ALASDAIR GRAY AND THE POSTMODERN

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me; that it is entirely my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified on the title page.

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ABSTRACT

The prominence of the term 'Postmodernism' in critical responses to the work of

Alasdair Gray has often appeared at odds with Gray's own writing, both in his

commitment to seemingly non-postmodernist concerns and his own repeatedly stated

rejection of the label. In order to better understand Gray's relationship to

postmodernism, this thesis begins by outlining Gray's reservations in this regard.

Principally, this is taken as the result of his concerns over the academic appropriation of

his work, and his suggestion that 'postmodernism' is an entity wholly constructed and

primarily active within critical theory, with a tendency to elide the political dimension of

literature under its own assumed apolitical solipsism. While acknowledging these

reservations, this thesis goes on to explore the extent to which theories elaborated under

the 'postmodern' heading possess utility as an approach to Gray's work, primarily

focussing on the extent to which they necessarily stand at odds with his political

concerns. To this end, subsequent chapters go on to read Gray's major works in parallel

with appropriate theoretical models drawn from the diverse configurations given

postmodernism. Comparison between Gray's project in *Lanark* of providing

contemporary Glasgow with imaginative depiction and the cognitive mapping demanded

in Fredric Jameson's account of the postmodern not only highlights their similarities, but

identifies this notion of the 'epic map' as a central aspect of the political dimension of

Gray's writing. The 'epic map' recurs in consideration of *1982, Janine*, which explores the potential political agenda in its narrators' seemingly postmodern fabulism, and its relationship to seemingly less 'postmodern' concerns of the novellas *The Fall Of Kelvin Walker*, *McGrotty and Ludmilla* and *Something Leather*. Likewise, 'mapping' also plays a part in approaching *Poor Things* in the context of postmodern historiography as described by Jameson and Linda Hutcheon. The penultimate chapter explores *A History Maker* as a complex negotiation with the very notion of postmodernism, installing, rejecting and subverting tropes drawn from postmodern theories, principally those of Fukuyama, Baudrillard and Jameson. In the concluding chapter, while no final conclusion is reached regarding a fixed relationship between Gray and the postmodern – a notion taken as impossible, given the heterogeneity of the values ascribed to the term – a degree of utility, and certainly of relevance, in approaching even Gray's political concerns is thus established.

NOTE

The following abbreviations are used for Gray's major works:

AHM – A History Maker.

J – 1982, Janine.

KW – The Fall of Kelvin Walker.

L – Lanark: A Life in Four Books.

ML – McGrotty and Ludmilla.

PT – Poor Things.

SL – Something Leather.

Alasdair Gray : Sick of Being A Postmodernist

Neither of the two main focuses of this investigation are renowned for the ease with which they may be defined or contained. Alasdair Gray, polymath creator of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama and visual art has regularly been cast as a mercurial figure for whom 'constant foregrounding of ambiguity… [is] a working principle' (Pittin 1996, 199). The postmodern, meanwhile, functions for some as a byword for obscurity or uncertainty. Such uncontainability may be ascribed to the artefacts classed under the postmodern heading, characterized by Linda Hutcheon through reference to 'self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement[s]', whereby 'Postmodernism's distinctive character lies in this kind of wholesale 'nudging' commitment to doubleness, or duplicity'(Hutcheon 1995, 1). Frequently, however, such qualities are seen to extend to postmodernism's construction, which almost from the outset has stood as 'a fiercely contested category, at once signifier and signified, altering itself in the very process of signification' (Hassan 1987a, xii). Much of this chapter will focus on the tangled weave of definitions produced by this contest over the term. Before considering the identity of postmodernism, however, it is useful to explore that of Alasdair Gray, and to sketch some of the features which make the question of their conjunction so interesting. The strategy employed here in defining Gray is one which foreshadows a technique previously brought to bear on the postmodern. Faced with the seemingly irreducible variety found within postmodernism, some critics, most notably Brian McHale, have invoked the dominant, a concept appropriated from the Russian

Formalists which represents 'the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines and transforms the remaining components,' (Jakobson qtd.in McHale, 1987, 6). In seeking to identify the postmodern dominant, such critics attempt to unify this heterogeneity without denying it, locating an underlying logic from which its variety proceeds. The same approach may be taken with regard to Gray's varied output, and indeed previous commentators on Gray have invoked the dominant in all but name, identifying various Gray fingerprints, stylistic and thematic, which not only mark this body as a single oeuvre, but render its heterogeneity more manageable. That a variety of dominants have been identified is not in itself problematic, for as McHale notes a single text bears multiple dominants which 'emerge depending upon which questions we ask of the text, and the position from which we interrogate it'(McHale, 1987, 6). Where problems do arise, at least superficially, is when postmodernism itself is classed as a dominant structuring Gray's work, for critical uncertainty as to postmodernism's applicability is only strengthened by seeming contradictions established between this and other Gray dominants.

Three Gray Dominants: Politics, Autobiography, Locality

Perhaps the most firmly entrenched dominant within critical orthodoxy on Gray is his engagement with politics, whereby, as Alan McMunnigall observes, '[u]ndeniably, Gray's fiction displays an obsession with the political'(McMunnigall, 2004, 337). As Robert Crawford suggests, 'one of his principle continuing obsessions'(R. Crawford, 1991, 4) is not merely politics as a whole, but, more specifically, 'the struggle against entrapment' (R. Crawford, 1991, 4). The relevance of this struggle to conventional notions

of politics is brought out in the dichotomy by which Gray analyses his obsession, where 'all my writing is about personal imagination and social power, or…freedom and government' (Gray and Gifford, 2001, 280). More generally, these '[t]ypical criticisms', as Lumsden terms them, which depict Gray's fiction as an 'exploration of, and an imaginative escape from, the systems which serve to entrap and enclose the individual'(Lumsden, 1993, 115), show Gray's obsession as focused upon one facet of political experience, while nevertheless expanding beyond traditionally 'political' spheres to engage with a variety of systems.

To this primary dominant may be added another: the presence of Gray himself. To claim that one of the defining characteristics of an author's work is that it is the work of that author is clearly tautologous. From another, post-Barthes, perspective it is unthinkable for quite different reasons. Yet the sum effect of all Gray fingerprints is to suggest a common source so strongly associated with their author that commentators turn to such psychopathologizing terms as 'obsession' when describing it. Here Gray's fiction becomes an expression of his personality, even, such terms may imply, a symptomatic or therapeutic one. Certainly, there is a confessional air to much of Gray's fiction. Despite his self-conscious search for alterity in *1982, Janine*'s narrator – scientific where Gray is artistic, conservative where he is socialist – Jock borrows intimate details from his creator. Thus, for all Gray's satisfaction that he 'managed to get away from the 'me' persona' (Figgis and McAllister, 1988, 19), their similarity is marked through his 'putting in wee sex fantasies that I meant to die with only a few select friends knowing about'(Whiteford, 1997, 319). Further authorial manifestations are found when Jock works on Gray's *McGrotty and Ludmilla* – whose author briefly

appears – and when he encounters an earlier self-image, 'a hairy art student in a paint stained dressing-gown…working…on a frieze of fabulous monsters'(*J* 237-8). Extending from the deeply personal area of sexual fantasy to the performative identity of authorial function, these figures give 'Gray' a pluralized manifestation in the text.

The same is true of the more openly autobiographical *Lanark*, where Gray's refraction as Thaw and Lanark is compounded by a further surrogate in the text's 'author', Nastler. This meeting between Lanark and his supposed creator is just one of several such ontological excursions in Gray's fiction, again engaging with Gray's primary obsession, where in this case the entrapping systems of authority are the trappings of authoriality. The effect of this 'conjuror', 'an unstable and rather deranged creature' (Toremans, 2003, 584) or of the 'Alasdair Gray' who idiosyncratically annotates *Poor Things* is thus to expose a position where '[a]uthorship…is not a vocation so much as a tainted, encumbering office [Gray] hankers to resign'(L. McIlvanney, 2002, 196). These self-portraits also possess a political dimension attained less through their metafictionality than their use of Gray's own experience. As Nastler explains, '[m]y first hero was based on myself…the only entrails I could lay hands upon' (*L* 493). Likewise, Gray has 'regretted that my hero had to be an artistic Young Bloke – too many books about those – but it was easiest. I had more information on the person I was and would like to be than I had on anybody else'(Acker, 2002, 46).

Attendant upon this regret was a further anxiety that this limitation might be compounded by a failure to experience situations which Gray desired to represent. Thus, he has explained, '[m]y main worry while on the job was that life might not teach me enough to let me describe properly some of the best and worst that can happen to a

man'(Anon., 1984, Par. 2), a concern which he has linked to *Lanark*'s extended genesis, since 'I meant to tell the whole story of a man's life. Before the age of 40 I was too young to do so' (Delaney and Swan, 1986, 219).[1]

It is for a similar reason that Gray adopts a further thematic focus key to many responses to his work, his strong association with Glasgow. As Edwin Morgan has commented, 'Gray never lets Glasgow slip out of his sights' (Morgan, 1991, 66), a concern most apparent in *Lanark*, which can be taken as an attempt to map the city's realities and representations. While the thematic treatment of this process marks it out for particular attention here, a concern to depict Glasgow, and more generally Scotland, appears throughout Gray's novels. Thus *1982, Janine* shows Gray attempting to 'talk about the *now* (1982) of stupid lovely ugly screwed-up rich poor old Scotland' (Vincini, 1994, Unpaginated), while, he explains, '*Something Leather* was my effort to concentrate on Glasgow 1990… a picture of a place'(Vincini, 1994, Unpaginated). Likewise *Poor Things* functions as an exploration of Glasgow's nineteenth century development in which the nineteen nineties nonetheless play an important role. Among his extended fiction, only what Bernstein terms the 'London Novels', *McGrotty and Ludmilla* and *Kelvin Walker*, are set outwith Scotland, yet here the imperial centre is employed primarily to explore relationships between Scottish protagonists and the British state.

While this focus on civic and national identity is clearly compatible with Gray's nationalism, his comments on the Scottish elements in his work generally recall those on autobiographical material. Asked about his work's Scottish identity, he replied that this was '[a]s important as it is for Goethe to be seen as a German, Frisch as a Swiss, Jesus as a Jew… Everyone has to work with the material they find in their own corner of the

human race' (Böhnke, 2004, 288). This limitation of available material is discussed without anxiety over attendant limitations in its potential. Overcoming the 'the phoney old *local versus international* doublebind'(Gray, 1983, 9) of the Scottish predicament, Scottish experience is the local manifestation of a universal reality, where, he explains, 'Scottish material does not inhibit me – it is the most available, and much that happens here is very like what happens in Chicago, Zimbabwe and Kensington' (Anderson and Norquay, 1983, 9).

The Politics of Representing Locality

The relevance of the local and autobiographical to Gray's political project is best established with reference to his discussion of political art. 'It's a pity', he writes,

> that storytellers cannot be moralists. They can invent people who pass moral judgements, when these are convincing and appropriate, but if they make their inventions the text of a sermon then a sermon is all they will write, no matter how well they have reflected part of the age and body of their time. Readers must be enticed to their own conclusions, which cannot be predicted. (Gray, 1985, 31)

Disavowing overt didacticism, it is to the tactic implicitly raised here, of representing a cultural moment, that Gray turns in elaborating fiction's political dimension. This project, 'to show the whole age and body of a time *to* a time, to reflect the constitution and abuses of a whole commonwealth'(Tillyard, 1966, 28) returns in *Lanark*, where Nastler's ambition to write an epic – which must 'communicate the feeling of what it was like to be alive at the time'(Tillyard, 1966, 12) – signals just this function of engendering comprehension through representation. Gray's epics are thus both moralizing and representational, the one function implicit within the other; in Liam

McIlvanney's words, Gray's narratives provide 'working models of the world they seek to condemn' (L. McIlvanney, 2002, 200). Further, Gray's insistence on representing reality is not undermined by his recourse to fantasy, asserting that '[t]he world which fantasy can only be a temporary alternative to seemed the world my imagination should tackle…though sometimes under a fantastic disguise'(Anon., 1994, 19). Thus Morgan's suggestion that Gray keeps Glasgow in his sights includes the recognition that, where Gray's fictional world is clearly not our own, it nevertheless might prove to be 'a subtly altered, fantasy Glasgow…slightly wrong, slewed out of kilter, yet vaguely recognizable'(Morgan, 1991, 72). Indeed, in terms of incorporating moral judgment, reconfigurations of reality offer greater resources than 'realist' accounts. Christopher Whyte suggests one element of this when he notes 'a paradox of *Lanark* (and one explanation of its power)…that the grim science fiction of the outer books evokes Glasgow…more accurately and poignantly than any realism could do' (Whyte, 1988, 1). In exaggerating the dystopian aspects of reality, Gray's writing likewise operates as satire, a genre characterized by the implicit moral edge incorporated into a depiction of the world. Thus Johanna Tiitinen casts Gray's fantastic translations of reality as primarily satirical, where 'Gray criticizes the existing governmental and value systems through meticulously built parodic extensions of these worlds'(Tiitinen, 2004, 210). At the same time however, translation into fantasy can be seen to ally these emotive aspects with analytic information. Spaces such as Unthank here stand as Glasgow *revealed* by fantasy, less tangible aspects rendered visible through allegory. The 'literalized metaphors'(Donaldson and Lee, 1995, 160) identified by Donaldson and Lee thus allow theoretically elaborated systemic patterns to be more immediately comprehended as an

image within diegetic reality, effectively a benign form of reification whereby, as Charlton terms it, 'abstract tendencies in life are concretised in the text to form actual structures'(Charlton, 1988(b), 39).

Gray's Critics : The Dangers of Appropriation

While offering implicit political commentary in this way meets Gray's requirement that the reader draw their own conclusions, the possibility arises that his fictions may be misconstrued. Gray seems to accept or even celebrate this, commenting that 'I would like my work to be reviewed, by different people who all approved of it for absolutely different reasons'(Toremans, 2003, 572). As he is aware, however, his reluctance to engage in overt moralizing does not necessarily maintain such interpretative freedom. Between reader and text are imposed the further readers and texts of the professionalized critical establishment. As Gray has observed, '[i]f you're a reviewer, you're always on top'(Anderson and Norquay, 1983, 8). Awareness of this hierarchy prompts further anxieties. '[S]ince university teachers lecture on my books and students write dissertations on them,' he has commented, 'I have grown conscious of my academic audiences and afraid of seeming their property'(Axelrod, 1995, 113). There are at least two elements involved in Gray's fear of appropriation. The first revolves around his valorization of readerly pleasure. Opening a critical work of his own, Gray suggests criticism and pleasure as antithetical through establishing a division between 'scholars' and 'FOLK WHO READ for pleasure'(Gray, 2000(d), ix). In one sense, what is at issue here is pleasure's survival within academia, the 'dread that analysis of my work may ruin pleasure' (Vincini, 1994, Unpaginated). More generally,

Gray fears that academic appropriation might exclude his wider readership through suggesting that his work 'will be too clever for them'(Axelrod, 1995, 113). This fear is in turn allied to a second anxiety that critical discourse will limit his readership's responses. Here again, the need to preserve pleasure plays a part, as 'Teachers and critics too often tell students & the public what to think of work before it has been enjoyed, thus making enjoyment difficult'(Böhnke, 2004, 284). This link between interpretative freedom and readerly enjoyment brings the dichotomy of 'scholars' and 'folk who read for pleasure' into question, suggesting that a critical response plays a necessary part in a pleasure-oriented reading.

Gray's comment on MacDiarmid's lyrics may help to reconcile his desire to be reviewed with his fear of appropriation. 'I have read expositions of these poems', he writes, 'by appreciative scholars who strike me as having missed half the point. This always happens when people who love a great piece of writing hear it explained by others'(Gray, 1994(b), 40). Gray's wish for a variety of reviews may, in this respect, share in an awareness of criticism's limitations. It may also offer a further means of curbing the prescriptive interpretations of criticism through imagining a variety of responses failing to cohere into an enforceable orthodoxy. While his desire shows critical freedom valorized alongside that of an unprofessionalized readership, the specific example with which he illustrates this subtly suggests his own reservations. Tellingly, the reviewer he cites is 'the intellectual wing of the conservative party, Roger Scruton' (Toremans, 2003, 572), and it is in ideological terms that their differences arise, Scruton reading one Gray story as 'a satire against a communist state, whereas I regarded it as a satire against an utterly conservative state!' (Toremans, 2003, 572).

Even more revealing is the story over which these interpretations contend, 'Five Letters

From An Eastern Empire'. As Gray suggests, this can be read as a satire against state

repression. Its more specific concern, however, is criticism's role in this repression. Here

Bohu's disillusionment over genocide in his poem 'The Emperor's Injustice', is, through

a state official's appended 'CRITICAL APPRECIATION' (Gray, 2001(c), 130)

radically transformed into the 'literary…side… of the attack'(Gray, 2001(c), 133). As

Gray explains, the story shows

> the capacity of any educational establishment to take what has been written with
> revolutionary fervour, put it onto the curriculum and teach it…*Animal Farm*,
> which is a lament for the Russian Revolution and the failure of it…is now taught
> as a warning against socialism or any attempt to do anything socially innovative
> or decent in extending democracy'. (E. Donaldson, 1984, 32)

The tension between preserving interpretative freedom and safeguarding his

works against revision prompts Gray to enter into his texts in a further sense, as the

author of didactic content. In the disavowal of sermonizing cited above, Gray does

suggest some leeway via fictional spokespersons, a technique he repeatedly applies.

These sermonizers offer the explicit commentary otherwise subsumed within the

framework of their worlds, Gray's 'excuse' being that 'I put these things into a personal

voice'(Acker, 2002, 49). Here Gray's use of 'personal' is particularly apt. As Phillip

Hobsbaum suggests, '[h]is prose possesses, to put it mildly, a definite

personality'(Hobsbaum, 1995(a), 147). This personality may be that of the text, but in

sharing a style and views similar to his Gray's non-fiction, any separation between

author and sermonizer is brought into question; as Mick Imlah comments with regard to

Kittock's notes, these are 'said to be by her, but indistinguishable in character from

Gray's usual subversive pedantry'(Imlah, 1994, 22). Conversely, the use of a spokesperson may in some cases be too effective, a possibility present even where the sermonizer is a fictionalized 'Alasdair Gray'. Patricia Belfield thus reads certain of *Poor Things*' editorial comments as intentionally ironic – and hence implicitly rejected – despite their similarity to Gray's non-fictional articles (Belfield, 2002, 66).

These instances show Gray's attempts at enticing the reader to certain conclusions shading into a coercion which is blunted through undermining the sermonizer's authority. Similar strategies attend his interface with criticism. While Gray's interviews offer a useful resource, the equivocation with which Gray meets questions on 'Five Letters' should urge caution. As Gray has explained, 'I don't like exposing himself' (McMunigal, 1995, 77). The pseudo-posthumous documentary *Under The Helmet*, in which the subject never appears, and the camera trickery of *Alasdair Gray 0-70*, in which he interviews himself, offer exaggerated examples of Gray's play with interviews, but this element recurs elsewhere in a more general, less categorizable, untrustworthiness about his answers. Overall, Gray's interviews suggest a companion strategy to his entry into fiction, where the textual Gray of his writing enters into our supposed dealings with the physical author and 'the 'interview'', in Nairn's judgment, 'could easily be added to his catalogue of accomplished mercurial fictions' (Nairn, 1991, 141).

Gray's Critics: The Appropriation of Criticism

This suggestion that the editor of *Poor Things* may not be the only 'Alasdair Gray', and the interview not only the meeting point between Gray and his

commentators, but between criticism and fiction, is particularly interesting given his concern to create other points of interpolation for these elements. The variations on 'End Notes and Critic Fuel' which append his fictions display a similar willingness to play with expectations regarding fictional and critical discourse. In Gray's hands the author's acknowledgements become a means of commenting upon the world, to make remarks 'which purely literary minds will ignore' (*J* 345). The content and tenor of the notes to *A History Maker* or *Poor Things* – both already tending towards this situation – are thus matched by certain of Gray's 'own' paratextual materials, as with the dedication of *Working Legs*, 'To Baroness Thatcher and all the Right Honourable Humpty Dipsies who have made our new, lean, fit, efficient Britain'. As this example shows, Gray's use of paratextual forms to offer political opinion is not limited to those instances where he draws upon critical discourse, although such examples have been singled out for comment. One critic who does so is Alison Lumsden, whose judgement that the thematic treatment of entrapment in Gray's fiction displays an 'acceptance of the inevitable encroachment of entrapping systems…[which is only] a form of *collaboration* with these systems themselves' (Lumsden, 1993, 124) continues into its formal qualities, including 'the genial, almost Masonic dialogue which he invites with academic criticism' (Lumsden, 1993, 125). Here Lumsden apprehends the systems entrapping Gray's texts on two fronts. In the first, criticism itself represents a form of enclosure, an 'entrapping and stifling practice' (Lumsden,1993, 124), which further restricts Gray's readership, not merely in terms of available hermeneutic possibilities but with regard to their very identity, serving 'to circumscribe Gray's reader, presupposing that he or she will inevitably be a 'research-scholar' or critic'(Lumsden, 1993, 124). This echo of

Gray's own concerns is highly ironic, for the criticism Lumsden here refers to is that offered by Gray himself, an effect of Nastler's comment that the epilogue 'contains critical notes which will save research scholars years of toil'(*L* 483). Lumsden's reservations may be countered on several grounds. The most obvious of these is conceded by Lumsden herself, arguing that 'while…these words belong to Nastler, they express a position which does not seem that far removed from Gray's own'(Lumsden, 1993, 124). In the face of Gray's stated opposition to critical appropriation, this suggestion appears questionable. Certainly, Nastler's direct address to academia presupposes an academic readership. Yet this cannot and does not represent the exclusion of a non-academic readership, only the association of such a possibility with the critical discourse whose form interpolates the epilogue. Rather than representing, as Lumsden has it, Gray's 'unwillingness to allow the text to stand alone'(Lumsden, 1993, 124) from criticism, the presupposition of a critical readership shows the inscription within the text of a process which Gray cannot avoid.

As with other systems of entrapment, then, Gray's response to those systems surrounding his texts is to represent them within fiction. This is not limited to criticism but encompasses further systems governing textual production, a point made by Workman, who notes the typists, typesetters and further 'thousands whose help has not been acknowledged' (*L* 499). Workman's acknowledgement not only describes this system but exemplifies it in practice, inscribing a further, critical, layer within the novel and displaying its ability to situate a text. It is in this replication of the effects of criticism, more than the specific content of his critical interventions, that Gray comes closest to that complicity Lumsden identifies. Yet the content of this critical material

often works to forestall this effect, turning these interventions into denials of their models. The use of a form to undermine its own authority is a repeated strategy of Gray's, extending to erratum slips which declare 'This slip has been inserted by mistake'.[2] A similar process operates in Gray's critical material. Granted, the most extensive example of this, *Lanark*'s Index of Plagiarisms, still retains some utility. As Gray has commented, while writing *Lanark* he feared that his readership's pleasure would diminish if they were unaware of the novel's context. In this respect, the function of the index lies in 'giving such a reader my own education' (G.White, 1999, 343) as emphasized in Nastler's promise to scholars. Yet, while Lumsden takes this claim as restricting the reader's experience, Nastler's argument for his epilogue's being 'essential'(*L* 483) also rests on its 'comic distraction'(*L* 483), and the index, offering both multiple sources for single features and interpretations unanchored in the text itself, is also intended, Gray explains, '[t]o amuse readers by scrambling a part of them that feels additional scholarship is a better guide to a book than its story' (Böhnke, 2004, 286). Here criticism's ability to intrude between reader and text is instantiated in a self-referential loop by which the entries for Black Angus, Aonghas Macneacail and Angus Nicolson refer only to each other. In addition there are several entries – perhaps eighteen, although Murray and Tait suggest 'at least two' (Murray and Tait, 1984, 220) – which provide sources for chapters numbered after the novel's end.[3] A reference, perhaps, to criticism's ability to find meanings which are not in a text – here exaggerated to finding texts not in the text – this also sets critical interpretation in direct competition with the author's intentions, for the conclusion which they sketch is at odds with Nastler's plans. That this scrambling of critics is not their outright condemnation,

however, is perhaps suggested by the fact that the critic's conclusion might seem

preferable to the author's. Similarly problematic is the question of how to read the

process by which this ending is constructed. As Lee observes, 'the references are so

abstract…that they could certainly be read in a variety of ways'(A. Lee, 1990, 113).[4] As

Gray has explained, '[a]ny vain cunning author will devize ways to help the story run on

in the audience's head when the teller stops'(G.White, 1999, 342). The more oblique

entries prove such a device, using the power of critical discourse to add to the text, while

reserving the final exercising of this power for the reader.

The trajectory of Lumsden's argument, beginning with Gray's complicity with

political power structures only to take a narratological turn into linguistic entrapment,

sketches a potentially illuminating clash between her priorities and those of her subject.

For Lumsden any explicit political message represents a limitation on readerly freedom,

a 'pulling back' towards a 'specific and limited field of hectoring reference'(Lumsden,

1993, 123). Interestingly, her examples of this tendency, from *1982, Janine* and

Something Leather, appear not in the novels' main texts, but in their critic-addressed

postscripts.[5] Unexpectedly, Lumsden does not situate these as examples of Gray's

criticism, glossing over the latter as from 'the end of the novel' (Lumsden, 1993, 122). A

possible explanation for this oversight lies in the contrast it suggests between Gray's

negotiation between political and hermeneutic innovation and her own tendency to

conflate the two. As Lumsden realizes, there is a tension between Gray's disavowal of

sermonizing and his desire to convey a political message. Here it is telling that several of

Gray's sermonizers take as their text the world they, not the reader, inhabit. Gray's

partial sacrifice of interpretative freedom is thus occasioned not only by the need to

convey a political message, but a need to preserve that message as it conveyed by other means. As with Tohu, the danger Gray's addenda seek to overcome is the castration of radicalism at the hands of interpretation. This strategy is implicitly raised, and explicitly rejected, as Lumsden briefly considers the possibility that Gray's critical interventions work at 'drawing the poison' (Lumsden, 1993, 123) of critics. She stops short, perhaps, at admitting these examples of this strategy into her argument because she herself represents the poison which Gray is attempting to draw. Identifying political and narratological radicalism as compatible, if not wholly identical, Lumsden fails to recognize the extent to which the form in which she desires the latter – that Gray's work be left 'in some more ambiguous area where the reader may or may not read some direct social issues…into them'(Lumsden, 1993, 122) – comes into conflict with the manner in which Gray assays the former.

Lumsden's narratological turn is particularly interesting as exemplifying both a further dominant in Gray criticism and one of the features which leads Gray to reject it. Having denied the radicalism of Gray's worlds, Lumsden comments that '[n]ot surprisingly…it is not for these thematic explorations that Gray's fiction has been hailed as innovative, but rather for its stylistic experimentation' (Lumsden, 1993, 118). This experimentation is, she suggests, a 'postmodern' one, an identity established not only through use of 'postmodern techniques and strategies' (Lumsden, 1993, 118), but through the ends to which these are deployed. Here the key constitutive facet of Gray's postmodernism is not so much his writing's stylistic makeup as the philosophical position discerned as animating this, 'an attitude and a response to…the awareness of linguistic reflexive entrapment'(Lumsden, 1993, 119). Gray's fiction is here primarily

directed towards the question 'of the ways in which the traps created by the process of writing and imagination…may themselves be challenged within the work of fiction' (Lumsden, 1993, 118). The position which Lumsden accords to Gray is thus one similar to her own. That he is seen to fail in this regard stems less from his duplicity than from Lumsden's fallacy in ascribing him this position. While metafictional concerns do indeed play a role in Gray's work, they remain attendant upon the direct political engagement which Lumsden's more puritanical version of this position denies. In this respect, the clash between Gray and Lumsden offers a concentrated example of a more general clash between the author and his critics: the interpretative tussle over Gray's postmodernism.

The Problematic Dominant: Gray Vs Postmodernism

Lumsden is far from alone in subjecting Gray's relationship with postmodernism to critical interrogation; her's is one of many such accounts which have collectively worked to create a critical environment in which Gray's 'postmodernism' is as firmly established as any of the dominants considered previously. Thus, even critics who deny this relationship have been forced to do so vocally, airing such reservations as Glyn White's contention that 'so labelling [*Lanark*] is little assistance in dealing with this text as a reading experience' (G. White, 2000, 63). That Gray himself might be classed among such unbelievers is unexceptional. As Paul Smethurst, one commentator upon Gray the postmodernist, admits, 'I suspect none of the novelists covered in this work would be comfortable with the label'(Smethurst, 2000, 311). With Gray, however, Smethurst's suggestion is grounded in more than suspicion, for his willingness to enter

into dialogue with critics has meant that he, too, repeatedly takes up the issue. The resulting conversation resembles less Lumsden's genial dialogue than a heated debate, as '[t]he more Gray has argued that his work is not postmodern, the more some critics have insisted on the application of the term' (McMunnigall, 2004, 335). McMunnigall's characterization of this struggle suggests that the prevalence of the postmodernist issue stems in part from criticism's need to respond to Gray's disavowals. For others, however, Gray's role in this dialogue remains passive. With one eye on the authorially-approved limits hypothesized by Lumsden, a level of disengagement from this debate is clearly acceptable. This concern is exemplified by Stephen Bernstein who, while he draws support from Gray's reservations, makes clear that this 'is not to say that Gray should dictate whether critics may call his work postmodern' (Bernstein, 1999, 29). Less justifiable are the many whose presumption of Gray's postmodernism is conducted without reference to his comments, or with their curt dismissal in a single footnote (de Juan, 2003, 18-19). Attention to Gray's observations on postmodernism does however suggest much that is important to an understanding of, not only Gray's work, but the situation in which this debate has taken place.

As shown by Gray's laughter at Scruton's reading of 'Five Letters', his attempt to shed critical classification is not targeted solely against postmodernism. As Marie Pittin suggests, one reason for Gray's penchant for ambiguity is the opportunity this provides to deny 'any labelling, however accurate, of his fiction'(Pittin, 1996, 208). Thus, while Gray has highlighted some of the negative repercussions of appropriation as 'what comes of being praised or condemned as a postmodernist' (Axelrod, 1885, 114), he suggests that this is 'as bad as being praised or condemned as an exponent of Marxist

dialectic' (Axelrod, 1995, 114). Arguably, what has given the postmodernist issue its place in Gray's response is its predominance in his critical reception. The postmodernist tag may also be taken as emblematic of critical appropriation at its purest. This much is suggested by Gray himself, whose repeated denial of his own postmodernism hinges in part on its generation within academia. Here postmodernism is 'a school of criticism not a school of writing' (McAvoy, 1998, 7). As Gray bluntly replied to the question 'In which sense do you think that your art can be defined a postmodern one?'(sic) it can only ever be 'In an academic sense' (Vincini, 1994, unpaginated). This contention functions both as a riposte to those who identify his work as innately postmodern and as an analysis of this debate, suggesting the place of such analyses in originating 'his' postmodernist identity. Indeed, in circumscribing postmodernism's validity as a term to critical discourse, Gray makes the first of many claims regarding postmodernism's perceived solipsism. In this respect, the solipsism Gray finds in postmodern theory represents an amplification of the negative aspects of appropriation considered above. Certainly, Gray's sketch of one theorist in the notes to his poem 'Postmodernism' characterizes the term as a critical *carte blanche*, its exponent 'sure that critics and lecturers were now entitled to read any idea they liked into a work' (Gray, 2000(a)). As with Lumsden, such freedom again depends on the critic's disregard for social context; the postmodernist critic, Gray writes, ignores 'our intricate universe and how well or badly we live in it'(Gray, 2000(a)). Theoretical postmodernism is here offered as antithetical to such concerns, 'fashionable criticism so divorced from common sense that it snuffs out the word which Saint John said was the light of the mind'. Ultimately, the end result is a solipsistic obsession with this very

obscurity, as postmodernism turns inward and 'darkness lectures to darkness on

darkness/and the darkness sees it is good'.

Gray's apprehension of postmodernism's apolitical solipsism extends beyond the

erasure of political significance from artistic works to encompass a more general rejection

of political realities. 'It's the pretense', he has explained,

> that there is no need for class conflict now. Like saying, "It is true that the rich
> are richer and the poor are poorer, but that's just ordinary business; it's got
> nothing to do with politics." Of course it has everything to do with politics.
> (Toremans, 2003, 574)

Here postmodernism's apolitical nature appears less as solipsistic than as

actively repressive. Indeed, where Gray affords postmodernism an existence beyond

academia, it is this dimension which features most strongly. As defined in *A History*

Maker

> [p]ostmodernism happened when landlords, businessmen, brokers and bankers
> who owned the rest of the world had used new technologies to destroy the power
> of labour unions. Like owners of earlier empires they felt that history had ended
> because they and their story could now dominate the world for ever…
> postmodernists had no interest in the future, which they expected to be an
> amusing arrangement of things they already knew'. (*AHM* 202-3) [6]

Rather than being solely the product of academia, postmodernism's roots and

effects here extend into the economic and political spheres, even possessing an aesthetic

dimension. Yet while the nature of postmodernism is altered, Gray's grounds for

rejecting it are only intensified. The solipsism of postmodernism here shifts from a

theory concerned only with itself to an entire moment concerned with its own self-

image. The strands of theoretical postmodernism given extended consideration in the

novel – what might be termed post-history theories – thus retain a central position in this

apprehension of the term, as both a codification of the capitalist world-view and an attempt at protecting this domination through dismissing any potential for change. The same is true of aesthetic postmodernism. Rather than locate the postmodernization of art in its appropriation by apolitical theory, the 'indifference to most people's wellbeing and taste [which] appeared in the fashionable art of the wealthy'(*AHM* 202-3) here describes an innately postmodern movement.

Denuded of political impetus, unconcerned with reality, and fostered by the self-image of capitalism and self-aggrandizement of academia, Gray's characterization of postmodernism clearly illustrates the direct conflict between this dominant of Gray criticism and those considered above. Again taking Lumsden as exemplifying a postmodernist reading, it is easy to illustrate McMunnigall's contention that a 'negative result of the postmodernist reading is that at times the political dimension in much of Gray's fiction has been de-emphasized in favor of a reading which prioritizes narrative concerns' (McMunnigall, 2004, 336). Insofar as Lumsden suggests Gray as a *failed* postmodernist, however, installing a single, politically-aware interpretation on his work, she proves a better guide to Gray than those who wholly conflate him with the movement. Jennifer Hammond, for example, taking 'the "disappearance of the real" as a very definite fixture in postmodern literature'(Hammond, 1999, 45), offers a reading of *Poor Things* in which 'Gray himself does not seem to believe that there is an actual truth out there to be found'(Hammond, 1999, 45). As will be discussed in chapter four, *Poor Things* does show Gray questioning narrative's truth claims. The problems he raises depend, however, upon narrative's limitations, rather than reality's non-existence. What Hammond does here, as other postmodernist commentators do elsewhere, is construct an

image of Gray at odds with his practice. Further, the prominence of postmodernism in

discourse on Gray's work is such that this image has come to infect even commentaries

which centre upon his political concerns. Discussing the political engagement of

Scottish writers, Keith Dixon notes that '[o]n much the same left-leaning nationalist

wavelength [as McIlvanney]…we find, perhaps surprisingly, the mentor of Scottish

post-modernism, Alasdair Gray' (Dixon, 1994, 167). The source of Dixon's surprise is

the contradiction enforced on Gray's work by postmodernist accounts of its ends.[7]

As Lumsden suggests, Gray's identification as postmodernist stems from stylistic

innovation, a notion confirmed by the extent to which such analyses regularly

incorporate lists of 'postmodern' textual features. Thus Szamosi's comparison between

Gray and Esterhazy notes that the two

> exhibit a whole range of similar postmodern characteristics. Both writers use a
> number of paratextual devices…titles…footnotes…criticisms become integral
> parts of their works. *1982, Janine* and *A Little Hungarian Pornography* both
> contain a number of intertextual references…As another postmodern device both
> novelists admit to plagiarizing from certain texts. (Szamosi, 2000, 54).

From the few formal features of Gray's work considered above, the relevance of

emphasising these devices should already be clear. Missing from Szamosi's list is a

further 'core' element in Gray's postmodernism, his appearance as a fictionalized

character, which might be incorporated into the most apolitically narratological of

readings as instances of McHale's 'postmodernist *topos* of the writer at his desk'

(McHale, 1987, 198). Such lists may even find a degree of support from Gray himself,

who when he does afford an aesthetic dimension to postmodernism does so in terms of

its 'literary tricks'(Vincini, 1994, Unpaginated). Gray appears troubled, however, by the historically widespread appearances of such tricks, where the term's periodising connotations are taken as illusory – and 'Postmodernism does not seem to me a novelty or a late twentieth century development'(McAvoy, 1998, 7) – or, more typically, maintained in a conflict with anachronistic pre-postmodernists which renders the term meaningless. Thus, Gray has produced several lists of archaic postmodernists designed to undermine any shared postmodernist identity. The most extensive of these claims, the suggestion made in *The Book Of Prefaces* that *Tristram Shandy* employs '*every device that late 20th-century critics label post-modernist*' (Gray, 2000(b), 396) may be credited to A.L.Kennedy, but it is doubtless one with which her editor agrees.[8] Likewise, where Gray preserves the term's periodising function it without its stylistic definition, becoming a mere 'academic substitution for *contemporary* or *fashionable*...a specimen of intellectual afterbirth,' (Gray, 1996(a), 152-3) 'an adjective invented by university lecturers so that they can think themselves what used to be called *avant-garde*'(Vincini, 1994, Unpaginated).

As Hassan has noted, postmodernism is possessed of both a theoretical and a chronological definition (Hassan, 1987(b), 88), and Gray is not alone in questioning their inter-relationship. As shown by Lumsden's shift from Gray's stylistics to the historically original philosophical framework which she asserts as animating this – prompted by a recognition that postmodern stylistics 'have been found in various forms since the advent of the novel'(Lumsden, 1993, 119) – reconciling the two dimensions of the term represents one of many reasons for moving beyond a stylistic definition. Gray's characterization of postmodernism as a toom tabard, meanwhile, debars such a move, leading him to jettison the term. In redefining postmodernism in these terms, however,

Lumsden is forced to reject Gray as a postmodernist. Interestingly, a similar conclusion, couched in more positive terms, is offered by Böhnke, who again confronts the seeming irreconcilability of Gray's activism and postmodernism. Noting that Gray 'has been hailed as the 'postmodern' voice of Scotland precisely because of his extensive use of these playful, metafictional and intertextual devices' (Böhnke, 2004, 52), Böhnke warns that focus on these may 'all too easily lead to a view of an irresponsible, ludic postmodernism – which is strongly counterbalanced by Gray's political and ethical convictions' (Böhnke, 2004, 52). Implicit in this warning is a judgement on the substance behind postmodern stylistics, held to be either irreconcilable with social concerns, as with Lumsden, or, as Gray contends, essentially insubstantial. Evidence that Böhnke may tend towards the latter view comes from his conclusion that, while such devices establish Gray's postmodernism, they are deployed 'to his specific ends, pointing to a deeper truth and eschewing mere hedonistic playfulness'(Böhnke, 2004, 61), suggesting no 'deeper truth' behind postmodernist play. In such a situation, Böhnke confesses, he has 'more than once thought about dropping the terminology altogether, or at least inventing a different term for Gray's "peculiar postmodernism"' (Böhnke, 2004, xix). That he makes neither move is evidence that Böhnke does discern some more meaningful theoretical framework behind postmodernism. Böhnke's strategy here is to mark a distinction between, on the one hand, postmodernism 'proper' and on the other a ''vulgar' or 'confused' postmodernism, usually associated with either relativism and nihilism or simply with the contemporary' (Böhnke, 2004, 35). In the notion of vulgar postmodernism, a form spread through the term's appropriation by popular culture, Böhnke offers some justification for Gray's reservations over postmodernism, his comments taken as responding to just this 'simplistic 'anything

goes' brand of relativistic nihilism'(Böhnke, 2004, 248). Böhnke is not alone in making this suggestion, echoing Randall Stevenson's observation that superficial usage of the term represents Gray's 'one good excuse'(Randall Stevenson, 1991, 57) for rejecting it. By this means Böhnke is thus able to both accept Gray's reservations concerning apolitical postmodernism and to circumvent them, arguing for the continued applicability of postmodern theory to Gray's work. Further, this realization of postmodern theory itself bears a political significance, its simplification into nihilism 'a travesty of the deeply- and committedly-critical and antifoundational theories and practices which were originally referred to as postmodern'(Böhnke, 2004, 35-6). The introduction of this form of postmodernism does not however make its application to Gray any simpler. If anything, Böhnke's account of postmodernism proper only serves to complexify the issue, for as his mention of multiple 'theories and practices' may suggest, he follows the division between vulgar and proper postmodernism with a division within postmodernism proper itself. In this, he arrives at a strategy which will be repeated in the present argument, of accepting the validity of Gray's reservations concerning the postmodern tag, while insisting that such criticism 'must not be extended to all and everything which uses the term without at the same time paying attention to the theories and ideas applied in any single case'(Böhnke, 2004, 248).

The Plurality of Postmodernism

Böhnke's acceptance of a variety of 'theories and ideas' which may be invoked as 'postmodernism' may stand in contrast to the simplistic notion of the term which he ascribes to Gray, but the situation in which this arises is one with which Gray seems

familiar. Among Gray's justifications for denying postmodernism is the claim that 'I have

never found a definition of postmodernism that gives me a distinct idea of it' (Axelrod,

1995, 111), a claim echoed widely by critics. Thus Smyth, introducing a collection

entitled *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction*, could still conclude that 'no

consensus exists regarding either the parameters of postmodernism or the precise

meaning for the term' (Smyth, 1991, 9). In part this lack of definition results from the

term's vague usage in the vulgar sense, decried by Eco when he suggests that

'[u]nfortunately, 'postmodern' is a term *bon à tout faire*. I have the impression that is

applied today to anything the user of the term happens to like' (Eco, 2002, 110).

Similarly, Hutcheon laments that 'postmodernism' has 'most often been used too

generally and vaguely to be very useful' (Hutcheon, 1995, 10). Yet the possibility that

some fixed meaning of postmodernism has been obscured through popular misuse is

implicitly undermined in her suggestion that such a meaning is undesirable, if not

impossible. Some, such as Stevenson, counter this obscurity with a call for greater

specificity, where

> [p]lacing contemporary postmodernism in relation to twentieth-century literary
> history, showing how it follows from modernist innovation, is increasingly
> necessary if the term is to continue meaning anything specific for literary
> criticism. (Randall Stevenson, 1991, 57-8)

Hutcheon, in contrast, demands an ability to engender undefined meanings, where

'what we need, more than a fixed and fixing definition, is a "poetics", an open, ever-

changing theoretical structure by which to order both our cultural knowledge and our

critical procedures' (Hutcheon, 2000, 14). Both critics here raise valuable concerns

predicated on attention to the contexts informing postmodernism. For Stevenson, this

context is that of the aesthetic production to which the term is applied. In the case of Hutcheon, it is the context in which postmodern theoretical discourse has been produced; although her call for an ever changing poetics is prescriptive, it equally serves as an overview of the term's development.

From Federico de Onis' coinage of 'Postmodernismo' in nineteen thirty-four and Toynbee's introduction of the term into English twenty years later, the late twentieth century saw the escalating growth of the postmodern virus until western culture was inescapably infected, 'spreading', as Elizabeth Ermarth writes, 'from architectural theory and linguistic esoterica to sweater advertisements' (Ermarth, 1992, 4).[9] Following the pattern established in this first leap – from a term for trends in Hispanic modernism to one denoting the period after the Franco-Prussian war – this growth was accompanied by dramatic fluctuations in meaning which may be traced to several features of the term's expansion. Developed through its usage within theoretical discourse, 'postmodernism' has been defined by the contexts in which it has been used, repeatedly redefined with each deployment. Partly, this is the result of the different meanings ascribed to it by different writers, a situation in which, as Peter Brooker observes 'these different perspectives and informing criteria do not add up. They do not together form a complete picture so much as cancel, subsume, or contend with each other'(Brooker, 1992, 5). Further, this process of self-definition has been heavily taken up within postmodern theory itself. From this proceeds the dread possibility that darkness has began to lecture on darkness, or, as Steven Connor comments, that 'the self-conscious density of the debate itself…[has] began to cast a progressively longer and longer shadow over its alleged object of analysis' (Connor, 1991, 7). Unsurprisingly, this is

again a feature upon which Gray has commented, describing how '*All postmodernist debates and criticism I have encountered devoted so much energy to defining what post-modernism was they that they had no time to illuminate anything else'*(Böhnke, 2004, 284).

In the face of this uncertainty surrounding 'postmodernism', Gray's unease over the term may seem understandable. Such uncertainty has elsewhere functioned, however, as a key recommendation for its use. That evasive quality which refuses to let the term be defined is, after all, a feature enabling its intercontextual slippage. Further, a key function of the term has been the utility it provides for the exploration – or, more cynically, construction – of an emergent entity whose parameters have yet to be set. In this sense postmodernism is, as Walter Anderson contends, 'a makeshift word we use until we have decided what to name the baby' (W.T. Anderson, 1996, 3). These aspects of its function, both retrospective and evasive, are combined in Charles Jencks' evaluation of the term, finding it 'convenient, this slippery word. It simply states where you've left, not arrived' (Jencks, 1977, 7). Definition in terms of what postmodernism has superseded, as Jameson has noted, further aids in its multiplication. Considering the term as denoting an antithetical response to aesthetic modernism, he notes how

> there will be as many different forms of postmodernism as there were high modernisms in place, since the former are at least initially specific and local reactions *against* those models. That obviously does not make the job of describing postmodernism as a coherent thing any easier, since the unity of this new impulse – if it has one – is given not in itself but in the very modernism it seeks to displace. (Jameson, 1988(b), 14)

This disunity is compounded by the sense in which even the identification of aesthetic modernism as postmodernism's other – and supposing their relationship as uniformly negative – misleadingly limits its significance. While otherness from the modern remains a defining characteristic of the term, candidates have been frequently found outwith the aesthetic sphere. Indeed, this slippage between cultural strata has played a greater role in destabilizing postmodernism's meaning than variation within a given field. Victim of its own cross-disciplinary success, the function served by the postmodern within the social sciences, taken as referring to a socio-economic formation, inevitably sees a mutation in meaning beyond that developed within the discourse of aesthetic postmodernism, to say nothing of the term's philosophical dimension as a response to Enlightenment modernity. As characterized by Connor, the main strands of postmodern discourse – one focused upon the social formation of *postmodernity*, the other on the aesthetic production of *postmodernism* – 'run on adjoining tracks, sometimes crossing, but also sometimes diverging from each other in significant ways' (Connor, 1991, 27). It is through this continual separation and reintegration that the term reaches its greatest instability. Again, this may stand as one cause of the term's success. Even within a single field it is easy to see how the term's fashionability might lead to its continued usage, exemplified in Hutcheon's concession that, despite her own unease with the term, it 'seems to have stuck'(Hutcheon, 1984, xiii). Further, to abjure the term is 'to shut oneself off', as Böhnke explains, 'from all the discussions and debates that are conducted under the label'(Böhnke, 2004, 21). By the same logic, one of the potential explanations for postmodernism's success within a given field is its prevalence within other fields, its reference to otherwise separate phenomena which may now be

incorporated in the present discussion. Thus the discourses of postmodernism and

postmodernity exhibit points of convergence not only because of similarities between

the two areas, but because they are now theoretically conjoined, 'not only because they

appeal to some of the same evidence, but also because whatever becomes evidence (for

either archive) can be analysed in both ways'(R.Rawdon Wilson, 1989, 105). Gray's

facetious diagnosis of such 'inter-disciplinary cross-sterilization' (Gray, 1996(a), 147-8)

clearly signals towards the dangers present in such inquiries. Yet, to the extent that

hidden linkages between phenomena can be so revealed, this process has been fruitful.

Indeed, for Jameson, this has served as his project's founding strategy. The very

function of the term 'postmodernism', he writes, must be to

> correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of
> a new type of social life and a new economic order – what is often
> euphemistically called modernization, postindustrial or consumer society, the
> society of the media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism. (Jameson,
> 1988(b), 15).

While Jameson is unusual in explicitly elaborating a framework 'that can face in

two directions'(Stephanson, 1989, 3), a similar possibility is implicit in the work of

other commentators. Thus McHale, despite an isolated focus on the titular subject of his

Postmodernist Fiction, notes that its conclusions may be subsumed within 'something

like Fredric Jameson's story of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late

capitalism'(McHale, 1992(a), 9). Even those critics, such as Hutcheon, who deny the

presupposition of a relationship between postmodernism and postmodernity nevertheless

continue to engage in similar slippages.[10] These include the migration of concepts from

one artistic field to another, as when she applies Jencks' concept of architectural

'Double Coding' to literature and film. Hutcheon's central slippage, however, is between aesthetic postmodernism and philosophic, rather than economic, postmodernity, leaving her one of many theorists across several disciplines whose primary debt is to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, a work almost exclusively concerned with the philosophy of science.

Tracing The Linkages: A Tour of Postmodern Models

Something of the seductive value of postmodernism's slippages can be seen through tracing the affinities between ostensibly separate accounts. The extensive uptake of *The Postmodern Condition* across the disciplines offers it as a good starting point for such a sketch. Here 'postmodernism' denotes a state of affairs 'as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age'(Lyotard, 1987, 3). This is a society in which various discourses can no longer turn to the grand narratives posited as previously legitimising them. Where '[t]he grand narrative has lost its credibility'(Lyotard, 1987, 37) the totalizing structures of Enlightenment thought, dubbed by Lyotard the 'speculative narrative' (Lyotard, 1987, 37) of knowledge's unity and the 'narrative of emancipation' (Lyotard, 1987, 37) through which rationality promises liberation, are lost, leaving an assembly of local and provisional *petits histoires*. In contrast to '[t]he Enlightenment project…[which] took it as axiomatic that there was only one possible answer to any question'(Harvey, 1989, 27), in postmodernity answers become multivocal and uncertain, and 'truth' is replaced by 'truths'.

Lyotard's postmodernism here lends itself to comparison with the postmodernist dominant posited by McHale, whose conclusion that '[p]ostmodernist fiction differs from modernist fiction just as a poetics dominated by ontological issues differs from one dominated by epistemological issues,'(McHale, 1987, xii) describes a fiction which, like the discourses envisioned by Lyotard, offers problematic, multiple 'truths' irreducible to unity. Through the transgression of ontological boundaries – between fiction and reality or between irreconcilable fictive worlds – postmodernist fictions create 'the sort of space where fragments of a number of possible orders have been gathered together…a *heterotopia'*(McHale, 1987, 18).

This heterotopic zone in which plural truths are confronted but cannot achieve resolution in turn seems to fit with the distinction between modernism and postmodernism offered by Alan Wilde, who characterizes the two by their respective deployment of disjunctive and suspensive irony. For Wilde, the modernist stance regards a fragmented world and seeks to both represent and transcend this state through replicating its paradoxes within a unified aesthetic form. Postmodernist writing, meanwhile, holds a similar, if more optimistic, view of the world, where 'an indecision about the meanings or relations of things is matched by a willingness to live with uncertainty, to tolerate, and, in some cases, to welcome a world seen as random and multiple' (Wilde, 1981, 44).

Translating between McHale and Wilde, postmodernism's acceptance of plural worlds becomes an example of suspensive irony. Translating between Wilde and Lyotard, this mode of apprehension would seem the only one available in the face of a society without underlying narratives to unify these fragments. And with its emphasis on

the loss of the possibility of transcendence, Wilde's reading of postmodernism in turn bears a resemblance to that of William Spanos, in which postmodernism reflects not so much an acceptance of this loss as a revolt against a transcendence which never was, a 'deviant literature…that would "overcome" the master codes of the Western literary tradition' (Spanos, 1987(a), 3).

Taking his terminology from Kierkegaard, Spanos characterizes the strategy by which these codes are overcome as one of 'mastered irony', a mode which 'unlike the balanced and resolving irony of modernism, refuses to fulfil the expectation of closure or to provide…distancing certainty'(Spanos, 1987(b), 216). Indeed, for Spanos modernism represents the apotheosis of a literary tradition dominated by the valorisation of circumscribed form, a project which he contrasts with both the fluctuating terror of being-in-the-world and the free-play within systems of meaning advocated by deconstructionism. The postmodernist antagonist to this project, 'an art of being there, of being in the midst' (Spanos, 1987(b), 217), thus represents a recognition of the inevitable provisionality of identity common to world and word in a similar way to that perceived by Wilde.

Such irresolvable heterogeneity is likewise highlighted in the self-contradictory postmodernism described by Hutcheon. As she repeatedly avers, it is due to the worldliness of postmodern artefacts that irony, and more specifically parody, are afforded such a central position. To an extent, this appreciation of parody's ironic space as a site for the world's entry into the literary tradition offers further echoes of Spanos, who places postmodernism in the context of Bakhtin's folk tradition of parodic-travestying literature which 'introduces the permanent corrective of reality…*too*

contradictory and heteroglot to be fit into a high and straightforward genre'(Bakhtin qtd. in Spanos, 1987(b), 193). It can also be considered as a means of recognizing the worldliness of the text itself. By insisting on the text's inevitable situation in the systems which produce its meaning, postmodern artefacts cannot set themselves up in discrete opposition to that which they criticize. Rather, they must acknowledge their inevitable entrapment in these systems, and so are 'always paradoxically both inside and outside, compromised and critical' (Hutcheon, 1995, 205). In this light, parody becomes a means of resisting these structures in the act of inscribing them, 'repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity' (Hutcheon, 1995, 26).

This idea of open complicity between the postmodern artefact and its context is likewise taken up by Jameson. Here, postmodernism is the result of an expansion of capitalism into a more properly cultural field, and a complementary overflow of the aesthetic, to the extent that the postmodernist artefact must reproduce its system and postmodernism 'may as a process be described as some "nonhuman" logic of capital'(Jameson, 1991, 408). This transformation may otherwise be expressed in terms evoking both Spanos and Wilde, where the loss of the aesthetic sphere's autonomy results in the loss of the modernist transcendence of both world and market-place. Other facets of Jameson's system similarly repeat traits summarized above. One of the basic formulations he offers for its identity is the dictum that 'difference relates' (Jameson, 1991, 31), and in the various forms in which this primacy of the heterogeneous manifests itself lie clear links with other models of postmodernism. Jameson's comment that postmodern texts display 'the production of discontinuous sentences without any

larger unifying forms [in which]…the very language of form disappears,' (Stephanson, 1989, 5) echoes Spanos' formal disruption. The heterocosms of McHale fit easily into a hybrid postmodern literature whose effects result from 'our sense that each of the elements involved, and thus incongruously combined, belong to radically distinct and different registers' (Jameson, 1991, 370). And with Jameson's analysis of contemporary society as one which sees 'the emergence of the multiple in new and unexpected ways'(Jameson, 1991, 372), where our various informational subsystems 'can only be activated locally or contextually…in distinct moments of time and by various unrelated subject positions'(Jameson, 1991, 375) we reach, in concluding this tour, the observations of Lyotard which provided its beginning.

Breaking The Linkages: Postmodernism and Politics

This account of postmodernism may be accurate, but it is less than adequate, a *petit histoire* rather than a Grand Narrative. Postmodernism itself offers a repeated warning against narratives and the processes by which they are constructed, a warning that, in Holton's words,

> acts of narrative representation necessarily exclude as well as include information; only by virtue of exclusion can the included be organized into any comprehensible order. The filtering out of noise from the information, the relevant from the irrelevant, the background from the foreground, occurs only as a result of a complex series of judgements. (Holton, 1994, 9-10)

In constructing the tour of postmodernism given above, much else was excluded. Focussing on the theme of irony and ambiguity entailed the rejection of a variety of alternative thematic centres. One such fulcrum is the identification of postmodernism

with surfaces, rather than depth, a perception shared most notably by Wilde and Jameson, the latter regarding a 'depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality' as 'perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms' (Jameson, 1991, 9). Such an alternative construction would, of course, require its own exclusions, including a de-emphasizing of the differences which exist within this discourse of 'surface'. Wilde, for example, regards postmodernism's loss of depth as part of its worldliness, a denial of transcendence. Jameson suggests the opposite, the superficial artefact becoming 'a reified end product impossible to grasp as a symbolic act in its own right'(Jameson, 1991, 7). In denying any interrogation of that which lies behind the surface, superficiality marks for Jameson not the acceptance of the world, but the denial of a hermeneutic process which would reveal it, 'restor[ing] to these oddments [a] whole larger lived context'(Jameson, 1991, 8).

Such differences likewise occur within the current delineated above. Among the most interesting discords, and most relevant to discussing Gray, are those pertaining to postmodernism's political significance. In their emphasis on postmodernism's essential heterogeneity and resurrection of past forms, for example, Jameson and Hutcheon do exhibit a degree of compatibility. The interpretations given to these features, however, are strikingly different. While Hutcheon sees irony as central to both the construction of these heterogeneous artefacts their return to the past, Jameson lists both 'ambiguity in language, [and] irony' (Stephanson, 1989, 4) as features lost in postmodernity. Central to his characterization of the postmodern is a loss of our sense of history, from which the postmodernist re-representation of the past can be configured not as a means (as Hutcheon would have it) of commenting upon its relationship to the present, but a means

of both obscuring that relationship and offering consolation for its loss. Jameson distinguishes this imitation, which he describes as pastiche, from conventional parody. Robbed of its message because it has been – for whatever reason – robbed of irony, the sole effect of parody is now to note its repetition. [11] Where irony enters into the political significance of these artefacts is in the space it leaves for marking difference from dominant practices. For both Hutcheon and Jameson, postmodern artefacts are inescapably complicitous towards their engendering systems. While the former takes this as essentially duplicitous, Jameson's loss of irony accompanies a foreclosure of resistance. For Jameson, capital and cultural production are intertwined to such a degree that there seems no possibility of negating dominant values, with even the most politically charged of artefacts 'secretly disarmed and absorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part' (Jameson, 1991, 49). While Jameson repeatedly asserts his dialectical approach to postmodernity – hence neither celebrating nor condemning postmodernism – it becomes clear that this complicity is a factor which he finds 'morally horrendous'(Stephanson, 1989, 11), part of that system founded on the 'blood, torture, [and] death' (Jameson, 1991, 5) of American imperialism. Postmodernist art works in this respect to convey these values, or else to obscure them through 'attempts to distract and divert us from that reality or to disguise its contradictions and resolve them in the guise of various formal mystifications'(Jameson, 1991, 49).

Jameson's account of a postmodernism which works hand-in-hand with the owners of our world offers intriguing similarities to that described by Kittock, and a disheartening contrast with the politically radical postmodernism hinted at by Böhnke. Comparing these three accounts of postmodernism may seem to involve a misleading

sleight, given that Jameson here describes the potentially reactionary qualities not of postmodern theory but of aesthetic postmodernism. Jameson has to some extent already made this move, however, readily appropriating theory as yet another product of postmodern culture for analysis. The similarities sketched above between Jameson's and Lyotard's accounts of postmodernity thus belie the extent to which the former is essentially diagnostic, the latter avowedly proscriptive. For Jameson, not only do there remain 'all kinds of master narratives in this world'(Stephanson, 1989, 23), he explicitly situates himself in contrast to the zeitgeist of master narrative denial in which Lyotard operates. Whatever prescriptive force Jameson's argument possesses is thus fundamentally at odds with Lyotard, holding it not only possible to construct a totalizing theory of postmodernity – since 'a system that constitutively produces differences remains a system' (Jameson, 1998(a), 37) – but a necessity to do so.

That the framework in which Jameson describes postmodernity is that of Marxism not only attests to his belief in the continued operation of Enlightenment meta-narratives, but hints towards a recurring confrontation between the postmodernist and the Marxist over the former's political potential. Indeed, in Perry Anderson's reading of *Instructions Païennes*, the pamphlet in which Lyotard introduces the meta-narrative, it is clear that 'just one 'master narrative' lay at the origin of the term: Marxism' (P. Anderson, 1998, 29). Regardless of whether Marxism is taken as Lyotard's specific target, it is doubtlessly damned as one variant of the meta-narrative of Emancipation, a broader rejection which led to the most famous criticism of Lyotard, Habermas' assertion that to reject the unfinished project of the Enlightenment amounts to a dangerous neoconservatism.

Lyotard's response to this charge in *Answering The Question: What Is Postmodernism* was neither to end his hostility to Grand Narratives – it is here that he proclaims his 'war on totality' (Lyotard, 1993, 125) – nor to accept Habermas's conclusion. Rather, Lyotard relocates the core identity of modernity in a manner which preserves some of its emancipatory potential for postmodernism. Interestingly, the path with which Lyotard begins this shift suggests an intriguing parallel with Jameson's contention that modernism's appropriation by the culture industry left this once radical movement as a series of innovation-blocking 'logjams' (Jameson, 1991, 313). For Jameson, the antithetical relationship presumed between movements suggests postmodernism as a continuation of modernism's founding injunction to 'make it new'. Likewise, Lyotard's contention that 'postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end, but in the nascent state, and this state is constant'(Lyotard, 1993, 123), is first exemplified with reference to aesthetic modernism, with successive waves of artists remaining true to the principle of innovation embodied in their predecessors' work through questioning those works themselves. Here

> All that has been received…must be suspected. What space does Cézanne challenge? The Impressionists'. What objects do Picasso and Braque attack? Cézanne's. (Lyotard, 1993, 123)

A similar interrogation of the past is found in Lyotard's apprehension of the Enlightenment. Arguing that '[m]odernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without a discovery of the 'lack of reality' of reality' (Lyotard, 1993, 121), Lyotard here ascribes the initial possibility of Enlightenment rationalism to just this rejection of preconceived notions. This association is far from

original, echoing Kant's maxim that 'Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage' (Kant, 1993, 90). Where Lyotard does break new ground is in the character this suggests for postmodernism; not, as Habermas would have it, a neoconservative tendency closing the Enlightenment, but the Enlightenment's continuation by alternate means. Modernity, he seems to suggest, was not stalled by postmodernity, but through its own success. Culturally rehabilitated, supporting not further emancipation but the status quo, the thought-structures of modernity now await their questioning in turn. Here is the 'ingenious twist' (Jameson, 1998(b), 27) which Jameson finds in Lyotard's argument, transforming postmodernism from the end of modernity into a respite prior to its resurrection, offering an eventual 'return and…reinvention of some new high modernism endowed with all its older power and with fresh life' (Jameson, 1998(b), 27). Alternatively, it is possible to read their relationship not as cyclical, but as synchronic, even identical. As Thomas Docherty suggests, this intervention shows Lyotard's conception of modernity as, like Habermas', 'a matter of mood and attitude (or 'Subject-position') rather than a simple indicator of temporality or contemporaneity'(Docherty, 1999, 51); with postmodernity defined solely by its very 'modern' disbelief in modernity, these moods would appear the same.

As may be suggested by Böhnke's mention of 'committedly-critical and antifoundational theories' as representing postmodernism's positive strand, it is from this association with interrogatory disbelief that much of postmodernism's political potential proceeds. Two theorists who have placed special emphasis on such disbelief are Hutcheon and Spanos, the former's identification of a 'de-doxifying impulse of postmodern art and culture' (Hutcheon, 1995, 4) echoing in Barthesian terms – where

'doxa' denotes the invisible discourses which confront us as the 'natural' order of things – the latter's apprehension of a postmodernism which 'calls into question the received forms and discursive practices of the canonical tradition' (Spanos, 1987(b), 215). Both ascribe political consequences to this process, such that Hutcheon has argued that 'politics and postmodernism have made curious, if inevitable, bedfellows'(Hutcheon, 1995, 2). For Spanos this political dimension begins not with postmodernism, but with that tradition against which postmodernism stands as a corrective. Drawing parallels between the literary project of transcendence and a broader tradition of metaphysical thought, Spanos casts the two in a state of mutual reflection, where the western literary tradition has functioned to 'legitimate…the West`s aggressive cultural and socio-political imperialism' (Spanos, 1987(a), 3). Indeed, it was Spanos' personal knowledge of overt imperialism – his experience under the military junta in Greece – which prompted him to found the journal *Boundary 2*, a key moment in elaborating politically charged postmodernism (See Bové, 1990).

While there is clearly radical potential in the interrogation of politically-loaded presuppositions, the productive ends of these postmodernisms is in some doubt, for having erased their heritage neither seems to offer anything in its place. Amanda Davidson highlights this aspect of Spanos' argument when she suggests that

> [h]is thesis rests on the belief that raw uncertainty is the healthiest state for humanity. However…many of the greatest crimes against humanity, such as the Holocaust, developed out of profound uncertainty of identity, irrationality and fear of the future, other cultures and people. (Davidson, 1999, 48)

The specific example with which Davidson illustrates her concerns is doubtful, given that Nazism represented an attempt to reach a fixed world such as Spanos

fulminates against. Nevertheless, she is correct to suggest that Spanos' position,

rejecting the notion of universal values, is necessarily limited in its ability to elaborate

alternatives. The imposition of values upon reality may be the fallacy by which Spanos'

eternal city seeks its replication, but was equally the basis for the Enlightenment's

movement towards emancipation. As Toril Moi notes with regard to one discourse

within this movement,

> [p]resent-day feminism is a historically specific movement, rooted in French
> Enlightenment thought…and British liberalism…and consequently wedded, in
> deeply critical style, to notions of truth, justice, freedom and equality. The
> Enlightenment we seek to dismantle in the name of our political values is
> precisely a major source of such values. (Moi, 1990, 42)

Holding no universal values of its own, this postmodernism can demand nothing

more than the end of values. Rejecting all teleological ends, it can imagine no state

better than our own, which in any case appears as a pluralist utopia. This point offers an

occasion for Terry Eagleton, a vehement opponent of postmodern theory, to endow it

with some degree of (misguided) radicalism, where [t]he postmodernists and

poststructuralists who speak about heterogeneity and plurality are not so much wrong as

premature'(Eagleton, 1990, 30). Eagleton's criticism here is that such theorists provide

no means for developing this situation, and, worse, ignore the extent to which radical

transformation is necessary to achieve it; '[i]t is as though,' he writes 'having

temporarily mislaid the breadknife, one declares the loaf to be already sliced'(Eagleton,

1990, 27). Further, this stance can be seen to impose severe limitations upon analytical

practice which may in turn render aesthetic postmodernism equally solipsistic, effacing a

text's engagement with contemporary politics. This danger is highlighted by McHale,

who finds it exemplified in Hutcheon's readings of postmodern artefacts. Unable to turn to any grand narratives – other than the postmodernist narrative of grand narrative denial – 'the only absolutely safe interpretative move left to her, it would seem, is that of attributing to the novels before her the same "incredulity toward metanarratives" that animates and obsesses her own discourse'(McHale, 1992(b), 22).

Such accusations of solipsism are not solely targeted towards Lyotard and his followers, having been levelled at various brands of postmodern theory. One such brand is that peddled by Baudrillard, whose hyperbolic statements on the end of capitalist exploitation – and, for that matter, of 'reality' itself – have led many to lament with Douglas Kellner that

> it is hard to keep from losing patience with Baudrillard, given that we live in a world in which unequal power relations and repression produce massive suffering, incarceration, torture, murder and the slow death of lifeless life on a massive scale…[W]hile these phenomena may not be real for the postmodern theorist… for those condemned to work for a living or condemned to live in prisons, hospitals and mental institutions, they are all too real. (Kellner, 1989, 140-1)

As with Lyotard, Baudrillard's potential for political quietism rests in part on his rejection of Marxism, or at least its reconstruction beyond recognition. In large part this revision stems from Marxism's perceived complicity with capitalism, where Marxian categories are held to mirror the system they critique. More importantly for his later work, however, Baudrillard also questions the relevance borne by Marxian categories beyond the period in which they developed, an issue raised in his response to Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Here Marx sketches a tripartite genealogy for the system of exchange values, tracing the expansion of the field of alienation as it first effects only

surplus production, then the mass of industry, before finally encompassing all qualities. While Baudrillard accepts Marx's account, he asserts that Marxism's inception within the second of these stages cripples its ability to recognize the radicalism of the third phase. Rather than representing 'the time when each object, physical or moral, is brought to market as a commodity value in order to priced at its exact value'(Marx qtd. in Baudrillard, 1975, 119), this stage appears to Baudrillard as one beyond the commodity form, the result of 'a decisive mutation…as revolutionary in relation to phase 2 as phase 2 is in relation to phase 1' (Baudrillard, 1975, 120). From a system of political economy centred around the material commodity-form, the historical progression envisioned by Marx is not, Baudrillard contends, towards one structured by both material and immaterial commodities, but by the purely immaterial sign-form, and we have entered '*the political economy of the sign*'(Baudrillard, 1975, 121).

The transformation which has brought about the political economy of the sign is such that not only Marxian analysis, but all previous understandings of politics are now untenable. Baudrillard's account is still, therefore, one engaged with the workings of capital, but capitalism transfigured, where now 'it is on the level of reproduction (fashion, media, publicity, information and communication networks)…that is to say in the sphere of simulacra and of the code, that the global process of capital is founded'(Baudrillard qtd. in Durham, 1998, 52). In place of commodities, Baudrillard writes of simulacra, 'the ungrounded copy that, in absence of an original, stands in relation only to other copies' (Durham, 1998, 8). These populate the realm of the hyper-real, in which 'the signified and the referent are now abolished to the sole profit of the play of signifiers, of a generalized formalization in which the code no longer refers back

to any subjective or objective "reality," but to its own logic'(Baudrillard, 1975, 127).

Among other Marxist factors lost, therefore, are interpretative models based on the now

meaningless distinction between appearance and reality, while political struggle itself is

transformed into a mutually interdependent competition for the mere appearance of

power constituted under the logic of the code.

Is Baudrillard Even Postmodernist? : The Underlying Logic of Postmodernism

While this apprehension of Baudrillard would appear to substantiate Gray's

characterisation of postmodernism as both reactionary and solipsistic, such a conclusion

is not without its weaknesses. One problematising factor is the extent to which

Baudrillard's solipsism may even be considered postmodern. In light of the importance

placed above on an overt alignment with the term 'postmodern' in establishing a

theory's place within postmodern discourse, Baudrillard, who makes scarce use of this

semantically loaded fulcrum, would seem almost postmodern despite himself. This

absence is stressed by Mike Gane, a commentator strongly opposed to reading

Baudrillard as a postmodernist. Noting Baudrillard's belated use of the term, Gane

affords what brief mention it receives a key place in the argument of Kellner, one of his

opponents on this subject. 'Game of Vestiges', an interview in which Baudrillard

employs the term, represents, Gane suggests, 'a crucial turn for Kellner, for he now

wishes to find a point in Baudrillard where his thesis, that Baudrillard is postmodernism

in theory, can be grounded' (Kellner, 1989, 51). In Gane's reading of Kellner, then, this

instance takes the full weight of Baudrillard's postmodern identity, where 'out of one

article and one interview Baudrillard is said to provide a theory and practice of

postmodernism'(Gane, 1991, 52). Leaving aside the questions Gane raises as to

Baudrillard's intentions in using the term it is important to note that its deployment here

does not represent Kellner's sole evidence. More compellingly, he also directs attention

to the 'many proto-postmodernist themes' which Baudrillard explores, 'such as the

consumer society and its proliferation of signs'(Kellner, 1989, 95). Here Kellner evokes

an undeniable affinity between Baudrillard and more overtly postmodern theorists, while

still recognizing the importance of the term in establishing this identity through his use

of the 'proto-' modifier. Indeed, there is the suggestion that Baudrillard may not only be

placed alongside the postmodernists, but at their head; rather than simply bearing this

affinity through the parallel discourse he constructs, Baudrillard may be taken as a

founder of postmodernism through his early identification of its themes.

Baudrillard's influence on postmodernist discourse is further attested to in the

name by which Nicholas Zurbrugg identifies a dominant trend in this field, the 'B-

effect'. Zurbrugg is not alone in identifying this 'apocalyptic register informing most

European and American writings on postmodernism' (Zurbrugg, 1993, xi), which

elsewhere appears as McHale's 'apocalyptic metanarrative of the postmodernist

breakthrough' (McHale, 1992(a), 23). Nor is he alone in associating Baudrillard with

such a trend; if Kellner's suggestion that '[t]he escalating role of the media in

contemporary society is for Baudrillard equivalent to THE FALL into the postmodern

society of simulations' (Kellner, 1989, 67) hints towards not the apocalypse but its

lapsarian precursor, the negativity of such rhetoric nevertheless continues. In so

enshrining Baudrillard within this trope, however, Zurbrugg does endow the theorist

with an unexpected significance in the development of this

present tendency to define postmodern culture negatively, in terms of
"schizophrenia", "superficiality" and so forth, [which] derives from *overliteral
and undercritical responses* to some of the more seductive overstatements by
European theorists. (Zurbrugg, 1993, xi. My Emphasis).

If he is not responsible for postmodernism's apocalyptic turn, Zurbrugg suggests, he has

at least offered it support. Indeed, he goes on to suggest this as the primary reason for

Baudrillard's adoption into the postmodern canon, his widespread success 'surely a

tribute to both Baudrillard's mastery of a revived *fin-de-siecle* "twilight" rhetoric, and to

his audience's insatiable appetite for apocalyptic entertainment'(Zurbrugg, 2000(a), 84).

While Baudrillard has undoubtedly influenced postmodern theory's details, it is

perhaps this suggestion of broader affinity which leads to a more profitable means of

analysing his postmodernity. Here Zurbrugg's emphasis on postmodernism's negativity

is misleading. While the many variants of the narrative of disjuncture do tend towards

this direction there still exist more positive recastings of the tale, such as Hassan's

gnostic utopianism, less apocalyptic than apostolic. Where all such accounts are negative

is not in postmodernity's repercussions but in its very definition, achieved through

modernity's supercession. Indeed, in Frow's analysis, this presupposition represents the

single discursive function by which the postmodern has been elaborated. Here the

constitutive trope of postmodern theory is to

assume the existence of a historical shift in sensibility, which you call the
postmodern; then you define it by opposition to whatever you take the modern to
have been; finally, you seek to give a content to the postmodern in terms of this
opposition. The content, that is to say, is deduced logically from the axiom of
existence and only then discussed as historically real. (Frow, 1997, 15)

As with the Lyotard's nascent modernism, Frow's meta-analysis seems to

suggest that postmodernism's essence revolves less around what it installs or rejects than

around this founding act of rejection. With Baudrillard, this rejection is largely enacted

with respect of conventional Marxism. By rejecting Marxism as irrelevant, 'belonging to

an earlier stage of history'(Kellner, 1989, 49), Baudrillard, as Kellner suggests

> can be read as a Left variant of theories of…postmodern society in which it is
> claimed that socioeconomic development has moved beyond the previous stage
> of development and has entered a new stage in which the theories and categories
> of the previous stage are no longer adequate or relevant. (Kellner, 1989, 49)

Such a presupposition serves for Baudrillard as a point from which to populate

this epoch with the characteristics held to distinguish it from its precursor. Indeed, such

is the force of this structural postmodernism in Baudrillard's writing that even Gane is

forced to recognize it. Describing Baudrillard's insertion of the sign-form in place of the

commodity-form, he admits that '[i]t can now be seen how tempting it is to make

Baudrillard's analyses support a thesis of postmodernity, since his writing points to a

dramatic, or rather, *the* most dramatic turning point of all, where all the major

parameters have to be reconstructed'(Gane, 1991, 130). While this support may be

drawn from the specific features with which Baudrillard populates his epochal

disjuncture, it derives more strongly from the generalized support it offers for

postmodernism's discursive logic through its analogous enactment of the same.

While Frow's discursive manoeuvre will reappear later in this thesis, there are a

number of factors which warn against its adoption as postmodernism's essence. While

the assumption of some fundamental epochal distinction appears as an originating factor

near universal to accounts of the postmodern, to read this as necessarily manifest in a

series of discrete, antithetical oppositions is to disregard postmodern theory's own

equivocations. One of the most widely reproduced attempts at defining modernism and

postmodernism, Hassan's diagram juxtaposing their respective traits, would at first appear as the schematic embodiment of Frow's postmodern opposition (Hassan, 1987(b), 91-2). This diagram has however found a number of detractors who question not only the identities thus ascribed to modernism and postmodernism, but the very process of their construction. Expressing a similar ethos to Craig Owens when he suggests that '[p]ostmodern thought is no longer binary thought'(Owens, 1983, 62), these critics have drawn attention to the sense in which Hassan's oppositions force a more properly modern logic upon an entity supposedly founded on pluralism (Brooker, 1992, 11-12; Connor, 1991, 112). Others have raised the extent to which this diagram conflicts not only with postmodernism's ethos, but with its varied practice; something of both charges can be found in Hutcheon's suggestion that such a definition 'implicitly denies the mixed, plural and contradictory nature of the postmodern enterprise' (Hutcheon, 2000, 20). Indeed, such objections were first raised by Hassan himself, appending to his diagram a disclaimer that 'the dichotomies this table represents remain insecure, equivocal. For differences shift, defer, even collapse… inversions and exceptions, in both modernism and postmodernism, abound' (Hassan, 1987(b), 92).

That Hassan's reservations extend here to undermine the fixity of modernism highlights a further complicating factor in determining postmodernism's character through contrasting it with its predecessor. Just as the trail of 'sedimented meanings'(Ross, 1989, x) accompanying postmodernism's inter-disciplinary slippage has fostered linkages between its different functions, so too do competing formulations of the modern variously inter-relate. David Harvey's description of modernization thus relates back to the Enlightenment structures of thought which he holds as necessary for

capitalism's development, and forward to literary modernism considered as a response to economic modernity. Spanos, meanwhile, offers a competing linkage which effectively cuts out the middle-man, literary modernism here taken as the aesthetic enactment of Enlightenment ideals. With just these two examples, where the complex, largely antithetical position which Harvey's modernism ultimately bears to Enlightenment thought is not only simplified but reversed, we can see how such patterns of linkage are accompanied by contradiction. Again, these contradictions partially result from modernism's situation as a theoretical category, 'a recognition', as Stevenson describes the term's literary definition, 'some years after writers completed the work involved, of substantial similarity or even collective identity in the initiatives they took and the styles and concerns they made a priority'(Randall Stevenson, 1998, 8). If the contradictions within modernism appear less marked than in their successor, this is perhaps due less to the homogeneity of modernism's manifestation than the element of hindsight involved in its construction, contrasting with postmodernism's simultaneous actual and theoretical irruptions. Equally, this homogeneity may be fostered by attempts to define postmodernism through contrast with its predecessor, for as Marjory Perloff has noted, this can create a simplified 'straw man modernism' (Perloff, 1991, 243) against which desired 'postmodern' qualities may be more discretely opposed.

The Key of As-If: Reading Gray The Postmodernist

Asking himself whether McElroy's *Women and Men* 'is' a postmodern novel, McHale concludes this is '[a] vacuous question, deserving a vacuous answer: It all depends' (McHale, 1992(a), 205). The same is true of Gray's oeuvre. The most basic

factor on which such questions depend, of course, is exactly what one means by the postmodern. Insofar as exponents of Gray's postmodernism have answered this question with certainty, the definition of the term most often centres upon a checklist of postmodern traits subsequently located in his texts. Several drawbacks to adopting such a strategy have, however, already been rehearsed here. From one perspective, what is at risk in such comparisons is the mis-representation of Gray's work, unduly privileging features located on such lists and so creating texts which, if they 'are' postmodern, are not necessarily the texts Gray wrote. Equally, they also risk the mis-representation of postmodernism, for the dangers of simplification which haunt schema such as Hassan's remain even when the element of epochal juxtaposition is removed from their presentation. Further, the deployment of such lists necessarily invokes the more theoretical definitions of the term with which they exist in a state of interdependence. Having identified a work as postmodern through the application of a simplified schema, a more expanded theoretical model is required if interrogation of this text is ever to develop into meaningful analysis. At the same time, however, such a model has already been implicitly required in order to determine this catalogue. Even if the selection of these features is given as deriving from their repeated appearance within postmodern texts such interdependence remains, since some justification must lie behind the selection of the canon from which these traits are culled. In practice, differing theoretical conceptions of postmodernism have led to incompatible postmodern canons. In including the *nouveau roman* among the postmodernist works he considers, for example, McHale stands in agreement with Ermarth, but differs from Hutcheon, who categorizes Robbe-Grillet as 'late modernist'. The distinction she makes here rests on the 'extreme

modernist autotelic self-reflexion'(Hutcheon, 2000, 40) in works ascribed to this category, a denial of reference clearly out of place in her model of postmodernism, which 'goes beyond self-reflexivity to situate discourse in a broader context'(Hutcheon, 2000, 41). It is for similar reason that Spanos also characterizes certain strands of contemporary fiction as a continuation of modernism, where Raymond Federman (judged postmodernist by McHale and late modernist by Hutcheon), represents the 'formalization, in both his fiction and his criticism, of Samuel Beckett's disruptive worldly novels'(Spanos, 1987(b), 206-7). In the case of McHale, however, for whom this extreme self-consciousness about the (de-) construction of a fictional world exemplifies one form in which his ontological dominant may manifest, writers such as Robbe-Grillet and the surfictionists are placed in the postmodernist canon not despite this tendency, but because of it. Thus the heterogeneity of postmodern theory is further exacerbated, since, as Hutcheon notes, 'no one seems to be able to agree, not only on the interpretation, but often on what cultural phenomena are to be interpreted' (Hutcheon, 1995, 16).

From the brief exploration of the models comprising the postmodern in this chapter it is clear that the term cannot allow us to engage in a simple process of categorically labelling Gray's work, nor provide a rigid ideological structure for its interpretation. What it can provide, however, is access to a range of inter-related theoretical models from which a more open interpretative framework can be constructed. In realizing 'postmodernism', 'modernism', 'romanticism' et al. as theoretical constructs, Matei Calinescu characterizes them as 'tools that may be needed for doing certain jobs…that will become useless and cumbersome and worse when the jobs to be

performed are different'(Calinescu, 1990, 59). The same idea can be extended to the various models within postmodernism. In this practice, each theory of the postmodern becomes, as McHale would have it, a story told in 'the key of as-if' (McHale, 1992(b), 31), provisionally accepted so long as it is useful. In each chapter that follows, the primary criterion for usefulness will be the relevance of each model of postmodernism to the work by Gray under consideration. A central factor in determining this relevance will be the element of political commitment popularly held to be denied by postmodernism, yet also, in quite different ways, claimed as compatible with both the Marxian analysis of commentators such as Jameson and the de-doxifying postmodernism described by Hutcheon and others. With each juxtaposition of text and theory, therefore, two actions will be attempted. On the one hand, Gray's texts will themselves be opened up for investigation. From another perspective, the interpretative models of postmodernism used to do this will be interrogated, sketching the extent to which each can aid or hinder in the meaningful investigation of Gray's work. Or, in other words – and fenced round with the many provisos arising in this chapter – the extent to which Gray 'is' 'postmodern'.

The Generic Blending of *Lanark* and the Birth of Postmodern Glasgow

> [N]obody imagines living here...if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively. What is Glasgow to most of us? A house, the place we work, a football park or golf course some pubs and connecting streets. That's all. No, I'm wrong, there's also the cinema and library. And when our imagination needs exercise we use them to visit London, Paris, Rome under the Caesars...Imaginatively Glasgow exists as a music-hall song and a few bad novels. That's all we've given to the world outside. It's all we've given to ourselves. (*L* 243)

With this complaint Duncan Thaw provides a variety of approaches from which to frame a response to Gray's debut novel. The centrality of this scene has led some to infer that Gray writes, as Thaw paints, 'to give Glasgow a more imaginative life'(*L* 244). Indeed, so widespread are such appraisals of the civic or national literary tradition that Thaw's depiction as, in Craig's terms, 'the inheritor of Scottish culture as erasure' (Craig, 1999, 33), is itself possessed of a meta-representational function.[12] It is thus largely with regard to Scottish literary traditions that Gray's achievement has been measured. Here Gifford's claim, in one of its earliest analyses, that '*Lanark* undoubtedly will stand as one of the greatest of Scottish novels' (Gifford, 1983, 229) might represent their broadly hagiographic conclusions. Similarly, Gifford's reasoning, partially grounded in a comparison between *Lanark*'s achievement and previous Scottish fiction, has been a continued presence in responses to the novel. An earlier review thus asserts *Lanark* as 'the most remarkable thing done in Scottish fiction for a very long time. It has changed the landscape' (Massie, 1981, 3). Regardless, then, of whether Thaw's

complaint is unproblematically shared by Gray, his novel has from the outset been taken

to overcome the situation it evokes, as 'Thaw could no longer speak of Glasgow as he

did, after the work of his creator' (Massie 1981, 3). [13]

At heart this claim rests on the assumption that *Lanark* represents Glasgow in a

manner, and to an extent, previously unachieved. As such, it possesses a Janus-like dual

focus, looking back on its presumably failed precursors and forward to a new situation in

Scottish writing. As Moira Burgess observes, the novel 'marks a new beginning in

Glasgow fiction' (M. Burgess, 1998, 247), a claim reasserted more generally in Kevin

Williamson's suggestion that here 'foundations were undoubtedly being laid for a

reinvigorated literary and cultural renaissance in Scotland' (Williamson, 2002, 174). Yet

the importance of *Lanark* to this new phase derives in part from the tradition it

supposedly supersedes. Standing not only as a representation of Glasgow, but as a

commentary on previous representations, the fact that *Lanark* shows Gray 'working with

materials of the past' (Porter, 1991, 46) suggests a dual denial of Thaw's complaint,

recalling a tradition which the novel supersedes by bringing to fruition. In this respect,

Dorothy Porter claims, '*Lanark* is an enabling fiction for subsequent Glasgow writers. It

is further enabling in being synoptic rather than proleptic: it closes rather than

inaugurates a phase'(Porter, 1991, 46). Certainly, if a key constituent of this phase is its

presupposition of failure, Gray's success marks a factor in inaugurating any literary

renaissance. Thus, it is as an example of both Gray's accuracy in diagnosing the Scottish

artist's mindset and Thaw's fallacy in assuming its truth that writers have highlighted

Lanark's influence. Like Thaw, Alan Warner has described a youthful alienation such

that 'I can't express how completely I believed that there was nobody alive in Scotland

writing a book' (Redhead, 2000(b), 130), a situation remedied by 'Alasdair Gray's mighty *Lanark*'(Redhead, 2000(b), 130). Elsewhere, Duncan McLean turns to 'that famous bit in *Lanark*' (Redhead, 2000 (a), 104) to describe his youth, citing Gray as a key formative influence.

This suggestion that Gray has provided Scottish writers with a model to emulate undermines the extent to which *Lanark*'s epochal significance is primarily synoptic. In line with Lumsden's begrudging recognition of Gray's stylistic innovation, the key factor in this influence is less what the novel depicts than the manner in which this is represented. Interestingly, Moira Burgess' account Scotland's most recent literary renaissance, that '[a]fter the epiphany of *Lanark*, Glasgow writers realised that…[representing Glasgow] need not be a problem for them' (M. Burgess, 1998, 260), refers simultaneously to both propositions. Synoptically, *Lanark*'s position as the culmination of a previous tradition enables subsequent writers through suggesting Thaw's situation as at best illusory, at worst surmountable. Proleptically, the formal innovation of *Lanark* provides an indication of the means by which Glasgow can be represented. This formal influence can be approached in specific terms, as when Cristie March observes that '[c]ontemporary Scottish writers acknowledge the literary modes developed by Gray and Kelman' (March, 2002,7). Thus it is with one specific innovation in mind – *Lanark*'s juxtaposition of fantasy and realism – that Iain Banks admits 'I don't think *The Bridge* would be the way it is at all if it wasn't for *Lanark*' (Robertson, 1990-1, Par.32). More generally, this influence can be seen in 'the post-*Lanark* freedom of the Glasgow writer' (M. Burgess, 1998, 269), where *Lanark*'s

importance lies less in its providing a specific model than in its suggestion that deviation from realism is not only possible but advisable when representing Glasgow.

This brief exploration of *Lanark*'s position in the Glaswegian literary tradition introduces several concerns equally important in considering its 'postmodernism'; the notions of epochal change, of innovation and continuity between periods, of expanding formal resources, of representing the experience of a given moment and through all these the ramifications of Thaw's complaint, shall all be reconsidered in this context as this chapter proceeds. Indeed, in several ways *Lanark*'s postmodernism is itself a factor behind the novel's position as inaugurator of a new era. For all that Gifford's evaluation of *Lanark*'s achievement rests on its place in the Scottish literary tradition, he further suggests that 'this – though true – denies the novel its other singular achievement and significance…that it singularly and effortlessly manages to find equal footing…with the best of great surrealist and dystopian fiction throughout the world'(Gifford, 1983, 229).[14]

The significance of *Lanark*'s achievement in an international context lies, in one respect, in its implied transcendence of any parochialism associated with the national tradition. More meaningfully, it reflects the effective circumvention of this parochialism through making alternative traditions available to Scottish literature, where, Brian McCabe realized, '*Lanark*'s importance consists in the fact that it has opened a very large door in the windowless little room of Scottish fiction, a door we did not know to be there' (McCabe, 1981, 12). Scotland's ignorance of the world beyond is particularly relevant to *Lanark*'s postmodernism. As discussed in the previous chapter, the stylistic innovations Gray shares with postmodernism have seen him repeatedly situated as its

local manifestation. Yet, as Randall Stevenson has observed, for all its seeming ubiquity elsewhere, 'in criticism and literary history recently produced within Scotland, "postmodernism" is a term conspicuous by its absence, or the scarcity of its use' (Randall Stevenson, 2004, 209). While this passing over of the door marked postmodernism is here seen in criticism, it suggests for Scottish fiction a situation which is either comparable or, to Scottish eyes, unrecognizable. In either case, the identification of postmodernist traits within Gray's fiction represents a fundamental expansion of both Scottish literature and its critical apparatus; as Stevenson has written elsewhere,

> [p]ostmodernism has much to offer Scotland, and *vice versa*. In discovering this potential, Gray has probably done more than any other recent novelist to suggest opportunities for the future development of Scottish literature. (Randall Stevenson, 1991, 61)

The liberating effect of postmodernism's entry onto the Scottish scene is compounded by the extent to which it is not only innovative in terms of its recent arrival, but, in analyses such as Frow's, by its very definition. Presuming innovation to be postmodernism's central constitutive trait is however problematized by the variety of accounts in which the modern and postmodern are set in relationships other than the concurrently periodic or discretely antithetical. Areas of linkage and continuity between modernism and postmodernism have been repeatedly sketched, which, while resistant to homogenization, might be grouped into three very broad categories: continuity seen in techniques and concerns, continuity of the situation to which the two respond, and in terms of the attitude expressed.

Offering a definition of postmodernism and its predecessor in which the two are maintained as separate categories, McHale's own account may appear superficially compatible with the apocalyptic myths he describes, committed to a chronological relationship between the two, where 'postmodernism is the posterity of modernism' (McHale, 1987, 5). Stressing the need to recognize 'the element of logical and historical *consequence*' (McHale, 1987, 5) in the relationship between modernism and postmodernism, McHale's suggestion that 'postmodernism follows *from* modernism, in some sense, more than it follows *after* modernism'(McHale, 1987, 5) is one shared with those theorists for whom this element of consequence is read as an antithetical reaction. Where McHale's account differs from the ur-myth of disjuncture is in its emphasis not merely on consequence, but on continuity. Not only does McHale's model reserve space for the survival of modernist traits, it suggests this as a key aspect of his definition of postmodernism, staging their return in intensified or transfigured forms. This evolutionary process encompasses a variety of techniques, including the ontologically unstable zones of postmodernism which he tentatively traces to a literalization of modernism's monadic relativism (McHale, 1987, 79). It also extends to the movements' respective dominants, as '[i]ntractable epistemological uncertainty becomes at a certain point ontological plurality or instability: push epistemological questions far enough and they "tip over" into ontological questions' (McHale, 1987, 11). The conclusion offered by Stevenson that 'modernist initiatives distinctly survived and went on to shape a whole new phase of the fiction that followed' (Randall Stevenson, 1999, 203) shows how this model of continuity is compatible with the opposition necessary to ground postmodernism's identity. Realizing the modernist legacy as a factor 'shaping' its

successor, Stevenson's terminology leaves room to characterize this process as one of both positive precedent and antithetical reaction.

Fundamental to the validity of any 'evolutionary' model of postmodernism is the assumption of an underlying mechanism responsible for prompting modernism's revision to a sufficient degree, and in a recognizably similar way, to justify its recognition as a separate 'species'. This biological metaphor is untenable for many obvious reasons, yet the notion that development is predicated towards meeting the demands of changing conditions does suggest itself as a means of couching a response to postmodernism's evolution, even where this changing situation displays the same underlying tendencies. When Stevenson asks to what degree the new situations of postmodernity are 'simply intensifications of the old; how far postmodernist texts reflect what are only more complex, threatening versions of stresses well established by the opening of the twentieth century'(Randall Stevenson, 1999, 213), it is primarily with capitalist modernization in mind. Similarly, Harvey's conclusion that 'there is much more continuity than difference between the broad history of modernism and the movement called postmodernism' (Harvey, 1989, 116) is based not only on parallels between their respective artefacts, but in their shared genesis in response to processes which, if they can be located in opposing forms of socio-economic organisation, nevertheless express the same logic. Here, postmodernism is reduced to 'a particular kind of crisis within [modernism]'(Harvey, 1989, 116), specific to its period, but inseparable from the development of which both are part. Similarly, postmodern economic organization, while a historic innovation, co-exists with modernist forms.

For Jameson, too, a degree of continuity is assumed on the socio-economic level through the installation of modernity and postmodernity as moments within a single development. Here, '[p]ostmodernism is not the cultural dominant of a wholly new social order…but only the reflex and concomitant of yet another systematic modification of capitalism itself' (Jameson, 1991, xii). Any modification involved is again presented as the elaboration of tendencies already embryonically present, where modernism is characterized as 'the experience and the result of *incomplete* modernization', in contrast to a postmodernism which 'make[s] its appearance wherever the modernization process no longer has archaic features and obstacles to overcome and has triumphantly implanted its own autonomous logic'(Jameson, 1991, 366). With the appearance of this final triumph, however, one contrast is established with Harvey's account, which neither suggests nor requires this monological reduction of the postmodern to capitalism. The source of this demand upon Jameson is, in its broadest terms, his commitment to the notion that there exist differences between these stages which install a fundamental distinction between their cultural artefacts. In brief, while there persists for Jameson a continuity between the two on an economic level, their characterization in terms of attitude is one of disjuncture. Here Jameson joins with many in reading modernism as dominated by modernization, 'a reaction', as Harvey has summarized, 'to the new conditions of production …circulation…and consumption'(Harvey, 1989, 23). This domination is, however, thematic, demanding nothing more than a reaction to these conditions. From the 'Modernolatry' (Nicholls, 1995, 125) of Italian futurism, celebrating change 'to make the subject a transparent vehicle of capitalist modernity'(Nicholls, 1995, 98-99), to the antithetical stance of Anglo-American High

Modernism, the range of attitudes shown within modernism was diverse. For Jameson, however, it is the latter strand which represents the archetypal modernist attitude, resistance to the market-place standing as the movement's 'most fundamental feature'(Jameson, 1991, 304). With the expanding inter-penetration of the aesthetic sphere and the class of commodities serving an equally definitive role in his account of postmodernism, this transformation is less a 'postmodernist breakthrough' than modernism's breakdown. Replacing 'the vocation *not* to be a commodity' (Jameson, 1992, 16) with an eager 'consumption of sheer commodification as a process' (Jameson, 1991, x), turning a critique of capitalism – or 'Utopian compensation' (Jameson, 1996, 42) for its effects – into its celebration, postmodernism shares in modernism's thematic domination by capitalism, but is rendered disjunct through its domination in a new sense.

The need to support this contention commits Jameson to a monological postmodernism wholly other than its predecessor, a commitment often regarded as denying postmodernism's actuality. Zurbrugg suggests the inadequacy of Jameson's theories in recognizing the nature of postmodernist artefacts;

> Jameson is blinded by the light of his theoretical coordinates. Having subscribed for so long to the myth that postmodernist culture is necessarily provisional, anonymous and submonumental, Jameson appears bewildered when art resists such categories. (Zurbrugg, 1993, 4. See also Callinicos, 1999, 132)

A more charitable response would recognize the extent to which Jameson is aware of his model's limitations. For all that he repeatedly asserts the unavailability of modernist values, Jameson does raise a possibility which leaves room for their continuation. This move, in fact, translates the characterization of the two as

representative of different stages in a single process of capitalist development from indicator of their continuity to the saving grace of postmodernity's uniqueness. Projecting postmodernism's monological triumph into the future, Jameson effectively extends the 'incomplete' moment of modernism to incorporate the present. Seemingly anachronistic survivals of modernist values now betoken 'the incompleteness of the postmodern process, the survival within it of remnants of the past, which have not yet, as in some unimaginable fully realised postmodernism, been dissolved without a trace'(Jameson, 1992(b), 229).

It should already be clear that Gray, avowed socialist and 'old-fashioned modernist' (McAvoy, 1998, 7), might prove an interesting subject for exploring these issues. Indeed, what consideration Jameson does afford to postmodernism's political potential displays notable parallels with the strategies employed in *Lanark*. In light of this, it is unsurprising that Gavin Miller precedes his conclusion that 'Gray is not postmodern in any accepted sense' (Miller, 2005, 125) with the observation that 'perhaps the strand of postmodern thought closest to Gray's is the Marxist analysis of Fredric Jameson' (Miller, 2005, 118). Unfortunately, Miller's argument concerning the ultimate inapplicability of Jamesonian postmodernism suffers from a restricted account of what this might entail.[15] In line with his own concern with temporality, Miller represents Jameson's postmodernism in terms of his notion of 'schizoid' time. This, the suggestion that the postmodern subject experiences time as 'a series of pure and unrelated presents' (Jameson, 1991, 27), is indeed a key aspect of Jameson's postmodernism. Similarly, *Lanark*'s temporalities have proved a fruitful subject for several commentators.[16] Further, certain of the novel's facets – most notably the central

disjuncture between Thaw and Lanark – are immediately suggestive of Jameson's schizoid temporality. Yet for all this, the temporal modes of postmodernism are not the only context – nor even the only postmodern context – which such features recall, and it is through these alternative approaches that a more productive attempt at relating *Lanark* to Jameson's postmodernism may be established.

Near the end of *Lanark*, its protagonist looks back on 'a muddle of memories without sequence, like a confused pile of old photographs' (*L* 517), prompting him to construct a chronologically-adjusted summary. Retrospectively reassembling his story from its printed sequence – books 3,1,2,4 – to that in which it occurred –1,2,3,4 – Lanark fulfils Nastler's wish that the novel 'be read in one order but eventually thought of in another' (*L* 483). In doing this, however, he does more than re-order memories, for the biography of Thaw which comprises the first two books has by the beginning of book three been forgotten by a protagonist who vaguely remembers 'a short word beginning with *Th*' (*L* 20). In this respect the novel's sequence may represent a deviation from his story as it occurred but not as Lanark experiences it, the placement of the Thaw narrative matching the point at which he hears the oracle narrate it. To Workman, the novel's in-house critic, the presupposition that the two tales belong as one is unjustified, 'the plots of the Thaw and Lanark sections… [being] independent of each other and cemented by typographical contrivances rather than formal necessity' (*L* 493). Gray's spokespersons are often unreliable, and Workman is no exception. Thus to Murray and Tait this footnote represents a characteristically 'Gray area' (Murray and Tait, 1984,221) where '[i]t is both a joke and not a joke that the Thaw and Lanark sections of this novel do and do not interrelate' (Murray and Tait, 1984, 221). Given the formal necessity

implied by one such contrivance – the novel's subtitle as 'A Life In Four Books' – the ambiguity engendered here partly revolves on the question of whether Lanark/Thaw represents one or two beings, an ambiguity which Gray does little to resolve. Commenting in one interview that '*Lanark* has two heroes, Lanark and Thaw' (Anderson and Norquay, 1983, 8), Gray would later claim that although 'the young manhood of Lanark [does not] follow smoothly from the adolescence of Thaw' (Axelrod, 1995, 110), nevertheless 'the parts…amount to one life'(Axelrod, 1995, 109). What is required of Lanark in re-telling 'his' life is thus not only the recuperation of one narrative from two chronologically disjunct accounts, but the integration of a fragmented subjectivity.

Considered in these terms a case could be made for *Lanark* as exemplar of Jameson's schizoid time; the fragmentation of Thaw/Lanark is exactly this, a matter of sequential times being 'present' but unrelatable. The manner of establishing this estrangement does however suggest further contexts for interrogation. Considered within themselves, the two characters are not irreconcilable; it is even simple to hypothesise a logical relationship between Thaw's – epistemologically unreliable – drowning and Lanark's arrival, pockets full of seashells, in an unrecognisable city. Yet a failure to recognize Unthank is ultimately responsible for separating the two, a failure not on Lanark's part, but on the reader's. As Gifford notes, '[e]veryone wonders where Unthank is, and what it is' (Gifford, 1987, 111), and the various attempts by *Lanark*'s readership to unify the two narratives amount to attempts to fix the relationship between the novel's spaces. The irreconcilability of Thaw and Lanark is at heart the irreconcilability of the world in which each lives; Thaw's Glasgow is our own, Unthank

is not. The potential solutions for this problem are diverse. One widespread

interpretation reads Thaw's suicide as a hallucinatory or metaphorical stage in his

descent into mental illness, where the Lanark narrative stands as a wholly-imagined

alternative to – or grotesque transformation of – his continuing experience in the 'real'

world. Commending this strand of interpretation as enabling us to 'read the events of

Book Three and integrate them easily into the "realism" of Books One and Two'

(Gifford, 1987, 111), Gifford contends that this is the 'only consistent way to read the

novel' (Gifford, 1987, 111). There are, however, equally consistent alternatives which

Gifford seemingly rejects. A reading where Glasgow, not Unthank, represents a flight of

fantasy is clearly inconsistent with reality. Within the novel, however, various factors

support such a hypothesis, from Thaw's concern over Glasgow's depiction to Lanark's

anxieties over narratorial reliability. Indeed, given the alternative account heard by Rima

– for whom Lanark 'fell asleep and obviously dreamed something else' (*L* 357) – it is

tempting to take the Thaw narrative as his own hallucination. In either of these strategies

the novel's consistency results from establishing an inter-spatial hierarchy, where by

installing one as primary reality the remainder is reduced to a non-competing sub-world.

Equally consistent – if strangely unconsidered – would be a reading of the two held in a

parallel relationship based around Thaw's suicide, both worlds co-existent but divided

by the ontological barrier of death.[17] Having settled upon his own reading as the only

consistent method of resolution, Gifford does signal towards such alternatives in

proposing that 'I'm not sure it's the only reading Gray intended' (Gifford, 1987, 111).

Here Gifford's admission of uncertainty suggests the importance which Gray's strategy

reserves for this hesitation between models. Indeed, what hope is there for *Lanark*'s

readership when even its author falls short at relating Unthank and Glasgow; asked to

explain the novel's central transition he has conceded 'I cannae make up ma mind about

that!' (Anderson and Norquay, 1983, 8).

With spatialization of temporal categories recurring both in Jameson's thought

and in *Lanark*, it would again be possible to read this hesitancy as a form of temporal

breakdown, with separate worlds representative of separate(d) times. A more immediate

parallel, however, would be with McHale's concept of a 'Zone' in which ontological

rules are juxtaposed. Superficial evidence for such a comparison might be drawn from

the fact that many of the features responsible for establishing Unthank's incompatibility

with Glasgow recall Science-Fiction, 'the ontological genre *par excellence*' (McHale,

1987, 16). Consideration of exactly why McHale regards science-fiction as

postmodernism's sister-genre does however undermine the ease by which the impact of

these tropes might be so determined. 'Science fiction,' he explains,

> by staging "close encounters" between different worlds, placing them in
> confrontation, foregrounds their respective structures and the disparities between
> them. It thus obeys the same underlying principles of ontological poetics as
> postmodernist fiction. (McHale, 1987, 60)

This is certainly true of the Lanark narrative, where close encounters between such sub-

worlds as Unthank and the Inter-Calendrical Zone reflect the novel's central

juxtaposition. The same can be said of the novel as a whole if it is taken to describe a

single protagonist passing between dimensions. Given both the explicit separation of the

two narratives and the variety of competing forms in which they might be re-integrated,

Lanark cannot however be so unproblematically identified with the genre. This Gray

Area is again foregrounded by an authorial spokesperson, here Nastler, who vehemently

bellows '*I am not writing science fiction!*' (*L* 497-8). The evidence provided for this

denial – that 'Science-fiction stories have no real people in them, and all my characters

are real, real, real people!' (*L* 498) – operates within multiple contexts simultaneously,

including the novel's meditation on representation. One aspect of its function, however,

is to question the extent to which Nastler's characters, and their worlds, are indeed

'real'. Offered in the context of yet another ontological breach, between the worlds of

Gray and Lanark, the 'realities' in question clearly cannot be of the same order. Instead,

reality in this sense is more properly the effect of 'realist' generic codes. While there are

aspects of the Thaw narrative which suggest it as something other than

unproblematically realist, its generic affiliations clearly stand in contrast to the Lanark

narrative. The novel's ontological instability therefore parallels, and is engendered by,

an equivalent generic instability. *Lanark* both does and does not belong to

postmodernism's sister genre; and where postmodern genre is characterized 'by its

appropriation of other genres…[by] a both/and situation rather than one of either/or'

(Perloff, 1989, 8), it is for this, perhaps, that it is postmodern.

This appearance of generic disjuncture represents a crucial moment in *Lanark*'s

inception. While, as Charlton explains, composition began with the ur-Thaw – where

'*Lanark* evolved from a semi-autobiographical novel dating back to 1951' (Charlton,

1988(a), 7) – this was soon combined with a '"Kafka-esque" fantasy novel dating from

the following year' (Charlton, 1988(a), 7) in a union which became 'the common thread

which ties together all subsequent conceptions of the novel' (Charlton, 1991, 13). Gray's

early arrival at this hybridity highlights again the importance of ambiguity to *Lanark*. It

also signals a further aspect of *Lanark*'s postmodernist identity, for the ontological

repercussions of generic hybridity are not the sole context in which this trait has been considered. The relevance of science-fiction's incorporation within this blend, while consolidated by McHale's account, predates his model of the postmodern. Indeed, both traits held a key position in one of the earliest attempts to describe literary postmodernism, Fiedler's *Cross the Border – Close The Gap*. While mention of border-crossings may evoke *Lanark*'s ontological boundaries, Fiedler's concern lies with the border between high and popular culture. Here transgression is realized in terms of generic heterogeneity only to the extent that such hybrids draw upon 'the genres most associated with exploitation by the mass media…the Western, Science Fiction, and Pornography' (Fiedler, 1992, 37). Announced in the midst of his invocation of a variety of high-cultural precursors, this context might explain some of the vehemence in Nastler's denial. Nor is he alone among the novel's authors in his awareness of cultural stratification. Before writing the memoir comprising chapter three, Lanark identifies two classes of writing, '[o]ne…a sort of written cinema, with plenty of action and hardly any thought. The other…about clever unhappy people, often authors themselves, who thought a lot but didn't do very much' (*L* 15). Lanark is clear as to which might garner more respect: 'a good author was more likely to write the second kind of book' (*L* 15).

Despite the invitation to interpret both these characters as autobiographical, neither Nastler nor Lanark are Gray himself, nor is the novel entirely the 'second kind of book'. In this respect, these comments by authorial spokespersons stand as the recognition of a border which Gray is aware of but will not be limited by, and Fiedler's observations suggest possible motivations for straddling this divide. Wresting the power to ascribe value out of the hands of a potentially elitist establishment, the democratic

urge of Fiedler's postmodernism as regards 'the gap between … professional and amateur in the realm of art' (Fiedler, 1992, 43) recalls Gray's fear of critical appropriation. Perhaps the most interesting area of comparison, however, lies in the parallel which Fiedler draws with borders outwith the literary, dubbing the high/mass culture gap an 'invidious distinction proper only to a class-structured community' (Fiedler, 1992, 43). While Williamson's appraisal of *Lanark* rejects postmodernism entirely, some of his own observations suggest the relevance this bears. Here the liberating force he finds in *Lanark* relates directly to its articulating 'the concerns, fears and aspirations of ordinary folk in Scotland' (Williamson, 2002, 171). In this respect, the incorporation of popular genres represents both an expansion of the resources available for this project and a self-conscious situation within this working-class constituency. As regards science-fiction this possibility is implicit in Williamson's account of discovering *Lanark*, where having read '[n]othing but sci-fi for years' (Redhead, 2000(c), 157), the novel's apparent genre prompts his discovery, first of *Lanark*, and through its index, of 'Camus, Sartre, Dostoevsky and loads of others' (Redhead, 2000(c), 157). Equally, Williamson contends that the novel reinscribes a modified form of Fiedler's border within itself, its priorities now reversed. Drawing a link between the running heads of *Lanark*'s prologue with those of the 'Oor Willie' comic strip in the *Sunday Post*, Williamson suggests that this particular borrowing asserts the novel's affinities with popular culture, functioning as a coded communication designed to bypass academia, where 'there are all these academics in universities, poring over the nuances of *Lanark*, maybe wondering why these jaunty wee rhymes are there… while childhood readers of a certain four pages of a certain Scottish Sunday newspaper wink at each other behind the

academics' backs' (Williamson, 2002, 176).[18] Like Fiedler's postmodernism, then, Williamson's account of *Lanark* endows its generic hybridity with a democratic, even revolutionary, potential, removing any stigma from popular culture through opening up the resources of popular genres to the novel, but not, crucially, to the academic establishment. From another standpoint, however, not only these connotations but the very identity which fosters them becomes illusory; for some, such as Jameson, 'the "popular" as such no longer exists' (Jameson, 1992(c), 15).

The reasoning behind Jameson's rejection of any democratic potential implicit in the weakening of high art/mass culture boundaries returns the focus of discussion to his contention that postmodernism is unable to express modernist values. In this interpretation, popular culture was a pre-capitalist phenomenon, the expression of a communal identity lost in the rationalization of life according to the commodity form. Jameson's contention that postmodernism represents a 'cultural mutation, in which what used to be stigmatised as mass or commercial culture is now received into the precincts of a new and enlarged cultural realm' (Jameson, 1998(b), 31-2), while it bears a basic similarity to Fiedler's claims, thus affords this change very different repercussions. Here, the assumed distinction damns 'mass culture' not as the culture of the masses, but of the system which dominates them. The resistance to the commodity form upon which Jameson's modernism centres thus lends cultural stratification its own radical potential. Indeed, an assertion of non-identity with popular culture here becomes modernism's defining feature, where, as Andreas Huyssen explains, '[m]odernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: An increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture' (Huyssen, 1988, vii). Likewise, the

triumph of an engulfing mass-culture defines Jameson's postmodernism. The final interpretation of *Lanark*'s generic hybridity here is ultimately its lack of consequence; equally subject to the logic of capitalist postmodernity, the disparate forms which it incorporates have been rendered blankly equivalent commodities.

Huyssen's more optimistic analysis of cultural de-stratification highlights two potentially problematic areas in Jameson's thought. With his central assertion that '[t]he boundaries between high art and mass culture have become increasingly blurred, and we should begin to see that process as one of opportunity rather than lamenting loss of quality and failure of nerve' (Huyssen, 1988, ix), Huyssen makes clear his broad agreement with Fiedler. At the same time, concern with how 'we should begin to see', highlights the extent to which he focuses not upon postmodern art, but on its reception. In this respect the Great Divide is not only a feature of literary modernism, but a construct haunting cultural theory. Here Adorno's writings on the culture industry replicate the modernist process of exclusion for broadly similar reasons. In his concern to save art's autonomy, however, Adorno also bequeathed the theoretical parameters which allow Jameson to announce its loss. Envisioning mass culture as the result of a process which has '"reunified" economy and culture by subsuming the cultural under the economic, by reorganizing the body of cultural meanings and symbolic signification to fit the logic of the commodity' (Huyssen, 1988, 21), the debt borne by Jameson's postmodernity to the Adornean culture industry is clear. As part of this heritage, however, Jameson also receives certain limiting assumptions. Disentangling the two broad forms implied for modernism's resistance to commodification, it is easy to see how changes in the processes of production and distribution might necessarily render

postmodern artefacts subject to the logic of the commodity form through being

themselves situated as commodities. At the same time, the Adornean model presumes an

inability to inscribe resistance within mass cultural artefacts. Here the growth of the

culture industry is a process in which culture is 'standardized, organized and

administered for the sole purpose of serving as an instrument of social control'

(Huyssen, 1988, 21), a notion replicated in Jameson's postmodernity. Even if some

mechanism for this wholesale reduction of available signification were established, there

is already a paradox; if art has become only blank commodity, how then might it also

operate as a tool of ideological reproduction. Concerns over this aspect of Adornean

thought carry over into Huyssen's more general reservations. Dubbing the Culture

Industry model 'sterile'(Huyssen, 1988, ix), Huyssen suggests that

> [p]olitically, adherence today to the classical culture industry thesis can only lead
> to resignation or moralizing about universal manipulation or
> domination….Theoretically, adherence to Adorno's aesthetics may blind us to
> the ways in which contemporary art…represents a new conjuncture which can no
> longer be grasped in Adornean or other modernist categories. (Huyssen, 1988,
> 19)

Again, Jameson may not be as blind as suggested. His postmodern dominant is,

he contends, 'not meant to be monolithic' (Stephanson, 1989, 11); in line with the image

of contemporary postmodernism as potentially 'incomplete', he has at times described

postmodernist artefacts clinging to the vestiges of uncommodified space 'enclaves of,

resistance, all kinds of things not integrated into the global model but necessarily

defined against it' (Stephanson, 1989, 11). Yet such enclaves of resistance remain for

Jameson markers of an undefined potentiality. Indeed, the whole issue of their

possibility is left pointedly unresolved:

 We have seen that there is a way in which postmodernism replicates or
reproduces – reinforces – the logic of consumer capitalism; the more significant
question is whether there is also a way in which it resists that logic. But that is a
question we must leave open. (Jameson, 1988(b), 29)

Some indication of how this politically resistant postmodernism may operate can

be drawn from the postmodernism Jameson more readily accepts, for, at least as it is

summarized by McHale, the aesthetic reproduction of capitalism's logic already contains

potential for resistance, where

[p]ostmodernist artworks and art-forms, in Jameson's view, are for the most part
merely *symptomatic* reflections or expressions, in the cultural realm, of late
capitalist social and economic relations... But there are certain postmodernist
works and tendencies which undertake to *reflect on* and not merely passively
reflect, late capitalism, seeking to transcend the merely symptomatic and become
diagnostic. (McHale, 1992(a), 177)

Here postmodernism represents a new mimeticism, where '[t]he distorted and

unreflexive attempts of newer cultural production to explore and to express this new

space must then also… be considered as so many approaches to the representation of (a

new) reality' (Jameson, 1991, 49). Such mimeticism may, Jameson suggests, turn over

into direct resistance, although it might be hard to reconcile this possibility of

'undermining the image by way of the image itself, and planning the implosion of the

logic of the simulacrum by dint of ever greater doses of simulacra,' (Jameson, 1991,

409) with his insistence on parody's unavailability. More generally, such resistance is

posited at one remove in direct political action, where such action is predicated upon an

understanding of what is being resisted. As a result the aesthetic reflection of

postmodernity represents 'an integral part of any socialist political project' (Jameson,

1988(a), 353). Indeed, for Jameson the situation of postmodernity is one which

particularly necessitates – even as it denies – the understanding required for resistance, and places a new emphasis on the role of the aesthetic in this process.

The impossible task Jameson imagines for political postmodernism might best be approached through his account of modernism's equivalent situation. Set in the three-stage model he borrows from Mandel, the problems of representation faced by modernism were those of imperial capitalism, where the individual's experience is 'limited to a tiny corner of the social world…[b]ut the truth of that experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place' (Jameson, 1988(a), 349). The various strategies adopted in response thus stand as 'symptoms and distorted expressions of the penetration even of middle-class lived experience by this strange new relativity of the colonial network' (Jameson, 1988(a), 350). Foremost among these is the rise of monadic relativism, where 'what we begin to see is the sense that each consciousness is a closed world, so that a representation of the social totality must now take the (impossible) form of a coexistence of those sealed subjective worlds and their peculiar interaction' (Jameson, 1988(a), 350). In postmodernity, 'a world capitalist system fundamentally distinct from the older imperialism' (Jameson, 1991, xix), the task of negotiating between the sites comprising totality is at once more insistent and less imaginable. With the expansion of capitalism, the spaces which must be related multiply extensively, including – through the growth of communication networks – hitherto unknown forms of 'space'. The relationships between spaces are similarly multiplied, as capitalist development extends beyond the empires which previously provided its recognizable centres. Diffuse and global, comprising the continuous interconnection of the heterogeneous, the system of postmodernity represents for Jameson 'a new and

historically original dilemma, one that involves our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities' (Jameson, 1988(a), 351).

The indescribably complex nature of postmodern organization is, Jameson suggests, 'crippling to political experience' (Jameson, 1988(a), 353). It is equally crippling to attempts at representing this situation. It is for this reason that, while he repeatedly confronts the need for this 'class consciousness of a new and hitherto undreamed of kind' (Jameson, 1998(a), 49), the conclusion Jameson ultimately offers is that this represents 'a subject about which I know nothing whatsoever, except for the fact that it does not exist' (Jameson, 1988(a), 347). Here Jameson sells himself short for rhetorical effect; while the final form of such a process may be unimaginable, Jameson has made several observations as to what it may involve. The most basic of these is the identification of its task, described as 'cognitive mapping'. As employed by geographer Kevin Lynch, this denotes the process by which the urban subject constructs an image of their city in order to negotiate between their own experience and the space in which it occurs. For Jameson, this process represents 'the dialectic between the here and now of immediate perception and the imaginative or imaginary sense of the city as an absent totality' (Jameson, 1988(a), 353), and, by analogy, a similar relationship between the individual subject and the absent totality of postmodernity. In addition, Jameson has also identified the discourse in which this process must be achieved – the aesthetic – and a formal problem attendant upon this, whereby the realities of capitalism and the individual's experience seem to demand separate modes of discourse. As Jameson describes it

we have this split between ideology in the Althusserian sense…and the discourse of science, which I understand to be a discourse (which is ultimately impossible) without a subject. In this ideal discourse, like a mathematical equation, you model the real independent of its relation to individual subjects, including your own. Now I think you can teach people how this or that view of the world is to be thought or conceptualized, but the real problem is that it is increasingly hard for people to put that together with their own experience as individual psychological subjects, in daily life…[a]esthetics is something that addresses individual experience rather than something that conceptualizes the real in a more abstract way. (Jameson, 1988(a), 358)

There are several areas of congruence between Jameson's imagined project and that of *Lanark*, the most recognizable being their shared evocation of Lynchian cognitive mapping. For its inhabitants, Glasgow's full reality lies in obscurity, replaced by an assemblage of loci where they intersect with this totality. Thaw's remedy for this situation is imaginative representation. Further, it is a remedy which, as with Jameson, is specifically associated with the aesthetic. Complaining that 'Glasgow never got into the history books, except as a statistic' (*L* 244), Thaw implies that there is a role for such abstracted representations, as describing the economic operations which 'let us exist' (*L* 244). Beyond this grounding, however, the responsibility of representing the city belongs, he suggests, to the artist rather than the statistician.

In drawing attention to those economic processes which situate Glasgow within a wider capitalist system, Thaw already anticipates the extent to which localized cognitive mapping might blur on this systemic level into a more properly global function. Nastler makes this explicit. Discussing the novel's genesis, Nastler describes its initial conception as the 'epic…[of] the Scottish cooperative wholesale Republic, one of the many small peaceful socialist republics which would emerge (I thought) when all the big empires and corporations crumbled' (*L* 492-3). Here economic organisation is placed at

the centre of the novel's representative function. Further, as 'one of the many' such formations it is an organisation whose globalized repetition leaves any local account equally representative of its world system. More than any comments he makes as to his subject, however, it is Nastler's basic announcement of epic intent which establishes the novel as a parallel to Thaw's mapping, for the term 'epic' operates in Gray's writing as an indicator of just this function. The unnamed 'She' of 'The Loss of the Golden Silence', like Nastler a student of Tillyard, suggests something of the similarity between the epic form and Thaw's desired representations of Glasgow when she describes how 'without an Epic map of the universe people can't feel at home in it'(Gray, NLS Acc. 9247/17(c), 1973, 19). To the extent that this feeling of home implies reconciliation, the term's applicability to *Lanark* may be questionable, chiming with Charlton's suggestion that any 'epic elements are largely confined to the hero's high aspirations…and to the ironical discussion of possible epic endings in the Epilogue' (Charlton, 1988(a), 13). Certainly, a comparison between *Lanark* and Tillyard's account of the epic reveals several contrasts, most notably the injunction that an epic 'must have faith in the system of beliefs or way of life it bears witness to' (Tillyard, 1966, 13). Indeed, the one trait described by Tillyard which seems to inform *Lanark* is that it 'communicate[s] the feeling of what it was like to be alive at the time' (Tillyard, 1966, 12). Here Gray's modification of the epic reduces the term's significance to its representative function, while carrying across certain connotations of the form which bear special relevance for its interpretation as analogous to cognitive mapping. The first of these is the comprehensiveness of its subject; as 'she' defines it, '[a]n Epic is a work which gives a complete map of the Universe as far as a civilisation is able to understand it' (Gray, NLS

Acc. 9247/17(c), 1973, 19). Insofar as McAlpin's apprehension of Glasgow is suggested as comparable with the effect of Thaw's localized mapping – and hence with the broader epic project – this comprehensiveness is given thematic presence via *Lanark*'s treatment of perspective. It is for this reason that Bernstein's reading of *Lanark* reserves a privileged place for the hill on which McAlpin stands, urging that '[i]t is through the novel's numerous images of ascent that it can most comprehensively be understood' (Bernstein, 1999, 38). Here the importance of such eminences lies in the potential they offer for achieving a transcendent viewpoint on otherwise obscure totalities, where, '[t]he triangulation that would allow for a complete mental experience of Glasgow is unavailable at street level' (Bernstein, 1999, 49).[19] Bernstein's choice of terminology, drawn from the marker atop Ben Rua, is particularly revealing in that it stresses the relational aspect of the mapping process; what is prized here is not the replacement of one perspective with another but the ability to describe the relationships between perspectives. Insofar as the view from the hill enables a triangulation between the perspectives embedded within it, *Lanark*'s thematic treatment of perspective reveals its indebtness to monadic relativism. Certainly, there is in this respect a continued place for the epistemological concerns of modernism, most notably in the uncertainty surrounding Thaw's breakdown; having reassured Lanark that he 'can promise to be accurate' (*L* 116), the oracle ultimately concedes that he is 'only able to tell the story as [Thaw] saw it'(*L* 350). While his is the only perspective which presents such inescapable hermeneutic difficulties, *Lanark* repeatedly reasserts the fact that Thaw is not alone in having his 'own way of seeing things' (*L* 207). Indeed, even crustaceans are afforded subjectivity, a particularly revealing episode in that it situates the issue of subjectivity

within the context of triangulating juxtaposition. Reprimanded by his tutor for drawing 'a simple, delicate, rather lovely' (*L* 229) shell with hard lines, Thaw explains that this represents the perspective of its inhabitant, for whom it was 'a moving fortress' (*L* 229). The reality of the shell cannot be found in either the perspective of tutor or inhabitant, but in a triangulation between the two. Given that Lanark himself is at least metaphorically identified as crustacean this drawing suggests itself as an internal commentary on the novel. A similar status can be given to a later painting of Monkland Canal, which comes closer still to emblematically representing *Lanark*'s epic strategy. Here, the juxtaposition of subjective positions is incorporated within the painting itself, where Thaw's 'favourite views had nearly all been combined into one' (*L* 279). In adopting a transcendent view in which subjective positions are combined, however, Thaw realizes that he is at risk of losing the specificity of each subjectivity, for '[i]n that huge multitude only *types* were visible, and he suddenly wanted a life-size figure in the foreground…whose bewildered face looked straight out at the viewers, making them feel part of the multitude too' (*L* 280).

The triangulation which this life-size figure seems to demand is thus not – or not only – that which describes the relationship between individual perspectives, but between the individual subject and the transcendent viewpoint. It is this, in fact, which represents the primary usage of the term 'triangulation' in Bernstein's response to the novel, where, '[w]e need somehow to be simultaneously inside the tenement and up on the mountain top to come to a fully experienced perspective on history' (Bernstein, 1999, 37-8). Cairns Craig, adopting a similar position, directly relates this process to *Lanark*'s narrative disjuncture, describing how

> [t]he double perspective…from within the trudge of history and from a perspective that is outside of it, is the foundation of the generic doubling of the novel. Neither perspective will suffice by itself – only the dialectical interaction of the two. (Craig, 1991, 103-4)

Craig's approach to the Thaw/Lanark split is thus to trace the novel's heterogeneity to its representation of reality from different perspectives. Thaw's Glasgow is a metaphorical walk through the streets, Unthank an aerial view of the same city. Here triangulation is that process of interlinking the two narratives which Workman's note denies, with the source of both their narrative disjuncture and its circumvention relocated on a hermeneutic rather than diegetic level. In this respect, the vehemence with which Penny Smith denounces Gifford's attempts to resolve the split appears somewhat unexpected. Taking a metaphorical approach to the Lanark narrative, Smith contends that its reduction to a hallucinatory subworld 'confines Hell to that small area within Duncan Thaw's tormented psyche, whereas the whole point of the novel is that hell is vast and we are in it. Unthank is Glasgow is the industrial, post-war world' (Smith, 1995, 117).

The latter part of this summation is eminently compatible with Craig's reading. Her insistence on the Lanark's physicality, however, where the novel demands 'an exuberant suspension of disbelief. Duncan Thaw *is* reborn as Lanark. Lanark *does* find himself in the institute' (Smith, 1995, 117) is neither supported nor required by this approach. Where Lanark's world is, in effect, a supplementary interpretation on Thaw's, triangulation is conducted regardless of the transformational mechanism posited on the diegetic level. In place of Workman's dismissive suggestion of typographic contrivance, Craig finds the unification of *Lanark* in typological contrivance, a secularized exegesis

whereby Thaw and Lanark are 'hypotypes of one another…whose significance is unknowable until it is fulfilled and completed by another narrative' (Craig, 1999, 182).

Lanark's generic heterogeneity is again a feature borrowed from the epic. As Gray has remembered,

> [Tillyard] *spoke of writers who had imblended idioms…which in ages like ours (where the scientific spirit is strong) can only be yoked together by a sort of grotesquely arrogant force. It was* then *that I perceived that the two sorts of book I was planning to write…should be the same.* (Gray qtd. in Charlton, 1988(a),10)

It is also in terms of the epic that Gray suggests the relevance of this formal feature to the dual perspective strategy. As 'she' has described, the genres contained within the epic are each relevant to a specific field, where

> Most poetry describes the isolated human soul. Novels, dramas, histories describe men in society. Science describes the structure of the world and its place among the stars. But a true Epic shows all these together like themes in a great symphony. (Gray, NLS Acc. 9247/17(c), 19)

If *Lanark*'s central split is taken as an attempt to describe experience from both phenomenological and objective perspectives, these observations would suggest its generic heterogeneity as occasioned by the forms relevant to each. Further, the reappearance of 'science' within both, and particularly its association with describing the world's structure, suggests for the broader perspective a 'scientific' character which recalls again Jameson's formal division. This, and its associated problems, are again confronted in *Lanark*. Just as Thaw's art teacher explains how 'the laws of perspective…had to be learned before true art became possible' (*L* 151), so too does his education encompass the formal ramifications of perspective; here *'A point is that which has no dimensions'* (*L* 154). Punningly, the observation that this is 'the first axiom in the book' (*L* 154) refers as easily to the novel as to Thaw's textbook. In terms of its

centrality to *Lanark*, this point achieves its pre-eminence through a thematic strand which explains how '[o]nly maps and mathematics exist to be understood and we're solider than those' (*L* 97). It is also the first axiom in a chronological sense – if the novel is taken as beginning with its prologue – for the oracle's tale illustrates the dangers of scientific discourse. Disturbed by the solidity of his acquaintances – that '[c]ompared with his phone number our closest friend is shifty and treacherous…our idea of the man is only slightly like him' (*L* 108) – the oracle chooses to translate them into dimensionless points, to live 'in the world of numbers rather than the muddle of seeable, touchable things which used to be called reality' (*L* 109). Losing the details of reality, the oracle is ultimately left 'bodiless in a bodiless world' (*L* 111). Thus is scientific discourse revealed as inadequate for the representation of lived experience; indeed as Jameson suggests it is a discourse without a subject, for in the process the oracle becomes a 'nonentity' (*L* 116). Again, Thaw's painting serves to comment on its novel, the introduction of the life-size figure a counterbalance to the broader perspective's tendency to reduce individuals to 'types', just as the inclusion of Thaw's experience does the same with regard to the 'scientific' discourse of Lanark. From his reversed perspective on cognitive mapping, operating solely on the systemic/scientific level, the same thought occurs to the oracle; 'by describing your life', he tells Lanark, 'I will escape from the trap of my own' (*L* 116).

One problem in mapping the capabilities of separate discursive modes onto the central disjuncture of *Lanark* is that, as they are characterized above, the two sections do not immediately fall into this opposition. A realist, semi-autobiographical *bildungsroman*, the Thaw narrative certainly suggests itself as an aesthetic

representation of phenomenological experience. Its content bears this out, inscribing History only as its traces present themselves to Thaw. Thus, as the range of Thaw's experience expands, so too does his understanding of society's connections; '[h]e had not seen the connection between physical work, poverty and bad feeding before because he came from Riddrie' (*L* 245). Given the various limitations upon Thaw's perspective, however, understanding of events remains unavailable, their combination a simple matter of simultaneous perception, as when '[t]he Korean war began, the cost of living rose and Mrs. Thaw got a job as a shop assistant in the afternoons' (*L* 167). The Lanark narrative, however, for which the revelation of such systemic connections is reserved, appears at first glance to belong not to *scientific* but to *science-fictional* discourse. In this instance, the two are not dissimilar, as the 'science-fiction' parts of *Lanark* primarily operate as allegories, a mode which may be subsumed within what is here termed 'scientific' discourse on several grounds. Primarily, this identification rests on the distinction Jameson offers between aesthetic mapping and the discourse of the social sciences, between that which 'addresses individual experience rather than something that conceptualises the real in a more abstract way.' At once aesthetic and scientific, the Lanark narrative here shows an abstract conceptualization of reality already translated into its (allegorical) character's immediate experience. Indeed, it is with regard to representing the unrepresentable that Jameson heralds the growing importance of the mode within postmodernity, where '[a]llegory thereby fatally stages its historic reappearance in the postmodern era… and seems to offer the most satisfactory… solutions to these form-problems' (Jameson, 1992(a), 4).

A third area of congruence between the allegorical system of *Lanark* and more obviously scientific discourse lies in the extent to which its metaphors are adapted from theory. Here the most fully developed metaphor, the plagues of Unthank, gives an idea of Gray's strategy. These diseases appear as physical transformations objectively occurring on Unthank's diegetic level, whereby 'dragons' grow armour, 'softs' undergo deterioration and so on, physical occurrences which have generally been taken to represent psychological traits. In addition, these, and the further metaphors which comprise Gray's allegories, have been characterized as the literalization of already metaphorical language. The diversity of sources from which these metaphors have been seeded is however such that their initial context does not in itself necessitate any political dimension. Here, the 'diseases are embodiments of colloquial descriptions of personality,' (Donaldson and Lee, 1995, 101-2) a reading which can certainly draw immediate support from some of the names given to the diseases, notably 'leeches' and those 'going soft'. In a similar fashion, the recollection of a colloquialism contained in the rigor is made explicit by one sufferer who describes how 'the slightest sideways blow would have cracked me open. We do crack, you know, in the army' (*L* 54). Even where this non-systemic depiction of colloquial abstractions is not so explicit, the identification of Gray's metaphors as such is still tenable, as when Murray and Tait observe that dragonhide 'comes from having to develop a thick skin in Unthank' (Murray and Tait, 1984, 228).

The suggestion of a colloquial parallel to Dragonhide is particularly interesting because this, the most extensively realized disease, has perhaps the widest range of potential sources. This polysemy is in itself an important aspect of the cognitive

mapping process, for reasons to be considered below. For the moment, it is interesting to note the range of contexts which produce these alternatives. One, Gray's suggestion that 'Dragonhide is (I thought) an exaggeration of eczema I had when an infant and adolescent' (Vianu, 2004, Par.20) eschews entirely the notion that dragonhide derives from a pre-existent phrase. By re-presenting Thaw's eczema in this distorted manner, however, any potential metaphorical significance borne by dragonhide may be tentatively mapped back on to the realist account. Certainly, Gray's use of eczema in 'Job's Skin Game' shows how the disease may be charged with significance. The notion of dragonhide as metaphorical 'symptom' of an internal 'thick skin' thus creates a link which posits a similar cause for the more prosaic symptoms of the self-enclosed Thaw.

As an example of the process of parallel reading which the two narratives demand, this linkage already shows the Lanark section as providing a concretized representation of the abstract tendencies underlying Thaw's experience. This relationship is further borne out by the terms in which dragonhide is discussed. Describing the 'heat' which should properly flow from the body in 'acts of generosity and self-preservation,' (*L* 68) Ozenfant explains how a desire to hoard this heat directly prompts insulating armour. As with the rigorist, this description of a purely physical disease thus offers support to its interpretation in psychological terms; if the transmission of heat through such acts is taken to represent emotional involvement, this account can easily be read as a description of Thaw's mental state. Unlike the rigorist's comments, however, Ozenfant's description of dragonhide represents an attempt not merely to describe but to explain the condition, and in doing so explicates its metaphoric

significance not through reference to colloquial language but to a further metaphor couched in medical terms.

The extent to which the diseases of Unthank represent the literalization of medical discourse is not immediately clear. Certainly, one such source is offered by the novel's index, which claims that '[t]he dragonhide which infects the first six chapters is a Difplag [diffuse plaguirism] of the muscular constriction Reich calls "armouring"' (*L* 496). Here dragonhide comes closer to representing a direct plagiarism of Reich's model rather than its literalized modification due to the nature of his original theories; rejecting mind/body dualism, the self-equivalence of physical and mental states is already present in Reich's account. Some degree of 'literalization' is present here, to the extent that a physical construction of tensed muscles metaphorically termed 'armour' becomes external 'hard black skin' (*L* 21). Yet other seemingly metaphorical aspects of this model – most notably Ozenfant's economy of energy, echoing Reich's orgone – in fact repeat Reich's theories within a fictional context. A second factor in questioning the extent to which dragonhide is a repetition of Reich's theories, literalized or otherwise, is the possibility of yet further psychological sources for this model. Miller, whose original claim that 'it is necessary to rebut the suggestion' (Miller, 1999, 150) that dragonhide derives from Reich has subsequently been modified to questioning the extent to which it represents the sole source, has identified one alternative in the theories of R.D.Laing. Here, the literalization of Reichian 'armouring' is repeated with regard to Laing's 'petrification', while the general conditions of dragonhide – and the other diseases of Unthank – display parallels to his accounts of psychological conditions transformed into physical terms.

Gray's debt to these theorists marks an important step towards meeting the conditions required by cognitive mapping, visibly subsuming theoretical accounts within an aesthetic artefact. Primarily concerned as they are with individual psychology rather than shared reality, these borrowings do however fall short of matching cognitive mapping's focus. For this, we must turn to a similar literalization process which draws its tropes from accounts of economic systems. Indeed, insofar as these accounts are concerned not only with underlying economic conditions but their effects on the subjects imbedded within them, the polysemy of the disease metaphor provides a means for Gray to endow his explication of reality in psychological terms with economic significance. This elaboration of an allegorical model operating simultaneously in multiple contexts potentially undermines Munro's suggestion of a unity underlying Unthank's diseases, that '[p]roblems take different forms but they're all caused by the same error' (*L* 63). Within a given context, however, it is possible to hypothesize as to what this error may be. Considered as an account of economic processes, the obvious contender for this position is the capitalist transformation of temporality and the attendant reification of the subject.

Given *Lanark*'s position as a 'postmodernist' work by an avowed modernist, it is unsurprising that temporality plays an important part in the novel. If modernism can be characterized by a search, as Harvey has it, for 'new meanings for space and time' (Harvey, 1989, 216), postmodernism has been taken as offering these new*er* meanings, a distinction largely founded upon the temporal modes structuring the works themselves. Of more immediate concern, however, are the external factors posited as responsible for

these formal strategies, the theoretical explication of which is paralleled within *Lanark*'s metaphors.

One frequently cited impetus for modernist temporality casts this as a further response to modernization. By means of a series of technological and social changes culminating in the standardization of temporal schema according to the Greenwich Mean, this process saw the transformation of temporality from a subjective experience ordered by the cyclical specificities of nature and the Church to a linear progression of self-identical divisions marked by the tick of the clock. The motivation for this change was to render temporal experience subject to calculation, a strategic manoeuvre which aligns this temporality with the analytical aspect of the Enlightenment project by allowing 'those mutually informative measurements between one historical moment and another that support most forms of knowledge current in the West and that we customarily call "science"' (Ermarth, 1992, 20). While this scheme represented the re-organisation of temporality on an inter-subjective basis, the hypothetical vantage-point from which such calculation became possible effectively excluded subjectivity. Duly reified, a relationship between individuals attained the character of a thing, an inhuman system of organisation confronting those subject to it as inescapable reality. It was largely to this pseudo-objectivity that the modernist 'time cult' responded. Modernism's deviations from standard temporal modes thus appear as a means of escaping a temporality which stood, to the then-influential Bergson, as a 'homogeneous and impersonal duration, the same for everything and for every one, which flows onward, indifferent and void, external to all that endures' (Bergson, 1911, 274). Attempts by modernist writers to deny that the temporal 'dimension' could be subdivided into

calculable 'points' here show an interesting compatibility with *Lanark*'s criticism of maps and mathematics. Indeed, the parallels which Ermarth draws between clock-time and the temporality of realist fiction offer further significance to the oracle. Here, the pseudo-objective transcendence required to mathematically describe reality, already identifiable with clock-time, is described in familiar terms, as reinscribing 'a subject position that remains disembodied, outside and beyond any particular; a subject without traction, a perpetual spectator' (Ermarth, 1992, 38). Further, for Ermarth the localized representative of this subject position within realist fiction is the narrator, a figure generally 'disembodied and indistinguishable from the narrative process itself' (Ermarth, 1992, 27), '[l]iterally "History speaking," and nothing more individualized' (Ermarth, 1992, 27).

If the calculability engendered by clock-time suggests its relevance to Enlightenment modernity, it simultaneously signals towards economic modernization, for this, too, is dependent upon the equivalence of temporal values. Here, the fundamental necessity met by temporal calculability is again a requirement that individual moments be comparable, in this instance revolving around the prediction of profit. This basic calculation in turn depends upon subsequent factors from the product's exchange value to the hourly wage, projecting the equivalence of temporal stretches outwards onto further areas of human experience. Or, from another perspective, clock time becomes a part of a broader system of commodities structured according to similar logic. Whether mathematically translatable as variables in profit equations, or effectively exchangeable as commodities within the system these describe, the position of these factors within capitalism depends upon their assumed equivalence. As noted by György

Lukács, writing contemporaneously with modernism, this requirement sees the

transformation of the worker's activity from an aspect of his own being to an external

object, as

> estranged from himself, it turns into a commodity which, subject to the non-
> human objectivity of the natural laws of society, must go its own way
> independently of man just like any consumer article. (Lukács, 1971, 87).

In order to establish the values regulating this exchange, work itself undergoes the same

reduction to pseudo-objectivity seen in clock time, transformed, in Lukács' terms, from

'a merely empirical average figure to an objectively calculable work-stint that confronts

the worker as a fixed and established reality' (Lukács, 1971, 88). Indeed, not only does

the reification of temporality parallel the reification of production, it stands as an

integral part of this process. The value to which the worker is reduced is not their

activity, but activity across time, where, Marx observed 'Time is everything, man is

nothing; he is at the most the incarnation of time' (Marx qtd in Lukács, 1971, 89).

Where activity enters the profit equation in this form and returns to the worker as an

hourly wage, time itself becomes a counter of exchange. Under capitalism, E.P.

Thompson notes, 'not the task but the value of time when reduced to money is dominant.

Time is now currency: it is not passed but spent' (Thompson, 1967, 61).

As with Ozenfant's Reichian rhetoric, time's commodification is noted within

Lanark in terms which straddle a description of our world and its own allegory. In

Unthank, where conventional currency becomes questionable because 'everyone has a

different notion of its value'(*L* 23), the structural equivalence of time becomes literalized

through its overt substitution. Here, Lanark is told, '[t]he owners and manipulators have

better ways of banking energy. They pay themselves with time' (*L* 410). Similarly, while

the use of a Quantum credit card – by which '[t]he energy to pay for [commodities] would be deducted from your future' (*L* 437) – primarily evokes debt, it does so in a way which translates the 'energy' of exchange value not into money but into time. It is for this reason perhaps, that, while the diegetic reality of Unthank represents the literalization of theory, the first overt comment on this situation is couched in a different mode. 'MONEY IS TIME. BUY TIME FOR YOUR FAMILY' (*L* 432), the walls of Unthank exhort, 'QUICK MONEY IS TIME IN YOUR POCKET' (*L* 432). No longer an implicit structuring principle of the capitalist system to be analytically exhumed – 'a secret', Marx observes, 'hidden under the apparent fluctuations in the relative values of commodities' (Marx, 1972, 340) – but unobscured reality, it is fitting that theoretical pronouncements on our own world return here in a parody of advertising, the language of the commodity form.

The use of 'energy' to denote an economic factor above again suggests the polysemity of *Lanark*'s allegory through creating a potential overlap between economic- and psychological-oriented metaphoric systems. Here, the diegetic context within which the energy trope operates will be taken as a literalization of theoretical accounts of economic processes, primarily Lukács' analysis of reification. 'Energy' itself, however, is seemingly divorced from this strategy as an original metaphor whose significance is established without reference to theory. Interestingly, in this instance Gray provides an intermediate stage between his allegory and previous discourse, elaborating within the realist section an analysis which, while it repeats observations drawn from theory, couches these in terms which anticipate Unthank's metaphors. Prompted by the 'ten-to-eight factory horns' (*L* 223), Thaw thinks 'with awe of the energy needed to keep up a

civilization, of the implacable routines which started drawing it from the factory worker daily at eight, from the clerk and shopkeeper at nine' (*L* 223). With its comic temporal precision and translation of human activity into a tentatively separate inhuman 'energy' – at once a quality and an object – Thaw's analysis parallels Lukács' account of reification. Further, mention of the 'implacable routines' by which this energy is drawn incorporates within this further aspects of Lukács' account dealing with industrial organisation. Here capitalism's injunction to maximize profit turns over into a concern to maximize time's value, resulting in the rationalization of production. With an eye on the organisational practices preached in Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management*, Lukács describes how 'rationalisation is unthinkable without specialisation' (Lukács, 1971, 88), directly equating capitalist modernization with the subdivision of labour. One result of this tendency was an intensification of the worker's alienation from his activity. In contrast to the comprehendible activity of the pre-modern worker, attending to tasks as their necessity became apparent, the individuated, repetitive actions of the assembly-line system could only be approached as the demands of the inhuman logic of the factory. Divorced from the totality of production, for the worker

> [t]he finished article ceases to be the object of the work-process…[and]turns into the objective synthesis of rationalised special systems whose unity is determined by pure calculation and which must therefore seem to be arbitrarily connected with each other. (Lukács, 1971, 88)

Confronted with an intensification of the same logic as clock-time, the worker becomes as a clock themselves, robbed of their autonomy in the face of a system which demands a rhythm of unthinking action, 'a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical

system' (Lukács, 1971, 89). Thus the specific demands of specialization feed into the effacement of human qualities demanded by the system, and

> [w]ith the modern 'psychological' analysis of the work-process (in Taylorism) this rational mechanisation extends right into the worker's 'soul': even his psychological attributes are separated from his total personality and placed in opposition to it so as to facilitate their integration into specialised rational systems and their reduction to statistically viable concepts. (Lukács, 1971, 88)

Within mathematically-ordered production processes, the worker is himself too solid and human traits 'appear increasingly as *mere sources of error*' (Lukács, 1971, 89).

While Thaw's meditation on the factory horns signals towards rationalization's effects, it cannot represent them. Aware that if the regulation of industry ceased the world as he knew it would end, Thaw can appreciate this link only abstractly, where 'the end of civilisation was still an idea' (*L* 223). Again, a distinction is made between abstract knowledge of the organisational tendencies underlying phenomenological experience and this experience itself. Thaw has had explained to him that

> when most people leave school they have to live by work which can't be liked for its own sake and whose practical application is outside their grasp. Unless they learn to work obediently because they're told to, and for no other reason, they'll be unfit for human society. (*L* 168)

On this particular morning, however, he is not among the '[h]undreds of thousands of men' called to the factories, but 'the luckiest man living here' (*L* 218), in bed on his first day at art school. [20] The revelatory effect of direct experience is described by Coulter, whose fuller account of production stems from employment in a machine shop. Here, he explains to Thaw, 'on your second Monday it hits you' (*L* 215):

> I've tae go on doing this, getting up at this hour, sitting in this tram in these overalls dragging on this fag, clocking on in this queue at the gate. "Hullo, here we go again!" "You're fuckin' right we go!" and back intae the machine shop. (*L* 215-6)

Coulter's account recalls again industry's temporal precision. Indeed, the repetition this fosters is extended even to personal routines, separate cigarettes conflated into 'this fag'. With a despair absent from Thaw's account, Coulter suggests the seeming inescapability of this repetition, where '[n]o accident but an atom bomb can get me out of engineering' (*L* 218). Yet, as he tells Thaw, 'this feeling doesnae last' (*L* 216). What Coulter discovers is not escape, but submission. Accepting the inhuman logic of the system which confronts him, Coulter loses his humanity; '[y]ou stop thinking. Life becomes a habit…Life's easy when you're a robot' (*L* 216).

As with Thaw's depiction of productivity as energy, this metaphor returns in Unthank. Where Coulter suggests that workers become like robots, here, in the form of Misses Maheen and Thing some workers *are* robots, each 'not a real woman…[but] a tool, an instrument *shaped* like a woman' (*L* 445). There is a potential to read these secretaries as representing industry's automatization; rather than becoming robots, workers are here replaced by robots, a concern signalled in Monboddo's observation that 'in three years all the limited skills of a council supremo will be embodied in the circuits of a Quantum-Cortexin humanoid' (*L* 537). With Gray's allegories, however, the existence of alternatives need not undermine the validity of a given reading. In any case, the logic behind automatization replicates that of earlier stages in the rationalization process. Again, a key concern is productivity over time, the intended result of Monboddo's replacement being, he notes, that 'Everything will suddenly go much faster' (*L* 537). Likewise, automatization privileges mechanical predictability – and Maheen is 'a reliable piece' (*L* 440) – over human variety. The shift from human to

machine, whether characterized as one of transformation or replacement, is thus adequately represented by Miss Thing, who is 'exactly like Miss Maheen' (*L* 549) and 'cannot hear what is irrelevant' (*L* 550-1). The logic the robots indicate is in either respect that evoked by Coulter or described by Lukács, where all aspects of production, human or otherwise, are treated in instrumental terms.

One aspect of the robots which implies specific reference to automatization rather than more general rationalization is their manufactured nature; as Gilchrist describes Maheen, 'She's a Quantum-Cortexin product' (*L* 440). Yet even in this description there is a potential recollection of the reification of the subject in the extent that the robot Coulter is, metaphorically, the 'product' of the factory. Further, if Maheen and Thing are artificial in origin, they nevertheless tend towards an incompletely human identity – as Ozenfant claims regarding his artificial successors, he may be 'the last of the fully human Lords Monboddo' (*L* 537) – displaying a 'readiness to take on human attributes' (Randall Stevenson, 1998, 89) which often accompanied the transformation of people into machines in the modernist response to reification. This ambiguity concerning the boundaries between human and machine is intensified by consideration of the manner in which Unthank's machinery is produced. Encountering a further human-like machine, Lanark recognizes the voice of an acquaintance, suggesting an opposite identity of machine-like human. As he discovers, however, Gloopy's fate is not so simple:

"Is it you, Gloopy?"

The lift said, "No, only part of me."

"Which part?"

"The voice and feelings and sense of responsibility. I don't know what they've

done with the rest" (*L* 86).

The elevator is neither a machine aping humanity, nor a human reduced to

machinery, but an ambiguous entity created in their merger. In a conflation of industrial

processes and their finished products which continues throughout *Lanark*'s depiction of

capitalism, the fragmentation by which an elevator is made from Gloopy appears as a

further literalization, not in this instance of the robot metaphor, but of Lukács' account

of specialization. The question this raises, and which the novel never answers, is

whether *Lanark*'s robots bear within themselves aspects of previous victims of

capitalism.

To read *Lanark*'s diseases in terms of reification requires that this first plague of

Unthank be considered in conjunction with the second, a series of mysterious

disappearances. Initially adding to Unthank's dystopian air, when Lanark himself

disappears a more positive dimension develops. Indeed, here the two plagues appear

diametrically opposed; it is Lanark's horror at confronting a Mouths-sufferer – prompting

another utterance of his repeated complaint 'This is hell!' (*L* 46) – which leads him to seek

his own disappearance, now realized more hopefully as 'the way out' (*L* 47). It is a way

out of Unthank, to the Institute, and a way out too from his covering of dragonhide.

Further, it transforms Lanark into a way out for others, employing him as a doctor in an

institution which seems entirely focused upon curing Unthank's diseases, which lives, as

one resident puts it, by '[d]octoring the patients' (*L* 63). It is this seeming opposition

between the two which leads de Juan to preserve the negative connotations of the disappearances through offering a more positive interpretation of disease. Here, he suggests, '[r]eaders understand that the diseases people suffer from in Unthank may be seen as a signal of the potentiality inherent in the human being, and, therefore symbols of the possibility of multiplicity, difference [and]variety' (de Juan, 2003, 195), casting the institute as 'a unifying and homogenising centre [which] implies leaving behind the idiosyncrasies proper to any individual human being, wiping out his/her differing features' (de Juan, 2003, 196). De Juan's argument ignores several salient features of the two metaphoric systems, not least the relationship between them. Like de Juan, Lanark himself initially takes the institute's 'doctoring the patients' to refer to its curative mission. The more negative appraisal which follows rests on the realization that this is not the only sense of 'doctoring' involved; as one staff member explains, 'nobody is ever cured… the treatment only keeps the bodies fresh until we need fuel or clothes or food' (*L* 89).

Although it is the last of these needs which prompts Lanark to leave, the other forms of consumption also appear as reflections of institutionalized cannibalism. Indeed, it is from the start a cannibalistic institution, Lanark's way out of Unthank a disembodied mouth, his passage to the institute obtained through its 'gullet' (*L* 48). Similarly, Munro's comment that 'the institute lives by purging the intake' (*L* 63), while re-phrased in terms of doctoring patients, bears within it connotations of consumption, digestion and evacuation which continue this image. In this respect, the institute appears as part of '[t]he most pervasive' (Donaldson and Lee, 1995, 160) of the novel's literalized metaphors, borrowed from Hobbes' *Leviathan*. As we shall see there are

necessary differences between the allegory of *Lanark* and this description of 'a state…as a single man…full of strength got from people forced to supply its belly, the market' (*L* 489). Yet there is much to recommend reading the institute as the stomach of capitalism. Recalling again Lukács' image of rationalized industry, the institute, Lanark is told, is a machine, which 'like all machines… profits those who own it' (*L* 102). Further, as Noakes explains, the nature of this machine is such that its ownership extends even to the exploited, and – recalling Thaw's dilemma – society itself would 'collapse if it vanished' (*L* 102). The literal cannibalism of the institute's inhabitants thus reflects the more metaphorical cannibalism of the system of which they are part. Indeed, shifting into unliteralized metaphor, the cannibal trope provides Noakes with a description of capitalism repeated throughout the novel, that '[m]an is the pie that bakes and eats himself and the recipe is separation' (*L* 101).

At its broadest, the 'separation' of Noakes' aphorism is the subdivision of humanity into competing groups who may then exploit each other, the division 'into winners and losers' (*L* 410). Variously linked in the novel to issues of class and race, this thematic strand ultimately manifests as war, expressed as the 'eating' (*L* 414) of such cities as Dresden and Hiroshima. As Noakes explains, however, '[w]ar is just a violent way of doing what half the people do calmly in peacetime: using the other half for food, heat, machinery and sexual pleasure' (*L* 411), and in capitalism's daily operations this separation is that seen in the institute, between exploiting cured and exploited diseased. It is here that de Juan's suggestion that the diseases indicate human potentiality is at its most questionable, for this separation ultimately appears to the exploiters as based on a distinction between human and non-human. Here Munro's

suggestion that '[w]e don't eat people. We eat the processed parts of certain life forms which can no longer claim to be people' (*L* 373) may appear to be a propagandistic self-justification. Bearing the issue of reification in mind, however, Munro's claim is revealing to the extent that it expresses both the instrumental logic of capitalism and the potential effects this works upon its subjects. Indeed, the self-justifying element potentially reflects a second aspect of reification which Jameson claims as increasingly relevant in the postmodern era, 'the effacement of the traces of production' (Jameson, 1991, 314). In this respect, the denial of human status to the diseased is part of the effacement of the product's origins, and so a means of avoiding this unpalatable truth. More than an illusion fostered by capitalism's instrumental logic, however, Munro's distinction appears in the novel as truth. Expressed through animalistic images of leeches, dragons and sponges, the progress of each disease represents the transformation of the human to the inhuman. Further, this is a progress tentatively linked to the strictures governing employment, as when the rigorist realizes that his 'whole professional life was a diseased and grandiose attack on my humanity' (*L* 55). More broadly, the Catalyst provides a link which, if it does not situate the institute as the cause of these transformations, nevertheless asserts their necessity for its operations, describing how 'We can find a practical use for any number of dead monsters, but a mere man can only be burned or shovelled into the ground' (*L* 56).

Given Lukács' analysis of the psychological effects of objectivity, there is room to consider Munro's denial of humanity to the diseased as co-extensive with reality. Here the rigorist's characterization of the disease, an assault on the 'human image' through 'overdeveloping some bits to gain temporary advantage and breaking others off

to get relief from very ordinary pain' (*L* 54) is particularly suggestive. Insofar as this 'breaking off' and 'overdevelopment' of aspects of the subject directly relate to specialization, this represents a further form of that 'separation' which makes exploitation possible. Repeating the conflation of work-process and finished product seen with Gloopy, rationalized specialization thus haunts Unthank's diseases, leaving their sufferers tailored towards particular ends, from the transformation of softs into foodstuff to the disintegration of rigorists into crystals 'essential for making communications circuits' (*L* 70). Such a specific interpretation would however appear inadequate for incorporating the motivations suggested for such changes, leaving the rigorist's mention of 'advantage' and 'pain' a relic from psychoanalytic theory. Taking the separation involved as that more general condition of the individual worker, however – the reification of their labour into a discrete commodity – this psychological dimension becomes an integrated part of the economic allegory. Tellingly, the advantages of disease are most fully presented in the case of Lanark, whose specific ailment comes closest to representing the worker's role in productive processes. Rather than showing his transformation into material, the changes occasioned by Dragonhide are irrelevant to the institute other than through their impeding energy flow. Once armouring is complete, this reservoir bursts from the sufferer, to be harvested by the institute. Here there is an obvious parallel to the image of industry offered by Thaw, extending to include the temporal precision by which 'energy' is drawn. In the institute, Ozenfant explains, [t]he clock keeps us regular' (*L* 78), a privileging of regularity which has seen the replacement of the 'solar year of the Nazarene calendar' (*L* 103) with the 'decimal year' and the 'erratic and unstable solar day' (*L* 372) with 'decimal time'. As with capitalism,

the institute's dependence on clock-time derives from the ability it lends to 'measure or plan,' (*L* 78) here to predict energy release. Taking the explosion of a salamander as its moment of entry into the regulated systems of the workplace, the progressive armouring of dragonhide becomes representative of the necessary preparation of the worker. As characterized by Lukács, this entails the reification of the worker's activity until it is effectively realized as a separate inhuman entity; as depicted in *Lanark* this is the transformation of Lanark's armour-clad arm, which 'looked diseased because it grew on a man' (*L* 41) but, considered outwith the humanity, 'looked very healthy indeed' (*L* 41). Further, Lanark's arm becomes possessed of a separate agency. Doing his bidding of its own volition, Lanark 'would find it holding a glass of water to his lips and only then notice he was thirsty' (*L* 40). Taking a futurist perspective, Lanark finds himself 'admiring the feelingless strength of the dragonish limb' (*L* 42). Yet, as the rigorist maintains, the development of this separate agency represents an attack on Lanark's humanity. While the potential uses of his transformation invite Lanark to consider the possibilities available '[w]hen I am all like this' (*L* 42), he realizes that 'if he was all like that he would have no feeling at all' (*L* 42). The ordinary pain against which dragonhide protects is the pain Coulter feels on entering industry. The ease with which the dragon incorporates the inhuman logic of the capitalist system is the ease of the robot.

While the disease metaphors represent an attempt to map capitalism, the systemic tendencies it describes are not unique to postmodernity; Gray's representation of the abhorrent efficiency of the subject as shaped by modernization appears readily compatible with the concerns of modernism. Indeed, comparison with one previous

response to this situation, Lady Chatterley's characterization of her husband, suggests

that some debts remain unacknowledged in Lawrence's brief entry in the novel's Index:

> Clifford was drifting off to this other wilderness of industrial activity, becoming almost a *creature*, with a hard efficient shell of an exterior and a pulpy interior, one of the amazing crabs and lobsters of the modern industrial and financial world, invertebrates of the crustacean order, with shells of steel, like machines, and inner bodies of soft pulp. (Lawrence, 1961, 157)[21]

In representing the logic of commodification common to both periods, the

allegory of *Lanark* may be seen to partially fulfil cognitive mapping's requirements. In

addition, it must also incorporate conditions specific to postmodernity, most importantly

'the unimaginable decentering of global capital itself' (Jameson, 1988(a), 351). It is this

which casts Gray's adoption of the Leviathan metaphor as potentially problematic,

insofar as the depiction of the state as one man may imply a no longer applicable image

of centralized hierarchy. Yet, as the rigorist complains, in the institute, 'there isn't a

commander' (*L* 55), a lesson confirmed when its figurehead explains that '[l]eaders are the

effects, not the causes of changes. I *cannot* give prosperity to people whom my rich

supporters cannot exploit' (*L* 551). As with Bohu's puppet-emperor, Monboddo provides a

symbolic centre for the institute and the council, any power he possesses belonging

properly to those who wield him. In fact, as Polyphemus explains, the same is true of the

institute and council themselves. Taking the former as denoting 'culture' and the latter

'government', Polyphemus argues that 'they pretend culture and government are supremely

independent powers when they are nothing but gloves on the hands of Volstat and

Quantum, Cortexin and Algolagnics' (*L* 410). That these latter entities, multinational

corporations, are represented as the true power suggests an interpretation of Gray's Leviathan frontispiece to Book Four different from its original. Here 'government' and 'culture' reappear as 'force' and 'persuasion', the latter a conception of indoctrination which includes an assembly-line representative of the institute's work-routines. With culture and government figured not as gloves on his hands but the weapons these hands hold, Gray's Leviathan appears less as emblem of the state than of a power beyond states. Indeed, it is in this form, and with regard to Unthank's corporations, that the textual manifestation of the Leviathan metaphor appears, as together these companies constitute the Creature, '[a] conspiracy which owns and manipulates everything for profit' (*L* 410), against which national distinctions appear illusory since '[a]n organization which encloses a globe must split into departments' (*L* 411).

To the extent that the Creature is conflated with the corporations comprising it, this adaptation of Leviathan sees Gray engaged in a common postmodernist preoccupation, 'the "cartelization" of the future, the growth of international conglomerates that threaten to displace national governments and engulf the entire world' (McHale, 1987, 67). Moving beyond this identification with specific corporations, however, the Creature becomes emblematic of the capitalist system as a whole. Such is the message of Monboddo's alternative model of capitalist development – 'too Marxian for the Corporate Wealth gang and too approving for the Marxists' (*L* 544) – which describes how 'wealth has engrossed the whole globe, which now revolves in a tightening net of thought and transport woven round it by trade and science. The world is enclosed in a single living city, but its brain centres, the governments, do not notice this' (*L* 543).

This use of conspiracies to represent power structures is a common thread running through Gray's writing, from the 'worldwide and irresistible' (*J* 123) Syndicate of *1982, Janine* to the conspiracy of *McGrotty and Ludmilla,* 'too huge to be opposed' (*ML* 97). Similarly, the exploitative element of the Creature, marked here by cannibalism, recurs in Gray's other conspiracies as various forms of consumption, from the vampirism of *McGrotty and Ludmilla*'s 'beast' (*ML* 97) to the coded rhetoric of the Syndicate, reducing prostitutes to produce, 'kilos' of 'fresh' or 'ripe' '*black molasses*' (*J* 123). Also recurring to varying degrees is the association between conspiracy and global communication networks; minimally present in the imaginary one-man operation of *1982, Janine* – which, within Jock's fantasy, demands telephone calls linking 'Chicago, Sydney, Berlin, Paris and Glenrothes' (*J* 123) – this trope extends through the bureaucratic messengers of *McGrotty* to find its most extensive realization in *A History Maker.* Interestingly, it is the imaginary nature of Jock's conspiracy which leads to the persistence of hierarchical centralization within the Syndicate. His claim that the syndicate represents a 'whole network…spun like a web out of one brain – this brain' (*J* 123) here functions to describe it on two levels. On the level at which the Syndicate operates, the messages passing across its communication network do indeed proceed from Jock. This centrality is however reflected in, and established by, his position as author of the fictional Syndicate. Elsewhere in Gray's conspiracies, where capitalism is translated into conspiracy without this context of psychologically-motivated distortion, the non-hierarchical structure of the network is a key characteristic. They are, as McGrotty explains, 'not like the conspiracies in the James Bond film with one evil mastermind. Hardly anyone in this – let`s call it an organisation – knows all the organisations that are part of it' (*ML* 108). The same

unimaginable complexity attends *Lanark*'s Creature, where none can comprehend 'the

organism as a whole' (*L* 437). In part, this complexity derives from the conspiracy's extent,

which leaves many implicated individuals unaware of their position, 'gentle, powerless

people who don't know they are cannibals' (*L* 102). It also refers to the conspiracy's

form. As Noakes complains of the institute staff, '[n]o God unites them now, only

mutual assistance pacts based upon greed' (*L* 80). Recalling the mechanistic manner in

which Noakes characterizes the Creature's constituent parts, the uniting force he

suggests here is not a discrete entity to which all parts refer but the relationships each

bears to the others.

A diffuse, globalized, divisive yet ultimately non-hierarchical network, Gray's

conspiracy reflects the structure of contemporary capitalism. Indeed, this aspect of

Gray's project has been foreseen by Jameson, who describes how

> confronted with the ambitious program of fantasizing an economic system on the
> scale of the globe itself, the older motif of conspiracy knows a fresh lease on life, as
> a narrative structure capable of reuniting the minimal basic components: a
> potentially infinite network, along with a plausible explanation of its invisibility.
> (Jameson, 1992(a), 9)

Yet, for all that he recognizes the possible utility of this trope, Jameson nonetheless

distinguishes this from true cognitive mapping. The motif of conspiracy, he writes,

represents 'the poor person's cognitive mapping in the postmodern age; it is a degraded

figure of the total logic of late capital, a desperate attempt to represent the latter's

system' (Jameson, 1988(a), 356), its 'failure…marked by its slippage into sheer theme

and content' (Jameson, 1988(a), 356). While Jameson himself has offered little

explanation for this dismissal, Hardt and Weiks suggest one reason for rejecting the

trope when they contend that

[a] conspiracy theory offers a particularly simple understanding of the totality in the sense that it tends to trace all mysteries back to a single source of power…Because they are so reductive and crude, conspiracy theories do not really provide the practical orientation that a cognitive mapping should. (Hardt and Weeks, 2001, 23)

Certainly, something like this simplicity can be seen in many conspiracy theories of the type Gray lampoons with hints as to 'why the pope had poor Kennedy shot' (*ML* 94). Within postmodernist fiction, however, such a characterization is debatable, and Gray does not seem alone in either recognizing or surmounting the trope's potential reductiveness. Thus the Tristero organisation haunting *The Crying of Lot 49*, while given a discrete moment of historical genesis, has the certainty with which this source might be identified undermined. The make-up of the organisation, meanwhile, its members and goals remain in obscurity throughout, except for their manifestation as the W.A.S.T.E. postal system, which, as a shadowy network of communication common to a wider range of sub-societies, might well serve as a properly extensive representation of postmodernity. Wilson and Shea's *Illuminatus!*, meanwhile, avoids reductive representation not through postponing the final revelation of its conspiracies but through describing an overabundance of conspiratorial groups. Beginning with Ishmael Reed's revision of Marx, that 'the history of the world is the history of the warfare between secret societies,' (Wilson and Shea, 1998, 5) *Illuminatus!* proceeds to describe a conspiracy which fails to resolve into a single history, as an ever-expanding array of secretive groups issue claims and counter-claims contradicting and recontextualizing each other 'in an epic of convoluted treachery that satirised all conspiracy theories of left and right' (R. A. Wilson, 1998, 64).

The potential reductiveness of comprehending postmodernity through the conspiracy trope represents a specific manifestation in terms of content of the problems *Lanark* more generally ascribes to the allegorical form. Dazzling instead of revealing, the assumed objectivity of allegory here reduces its subject through implying one-to-one correspondence with a system whose coherence is bought through reality's simplification. The same danger has been identified by Jameson, and may play a part in his rejection of the conspiracy trope. Thus, while he affords allegory a privileged position in meeting cognitive mapping's demands, examples of this form must necessarily 'be marked as imperfect in order to serve as a cognitive map (which it would be disastrous to confuse with reality itself…)' (Jameson, 1992(a), 9). In this respect, *Lanark*'s thematic consideration of allegory within its rejection of pseudo-objective systems marks a recognition of its own limitations. Principal to this is the recognition of its position as created artefact, seen most strongly in *Lanark*'s densely metafictional epilogue. Here, the confrontation between Lanark and Nastler represents, as Martinez has observed, 'a clear example of how postmodernism assumes reality to be non-existent or inaccessible and investigates instead what worlds texts can project' (Martinez, 1995, 102). The hesitation with which Martinez defines this position is particularly interesting, as it marks a key point of divergence in interpreting postmodernism's numerous author-figures. Presupposing the non-existence of reality for the postmodernist, this violation of the ontological boundary implies the co-extensiveness of fictional and physical worlds, suggesting 'Gray's' book as an attempt to direct our attention to the essential fictionality of the so-called "real" world' (Miller, 2001, 315). Whether this conclusion represents the 'typical postmodern reading' (Miller, 2001, 315) as Miller suggests will be considered in

the next chapter with regard to *1982, Janine*. The certainty with which Miller typifies

readings of postmodernism is however immediately brought into question by the second

of Martinez's alternatives, which offers a quite different interpretation. Rather than

eliding the boundary between real and fictional worlds, this pseudo-violation – for

Lanark and Gray can of course never truly meet – here represents the conscious

recollection of this ontological distinction. What is stressed is thus not the fictionality of

the real world, but the fictionality of fiction, what McHale has generalized as 'the

Otherness of the fictional world, its separation from the real world of experience'

(McHale, 1987, 27).

Lanark's index, by representing the novel's diegetic reality as text – indeed as a

text composed from previous texts – continues this foregrounded separation of real and

fictional worlds. In addition the index also directly confronts, and to some extent

circumvents, allegory's characteristic problems, primarily the suggestion that, like

mathematics, allegory translates a solider world into a comprehensible system which,

while it renders underlying structures visible, does so through replacing reality with

pseudo-objective simplification; as Lanark is warned, '[m]etaphor is one of thought's

most essential tools. It illuminates what would otherwise be totally obscure. But the

illumination is sometimes so bright that it dazzles instead of revealing'(*L* 30). The initial

means of doing this is to openly situate the novel within this mode; it is here that

reference is made to the 'allegorical part of *Lanark*' (*L* 494). Such auto-exegesis also

broadly signals the interpretative status of allegory, both as an interpretation of the real

world and as construct which must itself be interpreted. An example of this can be seen

in the entry in which *Lanark* proclaims itself an allegory, an identification made in order

to exemplify its 'weakness' (*L* 494) in this regard through questioning the extent to

which the historical Monboddo was a 'fitting embodiment of government, science, trade

and religion' (*L* 494). By contrasting historical personage with fictional character, Gray

again confronts the border between real and imagined worlds. Further, in his assumption

that the name 'Lord Monboddo' simultaneously refers to both an abstract concept and a

historical figure, Workman also juxtaposes the contrasting reading-positions assumed

for realist and metaphorical mimeticism. The hermeneutic process by which

government, science, trade and religion are resurrected from the textual entity of

Monboddo is thus revealed as preceding from a primary interpretation which resolves to

seek in the text metaphoric rather than realist layers of reference. This notion is

particularly important to the reading offered by Beat Witschi, whose assertion that

'Lanark…*is*, and yet and is *not* an allegorical figure' (Witschi, 1991, 103) rests on the

simultaneous availability of multiple modes of interpretation. Certainly, it is possible to

read the novel in a 'realist' mode, its primary project taken as the delineation of a

science-fiction reality rather than as a commentary on our own. Indeed, to the extent that

Lanark operates, in Edwin Morgan's terms, as 'a large and strong and moving

communicative act' (Morgan, 1993, 96), a level of empathic identification is assumed

which implies its characters' imagined existence. Yet the grounds on which Witschi

bases his claim that the novel 'both allows for an allegorical reading and simultaneously

foregrounds and undermines it' (Witschi, 1991, 102) effectively revolve around a

hesitancy, not between modes of reading but within the allegorical reading itself.

Sketching something of the polysemy seen above, Witschi rightly contends that this

leaves the allegorical model as a whole resistant to univocal reading, where 'one cannot

simply state that the "creature" *is* the big business multi, or that the "council" *is* the government' (Witschi, 1991, 103). Here Witschi seems to presuppose the equivalence of the primary interpretative context assumed for an allegorical reading – the identification of the text as allegory – with the subsequent choice of context required to carry this reading out. That this range of contexts resists simplification into a coherent model has already been shown. A reading of dragonhide in terms of Reich, for instance, necessarily involves the identification of his theories as the ideational filter through which reality has been translated. By openly identifying this context in the index, Gray foregrounds the role of this operation in interpreting allegory. Further, not only does he implicitly undermine the fixity of this identification through constructing metaphors simultaneously available to alternative filters, he again makes this aspect of his strategy explicit through offering alternatives within the index, where 'the turning of people into dragons is a Difplag of the transformed hero's nose and turning of bad boys into donkeys from the film *Pinocchio*' (*L* 487). Rather than bringing into question the extent to which an allegorical reading of *Lanark* is viable, the polysemity of the Lanark narrative instead continues Gray's consideration of the pseudo-objective univocality associated with allegory; what it enacts is not the rejection of allegory, but its transformation.

Witschi's rejection of *Lanark*'s allegorical status suggests that he holds what Jameson terms 'a one-dimensional view of this signifying process' (Jameson, 2000, 324), insistent that the allegoric mode requires fixed one-to-one correspondences. If Gray's metaphoric models represent a postmodern transformation of the form, this assumption is no longer necessary. Indeed, for Jameson this view of allegory has never been justifiable, as throughout the history of the form its signified equivalences have

always been 'in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text'

(Jameson, 2000, 324). In this respect, the polysemy of postmodern allegory represents

not a transformation of the mode but an intensification of that quality which renders it

amenable to postmodern concerns, where

> [i]f allegory has once again become somehow congenial to us today as over against the massive and monumental unifications of an older modernist symbolism or even realism itself, it is because the allegorical spirit is profoundly discontinuous, a matter of breaks and heterogeneities, of the multiple polysema of the dream rather than the homogenous representation of the symbol. (Jameson, 2000, 324)

 Jameson's description of the constant change and transformation of allegorical

reference is particularly apposite to *Lanark*, for while the index entries show the

elaboration of allegoric polysemy at its most self-conscious, similar revisions occur

throughout the novel. Initially described using such terms as crustacean, leech and

sponge, the diseases of Unthank are, as Alison Lee observes, 'named with words with

which the reader is perhaps familiar, but whose meaning cannot be gleaned from his or

her understanding of them' (A. Lee, 1990, 101). From the outset, then, these diseases are

possessed of multiple areas of reference, primarily the yet-unrevealed context of the

novel and their pre-existing real world referents. Indeed, in the latter case, reference is

further split between a realist mode of signification and a metaphoric relationship

drawing upon established colloquialisms. As the novel proceeds, these terms' local

context is further developed, yet the fixity of their significance is undermined, not only

on the level of metaphoric interpretation, but in terms of their diegetic reality. Here even

characters in *Lanark* seem uncertain as to what terms refer to, allowing their usage to

slip between the literal, colloquial-metaphorical and the novel's own metaphors, as when

one man explains that '[i]n the crustacean class you will find the scorpion, the lobster and the louse' (*L* 31). Such tentative, disconnected additions to the metaphorical model require the resurrection through inference of Unthank's diseases, prompting a situation in which there is potential for disagreement over even their diegetic reality. Hence, although Lee can assuredly assert that '"mouths" are developed by "leeches"', (A. Lee, 1990, 102) I would maintain that the term 'mouths' properly relates to sponges, an inference made from a comment that one finds 'leeches, using their vitality to steal vitality from others, and…sponges, hiding behind too many mouths' (*L* 54).

All of these techniques are present in the depiction of the creature, whose central position in any understanding of postmodernity leaves this potentially the most dangerous of the novel's literalized metaphors. Indeed, the extent to which this metaphor is even literalized is questionable. There are in the creature suggestions of physical presence, a development which both allows for the suggestion of autonomous agency and enables it to be said to 'swallow' its victims within the cannibal motif. Yet, for the most part references to the creature remain metaphorical even for those describing it, an entity whose existence is as abstract as the conspiracy it denotes. Where it is given some form of physical presence, it remains to a large degree faithful to the system it represents, whose traces might be discerned everywhere but whose presence is nowhere. Hence, reduced from presence to trace, and from metaphor to simile, the creature appears to Noakes in terms which nevertheless remain linked to Unthank's literal consumption, heard as 'a sound like the breathing of a hungry beast. I assure you, the institute is preparing to swallow a world' (*L* 81). Further, this dispersal of literalized metaphor does not stray far from its source as a limited interpretation of solider reality.

As with the disease metaphor, the creature is thus paralleled with a competing interpretation as 'the foundation', a more positive self-image developed by its supporters. Its limitation to the speech of one character – Monboddo – reasserts the subjective nature of the foundation in a way absent for the more widely-upheld creature. Yet it is worth remembering that the fullest description of the creature is that developed by Polyphemus, so-called because 'I only have one way of seeing things' (*L* 409).[22]

The model of postmodernism described by Jameson remains in several ways ultimately inapplicable to *Lanark*. Central among these factors is the manner in which Gray's attempt to describe postmodern capitalist organisation in terms which communicate the abhorrence with which he regards it is directly contradicted both by Jameson's denial that critical distance from capitalism is possible, and his notion of the 'waning of affect' (Jameson, 1992, 10) by which emotional resonance is lost. Likewise, while Jameson's description of mass culture's expansion might account for the generic inblending of *Lanark*, it cannot recognize the concomitant expansion in resources this represents, nor the class-based concerns which structure these resources' deployment. Similarly, the alternative resources which Gray draws from modernism, while not denied by Jameson, hold an uncertain position in his account of the transition between periods. What Jameson can provide, however, is an account of the system which *Lanark* attempts to describe, and of the representational process by which this description is communicated. Thus, as Duncan Petrie has described, *Lanark*'s attempt to represent contemporary Glaswegian experience ultimately turns over into an engagement with postmodernism, reacting to the economic situation of postmodernity and adopting the cognitive mapping strategies this demands. Hence, he suggests, the novel's

postmodernism 'relates to its profound and multi-faceted aesthetic engagement with the historical, the political and social, rather than its playfulness and use of pastiche' (Petrie, 51). Through his formal experimentation, Gray leads the reader from the streets of Glasgow up the hill where the city is visible, from a world in which 'the connection between feeding and killing folk is less obvious' (*L* 101) to worlds which delineate these connections. Drawing on past literary modes to meet the concerns of the present, with *Lanark*, Gray has ushered in the political postmodernism which Jameson calls for and denies.

RHETORIC RULES, OK?

1982, Janine and selected shorter novels

1982, Janine is a complex text offering many possible paths for interrogation, some largely unique to itself, others recurrent Gray concerns. Issues of power and exploitation, and the role of representation in generating and resisting these forces, are explored here as they were in Gray's previous novel and as they would subsequently be. In the light of this complexity it is odd that much analysis of *1982, Janine* has drawn rather limited conclusions, focussing on a single facet. This aspect of the novel is undoubtedly important, and, at least until the publication of *Something Leather*, unique in Gray's output. It also represents a potentially unsettling strategy, laying emphasis on exploring the motivation behind it. Yet the stress frequently placed on this theme risks obscuring its overall place in the novel. Repeatedly, the terms in which responses to *1982, Janine* have been couched are moral ones, and, with varying degrees of subtlety, the question they pose is this: Should Alasdair Gray be ashamed of himself?

The critics most certain of Gray's shame are those with the most fixed focus on what they consider the novel's dubious aspects, and the least problematic conclusions as to what these represent; critics who take Jock's fantasies as unquestionably 'pornographic' and apply the same judgement to the novel, 'sexually oppressive….Radioactive hogwash', filled with 'cruelty, stupidity and moral fascism'. If these dismissals of a novel 'so misinterpreted in its apparent sexual sensationalism'

(Gifford, 1995, 8), as Gifford later had it, come from the first impressions of reviewers rather than in-depth analysis, they find a strange supporter in Gray himself, incorporated within the text as afterthought to his own auto-analytical addendum.[23] Similar judgements appear in more considered responses. Anthony Burgess, although finding some of the skill of *Lanark*, complains that 'it is hard to wade through 345 pages of juvenile fantasy, however mature the technique, without feeling affronted' (A. Burgess, 1986, 400). S.J. Boyd, while reserving outright condemnation for *Something Leather* – 'a shameless and shameful book' (S.J. Boyd, 1990, 35) – nevertheless extends a similar judgement to its precursor. Indeed, the shame of *Something Leather* here clarifies that of the earlier novel, confirming 'beyond doubt what was already strongly suggested by *1982 Janine*: Scotland's greatest living literary light is a pornographer' (S.J. Boyd, 1991, 108). Yet, if the pornography of *Something Leather* highlights similarities with *1982, Janine*, it also establishes a distance between the two, for the change here between a 'strong suggestion' of Gray as pornographer and later certainty is due to more than an incremental rise in volume. As Boyd observes, his own interrogation of *1982, Janine*'s relationship to pornography 'does very little justice to the magnificent complexity and subtlety of the novel', an assertion which 'cannot with any confidence be said of *Something Leather*' (S.J. Boyd, 1991, 117). His reluctance to condemn *1982, Janine* results, then, from situating its 'pornographic' sections within a larger framework. *Something Leather*, meanwhile, its sections largely failing to cohere, receives simpler judgement.

What Boyd offers here is a means of containing *1982, Janine*'s pornographic qualities. Taking its sexualized portions as both an important facet of the narrative and,

in themselves, pornographic, he nonetheless denies this charge overall by stressing this as one element of a complex work. A second strategy by which commentators have attempted to render these sections palatable is to question whether they can be unproblematically identified as pornographic. Here, although portions of the text can be seen to mimic pornography, their intended effect is taken to differ from that of their parent genre. Thus, while Gifford recognizes that *1982, Janine* contains some very 'sleazy stuff' (Gifford, 1987, 114) he can nevertheless

> defend its presentation to the hilt, since any reader who doesn't recognise the cliched, parodic…derivation of these unreal lovelies is missing the entire point. They are finally meant to disgust, to shame us; we have all helped spawn these stereotypes. (Gifford, 1987, 114)

In this reading of Jock's fantasies the charge of shame is preserved, its import effectively reversed; through transferring Jock's shame onto the reader, Gray has no reason to be ashamed at all. Such containment has met with criticism. Davidson challenges the specificity of the emotional charge involved, arguing that this 'presupposes that those readers are men, that they all have these shameful fantasies' (Davidson, 1999, 150). Boyd, meanwhile, bases his rejection of this move not on the response required, but one distinctly not required, suggesting that *1982, Janine* 'may be funny, but it's still pornography. For pornography isn't a form that can parody itself'(S.J. Boyd, 1991, 111). Not only reader responses, but Gray's too, enter into this argument. If Gray is engaged in parodic criticism, his admission of the fantasies' autobiographical origins suggest this as at most self-parody. Answering an interviewer intent on reading the novel as an exposé of sexuality, Gray conceded that 'it does [criticize] a bit, aye, but the thing is, I quite enjoyed writing the sadistic nasty bits…I

cannot say…'I happened to write this for purely sociological reasons.' I rather enjoyed it

for its own sake' (Figgis and McAllister, 1988, 19).

One of the ironies of *1982, Janine* is that, while attempting to open out Jock's

fantasies beyond the pornographic – defending Gray against charges he seems happy to

accept – many critics have turned to one he vehemently denies. This is, that if *1982,*

Janine is pornography, it as at least *postmodern* pornography, and in the limited reading

of the novel given so far, several grounds for this claim are already apparent, from

Fiedler's inblending of commodified genres to Hutcheon's parodic de-naturalization of

codes. Further, a case has repeatedly been made for a postmodern reading of *1982,*

Janine based on narratorial self-consciousness. Again, this approach has been used to

extend the novel's import beyond the pornographic, as when Szamosi suggests that

> [t]here is, however, a more literary aspect to these fantasies; they are written
> according to the "rules" of postmodernism. They are part of the writer's self-
> conscious and autotelic narrative activity; as soon as Gray builds his erotic
> world, he deconstructs and analyses it, and in this way provides a dynamic,
> imagined discourse between his multiple fictitious worlds'. (Szamosi, 1999, 124)

Likewise, that the fact of Gray's authorship might already suggest some

postmodern trickery has arisen as a warning against the pornographic reading, as when

Berthold Schoene-Harwood finds it 'astonishing how, despite Gray's reputation as an

incorrigibly mischievous postmodernist, his second novel could so succeed in provoking

reviewers and critics alike to divulge their own inveterate prudery and disingenuous

conservatism'(Schoene-Harwood, 2000, 135). This situation has even appeared tinged

with a shame similar to the recognition of the pornographic, as when Jonathan Coe

suggests that 'Gray found a way of reconciling the strongest virtues of classic fiction

with a thoroughly self-questioning and (damn! Just when I thought we'd managed to avoid the word) postmodern sensibility'(Coe, 2002, 65).

Key to this postmodern sensibility is an aspect of the novel more readily associated with modernism. An extended interior monologue, Jock's mediating consciousness is central to the novel. Thus, as Charlton has observed, while *1982, Janine*'s narrative may be fragmentary, 'when we see the range of thoughts succeeding each other in Jock's mind we have already acknowledged that they have an inter-relationship. Their unity is ensured by being the product of one man's mind' (Charlton, 1988(b), 41). The affinity this bears to modernism has also occurred to Witschi, a critic whom McMunnigall suggests as '[a] good example of the standard postmodern interpretation'(McMunigall, 2004, 338), who makes this an occasion to assert postmodernism's unique development from the earlier movement. Reading the fragmentary, non-linear nature of the narrative as 'postmodern', Witschi finds his justification in a key deviation from the modernist norm, where 'Jock's tales are self-conscious and very dynamic displays of fabulative energy; they are, in short, postmodern: they turn modernist solipsism inside out and transcend it by projecting not one single world but worlds in the plural' (Witschi, 1991, 157-8).

As this focus on ontological multiplication might suggest, Witschi's response is indebted to McHale. Whether this is a fruitful context for considering *1982, Janine* as a whole is, however, debatable. Save for two key moments, the primary ontological boundary within the text, between the worlds of Jock and Janine, holds firm throughout. This is recognized by Jock, with repeated 'hells' which mark a failed ontological excursion, where his bed transports him to his fantasy California only to leave him

'[a]lone…absolutely alone' (*J* 55) in his hotel. More than he mourns this barrier, he celebrates it, and as considered below, has his reasons for keeping worlds separate. Other ontological boundaries within the text might also be read as problematized, such as the boundary between book-as-world and book-as-text. Here the novel's typographical innovations may work in the manner McHale suggests for such techniques, annexing 'the space of the fictional universe to the spaces of other ontological strata' (McHale, 1987, 56). Gray's own comments, however, reveal more concern with the representation of Jock's experiences, where 'typographically enacted, this climax would be exciting, would surprise folk…I like surprising, but there has to be a good reason'(Acker, 2002, 56). Similarly, while the appearance in Jock's world of two figures in shades of Gray – one the author of *McGrotty and Ludmilla*, the other a Thaw-like muralist – may suggest a querying of ontological boundaries, other motivations may be more relevant. Certainly, these border-crossings are subtle in comparison with Nastler, and given the importance developed in the novel of tempering autonomous creation with social interaction, it is possible, particularly in the case of the Thaw figure, to see their co-operation within a collective production as implying a form of redemption.

The utility of Witschi's reading in terms of ontological plurality is established by his focus upon its appearance *within* Jock's mental creations, and most especially its association with his creative self-consciousness. Here several distinct sub-worlds are elaborated, from the pornographic research bureau to the near-utopia in which Jock's friend Alan survives. Writing on the novel's numerous cinematic references, Witschi takes these to indicate that 'Gray clearly shares the love of many postmodernist

writers…of the literary possibilities by [sic] drawing on the cinema for models and raw

material'(Witschi, 1991, 161). In terms of the most explicitly cinematic moment, Jock's

film-within-a-fantasy 'CAUGHT IN BARBED WIRE' (*J* 88), this trope can again be

explained through recourse to McHale's postmodernism. Here,

> representations of film and TV figure among the range of postmodernist motifs
> and strategies that might collectively be called "ontological pluralizers"…formal
> or stylistic devices and narrative motifs all designed to introduce secondary
> worlds within the world of the fiction, or to split and multiply the primary
> ontological plane. (McHale, 1992(a), 125)

Yet while Jock's film produces a tertiary ontological level, this need not

undermine ontological certainty, its cinematic nature marked from the outset. The

'BRIGHT TUNEFUL PIANO MUSIC' (*J* 87) opening the chapter may be traced to

Janine's stereo as easily as to an overdubbed soundtrack, but the latter is soon signalled

with a direction to 'cut music'(*J* 88). The close, visual focus of the narrative, open to

sudden movement between vantage points but restricted in focus at any given moment

could likewise be taken as the result of Jock's slowly imagining his world. Yet the

translation of Jock's imagination into the cinematic is signalled metaphorically within

the text, his mental eye 'cool as a camera lens, the ear of imagination as discreet as a

small microphone'(*J* 89). It is signalled, too, in its layout, the jumps of film editing

evoked in sections such as 'I look down on a patch of grass where/Janine is laid out

among her loose dark hair' (*J* 89). Most obviously, it is signalled verbally, in the

instruction to 'Cut to:'(*J* 94), and both verbally and visually when such signals take on

physical reality and 'at the top of the gate…appear the words **CAUGHT IN BARBED**

WIRE: A Superbitch Production'(*J* 88).

One possible reading of Jock's – or Gray's – desire to signal this cinematic nature is offered by Boyd, who, rather than considering ontological plurality, focuses instead on the visually-oriented nature of Jock's fantasies, a concern with appearance which leaves even sections outwith this episode reading 'like screenplays of films or a running commentary upon or verbalisation of the images on a cinema screen'(S.J. Boyd, 1991, 112). This Boyd relates to the nature of the pornographic rather than the postmodern, aphoristically summarized with the comment that *'all porn constantly aspires to the condition of movies'* (S.J. Boyd, 1991, 112). While suggesting reasons for the cinematic qualities of Jock's fantasies, this also highlights a problem in this aspiration towards the visual which leads back to the issue of ontological instability in a more interesting way. The linguistic basis of Jock's fantasies are a recurrent barrier to his achieving his aim, but one with positive repercussions. The inadequacy of the verbal, which 'can create images, but …also get in the way of them' (S.J. Boyd, 1991, 112) becomes a means by which Jock delays climax. More, Boyd seems to suggest that Jock knows this, ultimately choosing verbal over visual, creation over consummation, devising 'plot-strategies which shy away from getting down to the really nitty gritty. It is in careful setting of the scene that the real skill lies' (S.J. Boyd, 1991, 112).

Jock's care in scene-setting is repeatedly highlighted, his attention to detail extending down to Helga's sob of misery, 'which gives me, personally, no satisfaction but I need it to make her convincing' (*J* 101). Here a concern for authenticity leads to the puncturing of the illusion of realism through explicitly recognizing Jock's construction of the realistic. Similarly, Helga's dress, a further marker of the text's visual qualities, appears through an instantly revised description – 'wrenched off both

shoulders (unconvincing) wrenched off one shoulder' (*J* 93) – in a way in which neither reality nor cinematic images can be. Such revisions are linked not only to authenticity, but to Jock's personal whims – or artistic preference – from one of his harem wearing 'white satin (no) white denim (no) white suede (yes)'(*J* 24) to the most extended example of such ontological revision in the second description of Superb's date. Where these other examples of Jock's revision show the unexpected fluidity of a single world, in the case of Superb two incompatible accounts are presented separately and remain unchallenged within themselves. Unlike the ontological plurality ushered in by Jock's film, these competing realities possess no inherent hierarchy. Indeed, the author seeks to limit the possibility of ontological competition precisely where we might most expect it – his cinematic *trompe l'oeil* – while allowing it elsewhere. As we have seen, this is established through explicitly representing the cinematic events as fictional, a move which also lessens the threat to ontological stability posed by trans-world entities. In addition to its applications for Janine herself – here both a fantasy character and an actress playing a similarly named character in a sub-fantasy – this conceit also defuses any ontological challenge from two of the films' minor characters, Cupid and Hugo, of whom Jock laments 'I am sorry they only appear in that short film' (*J* 103). This is revealed as a recent development, when, describing the genesis of his fantasies, Jock places the pair at its centre. While the truth of their shifting role is their relegation from this primary reality to its filmic sub-world, this is signalled in terms of a metaphor which both preserves the illusion of reality and re-asserts ontological compatibility with *Barbed Wire*, that 'Cupid and Hugo didn't know how to work with a big organisation so I dropped them. Last I heard they were working as extras in a blue movie'(*J* 119). While

utilizing this conceit to preserve the compatibility of his secondary and tertiary realities, Jock also introduces further trans-world identities which stress their fictionality. Jock's earliest fantasies are dated as 'occurring' when '*No Orchids for Miss Blandish* topped the bestseller charts' (*J* 119). It is unlucky for Cupid, Hugo and Big Momma that 'the trio were not readers' (*J* 119), for what we know of them suggests that they would enjoy this novel. Or perhaps their ignorance of *No Orchids* is for the best, since a basic summary of its plot – 'Crazy hopes of a glamorous, rich, colourful life and then abduction, rape, slavery' (*L* 83) – would prove eerily familiar. And if, following Rima, they took this as mere realism, since 'life for most women is just that, a performance in a male sex fantasy' (*L* 83), a closer inspection might prove more troubling, especially for Big Momma who, as Bernstein suggests, bears an uncanny resemblance to *No Orchid*'s 'big, grossly fat and lumpy' (Chase, 1973, 35) Ma Grisson (Bernstein, 1999, 76).

The content of these earlier fantasies, in which Momma's gang abduct a woman for sexual abuse, reinforce this problematic trans-world identity through manifesting the recurrent events of Jock's fantasy world in a form, and on a scale, which more closely matches the events of *No Orchids*. In doing this, the question of ontological plurality is also raised in a different sense. Through including himself as a member of this gang, and translating the gradual elaboration of his fantasies into the growth of his 'organization', Jock attempts to normalize them as reality, a move again marked by attempts at establishing realism. Where this concern leads to continual revision it again works against its supposed aim, an effect perhaps recognized by Jock in his bracketing of revisions, as with the self-criticism that '(You couldn't do that, you can't even dance.) Shut up'(*J* 119-20). A further such correction which might prove less problematic – a

slip of the tongue, rather than a misconstructed world – becomes more troubling by foregrounding the limitations on such attempts at stabilizing Jock's fantasies. Here he describes how, early on, 'Cupid and Hugo ganged up on Big Momma and forced her to please them in a great many ways while Janine wandered about naked making cups of tea for people. I mean coffee. Americans don't drink tea'(*J* 119). That the gang have made a beverage choice which doesn't conform to their national stereotype has only a negligibly troubling effect, yet is corrected. That Momma's gang abduct Janine the Hitchhiker while previously Hollis' organization (including Momma) have abducted Janine the actress (and later Frank will abduct Janine who 'was never an actress'(*J* 318)) is far more problematic. The extended revision seen in the alternative tales of Superb continues throughout as worlds and characters multiply and fragment. As Jock notes of Momma during such a transition, '[s]ince I abolished the police station sequence I have left her nowhere. I will compensate by putting her in two places at once'(*J* 156). The effect, as Witschi suggests, is of both ontological and characterological instability, where Janine 'is not a character in the proper sense of the word as she represents a plurality of several female heroines, rather than just a particular one' (Witschi, 1991, 158).

No Orchids' influence on Jock's fantasies further highlights their constructed nature. In his initial confusion as to where he lies, Jock is sad to narrow down possibilities from 'Belgium, the U.S.A., Russia' (*J* 11) to the more parochial 'Peebles or Selkirk' (*J* 12). Saddest of all, perhaps, to reason that '[a]ll American hotel bedrooms have bibles so I am definitely not in the States'(*J* 11), for as he later comments '[s]een from Selkirk America is a land of endless pornographic possibility' (*J* 17). In that

portion of the narrative when he is closest to entering his fantasy world – not as its author but as chairman of the Syndicate representing it – this same distinction operates. Here Jock remains a 'Lowland Scottish electrical technician who is sometimes seen at small family hotels in Tillicoultry'(*J* 123). The home of Jock's fantasies is always America. More, an America which, in addition to every hotel room holding a Bible – and all Americans drinking coffee – is filled with aspiring actresses, backwoods outlaws and Western Sheriffs. Populated by cultural stereotypes, envisioned by a man who experiences America only in representation, this is an America more really American because more imagined than real. Pondering this, Jock concludes that his sexual imaginings are equated with America 'because my most precious fantasies have been American, from Cowboys and Indians and Tarzan till…*The Dirty Dozen*? *Apocalypse Now*?' (*J* 17). Thus the boy who discovered sexuality from a publicity still becomes a man who imagines Janine with a 'sulky red mouth like Jane Russell in *The Outlaw*'(*J* 153) and plans to 'give Superb Jane Russell's body and face'(*J* 53). This offers a further motivating factor to the fantasies' cinematic nature, mimicking the form of the originals which shaped his sexuality. Yet the verbal component of Jock's fantasies is also valorized, and in his early exposure to the likes of *No Orchids* – when visual stimuli were few and 'commercial television was just a gleam in John Logie Baird's eye'(*J* 119) – possible reasons for this can be seen. The self-conscious revision which so often aspires towards authenticity seeks not only the authentically American, but authentically American language. Having had a character employ the word 'arse', Jock corrects himself – 'Stop. This is America. Go Back'(*J* 93) – and replaces it with 'ass'. 'Is gear an American word?' (*J* 45), he wonders, and, unsettled by his linguistic limits, worries that

'Walkie-talkie sounds British and out of date. There must be a newer name for it which I can't remember. Disconcerting'(*J* 38). This same concern does not, however, extend beyond his abilities with (American) English, for as he happily notes, 'I don't know French. Why quote what Stroud says'(*J* 23). Reasons for this lack of concern are dual and inter-connected; it is America which his language must evoke, and American language with which he is familiar. Describing how, in his early fantasies, Cupid was 'just a kid' and Momma 'the brains of the outfit' who together 'pulled off a department store payroll heist', Jock notes that '[i]n those days that sort of language came easily to me' (*J* 119). Not only the early forms of fantasies, but his linguistic abilities are thus strongly connected to *No Orchids*. Earlier, he points out his deployment of similar language as indicating his fantasies' location, where such dialogue as 'Broads. Real Smooth routines. Honey.' shows that '[t]hese people are American. Years out of date, perhaps, but American'(*J* 17). That they are 'years out of date' signals not only the formative role of such literature in Jock's youth, but the very fact of their literary basis. 'These people' are not only American, but the inhabitants of American pulp fiction, a genre which provides the plots to which they conform and the language in which they are created. Noting that 'sweet is a word I use too often'(*J* 46), and singing his short paean to 'astride astride, lovely word, astride'(*J* 47), Jock makes clear that language possesses intrinsic effects. Perhaps, then, it is not only the events of his fantasies which arouse Jock, but the very language of pulp fiction.

An author who creates worlds made unstable through flaunting their fictionality, who self-consciously engages with creation, and for whom the language he uses is as much his subject matter as what it describes; in this reading it would seem that Jock

himself is a postmodernist author. And just as, in the area of sexuality, some critics have

extended conclusions drawn from Jock's fantasies to include Gray, so too has the image

of Jock the postmodern fabulist been applied to his creator. Thus Marshall Walker

prefaces his response to *1982, Janine* with an observation on Gray which would

certainly fit with Jock, that

> [i]n the range of his imagined objects …there are two common factors. The first
> is the insecure identity of the author; the second is the simultaneous flaunting and
> evasion of that problem in the joy of making 'imagined objects'… with
> language. (Walker, 1991, 38)

Yet, if a reading of *1982, Janine* in these terms would protect it from the shame of being

pornography, it clearly also opens it to the 'shame' of being postmodern. As seen in

chapter one, Gray's own reasons for refuting his postmodernism are various; particularly

interesting here is the charge that postmodern readings of Gray's texts risk de-

emphasizing the political content of his fiction in favour of the narratological. The

remainder of this chapter will attempt to re-insert Jock's 'technical' postmodernism

within the context of Gray's political concerns, showing how both the form and content

of his interior monologue relates to concerns ultimately greater than the narratological.

Given that Gray's political concerns manifest in recurrent tropes throughout his

writing, locating the political dimension to *1982, Janine* is in part a question of situating

the novel within his oeuvre. Perhaps most interesting here are the similarities which it

bears to an often overlooked sub-canon within Gray's works, those novels which he has

recycled from his dramatic material.[24] One of the clearest such parallels, with *Something

Leather*, has already been mentioned. Moving beyond the pornographic, similarities are

also seen with two further adapted works, *McGrotty and Ludmilla* and *The Fall of*

Kelvin Walker. Here the disreputable genre of relationships used to convey a broader message concerning human interaction is not pornography, but romance, for as Bernstein writes of this pairing,

> though both narratives work ostensibly as love stories, they are concerned with love only in the most hackneyed way and that only as it acts to serve the larger plots concerning the internecine corruption of the media or the government bureaucracy. (Bernstein, 1999, 87)

As part of their meditation on power, these two novels likewise share in *1982, Janine*'s concern with performance, and in particular language. It is this thematic similarity, in combination with their formal dissimilarity, which suggests comparison with *1982, Janine* as particularly illuminating. A key feature of Gray's recycled material is, Bernstein suggests, an absence of 'some of the elements that put him on the literary map at that time' (Bernstein, 1999, 19), elements which may include both fantasy and self-conscious technical innovation. Thus they are 'more starkly realistic'(Bernstein, 1999, 19) than his other work, and if this comment is necessarily relative – requiring a comparison with Nastler and Dragonhide to describe a 'fable' (*KW*) or a 'pantomime' (*ML*) as realistic – it nevertheless suggests an important difference in their respective linguistic explorations. This is not to suggest that the narrative strategies of *Kelvin* and *McGrotty* show no degree of self-consciousness. Names, for example, are pressed into non-realist signification in a similar – if less densely complicated – fashion to that later seen in *Poor Things*. Paratexts are also utilized, including cover blurbs, epigraphs and appendices. Within the events of these novels, too, are extended intertextual parallels which these paratexts help to reveal, such as the ironic reversal of colonial travel writing contained in *Kelvin*'s chapter titles, or its debt to Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*.

The most obvious such parallel, meanwhile – *McGrotty*'s status as revision of *Aladdin* – is recalled within the text at such moments as Ludmilla's first appearance, resembling a character 'in a Cinderella pantomime' (*ML* 30) or McGrotty's assertion that 'I don't go to pantomimes'(*ML* 76). If such techniques suggest the self-consciousness so often ascribed to *1982, Janine*, however, the realism Bernstein perceives nevertheless largely stands unchallenged, and these few metafictional moments are peripheral to the texts' main concerns. As shall be explored later, these novels' concern with their own construction in language is both contiguous with, and subjugated to, a more general concern with language and fabrication, one whose situation within the context of our own world is clear.

Exemplifying the potential utility of a 'postmodernist' reading of a text's engagement with language, yet with little room to fall into 'postmodern' narratological solipsism, a consideration of these themes' appearance in the two shorter novels thus suggests itself as a useful context in which to explore *1982, Janine*. Further, *1982, Janine* displays the same contiguity between the effects of language in a general sense and its immediate role in the construction of the narrative, the difference being that here their emphases would appear reversed. While this relationship may suggest quite different priorities, there are other features to which this may be traced, such as Jock's dual role as focalising consciousness and self-conscious artist. Certainly, Jock repeatedly signals an autobiographical context for the development of his fantasies which draws on both previous texts and external reality. He also suggests that the mastery of language in which he prides himself has its effects, not only within his fantasies, but in real-world interaction. Jock's affair with Sontag is thus characterized as a contest over and through

language, the 'many little verbal triumphs' (*J* 91) which she scores in their conversations leading him to fantasies of physically silencing her. The same linguistic struggles appear with Denny, although here Jock holds the position of power. In retrospect, he devalues such victories, conceding that 'people with a confident tongue can tie up people like Denny in all kinds of knots. This is supposed to show our superior intelligence, but since it has nothing to do with truth or decency it merely demonstrates a special sort of skill' (*J* 229).

Denny's linguistic failures are partly responsible for the ambivalent mixture of affection and derision which marks the younger Jock's attitude towards his 'sturdy wee compliant pony' (*J* 175). Like Big Momma's gang, Denny can admit 'I don't read books' (*J* 106), and if Jock 'laughed and cuddled her'(*J* 175) for this ignorance, he also rejects her for the same reason. Here it is not so much ignorance which is rejected, but its class associations. That Denny is more linguistically capable than Jock suspects, at least in interpretation, can be seen in her penetration of his speech to find the 'DESTRUCTION LANGUAGE'(*J* 244) underneath. Attempting to placate her with optimistic lies, Jock has arrived at the unspoken truth that 'you are not in my class. You are just the wee hoor I keep at home' (*J* 244). Yet Jock's later judgement on this episode, that she 'was sharper than me' (*J* 244) may apply to more than her ability to read hidden sentiment. Certainly, it is not a sentiment she would concede herself, for all that a self-evaluation as 'hoor' (*J* 229) has previously been forced on her by Jock's linguistic dexterity. Rather, while accepting both her ignorance and working-class status, she sees no barrier between herself and Jock, so that, he realizes, 'Denny, who lacked proper parents and education and could not even dress properly, thought she and I were

the same sort of person' (*J* 216). Ironically, with his questionable paternity, repressive education and notably eccentric wardrobe, each of these judgements might be applied to Jock himself. Denny's superior sharpness, then, may lie in seeing what Jock cannot – yet – face, that he is not what he yearns to be, 'A FREE SPIRIT, someone posh who could flirt with posh girls' (*J* 245). Here Jock postpones this truth by immersion in fantasy, just as he will in his hotel. Where the elder Jock's fantasies are internal, young Jock, in leaving Denny for the theatre company, finds an inter-personal reconception of his identity. As with America, however, his perception of the theatre gains its glamour through fantasy, and this through linguistic dexterity. The ease with which he is considered posh stems, he learns, from 'the confident speech-style I had learned from my father…and a lunatic English teacher'(*J* 246). Similarly, the girls he flirts with are not posh but 'seemed posh to me because they dressed well and had the confident speech-style they had learned at drama college'(*J* 246).

As the learned nature of this linguistic confidence might suggest, the interface of class and language introduces the theme of education. The same relationship is sketched in Denny's excuse that 'I cannae help being ignorant. My education was rubbish' (*J* 175). Yet Denny's is not a failed education, but a successful one geared towards different ends. 'Your school did not teach you to speak or think,' Jock explains,

> it taught you to sit in rows and be quiet…The people who manage you… have been taught to make brazen speeches in firm clear voices, THAT is FAR more important…because RHETORIC RULES,O.K.? (*J* 215)

Kelvin Walker's Jake draws a similar comparison between one system geared towards manufacturing submission and another toward mastery, leaving the majority

so afraid of running their own lives that they feel frightened when there's no-one to bully them. So we get a gang of bullies…And what makes them so successful? Their confidence. And where do they get it? At home, and at school and at university. (*KW* 57)

Education cannot be removed from the question of linguistic mastery. Jock's dismissal of the class system is explicitly couched in terms which recall the linguistic heterogeneity it requires, 'the cleverest piece of frustrating daftness since the Tower of Babel, it benefits nobody but the few at the top' (*J* 246).[25] The public school of *Something Leather* primarily teaches class superiority, its 'one great falsehood: that the pupils are finer than pupils of all other schools and much finer than people who could never pay fees' (*SL* 27-8). The main means by which this is inculcated is through tutoring in Received Pronunciation. One pupil, 'New Money' may well be their equal when judged by the criteria of fees, but is inferior by speech. 'The uvers giggle whenever I opens me mouf' (*SL* 30), she complains to her headmistress, only to be told she 'can hardly blame them for that' (*SL* 30), and that it is her accent, not their attitude, which must change.

Given its national-, as well as class- associations, this concern is of special importance to Scottish writers as, in Craig's words '[i]t is not by our colour…that we have stood to be recognised as incomplete within the British context, it is by the colour of our vowels' (Craig, 1996, 12). Here not only the unequal distribution of power across accents comes into effect but, following Scots' demise as an independent language, lexical and grammatical differences also. As lexical constructions in their own right, this issue is not only a recurrent theme of Scottish texts, but an inevitable aspect of their form. Even the deployment of traditional narrative strategies betrays an implicit stance

on linguistic power relations. As Kelman has suggested, the traditional means of representing dialect works to reaffirm the superiority of 'standard' English, where working-class speech is 'a cross between semaphore and morse code… a strange hotchpotch of bad phonetics and horrendous spelling'(Kelman, 1992(c), 82). Affirming the power of one language over another, this strategy also accords one social group power over language, where 'none of [the working classes] knew how to talk' (Kelman, 1992(c), 82) while the upper class show '[a]n incredible mastery of language…the narrative belonged to them and them alone'(Kelman, 1992(c), 82). Such is the extent of Kelman's innovation, and the context in which he overtly grounds it, that at least one commentator has tentatively suggested him as the originating pioneer of the Scottish backlash, the 'first writer really to privilege the people's speech by taking it out of inverted commas and placing at the top of the novel's hierarchy of discourses' (McMillan, 1995, 85). Yet McMillan's claim is perhaps itself a result of the reductive institutionalization which she traces in the wake of Kelman's international success, where 'it is, of course, in the urban discourses of James Kelman and his disciples that most critics North and South of the border have found the new centre of Scottishness' (McMillan, 1995, 84). A less creditable parallel to this tendency might be seen in the fetishization of the now jet-washed Glasgow as City of Culture, a trend criticized by Gray, in *Something Leather*, where the place it holds for Kelman and his 'disciples' is made clear. It was doubtless their fashionability which lead *Something Leather*'s Linda to read these novels by which she typifies her adopted home's culture, 'written in phonetic Scotch about people with names like *Auld Shug*'(*SL* 174).[26] Just as it is her own

more privileged position in Britain's linguistic hierarchy which leads her to discard them as 'leav[ing] [her] cold'(*SL* 174).

If Linda's simplistic reduction of Scottish literature suggests a blindness to the importance of Kelman's project, it also reveals her ignorance of the tradition of which it is part. For all his stylistic innovations, Kelman is but one innovator among many in a procession of writers whose sole unifying trait is that their often radically different techniques stem from a desire to confront the novels' traditional hierarchies of dialect, from Grassic Gibbon's attempts to blend a unified chorus of Doric and standard English, to Matthew Fitt, whose *But n Ben A-Go-Go* is cast in synthetic Scots. Standing within this eclectic company, but outwith the stereotyped school Linda evokes, is her own author, who presents a further alternative strategy. Here the division between a central, standard English, voice and phonetically rendered dialogue goes unchallenged. Yet among the different voices so included – in effect, excluded – is the accent of the upper-classes. For all that she claims to teach 'the language of Shakespia and Docta Johnson'(*SL* 31) the headmistress is shown to teach a dialect like any other, its status attained purely through being 'the main dialect of the British rich' (*SL* 31).

The power-relationships between narrativized dialects seem to go largely unchallenged within the form of *1982, Janine*, an apparent oddity given that this form, an interior monologue in the mind of an intelligent Scot, is in many ways similar to that which has proved so fruitful for Kelman.[27] With his repeated use of a certain word Jock joins with Kelman in breaking a linguistic taboo often over-emphasized in responses to the latter's work, where 'every second word seems to be fuck, though hardly any fucking happens' (*SL* 174). Yet here fucking clearly does happen – if only remembered,

imagined or metaphorical – and Gray's use of the term seems to have little in common with the dialect mimeticism which urges its frequency in Kelman. The mixture of registers which goes through the mind of *A Disaffection*'s Doyle is similarly absent for Jock, who for the most part thinks in standard English. Rather than read this as a failure to engage with the issue entirely, however, we must take this as part of Gray's response. Given Jock's comments, this, and related issues are certainly visible within the novel, and it is this thematic engagement, coupled with Jock's linguistic self-consciousness, which may explain Gray's strategy. Aware of language's class connotations, and fearful of his own identity, Jock tells us that 'People who talk give themselves away all the time. I don't talk'(*J* 13). In his own head, where he can do nothing but, he constructs a narrative which cannot give him away. Although he is Scottish, he can talk standard English, just as, if he is in Selkirk he can still talk American. Above all he can display the linguistic dexterity which marks a master of language. That he is, in effect, repressing his own language is suggested in the way that, after he recognizes this situation, another form of repression is overcome. Jock has cried only once as an adult, but by the end of the novel he is in tears again, and a 'new man'(*J* 340) because of it, and these tears – a four-page column of 'Ach's (*J* 337-340) – seem particularly Scottish ones.[28] This link is also made by Hislop, whose reign of violence produces both repressions through classroom scenes of a type which has repeatedly offered fiction a means of dramatizing the status of Scots.[29] At a moment of crisis, Jock recalls the poetic English bolstering his linguistic confidence, with a 'thank you Hislop'(*J* 174) and even '[h]elp me, Hislop' (*J* 175). Yet in the face of true catharsis, this language, with its connotations of repression, must be replaced, signalling toward Gray's assertion that

'[t]he kind of speech we're taught not to use at school is the kind that we tend to revert to in moments of strong emotion'(E. Donaldson, 1984, 35).[30] A similar tension between the inculcation of correct speech habits at all cost and a fear of education's repressive ends is seen in Jock's later valorization of articulacy when he tells a speech therapist 'if you've ever cured one poor kid of a stammer you've done more human good than I've ever done in my whole career'(*J* 327). Yet the closest he has come to 'one single brave good unselfish action'(*J* 334), the memory of which prompts his tears, was to stand up to Hislop's attempt to violently 'cure' a boy's stammer with the charge 'You shouldnae have done that' (*J* 336). As one reviewer observes, it is telling that this 'shouldnae' represents a further 'creepin back o the Scots, in the period when fowk like Hislop wad lash the leid oot' (Vettese, 2004, 122). The language of Jock's authentic emotions is here the language of his resistance, not only towards this punishment, but by extension those beatings by which Hislop attempts to cure the speech defect of Scots in a boy whose 'employment of local slang is either a conscious or unconscious effort to destroy communication between the provinces of a once mighty empire' (*J* 84).

As might be expected from their characterization as formally conservative, neither *McGrotty* nor *Kelvin Walker* show this engagement with the status of Britain's dialects, unless it is in the explanatory footnotes appended to Scots in *McGrotty,* which reinforce the power relation implicit in traditional conventions. In so doing, these glosses also bolster McGrotty's position as outsider, for if he is socially an outsider in London, he is also a outsider in the narrative which describes him. Indeed, these two milieu seem convergent, as when '[t]he young typist who shared the room clearly thought him an intruder and found, or pretended to find, his accent unintelligible' (*ML*

28). This convergence of exclusion by language and exclusion from language clearly recalls some of Jock's anxieties, a parallel brought home in Anne Varty's observation that '[l]inguistic competence in RP betokens power in the marble corridors and McGrotty is immediately isolated as an incompetent inferior by virtue of his speech' (Varty, 1990, 34). A key point here is that the stratifying dimension of language depends not merely on accent, but the sum total of linguistic ability. The Minister of Social Stability is shown to speak standard English, but his uncertain position in the political hierarchy is nevertheless registered linguistically. In a telling failure of his vocabulary, Bill notes how Harbinger 'owned the finest collection of Florentine incunabula outside the British museum. I always meant to ask him what incunabula were and now – too late!'(*ML* 64). This ignorance of the books Harbinger collected is matched by an ignorance of that which he collated, Harbinger's report on the network of global power. That, thanks to McGrotty's switch, the 'report' the Minister receives consists solely of blank paper, prompts a further admission of linguistic defeat. Knowing that the prime minister – her superiority confirmed by her 'power of language'(*ML* 72) – will demand an explanation, he will 'tell her the truth, for it is the only thing I know'(*ML* 70). It is up to McGrotty to provide 'the lie which will make her think me honest' (*ML* 70).

It is odd, then, that the marker of linguistic incompetence seized upon by Varty is that 'the bungling Minister of Social Stability… misuses language by mixing metaphors, as do other lower minions' (Varty, 1990, 34). If mixing metaphors is a sign of incompetence, it is not Bill whose failure is marked most strongly, but Shots, whose dialogue abounds with such formations as 'you have bitten the hand of the goose that laid the golden eggs' (*ML* 102). Yet, as McGrotty explains, Shots is 'the most persuasive

talker I've heard' (*ML* 63), and this supposedly incompetent speaker is at the heart of the

novel's hierarchy of linguistic power. In this respect Varty is correct in observing that

Shots' 'abuse of power is marked by his abuse of language' (Varty, 1990, 34), for it is

the effect of language, not simply its correctness, which equates with power in this

novel, and often language must be misused to achieve its effects. Such misuse can be

represented in terms of meaning, as when Shots dubs 'stealing' 'an unscientific

word'(*ML* 48). It can also appear as a deviation from linguistic norms, as with his

deployment of Scots in an attempt to enlist McGrotty. Ultimately, the abuses of

language through which power operates are those represented by the Minister's blank

paper and its inevitable response; the ability to withhold the communication of reality,

and to construct alternatives in its place. In short, the ability to lie.

The Ministry of Social Stability, where this language-manipulation takes place,

repeats a semi-euphemism previously seen in *Lanark*, and like its namesake seeks to

'discipline, depress, pacify or…bribe the poorer half of the British electorate' (*ML* 11).

Where, in line with that novel's metaphoric economy of time and energy, the focus of

Lanark's Ministry was to enforce stasis, the ministry of *McGrotty* has a concern

similarly tailored to its novel. As we are told by its opening sentence, '[t]he ministry of

social stability was created at the end of the nineteenth century to counteract the damage

done by the spread of literacy and the granting of the vote to all male householders' (*ML*

11), in other words countering an expanded availability of both linguistic and political

power. In part, this disenfranchisement from language refers to a reduction of the

masses' ability to receive communication. Dreaming of McGrotty's becoming Prime

Minister, Ludmilla equates the performance of power with the withholding of

information, anticipating her joy to see him 'refuse to answer his first question' (*ML* 119). Similarly, the Minister explains to Harbinger that '[w]e, not you, are paid to suppress the facts' (*ML* 42). This last comment reveals the irony of his situation. The Harbinger report, which he must suppress, can be approached as a more detailed description of *Lanark*'s Creature, a fuller anatomy of a conspiracy. As a further example of Gray's capitalism-as-conspiracy trope, Bernstein's comment that '[a]nyone who reaps a personal benefit from the system Harbinger describes needs a detailed understanding of its ongoing operation'(Bernstein, 1999, 89) is out of place, for, like all such conspiracies, ignorance of its totality and unwitting complicity go hand-in-hand; even Shots, a beneficiary who 'had thought he knew at least half the contents of the Report'(*ML* 96) is shocked by what he reads. What does depend on knowledge of the conspiracy is the ability to *control* it. Genie to McGrotty's Aladdin, this textual artefact gains its ability to grant wishes through the power which words have over politics, the report 'a chain to bind the chainers' (*ML* 97). In one sense, the power of the text is similar to that feared upon the rise of literacy, that, if the majority could truly 'read' events, stability would be threatened, where '[i]f the information in that document leaks out, every piece of money in the world…will become worthless paper'(*ML* 62). Thus the minister's manipulation of language is a success – if only a partial one – turning the report into ash and allowing the conspiracy's survival. Those who properly read the report can also manipulate the conspiracy to their own ends, and here the Minister's linguistic powers fail. At first unable to read it because it has been replaced with blank paper, the Minister will protest that he has 'no wish to read it' (*ML* 72), effectively

ending his political career. It is left to McGrotty, who 'can remember everything I've ever read'(*ML* 109) to fully internalize its text.

The conspiracy requires not only the silencing of information, but its replacement with disinformation. Indeed, false appearances surround the Report's suppression, originally absent because McGrotty 'only pretended to steal it' (*ML* 92), its final destruction false not only in that it survives in McGrotty's memory, but because the fire it is thrown in is 'not a real coal fire' (*ML* 116), stirred with a 'purely decorative' (*ML* 116) poker. Yet McGrotty, arguing that the fire 'will burn paper…and it did' (*ML* 116), has grasped a truth which he has been moving towards throughout the novel. On his first visit to Shots' office, the naïve outsider who claims 'I don't read books' (*ML* 18), mistakes the false fire for a real one, just as he accepts Shots' 'elaborate stories' (*ML* 19). His ability to read strengthened, McGrotty can now tell appearance from reality, and knows how one can affect the other; Shots' sentimental lies temporarily create the bond they falsely describe, the pretence of stealing the report equals the reality, and a decorative fire burns paper. In tandem with this comes the development of his own fabulative ability. The McGrotty who complains 'But that's not true!'(*ML* 47), will end up both Prime Minister and 'Liar!'(*ML* 124).

Ludmilla is central to McGrotty's education in false appearances. When the two first meet 'neither quite believed the reality of who they saw'(*ML* 30), although McGrotty's appearance 'wasnae deliberate' (*ML* 31), incongruous rather than inauthentic. It is at this meeting that Ludmilla is likened to a pantomime character, although on other occasions she is equally an actress, whose 'makeup suggested she wore none at all'(*ML* 86). A theatrical costume, her clothes falsely create her intended

effect, the impression of bare feet evoked by sandals, her clothes 'not dirty canvas but unevenly dyed suede exquisitely tailored'(*ML* 30). The instant fascination which Ludmilla exerts over McGrotty provides him with an illustration of the effectiveness of false appearances. Moreover, this fascination is the result of her artistry in more than one respect, for '[o]n noticing the time, wealth and art she had used to create it he was dazzled still more'(*ML* 30).

Ludmilla is quick to dissuade McGrotty that she is an artist, and equally eager to distance herself from politics; in truth, she is intimately implicated in both. The studio flat which prompts McGrotty's reasoning so may not be active in any artistic sense, but placed 'between a commercial art gallery and a video rental agency'(*ML* 89), it works as a thematic marker of manufactured appearances. Further, it is in this studio that McGrotty reflects on his trip with Ludmilla, a trip which introduces him to shopping, where the '[s]quandering of wealth upon mere appearance – wealth which could have fed, housed and healed people – had given him an erection at times'(*ML* 89-90). Fiscal resources for the alteration of appearance are the preserve of the upper classes, just as linguistic resources are represented as such elsewhere. This association between clothing and sexual excitement recalls Jock's fascination with his fantasy cast's wardrobe, and also points towards June of *Something Leather*, whose 'only obsession is commonplace – she likes dressing well' (*SL* 9).[31] The commonplace nature of this obsession is brought into question when June's care for her appearance attains a similarly eroticized element, culminating in her liberation through the recreation of her appearance as the 'Revenge Angel'(*SL* 220). It is this transformation, an exercise in domination similar to Jock's fantasies, which has led critics to question both the novel's realism and its morality.

Interestingly, McGrotty's transformation bears similar connotations, which, either from its less explicit – or less extreme – nature, or from its subject's masculinity, has not received such criticism. Not only is his response sexual, it forms part of his fantasy 'of being thoroughly seduced by a lovely, cold-hearted and utterly depraved, upper-class English girl'(*ML* 91). The element of passivity in both transformations can also be read outwith this sexual context. If June's bondage is an aspect of her sexual domination, it also marks her as a created object, a passive canvas for a trio including both an artist and a 'fairy godmother' (*SL* 20). Her re-making marks a liberation, but a liberation by another, a notion contained in the description of her transformed appearance as 'a discarded doll look but look of *expensive* doll discarded because it is a *dangerous plaything able to act for itself* (*SL* 225). In a similar fashion, McGrotty is Ludmilla's plaything, the result of her artistry. As a member of the working-classes, McGrotty's identity, Ludmilla claims, is 'nothing' (*ML* 107). Yet a nothing with potential, which, 'with a bit of extra push … could become anything' (*ML* 107). June's liberation is ultimately political, engendering 'a feminist socialist revolution' (*SL* 247). Similarly, it is the remaking of McGrotty which, combined with his knowledge of the Report, brings him political power. The linguistic markers of McGrotty's outsider origins now work to his advantage, since '[t]he Scottish National Party was again in an emergent phase and a Scottish Prime Minister of Britain showed the Scots that their picturesque promontory was not totally manipulated by foreigners' (*ML* 121-2). In his new outfit McGrotty has a 'trustworthy appearance'(*ML* 114), again reaffirmed by his language, 'the kind of Scot folk instinctively trusted' (*ML* 122). Like the lie which makes its teller seem honest,

McGrotty's carefully calculated appearance and speech habits mean that '[o]n television he looked and sounded guileless' (*ML* 122).

On the question of artifice, Kelvin falls somewhere between McGrotty and Ludmilla. On arrival in London he appears as clean a canvas as McGrotty, with a 'blank, nearly characterless face'(*KW* 1), 'as naked of past history as Adam before God on the sixth day of creation' (*KW* 51). Yet already there are indications that he, too, has been shaped, less here in terms of his physical appearance – although both his origins ('a tartan tie'(*KW* 1)) and aspirations (hair combed 'in the style of Adolf Hitler'(*KW* 1)) might be read in this – than in his character. Fittingly, these indications precede Kelvin's arrival in three paratexts, the first of which '[i]n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1), identifies his Calvinist background. Moreover, it points towards the specifically linguistic nature of Kelvin's indoctrination. In one sense, this can be seen in the subconscious Calvinism expressed in his speech, for if Kelvin has rejected Christianity, he nevertheless continues to employ its phraseology. More broadly, however, the power of the word has a field of reference which transcends Christianity, its full significance lying, as Elidh Whiteford suggests, in 'the power of narrative to give shape and interpretative frameworks to cultures' (Whiteford, 1997, 268). For Murray, *Kelvin Walker* is 'an extraordinarily accomplished brief treatment of one of the most potent Scottish archetypes'(Murray, 1985, 5) and if this 'wee Scotch laddie just arrived in London to take us all over'(*KW* 21) goes about his task with the dour self-assurance of the archetypal elect, his is a project which can similarly be described in terms of secular alternatives to the Calvinist textual framework. Thus the second of the novel's epigraphs suggest Kelvin as a further archetype, the

'Scotsman on the make' while the contents page recalls the imperial project and sets the events of the novel in a pattern borrowed from colonial adventure fiction. On arrival in London, it is to texts – a 'notebook, a street map of London and a guide to your transport system' (*KW* 1) and a copy of *The Times* – that Kelvin turns in order to orient himself to the city, just as the word of God previously oriented him within the universe. Most interestingly, even his liberation from Calvinism is represented in textual terms, his epiphany coming as he 'sheltered in the public library, and there discovered…the sublime Ingersol' (*KW* 27).

Kelvin's supposed liberation from the word of God by the words of men, initially by Ingersol but more extensively by Nietzsche, is a site of tension throughout the novel, not least in his final recapitulation. His central borrowing from Nietzsche is an apprehension of the universe's mutability, 'that since there was no longer a God to give shape and purpose to life it was necessary for the few who could face this fact to take the responsibility themselves' (*KW* 28). Yet in some respects Kelvin's universe is as ordered as his father's, with these texts installed in place of religion. His liberators are accorded unexpected power which, if mental rather than spiritual, is still clearly textual rather than physical; as he will later realize, 'it's queer that something as physical as love can change our feelings about life. I only thought ideas could do that…only Colonel Ingersol and Frederick Nietzsche have done for me what you have done' (*KW* 60). Nietzsche as prophet thus dominates much of Kelvin's conversation, and as one who 'approve[s] of élites' (*KW* 22), he finds in Nietzsche an alternative elect, his membership of which is just as sure, his future 'certain because I live by will, not emotions'(*KW* 46).

The contradiction within Kelvin's recreation of his faith stems from one relic of his upbringing fundamentally at odds with this project. As with Ludmilla, Kelvin makes claims concerning his artistry – or lack thereof – which seemingly contradict his actions. Unlike Ludmilla, this denial is not only stated, but valorized, in Kelvin's assertion that 'I have no artistic talent at all, I'm glad to say' (*KW* 8), an attitude which recurs throughout the novel. Not only does Kelvin claim to 'know nothing of art'(*KW* 22), he 'distrust[s]'(*KW* 66) it, and while 'not opposed to art' (*KW* 63), finds science 'greatly superior'(*KW* 63). What leads Kelvin to deny artist status is something like the traditional Calvinist equation between art and lies, which survives in him despite claims of nihilism. In complement to this, Kelvin makes several assertions of his own difference which raise the fraudulence of representation as a necessary contrast. He asserts his fundamental honesty, but recognizes the limitations placed on this by his entry into representation. Accepting a role as a television interviewer, he claims 'I think I can play that part with the minimum of hypocrisy' (*KW* 74). Ultimately, even his personal self-expression is marked by this contrast between the fraudulence of representation and the honesty of Kelvin, since, he asserts, 'If I am dishonest it's my words that are wrong, not the feelings' (*KW* 82).

Despite this introspective honesty, Kelvin fails to engage with the fundamental truth of the matter, that however honest the pre-social Kelvin may be, he is only ever apprehended through filters of representation. Making claim to the same naïve authenticity as McGrotty, Kelvin comments that 'My manners are clean, but not very polished yet' (*KW* 10). He, his manners and mannerisms are, if clean, certainly not blank, having been polished by the textual frameworks underlying his culture. In terms

of his own self-fashioning, this polishing process is just as extensive. As he disembarks

from his train, Kelvin wears shoes which are 'slightly worn but beautifully polished'

(*KW* 1), and, his case filled with 'clothes hangers, clothes brushes and shoe brushes'

(*KW* 32), he clearly intends to keep his appearance that way. Kelvin is already aware of

the lesson learned by McGrotty, that power is attained by the manipulation of

appearances. When his resources are limited to the contents of his case, Kelvin polishes.

Given greater resources, he transforms more extensively. The link established in

McGrotty between the possession of wealth and the ability to alter physical appearance

here finds further significance. Arriving in London, Kelvin ponders the differences

between wealth in the capital and in provincial cities. While the latter also contain

money, it 'seemed a slower substance…Those owning it had not been liberated by it'

(*KW* 3). In London, in contrast, 'money had accumulated to a point where it had flashed

into wealth, and wealth was free, swift, reckless, mercuric' (*KW* 3). At least for a while,

the wealth of London similarly liberates Kelvin, and the manner of this liberation is to

take on the form of wealth itself. The experience which prompted Gray to conceive the

play, 'the freedom of feeling that because no Londoner understood me, I might, with a

bit of push, become…anybody' (Acker, 2002, 50-1) here reaches an extreme conclusion,

and Kelvin, with the liquidity of wealth, enters a continuous process of becoming, Jill

realizing that '[w]ith Kelvin everything was quick and fluid, always changing into

something else and being superseded' (*KW* 102), as he engages in a process of

'consciously and conscientiously remaking himself'(*KW* 103).

    As well as a care for the effects of physical appearance, Kelvin is sensitive to the

power of language. Like Jock, he prides himself on his skills, boasting that he 'always

got top marks in grammar' (*KW* 78). Unlike Jock, he is explicit in relating this skill to an assumed elite status, since '[w]hen superior politeness cannot get what it wants by superior verbal skill the world will become a jungle' (*KW* 77). That superior verbal skill can get Kelvin what he wants is largely borne out, most prominently in his occupations of television interviewer and columnist. Here, a socially proscribed accent is one resource from which he creates his persona, establishing himself as 'a simpleton who asks, out of sheer naiveté, all the most pointed and devastating questions' (*KW* 74). This recollection of McGrotty's seeming guilelessness is strengthened by further parallels. Jones, like McGrotty, is a Prime Minister whose success stems from his use of language, both in terms of supposed trustworthiness – he is, he claims 'not afraid to call a spade – or anything else – by its real name' (*KW* 91) – and from what his voice connotes, as 'his Welsh accent made many working-class people feel he was one of them and gave his middle-class supporters feelings of friendly condescension' (*KW* 88). The class and regional connotations of Kelvin's accent are similarly exploited. That RP-inflected heads of government, law and industry are 'savagely grilled by interviewers with firm regional dialects' (*KW* 73) represents, McKellar claims, 'the *British* alternative to revolution' (*KW* 73-4), an illusion of democracy. The one difference between McGrotty and Kelvin on this issue is, again, Kelvin's self-conscious engagement in the process, which sees his accent changing with his succession of selves, and '[i]n six days his accent changed from distinct Scots to a form of Anglo-Scots and then grew indistinguishable from BBC English' (*KW* 103).

Even before his employment as interviewer, language's powers of deception prove instrumental to Kelvin when he obtains his first job interviews through the

pretence that he is Hector McKellar. While this gambit primarily serves to introduce the role played by the strategic misrepresentation of the self in Kelvin's quest, his choice of assumed identity is itself meaningful. McKellar, 'who arranges things for television' (*KW* 7), continues the concerns of Kelvin's deceit. More, the strategy itself, a plan to 'take his name in vain' (*KW* 30), suggests an equivalence between God and the media, as well as offering one instance of the formative powers of biblical language. Fittingly, this name also suggests reference to Ephraim McKellar of *The Master of Ballantrae*, whose manipulation of language plays a large part in that novel's equation between the control of representation and more practical power (Clunas, 1993). The pair's hometown of Glaik also represents an instance of this meaningful naming, recalling, Walker has observed, not only 'glaikit', a description well suited to Kelvin's naïve persona, but 'glaik', a 'trick, prank, [or] deception' (Walker, 1991, 46).[32]

When one of Kelvin's potential employers rejects him as just this – 'a Glaik man' (*KW* 7) (as Kelvin terms McKellar), or 'abnormally self-assured confidence trickster with …an almost inspirational gift of the gab' (*KW* 52) – the effect is an assault on Kelvin's self-image, a possibility he claims 'never occurred to me before' (*KW* 57), but which 'maybe…was right'(*KW* 57). In some ways it is odd that such a comparison has not previously occurred to Kelvin, who holds both his verbal skills and confidence in high regard. Yet for all that his Nietzschean project is based on self-confidence and deceit, his self-confidence rests on a Calvinist distrust of art, and considering this description as a con man forces Kelvin to face this contradiction, crying "'I've lost my faith, Jill"'(*KW* 58). As Jill surmizes, the faith Kelvin loses is not in God but himself.

After this crisis, Kelvin's ascent to power continues much as before, his self-confidence now bolstered by faith not in his own will, but in God. The success he attains appears as God's gift, and it is in providential terms that Kelvin reconverts, noting the 'Divine Grace…manifest in the first big success of my career' (*KW* 136). Kelvin's reconciliation with God is thus figured as a product of gratitude, with God transformed into something 'good to me' (*KW* 101). The positive qualities which Kelvin is grateful for are, however, inextricably implicated in his loss of self-confidence, and if this new God is benevolent he nonetheless remains tyrant. As Kelvin explains, after his first successes 'my faith has never wavered. How else could I have done so well?' (*KW* 136), a judgement which asserts the power of God at the expense of Kelvin's will. Similarly undermined is the notion of autonomy involved in Kelvin's previous project, for not only is he unable to effect the success worked by Divine Providence, he cannot exist independently of it. Even during his Nietzschean phase, he realizes, 'there was a higher power at work. From the very start…I had been a mere glove on the hand of He who engendered the hoary frost of heaven' (*KW* 120). Throughout the novel, just as Kelvin remains committed to a Calvinist love of truth, he also shows a continued desire for divine order. Prior to his reconversion, this desire centres on Kelvin's artistry, where 'he spent time and care arranging all with the greatest neatness, creating where possible an effect of symmetry' (*KW* 40) until '[t]he room had an aspect of clinical and rigorous order which made Kelvin now feel thoroughly at home' (*KW* 41). In line with his then-nihilism, such artistry is inevitably seen as the expression of his own will, as, Kelvin explains '[m]an's noblest activity is creating order from chaos' (*KW* 41). With the loss of his self-confidence, such an activity becomes untenable. From then on, Kelvin

becomes one 'who like[s] living in a lawful universe with real ceiling over their head' (*KW* 121).

What makes this conversion interesting is its secular parallel, which returns Kelvin's dilemma to the question of political power. Praising Kelvin's potential as an interviewer, McKellar explains that his combination of confidence and a regional accent is unusual given a system of education which 'destroys the confidence of ordinary folk and channels the smart ones into universities from which they emerge as unlike their parents as possible'(*KW* 74). As noted above, Jake offers a similar distinction, related more explicitly to class stratification. Coming as it does at Kelvin's moment of crisis, Jake's speech reveals the similarities between his relationship to God and the operations of the class system. Here political and industrial leaders are, like Kelvin, 'all confidence tricksters' (*KW* 57), school-taught confidence their sole qualification. Kelvin's quest for power has a troubling effect on the invisible discourses supporting the class system, where, Jake explains, 'if you can only kick your way onto the ladder at the very top rung you'll have shown the whole system to be as insanely arbitrary as it really is' (*KW* 58). Yet, in Kelvin's failure of confidence such a possibility is denied, and his case becomes a parallel to that of the acquiescent majority, 'so afraid of running their own lives that they feel frightened when there's no-one to bully them'(*KW* 57).

The Nietzschean Kelvin is aware of this secular alternative to providence, and shuns it just as he shuns submission to God. Explaining to Jill why '[f]amous people aren't important'(*KW* 12), he depicts the true centre of power as inscrutably distant, inhabited by '[i]mportant people [who] own and control things, but the public hardly ever know who they are' (*KW* 12). Again like providence, these figures render all those

who are complicit with them – be they actors, writers, politician or scientists – as 'Tools, just tools' (*KW* 12). Recognizing the limitation this places on the autonomy of those concerned, at this point Kelvin distances himself from ever becoming one. Yet the means by which he begins his ascent to power consists precisely of convincing those who possess it of his potential as an instrument, his initial deceit designed to express 'a degree of intelligence and energy which they would be foolish not to harness to their own uses'(*KW* 31). We are told of McKellar that '[h]e believed that the stability of all well-conducted societies depended on bastards like himself' (*KW* 133), making the media here equivalent to The Ministry of Social Stability. McKellar's superior at the BBC, The Prevailing Consensus, strikes home this notion. For him, the programme is 'a public service'(*KW* 86), where, just as '[t]he army exists to protect us from foreign invasion…[so] *Power Point* exists to inform us of our political situation'(*KW* 86). Television, then, is as much a – potentially repressive – arm of the government as the armed forces. As its employee, Kelvin is as much an instrument of social stability as *Lanark*'s Miss Maheen, or *McGrotty*'s Miss Panther, whose 'pride in life was to be a perfect instrument in the hands of highly placed men'(*ML* 84). As a result of this, he achieves success without power. While, as the former's cover suggests, it is largely the relative success of their protagonists which distinguishes *McGrotty* and *Kelvin Walker*, this is itself the result of a different treatment of instrumentation. As Gray has commented on *McGrotty*, the novel caricatures 'nothing but the ability of the British rich to enlist awkward or threatening outsiders' (*ML* 130). McGrotty may be an imperfect instrument, but having achieved power there is little to suggest that he will greatly challenge the prevailing consensus. Having found his divine certainty Kelvin is too

threatening to effectively enlist, asserting that '[i]ndustry is not sacred' (*KW* 123). As Jake explains after Kelvin's engineered downfall '[t]he bastards gave you a job because you were useful to them, then when they found you were working for yourself they screwed you up – that happens in Britain all the time'(*KW* 135).

Here, the differing relationships which Kelvin and McGrotty hold with regard to instrumentalization represent recurrences of Gray's entrapment theme, alternatives made particularly interesting in light of the competing interpretations this theme has received.[33] Thus those who follow Crawford's suggestion that this be approached in terms of the individual's *struggle* with entrapment may find an emblematic example in the fall of Kelvin Walker, while Lumsden's assertion that Gray repeatedly depicts a more reactionary process of coming to terms with entrapment may chime more with McGrotty's assumption of power within the prevailing system. Dad, Gray's teasingly semi-autobiographical representative in *Something Leather,* might perhaps be seen to offer an interesting comment on Gray's focus on entrapment. Dad is a writer, who admits that '[u]nluckily I have only one basic joke' (*SL* 191), and so 'set[s] each story in a different time and place with characters whose voices, faces and jobs were different …[to] fool readers into thinking the joke was also different'(*SL* 192). The potential of this admission to be read as a comment on Gray's own work is limited, however, by the fact that this one joke is not political, but 'about sex'(*SL* 191). And yet, in describing his sexual jokes, Dad further substantiates his parallels with Gray. His current sexual fiction, of 'a beautiful discontented customer walking into a shop' (*SL* 197) to be made 'completely content' (*SL* 197) by sadistic lesbians, is merely a fantasy, not one of his written works; a fitting stage in the writing process, given that this is a summation of the

plot in which he himself appears. The book he has already published is similarly sexual and just as familiar, 'facetious chauvinistic pornography' which includes such 'fancies' as 'a tyrant with a harem of captured brides [and] a cowboy sheriff with a jail full of deliciously sluttish prostitutes' (*SL* 196). If Dad and Gray are separated by the different basis of their 'one joke', then these two novels seem to offer an overlap in which their jokes shade into each other, the sexual into the political. Such a possibility is confirmed within *1982, Janine*.

While many critics have focused on the sexual content of Jock's fantasies, the novel itself repeatedly suggests this as hiding more important concerns. Such critics find a precedent in Jock himself, who asserts that his 'problem is sex, or if it isn't, sex hides the problem so completely that I don't know what it is'(*J* 16). In this confusion, Jock's fantasies would seem to have succeeded in their purposes, complying with his recurrent call to 'forget it forget it forget it' (*J* 23). What Jock is attempting to forget appears complex and various; at this point, it is the demise of his relationship with his mother, later his memories of Denny. Even minor details which trace memory within fantasy, such as Superb's sharing her alibi for infidelity with his ex-wife – 'a dramatic society no no no a yoga group' (*J* 35) – must be expunged. While this repression of his personal relationships with women would seem to bolster the possibility that sex really is Jock's problem, other, seemingly unconnected memories, from Hislop to his dead friend Alan, are similarly placed under erasure. Ultimately, perhaps, it is his whole world which Jock seeks to escape in establishing discrete sub-worlds. Certainly, beyond the personal, Jock's feared topics include some whose link to sex appears purely rhetorical, urging

himself to 'think about fucking Superb, think about fucking Janine, don't think about fucking POLITICS' (*J* 66).

There are several important points to be made concerning this sleight of hand by which Jock slips from his obsessive focus on sexuality to his obsessive evasion of the political. The first is that these seemingly disparate topics are in fact as personal as his sexual fantasies. As Gray has explained, fantasies, like alcoholism, function here as 'devices to stop [Jock] remembering who he is' (Figgis and McAllister, 1988, 24), and Jock is aware of how interconnected political realities are with his personal identity, complaining that 'I would like to ignore politics, but POLITICS WILL NOT LET ME ALONE. Everything I know, everything I am has been permitted or buggered up by some sort of political arrangement' (*J* 231-2). For all that he represses his knowledge of this system and its effects, some of Jock's understanding of the world nevertheless slips into the narrative, describing a situation markedly similar to that of *McGrotty* and *Kelvin Walker*. The phrase '[m]irrors reflecting mirrors are the whole show' (*J* 71) represents one of his earliest confrontations with political reality, and if he does not dwell on its significance – fittingly, he suggests the phrase as Hislop's – the suggestion that political reality consists solely of reflected images fits well with both his retreat into fantasy and the more active fabulism founding the status quo of the novellas. Later, not mirrors, but 'instruments serving instruments are the whole show' (*J* 105), including Jock himself, 'not a man…[but] an instrument' (*J* 105). As with Kelvin, education and employment are closely involved in Jock's instrumentalization, where 'most folk who train for a trade or profession become mindless tools of it' (*J* 257), in his own case that of security installation supervisor. In one respect, Jock's transformation into a tool is here a parallel

to Coulter's robotic existence, and his evasion of it an attempt to preserve the full humanity which reification denies. Trapped in a deadening job, Gray has explained, Jock is 'one whose life is narrower than his knowledge and passions' (Anderson and Norquay, 1983, 9), and so whose 'only creative and sexual outlets were in fantasy' (McMunigal, 1995, 78). In this sense, Jock's fantasies, like June's clothes fetish, stand as compensatory outlets to relieve the effects of entrapping instrumentalization, for, as Senga tells June 'unless we bring one of our wicked dreams just a wee bit to life we live like zombies… slaves' (*SL* 20). *Something Leather* offers a closer parallel in the character of Leo who, like Jock, travels across Scotland as his company's representative. Describing himself as 'a free man' (*SL* 160), it becomes clear that Leo's freedom is a self-delusion, bought by internalizing just the sort of instrumental demands by which lack of freedom is defined. Unlike Jock, Leo does not drink, but his description of the many in his situation who '[go] to pieces entirely…usually through drink'(*SL* 167) fits well with Jock's own strategy of drunken fragmentation. The 'eternal vigilance' which internalizes his position as instrument similarly closes off a further traditional escape route from industrialization, that represented by nature. Leo's one escape takes place on a sunlit bank with 'not a human being, or telegraph pole, or another car than my own in sight'(*SL* 167). Without social interaction – which he inevitably equates with his role as salesman, the only visible instrument his car, Leo's tension is released, and he is lulled asleep. The world of nature which nearly seduces Leo is parallel, then, to the world inside Jock's head, the natural and the mental both offering a solitary plane of escape from industrialization. Leo's escape into nature is, however, a lone incident. On a daily basis, he finds release from a different avenue, one which offers a coping mechanism but

prevents him from watching the scenery around him. Explaining why he enjoys driving for its own sake, Leo describes its effects in terms which strike home its congruency with Gray's description of Jock, where by '[u]sing a highly sophisticated implement which every year slaughters thousands, I am constantly achieving and reconciling two different things, maximum safety and maximum speed. This achievement absorbs my whole personality' (*SL* 160).

It is tempting to suggest that the care with which Jock constructs his fantasies stems not only from a desire for fulfilment but from a need for the act of narrating. The linguistic skill in which Jock prides himself here represents language as an instrument which he must continually master, as Leo does his car, absorbing energies which otherwise find no outlet.[34] Something similar can be seen in Jock's apprehension of his activities, as when his mastery of language and himself evokes such comments as 'THIS IS SPLENDID. I have never before enjoyed such perfect control'(*J* 28). Of course, if the form of Jock's fantasizing is one means by which they offer 'that illusion of ABSOLUTE MASTERY which real life has never never never allowed me in any way whatsoever'(*J* 43), a similar effect can doubtless be recognized in their content, which translate this control over fiction into the domination of its inhabitants. Drawing a metaphor from his own job – in itself a sign of instrumentalization – Jock translates the politics governing the world into 'a security installation powered by the sun and only crackable by death' (*J* 69), and explains that '[i]n everyday life the installation encloses and controls me but in imagination I stand outside manipulating it and peering in' (*J* 69). It is fitting, then, that at the point at which this novel's representation of power comes closest to the standard Gray conspiracy model, the ontological barrier between Jock and

his fantasies is at its weakest. Both as a fantasy, and in his fantasy, the conspiracy stands as his creation, 'spun like a web out of one brain – this brain' (*J* 123). Where McGrotty uses his control over appearance to turn his manipulators into instruments, Jock escapes to a world of appearance where he is, by definition, the sole manipulator. Unlike Gray's other, headless, conspiracies, Jock can imagine himself in this position of impossible power, not merely complicit with capitalism, but its personification; as chair of the syndicate, he asserts, 'I am worldwide and irresistible'(*J* 123).

In attempting to escape his entrapment, Jock creates a separate world.[35] In attempting to compensate for his position as instrument, he asserts himself as manipulator, and so – giving a further dimension to his aphoristic summation of the 'whole show' – recreates his fantasy world as a mirror-image of reality. Jock's syndicate, an attempt to escape reality, becomes, like Gray's other conspiracies, a means to understand it. Little wonder then that politics will not leave Jock alone, for as Sontag complains, '[h]ow can I forget politics when your fantasy has such a convincing political structure' (*J* 67). Key to his attempts at avoiding the political ramifications of his fantasies is Jock's insistence on separation, obscuring the links between factors in the real world and between real and imagined worlds. Considered as a project of cognitive mapping, the conspiracy trope is intimately engaged in fostering an appreciation of both such forms of connection. Jock apprehends the need for such a project, appreciating the irony in a brewery manager's claim that 'I fail to see how this [his own personal wealth] connects with …the wage of the average Scottish barmanager' (*J* 63).[36] If the world is a security system, then having power over it requires something similar to the total knowledge of an installation supervisor, who 'must see and test [the system] as a whole'

(*J* 105), a notion which recalls the Harbinger Report, or cognitive mapping's injunction towards understanding the totality. At the same time, Jock repeats the warning of impossibility which cognitive mapping also asserts, that one would need 'a big mind to see that, a mind as big as the mind of God' (*J* 110). That Alan's scientific comprehension is congruent with cognitive mapping is seen in one of Jock's few non-sexual fantasies, when '[w]ith a needlesharp pencilpoint Alan touches the spots on the globe where there is hunger, unemployment, riot, war and disease, spots not always identical but always connected. He says, "We don't need those bits."' (*J* 139). Here, the importance of Jock's 'imagining, not remembering this' (*J* 139), lies in the close connection established between fantasy, cognitive mapping and political change. When not engaged in sexual fantasy, Jock's imaginings are concerned with altering, rather than replicating the current political system, a task in which Alan is repeatedly implicated. As with his sexual fantasies, these utopian visions are a means of coping with the world, and it is a sign of Jock's recovery that when, late in the novel, he concludes '*I can only stop raving by retreating into fantasy*' (*J* 311), domination is 'NOT the fantasy I intended' (*J* 311). At the same time, they are also a means of representing and so understanding the world, here shifting Jock's metaphorical self-realization as film director to a conceit based on his experience with lighting, underlining his power to illuminate with 'searchlights and cameras [showing] the bad schooling and housing of folk whose work was essential...Social reform always followed these revelations' (*J* 264). Ultimately, this imagined project is revealed to be 'the greatest work of scientific art conceived by the human mind: THE MAP OF EVERYWHERE' (*J* 266).

Jock's shame lies not in the exploitation of women, nor in their repression by pornographic formulae such as he creates; it is of his exploitation, as instrument of a system of domination, and the repression of his own possibilities, that Jock should be ashamed. In the optimism of his youth – aware of his potential, working communally, sharing in utopian desires – even the fantasy world in which his repression will ultimately entrap him can be valorized, as daydreams shade into active engagement with progressive change, and '[s]ince I imagined them of course they are possible' (*J* 262). Disappointed in himself, Jock soon 'disliked folk who were still hopeful' (*J* 293), and the nature of such fantasies changed, from a transformation of his life and others, to the limited comforts he achieves through complicity in their exploitation. A pessimist and coward, Jock can only create a world as hellish as his own, yet still prefers this to reality, for '[c]owards cannot look straight at the world' (*J* 305). It is tempting to relate this combination of the reproduction of economic reality with its mystificatory obscuration to the model of postmodernism described by Jameson, joining with both Jock's solipsism and fabulative linguistic self-awareness in a condemnation of Jock-as-postmodernist. A condemnation which finds strange support from one review criticizing *1982, Janine* as part of a trend whereby writers have been encouraged 'to indulge in a form of hyper-self-conscious navel-gazing…which rapidly degenerates into decadent fatuity' (Lewis, 1984, 57). Here, Lewis' claim that these writers are 'navelists as opposed to novelists ' (Lewis, 1984, 57), though a criticism of Gray, applies more to Jock. Given that Gray has repeatedly denied the applicability of the term 'postmodernist' to fictional work, it is unclear to what extent this interpretation of Jock's situation can be taken as part of Gray's criticism of postmodernism. In any case, just as *A History Maker*

will both condemn postmodern theories of society as solipsistic and recuperate from them a genuine representation of the logic of capitalism, so Jock's aesthetic postmodernism contains within it both a coward's escape into his own narrative and a legitimate means of looking at the world. Here, as much as Jock's salvation consists of the recovery of his optimism and return from his own narrative to the real world, it also entails his facing the truth of his pessimism, recognizing that his sadistic fantasies represent a means of understanding contemporary reality, 'an insistent attempt by Jock', as Miller has it, 'to grasp the subjective reality of his life' (Miller, 2002, Par. 33). In doing this, he must reject the separation which haunts his earlier thoughts, the separation between his own security and the exploitation of others, and the separation between his fantasy world and reality. Having stressed the fictionality of his creations, his fantasies culminate with a mis-en-abyme destabilizing his sub-world's ontological coherence, where 'the story must stop, because Janine has now been forced to see she is a character in it' (*J* 332). In doing so, Jock also destabilizes the boundary between this fantasy world and his own. Janine here realizes that she is not free through reading herself in the person of Nina, whose world appends her own. Earlier, Jock concedes that in tracing Janine's growing comfort in her own entrapment 'I did not notice that this was the story of my own life. I avoided doing so by insisting on the *femaleness* of the main character'(*J* 193). In the mirror-image of his world, he can accept only the position of manipulator. Yet, as Janine realizes that (Ja)Nina, and so she herself, has always been manipulated by others, so Jock recognize the same in (John)ine. In recognizing his own entrapment, Jock becomes free, and in accepting Janine as his 'silly soul' (*J* 341), their co-identity is ruptured. 'For more than twenty-five years…I was a character in a script

written by National Security' (*J* 333), Jock realizes, yet, unlike Janine, he can attain

something else. Recognizing how the world is organized, yet recognizing, too, the

possibility of change, Jock rises on this new morning without a script to tell him what to

do, but certain that he will not do nothing.

Reforming The Victorians: *Poor Things* and Postmodern History

Poor Things is manufactured from contending voices. As originally envisaged, the longest portion of the novel was to serve as centre-piece to a collection entitled *Voices Apart* (Gray, NLS Acc.10749/7, 1991(b), 45). In subsequent revisions, the autobiography of Archibald McCandless lost these companions, but gained several others. Invaded by letters from his fiancée Bell and her lover Wedderburn, appended with a letter from his wife Victoria and framed by the introduction and notes of the 'editor' Alasdair Gray, McCandless' narrative remains at the centre of the novel. Variously confirmed and contradicted by its neighbours, however, McCandless' account is brought into question through the loss of final authority. Although *Poor Things* purports to tell a single story, the title of Gray's planned collection aptly describes the novel; *Poor Things* is a collection of voices, and the heart of the novel lies where they part.

Given the range of details left unresolved here – from the position of a coach-house to the practicalities of resurrection – it is clear that McHale's postmodernism might again serve to describe the novel. An ontology, McHale reminds us, is 'a theoretical description of a universe' (Thomas Pavel qtd. in McHale, 1987, 27), and, providing the reader with several contradictory descriptions of its universe, *Poor Things*

fits easily into his model. Such compatibility stems, however, from both the emphasis on *description* in this definition, and from the element of fluidity which McHale preserves between ontological and epistemological problematics, for in *Poor Things* the world described remains reconstructable only from its narrators' separate descriptions. As a result, the novel consistently foregrounds interpretation. Thus Bell's cranial scar is given a series of interpretations which presuppose quite different contexts. For Victoria, in her Dickensian narration of events, this ridge results from her father's violence. For McCandless, it marks Bell's brain-transplant, while Wedderburn describes it as '*the mark of Cain*' (*PT* 89), in line with his own apocalyptic world-view. Within the textual hierarchy of the novel not merely this primary reality but the narratives themselves are subject to interpretation. Victoria's letter, '*correcting what she claims are errors*' (*PT* 249) in her husband's account, thus originates as a response to McCandless' narrative, countering his interpretation of events with her own and deducing possible causes for his deviations. The same is true of 'Gray', accumulating evidence in support of McCandless' veracity, and of the unnamed editor whose errata slip 'corrects' the novel. Ultimately, it is true of the reader, whose attempt to recuperate a stable ontology from among these texts has been repeatedly foreshadowed within the novel itself.

The epistemological concern evidenced in this self-conscious focus on interpretation need not militate against reading the novel in terms of McHale's model. While *Poor Things* shares in a long tradition of narratorial unreliability, this is here intensified. Thus, Hobsbaum concludes, '[t]he total structure of the novel is necessarily subverted… [and so] we are looking at a book which may well anticipate an unexpected phase in the convoluted history of prose fiction' (Hobsbaum, 1995(b), Par.47). The

central feature of this shift is again the loss of a recoverable ontology, a fact made

clearer – and explicitly comparable to the shift in McHale's model – when comparison

with *Pale Fire* leads Hobsbaum to claim that 'Alasdair Gray's break-through into post-

modernism is actually an extension of Nabokov's modernist technique' (Hobsbaum,

1995(b), Par.26). While *Poor Things* contains several examples of persuasive evidence –

from Wedderburn's lunacy to the '*common sense*' (*PT* 274) Victoria wields against

McCandless – these fall short of resolving their central hesitancy, and Hobsbaum is

correct to discount them, the novel offering 'no element that will necessarily sow

suspicion in the reader's mind' (Hobsbaum, 1995(b), Par. 47). The claim Kinbote makes

in his commentary that 'without my notes Shade's text simply has no human reality at

all' (Nabokov, 1988, 25) is undermined by the extent to which *Pale Fire* resurrects a

'human reality' at odds with his description. In *Poor Things* competing notes strive to

offer a reality which cannot win out over its descriptions. The reality described by *Poor

Things* ultimately remains a textual one.

    Poor Things flaunts its own textuality in multiple inter-related ways,

foregrounding its status as both narrative and artefact. As part of this, it also highlights

its sources, both the texts – real or fictitious – assumed within its deigetic reality and the

real-world texts – historical or fictional – which Gray utilizes in its composition. Where

these sources remain visibly textual on a diegetic level they may yet take on what Todd

has termed a *talismanic* quality, a tendency to shape events which exercises 'distorting

pressures on the realistic attributes of a given text' (Todd, 1988, 120). Where aspects of

the source text achieve full diegetic reality their anti-mimetic connotations are even

clearer. As I shall argue below, the connotations borrowed from such references are

employed by Gray to convey an openly political message on the 'real' world, a use of history towards polemical ends shared with Gray's non-fiction. The immediate effect of *Poor Things'* intertextual matrix, however, is to again highlight its textuality. Here it is less a mimetic representation of a world than an artefact demanding interpretation; as Christopher Harvie notes, 'interpreting *Poor Things* is like peeling an onion' (Harvie, 1992, 38). Further, the specifically textual, even fictional, sources employed here raise the suggestion that it is on this level that the network of signification finds its reference. While Barbara Hardy's suggestion that Gray's 'strong, simple message about the caring society is ingeniously buried in a textual minefield'(Hardy, 1992, 18) obscures the extent to which this minefield generates and is itself part of Gray's message, it highlights the danger that the novel's foregrounding of the act of narration might be replicated in its reception. This possibility gains an additional significance from the specifically historical nature of Gray's subject matter, for historical representation has been at the forefront in claims concerning postmodernism's solipsism. Something of the potential paradox involved here can be seen in Elizabeth Young's response, where the novel is taken as the representation of a 'new world birthing itself from out of all the misconceptions and neuroses of the Victorian age', and yet 'Gray also adheres to postmodernist literary concerns. At every turn we are dutifully reminded of… the fictionality of the historical process'(Young, 1992, 23). This paradox is also signalled, and compounded, by Gray's mercurial cover-blurb to the novel. 'Since 1979', this asserts, 'the British Government has worked to restore Britain to its Victorian state, so Alasdair Gray has at last shrugged off his postmodernist label and written an up-to-date nineteenth-century novel.' Whether Gray has indeed shrugged off postmodernism in

turning to the 'up-to-date nineteenth-century novel' – itself a particularly postmodern oxymoron – will form the focus of this chapter. Before this, however, it is important to describe the textuality which might lead such an identity to be ascribed to the novel.

The novel's textual safe-awareness begins with the characters themselves. As suggested above, this foregrounding of textuality interweaves with a focus on the act of interpretation. Even where information is orally received by its characters, the condition aspired to, it seems, is to be 'as good as a book' (*PT* 59). For the novel's already-textual sources, it is in this condition that they remain. For all that such sources offer their readers, within and outwith the book, information concerning the novel's diegetic reality, they are presented from the start as texts. Thus, while McCandless affords the reader access to Blessington's biography, he makes clear the mediation involved. If McCandless 'KNEW OF GENERAL BLESSINGTON LONG before Baxter read his name aloud from Wedderburn's letter' (*PT* 206) – the first indication of his connection to McCandless is here a textual one – it is because he is one of the 'newspaper readers' who have followed Blessington through '*The Times* of London and *Manchester Guardian*' (*PT* 206). In expanding this information, it is to a further text that McCandless turns, *Who's Who*; '[t]he day after Bella returned to us', he writes, 'I read the above entry in Baxter's library' (*PT* 207). And an 'entry' it indeed is, an intrusion into McCandless' text in smaller typeface with the bold headings and two-column format of the 'original' entry. What the reader is offered, effectively, is not a narrative constructed from McCandless' point of view, but an attempt to replicate for the reader McCandless' own view of a narrative: the reader reads what McCandless has already read.

The achievement for which Randall Stevenson has praised *Poor Things*, that 'Gray has restored to Scottish writing a sense of the book as significant object, and of the potential for integral – or sometimes almost ironic – relations between verbal and visual' (Randall Stevenson, 1997, 44), is realized in several ways, each of which continues this exploration of its narrative sources. Both Gray and 'Gray' are aware of the objectivity associated with visual reproduction, hence the latter's larding his historical notes with illustrations purporting to substantiate the text. With each example, however, this authority is undermined, and the processes by which it operates revealed. One crucial aspect of this is that each visual source itself demands interpretation. As exemplified in Gray's previous foray into fictitious history, *The Crank Who Made The Revolution,* the first part of this process is to identify the illustration's subject. Here, the interpreter is at a loss, noting that 'nobody knows if it portrays Provost Coats or McMenamy's Granny' (Gray, 2001(b), 42). In *Poor Things*, as befits the 'editor's' certainty, there is no such admission. The hesitancy with which 'Gray' explains that on a plan of Baxter's home 'the shaded area behind indicates the garden and "coach-house"' (*PT* 294) does, however, signal the necessarily subjective nature of such interpretations, making reference to his debate with Donnelly over the coach-house's existence. With this admission of partiality comes the possibility of unreliability.

The unreliability of paratexts is made more explicit with one of Gray's portraits in the style of Strang. Captioned as 'Professor Jean Martin Charcot' (*PT* 187), this illustration is given further interpretation by an errata slip explaining that it '*does not portray Professor Jean Martin Charcot, but Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac*' (Moores, 2002, 207-8). For those familiar with these figures, this unreliability is already

implicit; as Gray has explained, 'Charcot was indeed based on Boldini's portrait of Montesquieu' (Axelrod, 1995, 114). The importance of its overt admission lies not only in highlighting this discrepancy but in establishing a paratextual hierarchy of reinterpretation which serves to reflect the structure of the novel as a whole.

This parallel between visual and textual sources continues in more subtle forms of interpretative misrepresentation by commentators. Thus Strang's portrait of Bella enters into the process of reinterpreting its subject, accepted by Victoria as '*a good likeness*' (*PT* 251) as it '*shows I am a plain, sensible woman, not the naïve Lucrezia Borgia and Le Belle Dame Sans Merci described in the text*' (*PT* 251). At the same time, however, she suggests that this image is only recognizable if the reader ignores '*the Gainsborough hat and pretentious nickname*' (*PT* 251). Further, this pretentious nickname –'Bella Caledonia' – and Gainsborough hat – or at least the thistle which garlands it – are among the details which suggest for this portrait allegorical, rather than realist terms of reference. Indeed, in this respect Bella Caledonia shows the novel's visual element turning tables on its framing paratexts. Not merely an alternative interpretation of the diegetically-real Bella, but potential filter through which to read *Poor Things*, this is, as Tiitinen has claimed 'an illustration that leads to further interpretations of the novel' (Tiitinen, 2004, 124).[37]

These examples illustrate some of the ways in which *Poor Things* explores the relationships between its verbal and visual elements.[38] Whatever else it achieves, however, the basic effect common to all these aspects of its design is, as Stevenson observes, to reassert the novel's status as book. Fundamentally implicated within but ultimately untranslatable into the narrative, these illustrations stress their medium's

visual nature. Further, as copies of real or fictitious originals, they also incorporate reference to printed matter's reproducibility. As the editor notes, the technology of publishing here matches a need for visual reproduction, employing 'a photographic specialist, to make plates from which the Strang etchings and facsimiles of Bella's letter could be reproduced' (*PT* xiv). The same reproducability attends their supposed originals; while Victoria asserts the accuracy of her portrait, it too stands as a further reproduction, '*copied from one in an illustrated newspaper*' (*PT* 251). Other illustrations are loosed even further from their assumed physical referents, most notably the illustration provided for Blessington's scheme to recover Bell – purporting to show '[t]*he kind of cab in which General Blessington planned to abduct his drugged "wife"*' (*PT* 296) – in which any claims to a direct relationship are entirely paratextual.

Similarities can be seen here between *Poor Things*' visual strategy and Blessington's *Who's Who* entry. Through variation in layout, this section extends the novel's acknowledgement of its own visual nature to include the print by which narrative is transmitted. So too is emphasis placed here on the reproduction not of an original, but of the latest in the series of artefacts, an attempt to mimetically reproduce the initial reading experience of the character imagined accessing this physically transmitted information. Something akin to this can also be seen in the principal embedded narratives of the McCandless section, the letters from Wedderburn and Bella. As with the *Who's Who* entry, typographical variations are employed to mark these incorporated chapters off. Likewise, these variations signal towards both the physical artefact which initially contained them – in this case through the association of italic type with handwritten manuscript – and an interaction between content and design

similar to that seen in the *Who's Who* headings, as when Wedderburn's lists of evidence are given in two corresponding columns (*PT* 95-97) or Bell's blank verse is justified accordingly (*PT* 105-115). Unlike the entry on Blessington, however, the texts visually reproduced are explicitly contrasted with their originals, a fact which extends beyond typography to include, in Bella's case, orthography; where the text she writes has '*DR GD I HD N PC Y WRT BFR*' (*PT* 101) McCandless' account has altered both spelling and layout to '*Dear God,/I had no peace to write before*' (*PT* 105).

The design of Bella's letter is of particular interest due to the contrast between this heavily altered text and the pages of original letter imbedded within it, 'printed by a photogravure process which exactly reproduces the blurring caused by tear stains' (*PT* 144). Rather than showing a deviation from the novel's textual mimesis, however, this contrast in fact develops the theme beyond the visual to include oral performance, the italicized portion, 'given, not as Bella spelled it, but as Baxter recited it' (*PT* 102). The association between italic typefaces and handwriting is here overshadowed by their use to indicate quotation. Where handwriting is more strongly indicated – indeed, directly reproduced – the difference is again prompted by the circumstances in which McCandless encounters the text, for this portion is handed to McCandless, who now 'give[s] the pages here as they were given to me' (*PT* 144). The same is clearly not true of recited passages, a fact recalled through reference to the performative aspect of their presentation, punningly evoked before Wedderburn's letter – where McCandless and Baxter 'composed ourselves on the sofa / He read aloud what follows' (*PT* 74) – and more explicitly when Bell's letter is read 'with a distinct tone and grave elation I thought theatrical' (*PT* 102). Here some degree of physicality is present, the immediate

physicality of performance. Its loss is fittingly recorded in a manner which flaunts its new physicality as visual artefact, an engraving of a human tongue preceding each letter. The transmission of information between media also affords each mediator a level of control. This process begins with the first mediation, the attempt to represent an absent reality in written words, a fact noted by Wedderburn when he explains that in conversation he '*exposed all my past iniquities more frankly and fully than I have courage and space to do here*' (*PT* 81). Baxter's comment on this, 'Thank goodness for that!'(*PT* 81) emphasizes his own opportunity for interpolation. The absence of the original document further empowers this performance when Baxter edits the original text. Interestingly, although McCandless is given a similar power in his role as transcriber, this is employed to compensate for information lost in previous intermedia transitions, including the 'few heartfelt sobs'(*PT* 102) of Baxter's performance.

McCandless' concern to replicate original sources is given a problematic significance by Lynne Diamond-Nigh. 'It is telling', she suggests, '…that this is the only part of Bella's entire "letter"…that Godwin does not want to read out loud to McCandless, as if it does not have to be linguistically mediated because it is pure experience' (Diamond-Nigh, 1995, 179). As a recognition that the transference of documents shows Baxter as sharing in McCandless' concern with experiencing sources in their original form, this observation is certainly important. Further, by establishing a distinction between the linguistic and visual aspects of the novel Diamond-Nigh's suggestion plays a key part in a claim similar to my own, that, with *Poor Things*, 'the book becomes a physical object, a three-dimensional sculpture as well as the traditional unobtrusive container of narrative' (Diamond-Nigh, 1995, 180). What is more

questionable is the conclusion which Diamond-Nigh draws, in which the distinction between visual and linguistic elements is asserted as a discrete opposition, the former privileged over the latter. Hence, she suggests, the novel's emphasis on textual physicality results in 'the primary medium by which these works are constructed, the word, itself becom[ing] abstract form rather than communicative sign' (Diamond-Nigh, 1995, 181). Here Diamond-Nigh fails to recognize the extent to which linguistic communication appears as one of several inter-related means of receiving information. Leaving aside the letter's own linguistic elements, she would be more correct to note the inadequacy, rather than the irrelevance, of subsequent mediation. Rather than rendering this a matter of abstract form, the novel's emphasis on its physicality broadens the category of communicative sign. As Stevenson suggests, *Poor Things* asserts the book – and, we might add, the letter and oral performance – as a significant object, an object which, through interpretation, may be made to signify. The experience represented by the letter is that of a given form of mediation, where even the visual reproduction of the letters is shown to be an inadequate, requiring a linguistic back-up to note 'the pressure of pen strokes which often ripped right through the paper' (*PT* 144). Further, while the recuperation of meaning from such signs entails one form of 'reading' on McCandless' part it is to more conventional reading that he returns. When the physicality of the text obscures its message McCandless hands it back to Baxter, asking 'What do the scrawls mean... Only you can decipher them' (*PT* 151). This he does, by means of the linguistic mediation Diamond-Nigh cannot find in the text, and the interpretative act which translates the abstract into the communicative.

Although the sources evoked with this first form of textuality work to problematize the possibility of *direct* historical reference, they do not represent the denial of reference often associated with postmodern historical fiction. Indeed, by clearly situating these networks of transmission within the world they represent, these strategies work to reassert the physical reality of this world through the physicality of its self-representations. The same is not true of a second class of intertexts, which differ from this first by making their primary reference to real-world fiction, and appear here on the level of the *fabula* rather than *sujet*. These two differences do not necessarily combine in every instance. McCandless' announcement of his nuptials 'READER, SHE MARRIED ME' (*PT* 240), makes clear reference to *Jane Eyre*, yet, as an aspect of his narration rather than of events, need not imply their fictionality. However, in highlighting this event as a realization of what Dana Shiller has called 'that most Victorian of conventions, the marriage ending'(Shiller, 1995, 167), this specific intertext does point towards a more general level of influence of more problematic import. Whether the compliance of the novel with generic conventions is an affect of diegetic events or of their narration is unclear; in this instance evidence tends towards the latter, as the marriage ending and deathbed speech with which McCandless climaxes draws an unnecessary closure to his narrative. In other cases, evidence would tend in the other direction, as with the most notable of the novel's intertexts – its debt to *Frankenstein* – which casts 'Making Bella Baxter' as gothic. Such an identification does however come with two reservations, the first being that, in this profusion of competing accounts, these events may themselves be read as McCandless' fabulation. A further warning comes from Bella herself, who notes that while 'most folk think God and me a very gothic

couple. They are wrong. At heart we are ordinary farmers like Cathy and Heathcliff in

Wuthering Heights' (*PT* 51). This denial of generic conventions, and the unexpected

reading with which she supports it, highlights the fact that both events and narratives

may be simultaneously open to representation and reception within a number of generic

codes. Both of these reservations are clearly in place with regard to Victoria's claimed

childhood, re-writing her genesis in Dickensian terms. Further evocations extend Bella's

comment by showing the inadequacy of a single generic identification for the novel.

Thus Wedderburn's madness is expressed in language identifiable with Victorian fiction

of sensation, the extent of its generic affiliations mockingly recalled in Baxter's

summary of 'Making a Maniac' as reading '*the sunlight shone on me like a benediction,*

for I felt that a hideous burden had fallen from my shoulders et cetera' (*PT* 92).

Likewise, if the creation of Bella's body is gothic, her subsequent mental development

in 'Making a Conscience' conforms to that genre in which a conscience (and a

consciousness) is made, the *bildungsroman*. Shades of the *bildungsroman* similarly

attend McCandless' origins in 'Making Me', alongside such non-fictional genres as

autobiography – the '[m]any shallow, gossipy books…published in those days' (*PT* ix)

with which the editor first confuses his find – and with the Victorian trope of the self-

made man. While the most obvious appearance of this archetype comes with Victoria's

father, the self-made man makes an implied appearance, literally and metaphorically, in

Hawley's suggestion that both 'Making Me' and 'Making Bella Baxter' can be usefully

paralleled with Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* (Hawley, 1995, 177), thus identifying a further

non-fictional genre informing the novel.

Interestingly, the first form of emphasized textuality may imply the fictionality of events to the extent that it itself represents a further recollection of generic codes. As considered above, the novel's overarching structure works to place it in the tradition of the unreliable narrator, a tradition in which emphasis on the physical existence of a novel's sources already operates as a trope. One specific precursor is identified by Hobsbaum when he describes *Poor Things* as 'derived from *The Master of Ballantrae'* (Hobsbaum, 1995(b), Par.27)*,* an apt comparison in that both novels show a fictional editor collating a variety of narratives. In some editions of *The Master*, this parallel becomes even more specific, for, as originally conceived, McKellar's faux-editorial status is matched by the appearance of Stevenson himself. Indeed, not only does the preface by 'R.L.S.' share in 'Gray's' circumstances in that each author/editor describes their discovery of the narrative, both also incorporate a further real-world entity to act as conduit. Charles Baxter, whose legal firm supposedly harboured McKellar's manuscript, was thus approached by Stevenson in 1888 to perform what would become the Donnelly role in *Poor Things* (R.L. Stevenson, 1994-5*,* vol.6, 99), although he would not debut in the novel until ten years later. The reason for this initial absence is particularly suggestive; Stevenson withheld this section from earlier editions because, he feared, it appeared 'a little too like Scott' (R.L. Stevenson qtd. in Poole, 1996, 229).

The fear that his novel is a little too like Scott is one which Stevenson shares with 'Gray', to the extent that the latter feels it necessary to offer explicit denials. The form of this denial, a debate with Donnelly over the reality of the McCandless narrative, thus works to undermine the authenticity 'Gray' seeks in two ways. Acting as a parallel to *Lanark*'s index of plagiarisms, this discussion highlights the novel's basic strategy

when Donnelly suggests it as a 'blackly humorous fiction into which some real experiences and historical facts have been cunningly woven, a book like Scott's *Old Mortality* and Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*' (*PT* xi). 'Gray's' response, to counter this assertion with notes in which he has 'collected enough material evidence to prove the McCandless story a complete tissue of facts' (*PT* xii), reveals some justification for his metaphor's unexpected immateriality. Indeed, not only does this strategy confirm Hogg's influence, it in fact goes some way towards establishing it. Read alongside Victoria's letter the McCandless' narrative does indeed recall Hogg's canonically unreliable narrators. As a fantastic text swamped by editorial material, however, there are further parallels between *Confessions* and *Poor Things* when the latter is taken as a whole. Further, while Hogg and his 'editor' are not conflated, the latter's search for material evidence similarly transgresses ontological boundaries when, in response to a letter 'James Hogg' has written to *Blackwood's Magazine*, he seeks out 'Hogg' and the novel's central manuscript. Here 'Hogg' is cast as an unreliable narrator, his initial letter questioned by the editor who finds 'the stamp of authenticity in every line; yet so often had I been hoaxed by the ingenious fancies displayed in that Magazine that when this relation met my eye I did not believe it' (Hogg, 1994, 188-9). 'Gray', while he does not share this caution, thus offers the reader a similar signal towards doubt by seemingly striving to quell it.

While this identification of the novel's sources is hampered by 'Gray's' desire to maintain its authenticity, Victoria's letter, written from the opposite perspective, can further anatomize the text without recourse to irony. Noting the McCandless narratives' overt resemblance to *Confessions*, among other sources, Victoria goes on to find '*traces*

of The Coming Race, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dracula, Trilby, Rider Haggard's She'
(*PT* 273) and further works. Ultimately, she asks, '[w]*hat morbid Victorian fantasy has
he NOT filched from?*' (*PT* 272-3). The influence of these sources would appear to
operate on the diegetic level and hence assert the novel's fictionality. Several factors do,
however, complicate such an observation. Identified by Victoria, whose ontological
level she asserts as superior, this self-consciousness concerning its own construction
remains unincorporated within that narrative whose fictionality is being asserted.
Further, these debts are realized in a manner more complex than the simple theft
Victoria alleges. To take 'The Premature Burial' as an example, a suspect for the
'*additional ghouleries*' (*PT* 272) she claims as taken from Poe, there are indeed clear
parallels. As with those parallels identified by the editor, however, certain of these
similarities arise on the level of the novel as a whole. Again, this represents a similarity
in form rather than content, as Poe's narrator attempts to establish the reality of his own
narrative through historical references. Among these precursors appears one – the case
of Victorine Lafourcade – of more specific relevance. Describing the resuscitation of a
supposedly dead woman at the hands of her lover, and the subsequent battle with her
husband when she is recognized, the parallel with Victoria's case is clear. However, just
as the coincidence of the two figure's names is more ontologically problematic than
Victoria would wish so the problematizing effect of her story is reduced through its
appearance, not in the events of McCandless' narrative, but as an alternative account
offered within these by Blessington.

The strongest indication of the novel's fictionality comes not from the
intertextual coincidence of events, but the intertextual derivation of its characters. Again,

the novel's signals towards this possibility can be seen to refer to both its diegetic reality and its narration. The emphasis on the construction of characters in several chapter headings, strongly associated with specific genres, thus recalls both diegetically real processes of becoming associated with these genres and the creation of a character drawn from these conventions. The linguistic element here is reaffirmed when the characters themselves show moments of self-awareness on this point. Thus, when called upon to provide the outrage which Baxter's gothic blasphemy demands, McCandless finds himself raving 'in the language of novels I knew to be trash' (*PT* 37). Novels populated, he realizes, by 'conventional puppets' (*PT* 43). Transformed into a puppet of convention by his own language, McCandless is joined in this regard by Wedderburn, whose lapse into mania is coextensive with his lapse into novelistic language. As Baxter explains when reading Wedderburn's letter, he 'writes as you talk when you are drunk'(*PT* 78); both, it would seem, are 'sickeningly derivative' (*PT* 91).

One interesting moment of linguistic self-consciousness is provided by Bell, the import of which goes further than establishing its characters' generic identity. Upon meeting McCandless, Bella assumes his name to be descriptive, only to be corrected by Baxter in a manner anticipating Saussure:

> '"Mac Cand *Less*, dear Bell."
> "But dear Bell has no candle so dear Bell is Candle-less too, God Win. Please be Bell's New Candle you new wee candle maker."
> "You reason *beautifully*, Bell," said Baxter, "but have still to learn that most names are not reasonable". (*PT* 30)

Names, Baxter reminds us, are not reasonable – the relationship between the person Bella is introduced to and the 'McCandless' by which he is introduced is an

arbitrary one. Yet this is true only of 'most names', and there exists a class of names in which this relationship is far from arbitrary. These are the names of fictional characters, which may be as apposite or as aleatory as the writer wishes, and necessarily possess a far closer relationship to their referent than other names. What Bella has accidentally hit upon is that McCandless belongs to this class. The man who would emancipate her from a domestic role to become one of the '*unwomanly women*' (*PT* 304) could well be said to have made a 'candle' for her. That he does this by becoming 'a very good wife' (*PT* 303) shows the extent to which he is made Candle-less.

While apposite names are common in Gray's work, the ability of names to simultaneously refer and describe takes on a special emphasis in *Poor Things*, where dense networks of signification, operating metaphorically and by intertextual and historical reference, are repeatedly woven around a single name.[39] Wedderburn's surname, including within it 'Wedder' – Bell's term for the penis – offers both metaphoric commentary on his self-destructive sexual excesses and a precursor to his elopement in the ballad *Captain Wedderburn's Courtship* (Child #46). Elsewhere, not only are these systems more complex, they are further compounded by a multiplication of names. As Bell, Bella's nomenclative multiplicity has primarily been seen to resolve around reference to the physical object. This in turn has been given a metaphorical significance, beginning with Bell herself, who uses this image to describe the 'tinkle clink clank clatter'(*PT* 61) of her limited memories. Wendy Dulaney, meanwhile, suggests that '[l]ike the image of the bell in Russian culture in the late nineteenth century, she represents the dynamic aspect of liberty' (Dulaney, 1999, 24-5), while Bernstein, following the title of Hawley's essay, makes her part of the '"Bell, book and candle"…linked to the novel's "exorcism of

Victorian sentiment"' (Bernstein, 1999, 110). As Victoria, meanwhile, Bella's

identification with her monstrous precursor is switched to one with his creator, a

feminized form of Victor Frankenstein whose utopian health schemes continue her near-

namesake's desire to 'banish disease from the human frame' (M. Shelley, 1992, 40).

Switching from intertextual to historical reference, Victoria is at the same time identified

with the queen of whom '*she is still, at heart, a subject*' (*PT* 308), while Baxter's death-

bed translation of both names as '*Bella-Victoria, you Beautiful Victory*', (*PT* 271) offers

an echo of her own final optimism over the 1945 elections.

Rather than representing the puppet-like reproduction of existing characters, the

indirect recollection of historical and intertextual personages shown in *Poor Things*'

names evokes multiple antecedents. This has been noted by Tiitinen, who finds *Poor

Things*' characters 'hilariously hybrid' (Tiitinen, 1999(a), 89), citing Baxter as an

especially interesting example. The character of Godwin Bysshe Baxter, she suggests,

'consists of bits and pieces of William Godwin, Percy Shelley, Victor Frankenstein and his

creation' (Tiitinen, 1999(a), 89). Here recollection of Baxter's antecedents works again

to assert his fictionality through highlighting his derivative nature. The alternative

accounts of the novel's events also allow for these sources to be placed in direct

competition, where Baxter is, in McCandless' version, 'father' to Bella, just as Godwin

fathered Mary and Victor the monster, while his situation as doctor and potential lover

combines reference to Percy Shelley and to William Baxter, at whose house in Dundee

Mary stayed under medical advice (M. Shelley, 1995, 31 ft2). Other facets of Baxter's

character evoke alternative sources simultaneously. His idiosyncratic diet and claim to

'*have never killed or hurt a living creature*' (*PT* 20) may derive from the monster's

assertion that he does not 'destroy the lamb and kid to glut [his] appetite' (M. Shelley, 1992, 141). This claim is paralleled, however, by the opinions of Percy Shelley, whose "Queen Mab" – in which man 'no longer now/slays the lamb that looks him in the face' (P. Shelley, VIII 211-1) – offers occasion for a lengthy justification – note seventeen to the poem – of vegetarianism.

Interestingly, this parallel evocation of Shelley and the monster finds a precursor within *Frankenstein*. As Small notes in *Ariel Like A Harpy* – a study which Gray acknowledges as contributing to *Poor Things* – *Frankenstein* betrays several areas of congruence with Shelley's own beliefs. Indeed, he goes on to suggest, these parallels are such that Shelley himself is endowed with textual presence, not in the monster, but as Victor Frankenstein, who 'clearly and to some extent must intentionally have been a portrayal of Shelley and Shelley can scarcely have been unaware of it, if only on account of his name' (Small, 1972, 101). Small's justification for this claim stems largely from Shelley's use of Victor as pseudonym for his first published work; the equivalent, perhaps, of Frankenstein's first attempt to create life. In effect, the strategy which Small here accredits to Mary Shelley is one reflected by Gray: a reference to her husband which functions through reference to a previous text, evoked in the process of naming. Here again, however, there are multiple relationships established between *Poor Things* and its precursors, not merely the hybridity of the final product by which Baxter evokes both the monster and his creator – and through each of these Shelley – but a multiple reflection of these sources, whereby the same figures are recalled in the figure of Bella/Victoria.

While such references identify each precursor as the source for the character, the multiple relationships between character and 'original' suggest this as something other than a direct derivation. A complicating factor here is the possibility that these references again operate on the levels of both construction and interpretation. It is often the characters themselves who confer these names, including the novel's most audacious re-signification, Wedderburn's translation of Baxter's name into '*GOD-SWINE BOSH BACK-STAIR*' (*PT* 95). There may be some apposite connotations here, given Baxter's atheism and concern for the poor, but otherwise this combination of all that was negative to Victorian Britain – the diabolic, the foreign, those who use the servant's entrance – seems largely inappropriate. In his religious mania Wedderburn has taken the search for signification too far, finding reference to *Revelation*'s beast in the fact that Baxter lives '*at 18 Park Circus, which number is the sum of 6+6+6*' (*PT* 95). Even Wedderburn concedes that his reading does not wholly account for reality, writing to Baxter that '*if you and I meet and discuss the matter calmly surely we will find something?*' (*PT* 97). In this respect, however, Wedderburn's letter merely repeats the same problems which attend its neighbouring narratives. Just as the differences between McCandless' and Victoria's accounts are the result of the same events being described according to different generic codes, so, as Shiller notes, Wedderburn's representation of Bella as scarlet woman is the result of 'his insistence on wedging Bella into a familiar convention of Victorian fiction, albeit one into which does not [sic] accommodate her adequately' (Shiller, 1995, 167). His re-writing of Baxter's name reveals only Wedderburn's ability to create meaning. While Godwin Bysshe Baxter and God-Swine Bosh Back-Stair are entangled with different traces of reference, the result of their excessive signification is

the same: the foregrounding of the role of nomenclature as interpretative filter, and the ability of both author and reader to make such texts signify.

The notion that the intertextual personages evoked by *Poor Things*' names function less to identify a character's original source than to suggest contexts in which to interpret them is strengthened by the number of cases in which clear contrasts are established with their originals. While Frankenstein creates a male homunculus, it is with Bella that Baxter's project begins and ends. Further, Frankenstein abandons his second, female, project, consigning her parts 'into a basket, with a great quantity of stones…to throw them into the sea' (M. Shelley, 1992, 165), a disposal reversed in Baxter's resurrection of a weighted body recovered from the Clyde. The most extensive difference between the two creators is highlighted by reference to a third. Although Bella makes clear that he is not 'our father which art in Heaven, God' (*PT* 52), Godwin's often abbreviated forename repeatedly suggests this comparison. The irony here is that Bella is questioning the remorse with which Baxter asks her to 'forgive [him] for making [her] like this'(*PT* 52), her ignorance of her creation hiding a Victorian Prometheus who has learned the lesson Frankenstein does not, set in a comparison which owes something to the monster's reading of *Paradise Lost*. Caring for his creation, Baxter is Frankenstein's humane revision.

Baxter's treatment of Bella highlights the fact that, while the form of such references emphasize the novel's fictionality, their content is nevertheless deployed to comment upon the real world. Among the many thematic strands of the novel predicated toward political engagement are several which bear clear relevance to the figures cited, from the proto-socialism espoused by Shelley to Frankenstein's concern with public

health. It is within one such strand – educational reform – that Baxter's reformation of Frankenstein should be understood. The central message of this strand, that childhood experience is responsible for social ills, finds 'practical' manifestation in Victoria's loving economy. Prior to this, it is commented upon by Baxter, who describes the exclusion experienced as a child develops through 'twenty-four-inch-long gnome…Yard-tall Goblin…[and] Four-foot dwarf'(*PT* 69), asking if 'the giants who owned the world when you were wee let you feel as important as they were?' (*PT* 69); such oppression moulds children 'into slightly insane adults' (*PT* 69). This explanation of behaviour in terms of environment is later extended by Bell, arguing that supposedly 'evil' people remind her of the '*bitch with a broken leg* [who] *growled and snapped… but only because I was hurting her. When she felt better she treated me like a pal*' (*PT* 141). The conclusions Gray offers here chime ultimately with William Godwin. Despite the direct relevance of this precursor, however, a more layered allusion is in operation. Dedicated to Godwin for both filial and philosophical reasons, similar concerns are raised within *Frankenstein* itself, and it is through its relationship to this fiction that *Poor Things* negotiates its own political position. As Small notes, 'Godwin's educational notions, and his general view…that education determines character can be seen in the unhappy effects of the Monster's "upbringing"' (Small, 1972, 72-3). As with Bella's snappish bitch the wrath of the monster is traced to circumstance. 'I am malicious', he explains, ' because I am miserable…Let [man] live with me in the interchange of kindness; and, instead of injury, I would bestow every benefit upon him' (M. Shelley, 1992, 140). The exclusion affected by the monster's otherness, recalled in Baxter's characterization of infancy, thus finds a reversal in Bell's early experiences, attractive,

cared for and ultimately philanthropic. It is also recalled in the grotesque person of Baxter, in whom the monster's desire for a mate – that he may 'live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being'(M. Shelley, 1992, 140) – is both repeated and, with an air of Victorian self-help combining Victor and his creation, fulfilled, animating Bella so that he may 'enjoy her society' (*PT* 68).

The appearance of historical and intertextual personages in this way, does not, therefore, represent either a denial of real-world reference or relevance, nor the unproblematic derivation of the novel directly from fiction. Interestingly, while both historical and fictional characters are given a direct manifestation within the novel, the latter group have gone largely unremarked in criticism. Yet this pair, the Russian gambler and Mr Astley, appear to have walked straight from the pages of Dostoevsky's *The Gambler,* without revision or hybridization. In combination with this suggestion that *Poor Things'* reality is co-extensive with a previous fiction come further transworld incursions drawn from fact. One group of such figures, which includes Kipling, Tennyson and MacDiarmid, appear indirectly as part of the editor's attempt to assert the novel's historical reality. Here it is in 'Gray's' best interests to maintain a single referent for each name. Yet, by including these figures through texts in which they supposedly bear witness to the novel's world, these incursions remain inescapably textual. In the case of Geordie Geddes, absent from the text but implicated within its story by his rescue of Bell, his reality is further substantiated by quotation from a genuinely historical text in which he is similarly alluded to. Charcot, the only historical figure directly represented within the main narrative, likewise performs a textual function. That his contribution consists largely of outlining how he will arrange a demonstration of

hypnosis in which '*speeches of yours will be punctuated by my addresses to the*

audience in rapid French' (*PT* 186) suggests that he too appears as a representative of

discourse, in this case the burgeoning psychiatric discourse of the late nineteenth

century. Indeed, in urging Bella to refrain from self-analysis when relating her story, as

'*I am the lecturer, you are my subject. Our august audience will be disconcerted if*

anyone but the great Charcot passes opinions' (*PT* 189), he also provides a description

of the logic underlying that discourse's construction.[40]

Gray's technique with regard to these trans-world identities is one common

within realist historical fiction. Here most theorists would seem to accept Lee's

comment that '[i]n the nineteenth-century historical novel "real" people, places and

events were included or alluded to in order to convince the reader of the "truth" of the

fictional ones' (A. Lee, 1990, 52). Making a similar point, McHale draws attention to the

way in which conventional historical novels

> strive…to hide the ontological 'seams' between fictional projections and real-
> world facts…by tactfully avoiding contradictions between their versions of
> historical figures and the familiar facts … and by making the background norms
> governing their projected worlds conform to accepted real-world norms.
> (McHale, 1987, 17)

Given the central premise of McHale's postmodernism, the postmodern variant of this

strategy might be presumed to emphasize this disparity. To the extent that 'Charcot',

'MacDiarmid' et al. match known facts concerning their corresponding historical figure,

this is not the case in *Poor Things*. However, by emphasizing the textuality of its

historical figures, and placing them in a world composed of pre-existent fictional

characters and openly fictional constructs, *Poor Things* does not foreground the

boundary between history and fiction so much as that between our world and the novel, where historical figures are included within the latter. Where before the seam between fiction and history was elided in order to suggest the historical reality of the fictional, *Poor Things*, while it presents the two in the same continuous field, reduces history to the level of fiction. This charge has proved one of the central criticisms levelled against postmodernism.

For Jameson, a central proponent of this claim, the fictionalization of historical figures surfaces as one symptom of a general 'waning of our historicity' (Jameson, 1991, 21). As with much of Jameson's thinking on the postmodern a number of possible causes are implied for history's disappearance. Ultimately, these are traced back to his central supposition that there has been a process of dual colonization by which the aesthetic sphere and the commodity form have wholly penetrated each other, and in turn have come to dominate society. One effect of this change is a transformation of how history can be represented, where the ability to engage with history *as* history is denied and becomes a matter of blank commodities. It is not the case, then, that the ahistoricism Jameson sees in postmodernism represents a lack of concern with history. Indeed, he describes a postmodernity saturated with historical imagery, gripped by 'an omnipresent, omnivorous and well-nigh libidinal historicism' (Jameson, 1991, 18) which can only be fed through the production and consumption of such images. The crucial point is that these are *images* of history, history become limited to the aesthetic. The clearest example of this process is the category he dubs nostalgia cinema. Comprising a group of films as diverse as *American Graffiti*, *Chinatown* and *Star Wars*, the feature shared across this genre is, Jameson suggests, their reduction of history to 'fashion-plate

images' (Stephanson, 1989, 18). The Eisenhower period of *American Graffiti* is a time whose identity consists of its music and fashion, the depression of *Chinatown* a matter of its titles' reconstructed typeface as much as anything else. The nostalgia of *Star Wars* is, Jameson contends, an aesthetic nostalgia, a pastiche of the generic codes of nineteen-thirties' serials. Like all signs in Jameson's postmodernity, these markers of the past appear without reference to the history they supposedly invoke. In the phrase he borrows from DeBord, such images represent 'the final form of commodity reification'(Jameson, 1991, 18), and as such each has been

> reduced to a means for its own consumption. It no longer has any qualitative value in itself, but only insofar as it can be "used": the various forms of activity lose their immanent intrinsic satisfactions as activity and become means to an end. (Jameson, 1992(c), 11)

The use-value of 'history' – the Historical referent itself – is effaced, leaving behind its traces as commodities. History is reduced to 'a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum' (Jameson, 1991, 18), its central legitimating purpose the end-based 'use' of pure consumption. As such, the loss of the historical referent represents not only the outcome of the universal commodification of postmodernity – a 'fundamental mutation…in the object world itself – now become a set of texts or simulacra'(Jameson, 1991, 9) – but also one means by which this logic is enforced. The consumption of history as image is the consumption of history without value, inciting its response from an appetite for history which it cannot sate but only multiply, 'satisfying a chemical craving for historicity, using a product that substitutes for and blocks it' (Stephanson, 1989, 18).

This feedback-loop between a growing historical appetite and the commodified history in which it seemingly *must* be invested recalls one of the recurrent problems in Jameson's postmodernity, the usurpation of creative agency by commodification. Jameson's comments on E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, which he takes as representative of postmodern historical writing, would seem to suggest as much. This novel's conflation of the fictional and historical shows some affinity with *Poor Things*, and also leaves it, Jameson contends, a 'monument to the aesthetic situation engendered by the disappearance of the historical referent. This historical novel *can no longer* set out to represent the historical past' (Jameson, 1991, 25. My Emphasis). Elsewhere this image of inevitable compliance with commodification is modified. Here Doctorow's inscription of the logic of the commodity becomes a tool of resistance, attempting to 'undo postmodernism "homoeopathically"… by using all the instruments of pastiche itself and to reconquer some genuine historical sense by using some of the instruments of what I have called substitutes for history' (Stephanson, 1989, 19). As such, the novel appears less symptomatic than diagnostic, where 'by turning the past into something which is obviously a black simulacrum… [Doctorow] suddenly makes us realize that this is the only image of the past we have…an insistence on the very flatness and depthlessness of the thing which makes what isn't there very vivid' (Stephanson, 1989, 20).

As a self-confessed copy of which there *are* originals – but absent and overtly textual originals – *Poor Things*' consideration of history could well invoke the 'black simulacrum' of *Ragtime*. Jameson's emphasis on the overt constructedness of postmodern historical fiction is, however, a facet he shares with competing accounts of

the genre, and one such model, that offered by Hutcheon, seems more relevant here. In

Ragtime, Hutcheon suggests,

> the entire portrait of 1930s American [sic] is developed out of the popular culture
> of the period… the novel actually enacts the realization that what we "know" of
> the past derives from the discourses of that past. This is not documentary
> realism: it is a novel about our cultural representations of the past, our discourse
> *about* the 1930's. (Hutcheon, 2000, 136)

The different conclusions which these critics take from broadly the same

phenomena are largely a matter of the degree of self-consciousness each ascribes to

postmodernism. For Jameson, the broad swathe of postmodern historical fiction is

unreflective. Where self-consciousness enters into consideration, as with *Ragtime*, it is

precisely a consciousness of the text's less reflexive contemporaries. For all that

Jameson denies a role for parody in postmodernist fiction, this limited self-awareness

suggests its continued presence; if the majority of postmodern historical fiction offers

only pastiche, mimicry without meaning, those which strain towards meaning do so by

referencing this fact. They are, in effect, parodies of pastiche.

In contrast, Hutcheon's model of postmodernism has both parody and self-

awareness at its centre. The same is true of her postmodern historical fiction, a fact made

explicit in her term for this genre, historiographic metafiction. Indeed, as McHale

suggests, in 'her account, the category "postmodernist fiction" is *coextensive with* the

category "historiographic metafiction": whatever does not belong to the latter category

does not, by definition, belong to the former' (McHale, 1992(b), 20). While McHale

makes this point largely to question Hutcheon's exclusion of autotelic metafictions, it

nevertheless implies a similar rejection on the other side of the equation. If writing

which does not seek to engage to any extent with the representation of social reality –

offering, as it were, 'metafiction' without the 'historiographic' – is to be dismissed by Hutcheon as late modernist, a similar dismissal attends fiction which offers the 'historiographic' without a simultaneous dimension of self-awareness, equivalent of the 'commodif[ied] (and demotiv[ated])' (Hutcheon, 1995, 12) strand of 'postmodernism' she dismisses as kitsch. While this possibility might serve to reconcile her with Jameson over certain specific artefacts, however, these remain by definition outwith the focus of Hutcheon's argument.

It is through the pattern of internal contradiction by which Hutcheon repeatedly characterizes postmodernism, here manifest as the convergence of historical reference and literary self-consciousness, that she suggests a potential source for her differences from Jameson. That the combination of these concerns represents a potential paradox can be seen in McHale's summary of their mutual impact, creating a genre which 'aspires to give some account of historical reality while at the same time questioning everything that traditional historiography and the traditional (realist) historical novel took for granted' (McHale, 1992(b), 20-1). As with the other postmodern contradictions Hutcheon analyses, then, historiographic metafiction works through employing conventions which are simultaneously undermined. It is in the recognition of both sides of this and other postmodern paradoxes that Hutcheon locates her differences from Jameson. A separate area of contention between the two, her rejection of Jameson's universal culture industry, is thus characterized as the recognition of a further manifestation of this paradoxical strategy. In preserving a space within postmodernism for texts to mark their critical distance from dominant practices Hutcheon does not wholly reject their inescapable implication within capitalism. Instead, postmodernist

practices represent for her a contradictory merging of complicity and criticism, 'a

challenging *and* an exploiting of the commodification of art by our consumer culture.

Fredric Jameson's…readings of the postmodern…see only the second half of that

paradox, however' (Hutcheon, 2000, 207-8).

The same charge of ignoring postmodern paradoxes is levelled at Jameson's

interpretation of postmodern historical fiction. Here, the simplification consists of

translating the problematization of historical representation into its denial, erasing the

first aspect of historiographic metafiction's dual identity. In tandem with this, she

alleges that the historiographical nature of this problematization is bracketed away from

the question of history. Thus, Hutcheon's response to critics such as Jameson is to draw

attention to the metafictional problematization of historical representation as itself

indicative of a concern with history where,

> postmodern fiction is typically denounced as dehistoricized, if not ahistorical,
> especially by Marxist critics…Of course, the problematized histories of
> postmodernism have little to do with the single totalizing History of Marxism,
> but they cannot be accused of neglecting or refusing engagement with the issues
> of historical representation and knowledge. (Hutcheon, 1995, 57)

Hutcheon's dismissal of Jameson's argument, then, rests largely upon his resistance to

the idea that the overt fictionality of postmodern fiction might represent a self-conscious

engagement with historical representation. As mention of the 'totalising History of

Marxism' might imply, it also rests upon the suggestion that were this engagement to be

recognized it would still not be considered 'historical' by Jameson, given his more

limited application of the term. Elsewhere, Hutcheon contends that 'Jameson laments the

loss of a sense of *his particular definition of history*, then, while dismissing as nostalgia

the only kind of history we may be able to acknowledge: a contingent and inescapably intertextual history.' (Hutcheon, 1995, 113-4. My Emphasis). The extent to which Hutcheon is correct here is debatable. Certainly, it would be misleading to claim that 'History' functions in Jameson's writings in a limited sense. Discussing Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, Hayden White recognizes the complexity with which Jameson employs the term, noting that '[t]he confusion to the reader that is likely to result from the effort to follow Jameson in his many uses of the term *history* will be more than justified' (H. White, 1992(b), 147). Conventional definitions of history, as 'past events [or]…the record of those events' (H. White, 1992(b), 147), persist in Jameson's usage of the term, alongside a quite different apprehension of the concept. While insisting upon the physical extension of history as strongly as one who takes it to mean 'past events' – 'History', he summarizes, 'is what hurts' (Jameson, 1996, 102) – it is nevertheless something more than the physical reality which it engenders, a process which 'can be apprehended only through its effects, and never directly as some reified force' (Jameson, 1996, 102). Equally, the relationship between history as record of events and History as Jameson employs the term is marked by an ambivalence similar to that with which Hutcheon approaches the situation. If her notion of a 'inescapably intertextual history' is echoed in his suggestion that 'history is inaccessible to us except in textual form…[and] can be approached only by way of prior (re)textualization' *(*Jameson, 1996, 82), for Jameson this assertion comes only as a modification of a more fundamental claim, that History 'is *not* a text, for it is fundamentally non-narrative and nonrepresentational' (Jameson, 1996, 82). That Hutcheon's repetition of this notion comes in a similar form, yet with the relationship between assertion and modifying proviso reversed, reflects the

different priorities she brings to bear. '[T]o say that the past is only *known* to us through textual traces' she writes, ' is not, however, the same as saying that the past is only textual…past events existed empirically, but in epistemological terms we can only know them today through texts'(Hutcheon, 1995, 81).

It is here that Jameson's usage of the term History comes closest to the limited definition which Hutcheon finds in it. His privileging of the historical process over and above questions of representation gains its justification from the inescapable effects of this process as it confronts the individual subject. While this notion of history is clearly compatible with his Marxian theoretical structure, however, it is a concept which he assumes as self-evident outwith such a context. Indeed, that the notion of 'History as ground and untranscendable horizon' for all life is one which 'needs no particular theoretical justification'(Jameson, 1996, 102) is offered as the source for any political impetus towards understanding History. As such it is also the justification for adopting a Marxian conception of history, since, he claims, '[o]nly Marxism can give us an adequate account of the essential *mystery* of the cultural past, which…is momentarily returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak' (Jameson, 1996, 19). More than this is a justification of Marxism, however, it is a justification of narrativization, a process which for Jameson is central to any understanding of History. This is made clear by the terms in which Jameson commends to his readers the grand narrative of Marxism, suggesting that the traces of past realities

> can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story; only if…they are seen as sharing a single fundamental theme – for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity. (Jameson, 1996, 19)

It is this incorporation of historical moments into a 'single vast unfinished plot' which Jameson finds lacking in postmodern historical fiction, rather than any specifically Marxist form.

The non-availability of the historical referent which condemns postmodern historical fiction to ahistoricity is therefore not merely the non-availability of its physical referent, but of the relationships between referents which constitute, as White has termed it, Jameson's 'ultimate referent of history (in the sense of the knowledge we can have of it as a process)' (H. White, 1992(b), 147). The simulacral past of postmodern historical fiction acts as a functional parallel to the depthless productions of postmodernism's own moment. Ultimately, this loss appears as the non-availability not only of the reality of a given historical moment, but of the relationship this bears to other moments, including our own. As Jameson has made clear, it is in this sense that he considers postmodern historical fiction to offer an unsatisfying substitute for genuine historical consciousness, offering only 'images that entertain no determinable ideological relationship to other moments of time: they are not the outcome of anything, nor are they the antecedents of our present; they are simply images' (Stephanson, 1989, 18).

The terms in which Hutcheon suggests Jameson's motivation for focussing on an alleged loss of the historical referent represent a problematic area in negotiating between the two. It is possible to read her observations above as suggesting that his conclusions are a response to a lack of a specifically *Marxist* conception of history, in which case such comments are dubious if understandable. Equally explicit in Jameson's thought is a related commitment to the totalization of history, a trait also referenced in Hutcheon's comments, and here her charge might hold more weight. The incorporation of historical

moments within a single overarching narrative might indeed seem incompatible with the import of historiographic metafiction as Hutcheon describes it. Her characterization of the genre suggests it as providing an inherent contrast to grand narratives, 'impl[ying] a pluralist (and perhaps troubling) view of historiography as consisting of different but equally meaningful constructions of past reality' (Hutcheon, 2000, 96). Indeed, as mentioned earlier, McHale has suggested this incredulity towards totalizing metanarrative as the sole final interpretation which she gives the genre.

While McHale's summary of the category Hutcheon constructs – as one far more concerned with problematizing historical knowledge than with providing it – holds true for the majority of her interpretations, taking this as the sole response which she offers to historiographic metafiction is again to simplify her thesis through de-emphasizing one side of the genre's paradox. While the main strand of her discussion of historiographic metafiction posits the genre as problematizing representations of the past, nevertheless she can still conclude that a novel such as *Ragtime* offers 'an accurate evocation of a particular period' (Hutcheon, 2000, 89). Similarly, the narratives of consequence demanded by Jameson can still be seen to operate in Hutcheon's interpretation. Indeed, the metafictional concerns of the genre can be seen as the entry of representational conventions into one such relationship. Here, postmodernist appropriation from previous aesthetic forms

> does not wrest past art from its original historical context and reassemble it into some sort of presentist spectacle. Instead, through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference. (Hutcheon, 1995, 93)

Here the self-conscious interrogation of representation not only becomes a means of revealing its underlying conventions, but the role which these conventions have played in shaping historical forces. 'In a very real sense,' writes Hutcheon, 'postmodernism reveals a desire to understand present culture as the product of previous representations. The representation of history becomes the history of representation' (Hutcheon, 1995, 58). The representation of historical realities within narrative – and the delineation of historical relationships between them in grand 'narrative' form – therefore continues in historiographic metafiction not only despite its metafictionality but, in this regard, because of it.

The discussion given above to the relationship that *Poor Things* posits between history and fiction highlights the novel's shared concerns with historiographic metafiction. Both history and fiction are offered as explicitly textual, indeed intertextual, in the relationship which fiction bears to its forebears and history to the historical record; the two are figured as to some extent contiguous, or at least similar enough to confused. It is the ease with which such a misrecognition might be made which compels Victoria to append her addition to McCandless' narrative. This similarity also provokes 'Gray's' rebuttal of Victoria's account, and, if she feels she has no time to '*go through every page separating fact from fiction*' (*PT* 274), something like this clearly animates his notes. Yet both 'Gray' and Victoria, while assuming the strict seperability of fact and fiction, ultimately stumble when it comes to firmly dividing '*actual events during a dismal era*' (*PT* 275) from the interwoven '*cunning lie*' (*PT* 274). The same unsettling of ontological certainty which might attend the trans-world identities of *Poor Things* is thus ascribed to the trans-world realities of *Episodes*. Short of identifying the ontological basis of each

event, the best Victoria can do to afford the reader her own certainty is to urge them to ignore both '*what contradicts common sense*'(*PT* 274) – effectively eliding the text's ontological seams – and that which contradicts her own narrative. While the first of these strategies places an emphasis on the reader's interpretative abilities, the second suggests that the question of final interpretation should be bypassed. The resolution of the novel's competing texts which Victoria's letter invites is the total acceptance of her narrative. In effect, reading *Poor Things* becomes a matter of trust.

The same emphasis on unqualified acceptance of written sources is invoked within 'Gray's' foreword. Here, the first assertion of the seperability of history and fiction is raised in a self-undermining suggestion of their similarity which draws attention to their shared narrative form. Indeed, it is an awareness of what one discourse represents which seems to justify claims concerning the other, for 'Gray' asserts the veracity of *Episodes* by claiming that he 'had written enough fiction to know history when [he] read it', while Donnelly suggests that his own certainty stems from having 'written enough history to recognize fiction'(*PT* xi). 'Gray's' response to this impasse is to familiarize himself with the specific conditions of historical discourse, as there could only be 'one reply – [he] had to become a historian'(*PT* xi). In effect, our editor leaves the question of how fiction and history might be categorically distinguished unresolved, unless it is in the implicit recognition – in the 'six months of research' (*PT* xii) by which novelist becomes historian – that a key feature is the limit placed on a historian to work within the historical record. It is this different form of intertextuality – one to one correspondence with the real world through reference to historical document – which manifests itself in the novel's closing notes. While this suggests a level of engagement

with the reader's interpretative ability, however, 'Gray' is as dependent as Victoria on readerly trust. Before offering a chronology supposedly culled from independent sources, 'Gray' first informs us that '[r]eaders who want nothing but a good story plainly told should go at once to the main part of the book'(*PT* xii), leaving corroborative evidence the sole preserve of '[p]rofessional doubters'(*PT* xii). If there are indeed differences between writing history and writing fiction, it seems there are also differences involved in reading these discourses. Dividing his readership into wary readers practicing a historical method and unquestioning fiction-reading followers, it becomes clear which group 'Gray' prefers, for 'if my readers trust me I do not care what an "expert" thinks' (*PT* xiv).

Summarizing some of the general traits she has identified in historiographic metafiction, Hutcheon describes how

> [r]ecent postmodern readings of both history and realist fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent, either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. (Hutcheon, 1989, 54)

As this statement suggests, several of the concerns she has noted in historiographic metafiction are ones shared with contemporaneous considerations of historiography, most notably the work of Hayden White. Similar observations which White has made regarding his discipline draw out the sense in which, if *Poor Things* sees Gray interrogating the foundations of the two forms of discourse, 'Gray' at least has succeeded in his attempt to become a historian, for, like his new-found peers, he too

shows 'a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are:

verbal fictions, the contexts of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of

which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with

those in the sciences'(H. White 1978(b), 82).

White's investigation of narrative history's constructed nature does not invalidate

historical reference; for White, as for 'Gray', it is a commitment to the historical record

which gives narrative history its character independent of fiction, where

> what distinguishes "historical" from "fictional" stories is first and foremost their
> content, rather than their form. The content of historical stories is real events,
> events that really happened, rather than imaginary events, events invented by the
> narrator. (H. White, 1992(c), 27)

If this limitation in terms of the material viable for incorporation establishes

whatever truth historical narrative possesses, it does so through maintaining a claim of

reference to a History which is fundamentally non-narrative; '[i]t is', as White observes

'because real events do not offer themselves as stories that their narrativization is so

difficult' (H. White, 1992(d), 4).

Yet even here historical reference enters into a condition of intertextuality. One

sense in which this is the case is in the basic situation through which events of the past

make themselves available to the present, where it is not History itself, but the historical

record upon which the historian must base his narrative. A further sense in which the

unavailability of history necessitates its entry into narrative form is drawn out in the

previous quotation from White. For White the absence of history can never truly be

overcome through its textualized representations, which are the only means of reference

available and yet can only refer indirectly, creating 'the illusion that there is a past out

there that is directly reflected in the texts. But even if we grant this, what we see is the reflection not the thing reflected' (H. White,1992(a), 209). Yet the narrativization of history remains the procedure by which history attains a form amenable to understanding. That they are at best only indirectly referential textual constructs whose claims of direct correspondence are illusory, 'in no way detracts', White maintains 'from the status of historical narratives as providing a kind of knowledge…the encodation of events in terms of such plot structures is one of the ways that a culture has of making sense of both personal and public pasts' (H. White, 1978(b), 85).

Here a seemingly paradoxical situation arises, paralleling that at the heart of historiographic metafiction. While White preserves for historical narrative a privileged role in fostering knowledge of the past, recognizing the constructed nature of historical narrative entails recognizing its subjective basis. The objective truth implied by commitment to the historical record is undermined when the record itself is taken as the result of prior textualization, inevitably incomplete and yet too full to incorporate within a single narrative. The element of choice demanded by this plenitude is an inescapable part of the historiographic process. Indeed, it is through such choices that the contents of the historical record attain the very status of fact, for as White comments, historical facts 'are not so much found as constructed by the kinds of questions which the investigator asks of the phenomena before him' (H. White, 1978(a), 43). The key criteria when choosing facts from within the historical record would seem to be their capacity to lend themselves to a certain type of story which then represents itself as explaining the facts thus selected. Terming this originating supposition the 'governing metaphor' of a narrative, White describes one possible means of approaching this choice which makes

clear his attempt to reconcile the perceived subjectivity of historical narrative with the notion of historical truth. '[T]he governing metaphor of an historical account', he suggests,

> could be treated as a *heuristic rule which self-consciously eliminates certain kinds of data from consideration as evidence*. The historian…seeks to exploit a certain perspective on the world that does not pretend to exhaust description or analysis of all the data in the entire phenomenal field but rather offers itself as *one way among many* of disclosing certain aspects of the field. (H. White, 1978(a), 46)[41]

This relativist acceptance of a particular narrativization lends support to the notion that postmodern trends in historiography have replaced the idea of an overarching historical narrative with a variety of *petit histoires*. Indeed, for White there exists, in potentiality, viable narrative accounts without limit, a number stemming not only from the abundance of its contents, but the variety of ways in which any selection might be arranged. Indeed, the encoding of these potential narrative units into a story of a given form is what endows each account with its specific character, since

> no given set or sequence of real events is intrinsically tragic, comic, farcical, and so on, but can be constructed as such only by the imposition of the structure of a given story type on the events, [and so] it is the choice of the story type and its imposition upon the events that endow them with meaning. (H. White, 1992(c), 44)

Historical narrative, then, functions for White in a partly allegorical mode, for while it primarily refers to the events which form its overt subject, these are given meaning through a secondary referent, the plot-structures of the culture in which it is produced. The form taken by a given historical narrative is thus the central aspect of its operations, and, White suggests, '[w]hen the reader recognizes the story being told in a historical narrative as a specific kind of story – for example, as an epic, romance, tragedy,

comedy, or farce – he can be said to have comprehended the meaning produced by the discourse' (H. White, 1992(c), 43).

This recognition of the subjective qualities of the innumerable possible constructions of the past is exemplified in *Poor Things* narrative multiplicity. It is here that the transitional space between epistemological and ontological uncertainties finds its genesis, where the only means of approaching reality is via uncertain subjective narrative. Discussing the forms common among historiographic metafiction, Hutcheon suggests that two viewpoints seem privileged in the genre, a single narrator whose control is overtly signalled, and a number of narrators each providing their own version of events (Hutcheon, 1989, 66). In the character of 'Gray', we find the first of these types. In the novel as a whole, meanwhile, the narrative is given over to the mutually exclusive accounts of a variety of narrators. Where *Poor Things* stands at odds with Hutcheon's comment, however, is in an observation she appends to her identification of these two forms. Whether a work employs single or multiple narrators, she suggests, there is one factor shared by both, for '[i]n neither…do we find a subject confident of his/her ability to know the past with any certainty' (Hutcheon, 1989, 66). This is clearly not the case with *Poor Things*. The reader may be denied certainty, but this denial depends on various characters within the novel possessing it in overabundance, from 'Gray' and Victoria to the General's lawyer who has 'no doubt Lady Blessington immersed herself in the Clyde, and no doubt the Humane Society official rescued her' (*PT* 219), an event untrue in McCandless' narrative and nonexistent in Victoria's.

The certainty which these characters possess stems from their role as historians, authors of narratives in which 'reality wears the mask of a meaning, the completeness

and fullness which we can only imagine, never experience' (H. White, 1992(d), 21).

Each is engaged in their own project of narrativization, regardless of whether this

narrative is directly shared with the reader. As the links previously sketched between the

meaning ascribed to events in each narrative and Victorian generic conventions suggest,

it is the form of these accounts which establishes the context in which events are made

to signify. Again recalling Gray's epic maps, this process of narrativization is shown as

central not only for understanding the past, but also the present. Thus Wedderburn cites

textual precursors which allow him an imaginative understanding of his situation.

Justification for his philandering comes from identification with '*the moral code*

enjoyed, preached and practiced by Scotland's National Bard, Rabbie Burns' (*PT* 80).

Explanation of the same stems from identification with situations whose meaning is

defined in narrative, a process described in an early draft of his letter where Wedderburn

claims to '*explain why my peculiar emotional constitution made me fall so easy a pray*

to Bella's Wiles, and I must do so indirectly, by drawing a precedent from

literature' (Gray, NLS Acc. 10749/12, 1991(e)). While this comment is excised from the

novel, the practice is not. Thus, writing of *She Stoops To Conquer*, he tells how its hero

'*has but one defect. He is only at ease with women of the servant class…My case*

entirely!' (*PT* 79). His interpretation of *Faust*, meanwhile, offers a psychological model

he eagerly applies to himself, where man '*is essentially double: a noble soul fully*

instructed in what is wise and lawful, yet also a fiend who loves beauty only to drag it

down and degrade it' (*PT* 77). In short, he writes, '*I recognised* myself *in that tormented*

hero' (*PT* 77).

Several instances of this process occur throughout the novel. Reconciling himself to the reversal of gender roles within his marriage, McCandless constructs an image which, if it lacks Wedderburn's intertextuality, shows the same imaginative resolution of a problem through its metaphorical reapprehension; '[s]he is the swelling sail, trim rigging and busy sunlit deck of our matrimonial yacht: I am the low hull with the invisible ballast and keel. This metaphor greatly contents me'(*PT* 240). Elsewhere, Bell seems more reluctant to accept a representation of reality in place of experience. Reading one such transformation of the world, that offered in *Punch* magazine, she finds that among its inhabitants, '[t]*he ugliest and most comical are Scots, Irish, foreign, poor, servants, rich folk who have been poor until very recently, small men, old unmarried woman and Socialists*'(*PT* 127). Bell's education has brought her into contact with the majority of these groups and, as she later explains, while '*some wore cracked boots and patched coats and grubby underwear, just like the poor people we laugh at in* Punch... *none were ever as horrid as you suggest*' (*PT* 142). Nor, perhaps, as *Punch* suggests, although she seems to accept aspects of their representation at face value, reasoning that '*Punch says only lazy people are out of work so the very poorest must* enjoy *being poor.'* (*PT* 135). The analysis she brings to bear on *Punch* is however seen in the first question which the magazine provokes, as to '*why the well-dressed English people in the pictures were handsomer and less comic than anyone else*'(*PT* 128). Bell lacks two areas of knowledge vital to properly interpreting these representations. One is the underlying reality of capitalism. More importantly, she is also unaware of the subjective basis of representation, and so can only read these caricatures as a mimetic representation of

reality. Shortly after these failings are raised, however, Bell is offered an opportunity, in the persons of Mr Astley and Rev. Hooker, to rectify both these gaps in her education.

While the Rev. Hooker has retired from evangelism, and his companion claims '*no wish to spread*'(*PT* 133) his faith, their description as 'missionaries' remains apt. As with several characters in Gray's works the two exist largely to offer didactic lectures on their world; as might be expected in a novel so heavily concerned with the limitations of representation their descriptions reveal as much about the act of describing as they do about reality. This is certainly the case with Hooker, whose simplification of reality into a series of stereotypes repeats and extends the process shown in *Punch*. Not only does he describe to Bell how '*Black people eat each other. Arabs and Jews do unmentionable things to the private parts of their infants*' (*PT* 139-40), he also attempts to explain these racial inferiorities through employing the pseudo-scientific language of Victorian physiognomy, tracing Anglo-Saxon superiority to the '*smaller skulls*' (*PT* 140) of other peoples. As with the accusation of laziness levelled against *Punch*'s poor, Hooker's claims work to justify the status quo, where the overseas expansion of Britain and America shows them '*policing and civilizing the natives, not hurting them*' (*PT* 141). Hooker attempts to endow British and American imperialism not only with a justification, but with meaning. To do this he constructs a grand narrative in which '*God has sent the Anglo-Saxon race to purify the globe with fire and sword*' (*PT* 142). Such a form not only gives meaning to past and present, but does so through positing a teleological end. If Hooker's vision of the future overtly invokes comparisons with Christianity's prophesised outcome of history, his own '*faith…which points us all toward a golden future*' (*PT* 133) also bears comparison with other narratives of utopian

emancipation. Indeed, given that the central agency in bringing History to its culmination is not God, but the 'civilized' nations, his account would appear closer to secular doctrines than to orthodox Christianity.

The treatment of Hooker's views not only returns us to the question of the Grand narratives supposedly rejected by postmodernism, but, more specifically, to Marxism. Although the central position it reserves for racial difference makes clear its contrasts, Hooker's final prophecy that

> [b]*y the year 2000 the Chinese teacup-maker, Indian pearl-diver, Persian carpet-weaver…et cetera will at last pursue their occupations in peace and prosperity, for Anglo-Saxon law will have at last allowed the meek to inherit the earth*' (*PT* 141)

nevertheless bears similarities to the socialist utopias foreseen by Victoria or by the Russian gambler. While the now unacceptable choice of 'governing metaphor' underlying Hooker's account ensures that it can be read only as parody, this rejection is reinforced by its absence in our year 2000. The same rejection of teleological patterns in history appears with specific reference to Marxism in Victoria's letter. Or at least, that is how portions of the letter have been interpreted by some. Davidson, drawing attention to Victoria's optimism in the face of the pending world war, suggests that the very occurrence of the war invalidates her Marxist beliefs, since, '[i]n the one area that readers know, the facts contradict rational, Enlightened Victoria again' (Davidson, 1999, 60). Yet, even leaving aside Victoria's distance from orthodox Marxism, her position on the war is not as clear as Davidson suggests; indeed, the certainty of historical progress along the schema envisaged by Marxism may represent one reason for her rejection of its dogma, for while Victoria asserts that she '*was (as I am) a radical socialist*' (*PT* 306)

she nevertheless '*cannot like the orthodox Communists. They have one simple answer to every question and believe…that they can forcibly simplify what they do not understand*'(*PT* 312). Such simplification would seem beyond Victoria, for whom the war stands as a disruptive shock. The only way in which she might rationalize its place in History, it seems, is to ignore it entirely, and in her construction of a linear narrative of emancipation which reaches a partial climax in 1945, she describes how '*everything between 1914 and the present day has been proved a hideous detour, a swerving from the good path of social progress*' (*PT* 316).

The same desire to project a linear pattern upon history can be seen in Victoria's treatment of the future, while likewise repeating this resistance to history's simplification. Alongside the growing movement of international socialist solidarity which allows Victoria to predict the frustration of the first world war she also discerns evidence of its opposite in the Anglo-German armament race. This, she suggests, is enough to heed the vision of technologized conflict described in H.G.Wells' *The War In The Air*, a book which she makes clear '*is a warning, of course, not a prediction*'(*PT* 275). In the same way her own accounts of the future are not predictions, but hopes. These are not unfounded, since she '*expect*[s] *a better future because we are actively creating it*' (*PT* 275), but remain as necessarily tentative as all attempts at prophesizing. At her most optimistic concerning the peace, Victoria can only '*almost hope*' (*PT* 276) for the initial commencement of war which will bring this to a climax. Similarly, the prediction of social progress with which she greets the Labour Party's 1945 victory comes with the admission that the less optimistic might '*describe for* [her] *all the obviously vicious worms gnawing at the roots of Blooming Britain*'(*PT* 316). If her

reluctance to hear MacDiarmid's response marks a change from her earlier readiness to incorporate Wells' worms, it is because Victoria can herself play no part in realizing this future; aware how little time she has left, this prophecy will allow her to '*die happy*' (*PT* 316). Like the predicted utopia of Hooker's faith, which '*warms the heart* [and] *binds you to your fellow men*' (*PT* 133) and, we must assume, unlike Astley's in offering '*comfort to... those on the point of death*'(*PT* 133), the final purpose of Victoria's narrative schema of history would appear to be its effects on those who believe it. Only on the point of death does Victoria allow herself to accept its illusion of certainty, even then admitting the possibility of alternative views.

Here, then, Victoria shows herself to be aware of both the attractions and dangers offered by narrative representations of reality. If Hooker is responsible for teaching her this lesson through exemplifying grand narrative in practice, then the mechanisms by which such representations operate are the lesson of his companion. Before considering Astley's lessons to Bell, however, it might first be useful to consider one directed not to her, but towards the reader. Bell, pondering the social groups in *Punch*, finds its representational codes confirmed upon his arrival, when the '*comically English*' (*PT* 128) Astley appears as '*one of the well-dressed, handsome people I had been puzzling over in* Punch'(*PT* 128). As with Bell herself, Astley would thus appear to be a two-dimensional embodiment of a representational code, and, again, his further dimensions, uncontainable within this code, are soon revealed. There is, 'Gray' notes, 'no evidence that "Harry" Astley ever existed'(*PT* 287), prompting Gray to make a supposition which explains his 'English façade'(*PT* 287). 'He was', 'Gray' concludes, 'probably a Tsarist

agent' (*PT* 287), a translation of the character from the pages of *Punch* to those of a John Buchan novel which again lays emphasis on the untrustworthy nature of representation.

The uncertainty surrounding how Astley can be interpreted – 'read' according to one code by Bella, and another by 'Gray' – is taken by Davidson as further evidence that the novel subverts Bella/Victoria's ideological choice. It is a journey upon which Astley takes Bella, to Alexandria's beggars, which first exposes her to capitalism's worst effects, and it is his lectures which first outline for her this system's broader operations. For Davidson, to undermine the identity of this catalyst to Bella's political development is to undermine her conclusions. 'The background against which Bella chose socialism is no longer certain and stable' she suggests, and so

> [r]eaders are forced to consider if this situation materially changes the validity of her choice of Socialism or any other philosophy. They are also urged to recognise that all ideological choices are formed with partial knowledge and unavoidable uncertainty, and that we 'read' situations and texts differently according to the extent of our knowledge or ignorance of various factors. (Davidson, 1999, 62)

Such a claim is clearly compatible with the novel's emphasis on the partiality of narrativized accounts. The irony is that such partial knowledge similarly attends Davidson's own reading, for here there is a further factor which she leaves unconsidered. While Astley may be suggestive of *Punch*, both he and his Russian acquaintance derive more directly from *The Gambler*. Indirectly suggesting this in his notes, 'Gray' offers a degree of confirmation to Davidson's analysis through emphasizing the partial knowledge with which Bell interprets the here unnamed Alexis Ivanovich, whose speech reveals him as 'steeped in the novellas of Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Bella could not have known this, as the great novelist had died the year before (1881)

and was not yet translated into English'(*PT* 286). Further confirmation of Davidson's point stems from the overtly fictional nature of this origin, which would reveal Astley as not merely a Tsarist's fraudulent identity, but an intrinsically fraudulent entity.

While Astley's intertextual origins offer some support to Davidson's analysis, this emphasis on the partiality of Bell's knowledge need not necessarily undermine her socialism. One key point here is the extent to which Bella's choice is independent of Astley's identity. As Davidson would have it, Astley's origins render his lectures to Bell 'ironic' (Davidson, 1999, 62), which would imply that she identifies a less problematic reading of Bell's conversion as attendant upon his acting as a truthful representative of his assumed nation. Certainly it is not a case of his truthfully or ironically representing socialism itself, since Bell's socialism develops '*despite* [his] *teaching*' (*PT* 161), the view of a '*half-baked optimist*'(*PT* 161). And yet his lessons are likewise dissimilar from what one might expect of the English upper classes. His support for '*the English State Church whose pope is Queen Victoria*' (*PT* 132) is traced directly to the fact that '[i]*t keeps England stable*'(*PT* 132), and in other situations he supports other faiths. Astley's views on women are likewise at odds with the orthodoxy represented by Dr Prickett. Where Prickett explains that '[n]o normal healthy woman…wants or expects to enjoy sexual contact'(*PT* 218) as a known fact concerning women, Astley repeats the same observation as a fact concerning the organisation of life among the English middle- and upper-classes. Astley's comment that women are '*supposed to be superior to the sexual act itself…yet all the time they are as much parasites, prisoners and playthings as odalisques in a Turkish harem*'(*PT* 155) thus leaves room for a criticism of this belief, and the institutions founded upon it, which has no place in Prickett's account. Astley's

lectures are not an Englishman's commentary upon the world, but a meta-commentary on the same. If there is anything ironic about their relationship to his 'true' identities, it is the irony that a professional dissembler – or wholly fictional creation – bears such a crucial role in revealing the truth.

While the context of Astley's lectures may not undermine Bella's socialism in the manner Davidson suggests, their content shares her concerns over the dangers of ideologically-charged historical representation. Under the heading of 'Education', Astley describes how British children are prepared for their imperial position through being '*taught to admire killers and stealers*' (*PT* 155), an observation expanded upon under the heading of 'History', where he explains how '[b]*ig nations are created by successful plundering raids, and since most history is written by friends of the conquerors history usually suggests that the plundered were improved by their loss and should be grateful for it*' (*PT* 156-7). This observation, similar in attitude to Gray's non-fiction works, shows Astley's awareness of the political repercussions of subjective historical accounts.[42] He is equally aware of the dubious effects of justifying actions through overarching historical schema, citing optimists who

> *think the wretched deserve to suffer, or that their nation is curing – not causing –*
> *these miseries, or that God, Nature, History will make everything right one day.*
> *Doctor Hooker is one of that sort and I am glad his rhetoric did not blind you to*
> *the facts.* (*PT* 156)

Indeed, Astley's cynical dissection of Victorian society can be read as an attempt to save Bell from this rhetorical blindness.

Although concerned with the dissection of naturalized fictions, it may be misleading to cast Astley's lectures to Bell as engaged in de-doxification, for, as a result

of her 'amnesia', such doxa remain uninternalized. As Astley observes, this amnesia directly relates to her dissatisfaction, explaining that '[y]*ou find the world horrifying, Bell, because you have not been warped to fit it by a proper education*' (*PT* 156). A similar point is made by Charcot, who sees benefits to Bell's amnesia in a process of continual questioning which resists the naturalization of orthodoxy, since she must 'relearn things when old enough to think about them, which people who depend on childhood training hardly ever do' (*PT* 222). Others are less fortunate. For all McCandless has consciously rejected Christianity, he nevertheless finds his thinking conforming to the system in which he was educated. Rejecting Baxter's blasphemous projects 'as sure as there is a God in Heaven…a God of Eternal Pity and Vengeance'(*PT* 37), he finds himself in retrospect 'remembering I had stopped believing in God, Heaven, Eternal Pity et cetera after reading *The Origin of Species*'(*PT* 37). Later, we find a more subtle example of the same persistence. Chapter twenty-one, which begins with McCandless' bold assertion that 'THOUGH AN ATHEIST I AM NO BIGOT'(*PT* 200) soon sees him transferring the religion of his youth onto his friend. On hearing Baxter's 'commanding' voice, McCandless 'realized [God] had foreseen everything…[I] went forward with the courage of a Christian who knows God is on his side'(*PT* 201). Something similar can be seen in the case of the landowners described by Astley, whose view of their tenantry as '*useful animals, like horses and dogs*'(*PT* 138) may owe something to the stereotypes propagated by *Punch*, while Prickett's version of female sexuality, while 'false to nature and false to most human experience' (*PT* 218), seems unshakeable within a world-view derived from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*.

The ineffectual McCandless, laughing over his fiction in his sick-room, the incarcerated Wedderburn fearing his own diabolical account, Hooker preaching racial inequality through fire and sword; whether as a means of subjugating others, or an unwitting subjugation of the self, the replacement of reality by meaning-laden constructs finds a far from positive realization. As McCandless describes, '[t]he imagination is, like the appendix, inherited from a primitive epoch when it aided the survival of our species, but in modern scientific industrial nations it is mainly a source of disease' (*PT* 55). As each misrepresentation of reality controls and destroys both its exponents and the unwittingly indoctrinated, McCandless' reservations concerning imagined narrativization would appear to be confirmed. Victoria's commitment to socialism, for all its hesitancies becomes, in her final vision of triumph, another self-delusion. If Davidson is right to suggest that Gray brings Bella's ideological choice into question, then socialism does indeed become just another narrative to be rejected. Yet, if McCandless' diagnosis of imagination as a disease recalls Jock McLeish, this again comes with the proviso that a socially-engaged imagination forms the only way out. *Poor Things* represents the imaginative representation of reality not only as a means by which minds are 'warped' but as a resource through which meaningful life is made possible. It is this point which raises a second potential objection to Davidson's reading of Astley, for, in ascribing Bell's beliefs to a fraudulent persona or fictional character, it is possible that Gray may be drawing attention again to the role of the fictional in understanding reality. Interestingly, it is Ashley's intertextual equal, the gambler, who approaches such vision as a function of narrative. Like Thaw, the gambler locates regional identity within representation. '*Before Pushkin*', he explains to Bell, '*Russia*

was not a true nation, it was an administered region' (*PT* 115-6). It was Pushkin's narrativization of Russia's '*tragic past…peculiar present…*[and] *enigmatic future'* (*PT* 116) which '*made Russia a state of mind – made it real'* (*PT* 116), leaving '[p]*eople who care nothing for their country's stories…like people without a past – without a memory- they are half people'* (*PT* 116).

It is tempting to see in Bella's identification with these half-people, and her subsequent plan of '*making up for lost time'* (*PT* 116), a reference to the growing ideological inculcation by which she develops an understanding of politics. A more overt significance to this speech lies in its concern with history, again emphasizing the role of narrativization in endowing the record with meaning. Further, its more specific concern with national identity places this issue within the context of representing Scotland, an association strengthened by the extent to which the amnesiac 'Bella Caledonia' metaphorically represents her nation. In the combination of these notions is a return to the paradox of historiographic metafiction, where equal emphasis is laid upon the need to develop a narrative of history and on the acknowledgement that such manifestations are inescapably textual. Indeed, it is through the latter half of this 'paradox' that the novel's most direct engagement with reality is established, an engagement not with the Victorian era but with our own. While facets of the Victorian era are indeed glimpsed within a determined schema of development as Jameson demands, their contemporary political repercussions appears less in the temporal relationship between moments than in the uses to which narrative accounts of the past have been put. While Gray does offer his own map of Glasgow's development, part of this is to sketch history's resistance to containment within maps.

The relevance of *Poor Things* to Gray's then-contemporary situation is brought out by McMunigal, who explains that while *Poor Things* 'could be dismissed as 'yet another exercise in Victorian pastiche'. Three words uttered by John Major show the relevance of this book to the late twentieth-century reader. They are – Back to Basics' (McMunigal, 1995, 81). In fact, 'Back to Basics' was just one manifestation of a process of politically motivated historical misrepresentation whose relevance to *Poor Things* is perhaps most easily recognized in the name of its predecessor, 'Victorian Values.' This phrase, 'conjur[ed]…out of nowhere'(Samuel, 1992, 12) by Margaret Thatcher in 1983, would perform an important function in British political debate, regardless of its vague implications. One person for whom the term held certain meaning was Thatcher herself, who defined it in terms of childhood lessons:

> We were taught to work jolly hard. We were taught to prove yourself; we were taught self-reliance; we were taught to live within our income. You were taught that cleanliness is next to godliness. You were taught self-respect…you were taught tremendous pride in your country. All of these are Victorian values. (Thatcher qtd. in Himmelfarb, 1995, 4)

In essence, the sloganeering surrounding Victorian Values represented an attempt to transform the era into an age against which late twentieth-century Britain might be found wanting. A golden age, moreover, whose achievements were the result of virtues whose individualist emphasis was clearly compatible with Thatcherism. The response this project was met with from the Left was a similar act of simplification. In the wake of Thatcher's initial pronouncement, the leader of the opposition, Neil Kinnock, seemed to accept the notion that an entire historical period might be reduced to a set of values, values as compatible with Conservative policy as those identified by

Thatcher. The values that defined the Victorian era, he alleged, were 'cruelty, misery, drudgery, squalor and ignorance' (Kinnock qtd. in Himmelfarb, 1995, 13).

It is in the light of these contrasting accounts of the era, and attempts to recapture or reject this identity for contemporary Britain, that Gray's Victorians must be read. His response to these simplistic narratives is to offer an account of the Victorian era which dramatizes the contrast between subjective accounts of history, making clear that such accounts are partial constructions only indirectly representative of events. Moreover, the irresolution at the heart of the novel's evocation of the Victorians allows *Poor Things* to represent the era as a set of entities whose contradictions resist monological representation in coherent narrative. If the Victorian era is identifiable with the position on feminine identity held by Prickett and described by Astley, it coexists alongside the prostitution in the Parisian brothel. Meanwhile, both are set within the story of Victoria's emancipation which, if it prefigures the first female medical graduates of Glasgow University by four years, nonetheless represents an equally real, equally Victorian occurrence. The socio-economic assent of Hattersley through his own self-interest confirms the values described by Thatcher, just as the position from which he begins – and countless others remain – echoes those decried by Kinnock. The patriotic commitment to duty shown by Blessington is matched by the cynical assessment of patriotism made by Astley. A 'Christian nation'(*PT* 33) discovers Darwinian atheism.[43] The labour of the poor on which profit is based relates to the dedicated work of Hattersley to maximize these profits, of Baxter to minimize its damage, and Bell's self-analysis of the Victorian lady as '*parasite*'(*PT* 180). Stereotypes of Victorian Values are repeatedly confirmed alongside their equally stereotypical, equally Victorian opposites.

The overtly intertextual nature of the novel, in addition to emphasizing the status of these images as stereotypes, also allows comment on the ideological ramifications of its discursive codes. Key among these is the generic parallel with self-help books briefly mentioned above, most notably Smiles' *Self Help*, which may be taken as a didactic appearance of Thatcher's Victorian Values. Such, at least, is a common apprehension of this manual, which, Calder explains,

> [a]s crudely transferred to the Thatcherite 1980s…is taken to imply that rich men have every right to the swimming pools in their barricaded mansions, and young blacks in Brixton and yobs on Tyneside have only themselves to blame if they are unemployed. (Calder, 1994, 126)

This is, Calder suggests, a gross misreading of a 'confused left-wing moralist'(Calder, 1994, 126) whose thought 'derived from the same milieu as produced, not only the Victorian trade union movement, but also the co-operative wholesale societies which helped poor workers keep their families fed and clothed'(Calder, 1994, 126). The novel's thematic evocations of these movements and generic evocation of Smiles here combine to create an image of self help which goes beyond Thatcherite simplification. If self help is manifest in McCandless, who '[h]*aving fulfilled his mother's ambition by joining the middle class…had no wish to reform it from inside'*(*PT* 254), it is equally responsible, Gray suggests, for the reformers represented by Bell.

Even the temporal location of Victorian images proves an occasion for intertextual reference to undermine the period's homogeneity. If intertextual hybridity represents the means by which 'Victorianism ceases to be monolithic in Gray's hands' (Shiller, 1995, 199), it is also the means by which Victorianism ceases to be monolithically Victorian. Among the references haunting the novel, many, from Hogg to

Hamlet, are to texts which, if they helped shape Victorian culture, represent its heritage from previous eras. The same is true of the character's hybrid identities; while there is an evocation of Victorian trends in Baxter's philanthropism, role in medical advancement and even vegetarianism, the intertextual affinities of his name are, of course, all to pre-Victorian figures. That said, there is at least one reference within Baxter's name which is neither Victorian nor pre-Victorian. As partial name-sake and creation of Sir Colin Baxter, both Godwin and his progenitor might also be seen to refer to twentieth-century photographer Colin Baxter, a possibility which draws out the atemporal nature of the referential process in a way similar to the pre-Victorian echoes contained in Godwin's name, here highlighting not the persistence of previous eras within the novel's image of Victorianism but the possibility that this supposedly historical account bears meaning for the present. Martinez, drawing attention to this reference, suggests one area of relevance between the two Colins when he describes how the nineteen-eighties saw the latter Baxter increasingly known for 'romantic depictions of both Highland and urban scenes [which] transformed the Scottish postcard industry.' (Martinez, 1995, 120). That Baxter was engaged on a project of supposedly mimetic representation of Glasgow and yet provided, Martinez claims, 'partial, attractive and ideal views of the city'(Martinez, 1995, 120), shows one clear area of relevance to the novel's concerns. More specifically, the link between this project and Glasgow's tourist industry leads Martinez to trace this reference to a process of reconfiguring the past similar to the Victorian Values project, and just as important in reading *Poor Things*.

As Martinez would have it, '*Poor Things* is, to a large extent, concerned with the representation of the city of Glasgow during its year as European City of Culture'

(Martinez, 1995, 117). Here Gray is not alone in confronting the events surrounding

Glasgow in nineteen-ninety, for all that the announcement of the city's new title met

with little public response. If, in Spring's words, the announcement 'was at the time

rather a non-event [because]…no-one in Glasgow had heard of this particular prize

before that date'(Spring, 1990, 40), the groups responsible for this decision would

ensure that this would not be the case for long, issuing pronouncements which praised

the title itself as much as they did either 'Culture' or the city. These bodies got their

wish, with a single event in their schedule providing 'the biggest postbag to the *Glasgow*

Herald since Billy Graham's evangelistic tour in the 1950s' (M. Burgess, 1998,

299).What they would not have wished is the form this response took. A taste of the

initial lack of response, and its replacement with strident rejection, can be seen in the

following comment by McLay:

> GLASGOW: EUROPEAN CITY of Culture 1990. The announcement came
> from the Tory Arts minister, Edward Luce, in October 1986. It had a sickeningly
> hollow ring to it. Looking at the social, cultural and economic deprivation in
> working-class areas of Glasgow and thinking about the rigours of the new Social
> Fund and Poll Tax to come, it sounded like blatant and cynical mockery. And
> indeed a wry smile was the most usual reaction when people bothered to take the
> slightest notice. And not many did. (McLay, 1988, 1)

McLay's comments are useful in typifying the reaction faced by the culture year

in several ways. The criticisms that he raises – that the scheme was forced on the public

by an external hierarchy, that the image of Glasgow it manufactured was at odds with

the reality of ordinary Glaswegians and went hand in hand with forces worsening this

reality – are common to many commentators. Also typical is the fact that McLay writes

as one on whose behalf the project claimed to operate, not only as a Glaswegian but as a

writer. As Moira Burgess notes, '[a] number of writers…target[ed] the New Glasgow idea with furious satire and polemic' (M. Burgess, 1998, 262). While there were many individual responses in this manner, the extent to which McLay's comments in his preface to *Worker's City* can be taken as representative of the whole is strengthened by the fact that this anthology – and the loose campaign group of the same name – represented an attempt to target the project collectively. Kelman, a member of the Worker's City group, explained their choice of name in terms which make clear the role played by the culture year's revision of history. As well as its more general connotations, Worker's City was more directly targeted towards the use of the term Merchant's City in culture year literature, and so towards

> highlighting the grossness of the fallacy that Glasgow somehow exists because of the tireless efforts of a tiny patriotic coalition of fearless 18th century entrepreneurs and far-sighted politicians. These same merchants and politicians made the bulk of their personal fortunes by the simple expediency of not paying the price of labour. (Kelman, 1992(a), 1-2)

'Thus', Kelman writes, 'have the Leaders of the Labour movement come to enshrine not those who fought and died on behalf of it, but those who were its uncompromising enemies' (Kelman, 1992(a), 2).

A concern for the identity of the 'city fathers' clearly animates *Poor Things*. While uncertainty attends much of the novel, the issue of genesis – in its biblical sense condemned as 'unprovable blethers' (*PT* 19) – seems particularly problematized. The illegitimate McCandless tells us that his father did not give 'his son his own surname'(*PT* 15), and, in return, identifies him only by nickname. Of his late mother, he gives not even this, and notes that 'nobody remembered the position of the grave'(*PT* 9).

Other births are even less legitimate, their participants even more absent. '[T]here is', we are told, 'no record of [Baxter's] birth'(*PT* 279). Whether Sir Colin, Baxter's 'famous progenitor'(*PT* 17) – the closest Godwin comes to terming him father – fathers him in the traditional sense remains unresolved. Of his mother, meanwhile, '[n]othing definite was known' (*PT* 15), not even by Godwin, who claims to 'have no memory of her' (*PT* 18). This mother-shaped space is filled by various sources, from Baxter's tale of his father's assistant to the student gossip which alleges that 'she was in a lunatic asylum [or]…that Sir Colin kept her as his maidservant in black dress, white cap and apron, silently passing plates round the dining-table' (*PT* 15). A variant on this latter possibility is offered by Victoria, who casts the housekeeper Mrs Dinwiddie in the role, giving this silent figure voice as a '*keen-minded woman with a strong sense of humour [who]..could hold her end in a conversation with anyone*' (*PT* 261). An image which, incidentally, contrasts sharply with her own mother, drinking herself to death while her husband offers '*a word of advice, Mother. Don't ask visitors here until you can act ladylike*' (*PT* 258). Her father, meanwhile, is keen to assert his paternity, telling his daughter 'you are queer Vicky, and, and the fact that you cannot remember your own dad proves it' (*PT* 224). The relationship he asserts as so fundamental, however, is one reminiscent of that between the supposed city fathers criticized by Kelman and the city they shaped. Raising her amid poverty and neglect, turning her away when she runs from her husband, Hattersley's relationship to Victoria is an economic one. While Victoria's mother was Hattersley's wife rather than servant, her position as '*working man's domestic slave*' (*PT* 258) places their union in parallel with the impregnation of servant by employer which resulted in McCandless and Baxter, in Blessington's child,

and Wedderburn's *'few poor bastard bairns'* (*PT* 80). Where these bastards are treated with varying degrees of disinterest and economic exploitation – the two combined in the case of Wedderburn, putting his children *'to good domestic agricultural use on the expanding frontier of our Empire'* (*PT* 80) – in the case of Hattersley, this relationship comes closest to the analysis of the Victorian family offered in *The Communist Manifesto*, that '[t]he bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation' (Marx and Engels, 1998, 38). Hattersley, Victoria tells us, *'treated his wife and children like he treated the workmen: as potential enemies who must be kept poor by violence or the threat of it'* (*PT* 255-6). Describing the advantages of Victoria's return to Blessington, he focuses upon his bloodline's economic worth, both in terms of the value his descendants represent for him and what he regards as their debt, explaining how he might be '[t]he grand-dad of a baronet! You owe me that, Vicky, because I gave you life' (*PT* 224).

Hattersley's position as Victoria's father is less certain than his comments suggest. As with Baxter's mother, his place is threatened by alternative accounts of her birth, the most threatening of which, of course, is that which has proved the most compelling for many readers. McCandless' account of Bell's creation leaves her relationships fundamentally uncertain. In this account, Hattersley's fatherhood extends only to her body, with Blessington the father of her brain and Baxter 'father' to the whole. The alternative implicitly developed within 'Gray's' additional chapter headings where Bell and others are 'made' through being shaped through a combination of their experiences and the narrative conventions to which they conform, similarly bring into question the role of parents in the genesis of their offspring. While these alternatives

help to undermine the notion of a unitary group of 'city fathers', they also work to probe the character such a relationship would possess. Godwin's creation of Bell, while largely philanthropic, contains an element of self-gratification. Such exploitative self-interest is, he explains to McCandless, 'why our arts and sciences cannot improve the world, despite what liberal philanthropists say. Our vast new scientific skills are first used by the damnably greedy selfish impatient parts of our nature and nation, the careful kindly social part always comes second'(*PT* 68). A role in Bell's creation is thus reserved for greed, at the same time as this greed is critically examined. The same is true when Baxter's plan is taken as a charitable act. Initially representing his experiments in philanthropic terms, Baxter explains how '[f]or years I had been planning to take a discarded body and discarded brain from our social midden heap and unite them in a new life'(*PT* 34). This positive action is thus a direct result of a disinterested system of exploitation, and the 'fatherhood' of Bell belongs as much to the system which discarded her component parts as it does to Baxter himself.[44]

Here, then, is one aspect of Gray's representation of history which might conform to historical consciousness as apprehended by Jameson. Just as McCandless' book '*stinks of Victorianism*' because, like Victorian architecture its '*useless over-ornamentation was paid for out of needlessly high profits: profits squeezed from… stunted lives*' (*PT* 275), so too does Gray's book substantiate its stink of Victorianism through its contextualization within a larger lived system. A system which, if it is now revealed as the city's true father, does not take the sole responsibility for the historical genesis of the city itself. For one thing, the mothers of the city, their absence signalled in ways discussed above, find themselves re-inserted into historical narrative through *Poor*

Things' attention to female experience. Further aspects of the city's past at risk of marginalization by the Culture city orthodoxy find their expression, not least the specifically socialist experience whose absence was drawn out by the Worker's City group. As claimed on *Poor Things'* dust-jacket, Gray

> satirizes those wealthy Victorian eccentrics who, not knowing how lucky they were, invented The Emancipated Woman and, through her, The British Labour Party – a gang of weirdoes who kept hugging and dropping the woolly socialism of their founders until Margaret Thatcher made them drop it forever.

Whether *Poor Things* can be said to satirize these stirrings of the Labour movement or not, this movement, in victory and defeat, undoubtedly holds an important place.[45] Beyond Bell's own political radicalism, the issue of collective action develops throughout as a strong thematic strand. Just as Jock's job title highlights *1982, Janine*'s thematic concerns, so mention of McCandless' role as a 'Scottish Public Health Officer' signals a concern with public health. Again, the relationship borne between the history sketched by this strand of *Poor Things* and that offered by the merchant city concept is one marked by ambivalence. The conditions in which Glasgow lives are condemned, there being 'closes where over a hundred people get all their drinking- and washing-water from one communal trap, rooms where a whole family squats in each corner'(*PT* 196). Even the middle-class McCandless is exposed to health risks, from the 'industrial smoke and gases [which] hung in…a gritty haze that put a grey film on everything…and made crusts in the nostrils' (*PT* 44) to the 'churned effluent' (*PT* 44) of the city's rivers, both implicitly blamed on the industrialist city fathers. As Victoria explains, pollution is the result of '*NEEDLESSLY filthy factories… for by the nineteenth century we had the knowledge to make things cleanly*'(*PT* 275). The reason this knowledge is not put into

practice, she suggests, is the increased cost of production this would entail. A similar suggestion is made by McCandless, where '[i]f social legislation arrests the profits of British industry our worldwide market will be collared by Germany and America and thousands would starve to death'(*PT* 24). Writing as a socialist rather than a Liberal, Victoria clears this assertion of any attempts at justification, stating simply that '[t]*he huge profits of the owning classes were too sacred to be questioned*' (*PT* 275).

Gray would again appear ambivalent here in his engagement with the Merchant City account of Glaswegian history, confirming the importance of industry in shaping the city but rejecting the notion that this process was guided by philanthropic motives. The city's industrialists are here neutral in the face of the city's needs, resulting in '*this Glasgow which we do not love enough, for we would make it better if we did*' (*PT* 272). Philanthropic actions are not represented, however, as entirely incompatible with self-interest. Baxter's creation of Bell finds a parallel in his early fantasies of Ophelia. Here his principal motivation, as with Bell's creation, is the satisfaction of his 'women-shaped emptiness'(*PT* 38), translated here into the specific sphere of public health. The problems afflicting Ellsinore, in his diagnosis, are the result of a typhoid epidemic caused by an unsanitary water supply. His response is to imagine himself 'entering the palace quite early in the drama with all the executive powers of an efficient public health officer…A fresh water supply and efficient modern plumbing would set the Danish state right and Ophelia…would be powerless to withhold her love'(*PT* 40).

If self-interest can be taken as to some degree compatible with health reform, so, in a sense, can the industrial system. Both the actual living conditions described in the

novel and the system which creates them are represented in terms closer to Kinnock's account of the era's squalor than Thatcher's claim that in the period 'Cleanliness was next to Godliness'. Yet this situation exists alongside a feeling that goes one better than Thatcher, Baxter voicing approval of the Greeks when out of concern for public health they 'made a goddess of Hygiene'(*PT* 24). As Bell learns from him, '[t]here were no better public benefactors than those who strove to make Glasgow better watered, drained and lit – better *housed*, in short'(*PT* 198), and it is these alternative city fathers who make '*Glasgow…an exciting place for a dedicated socialist*'(*PT* 275). The relationship between these two forces is complex. As Victoria concedes, Glasgow's position as an industrial centre is partly responsible for its position as a centre for social reform, as '*the money which pays for our confidence and achievement has a dangerous source*'(*PT* 276). At the same time the profit motive is represented as antithetical to social progress. The Stewart Memorial Fountain, which takes on an emblematic function with regard to health reform, does so not only as an example of a practical improvement to the water supply but as a symbol of this struggle,

> erected to commemorate the work of Mr. Stewart…[when] [a]gainst strong opposition from the private water companies he got an Act of Parliament passed which enabled Glasgow Corporation to turn Loch Katrine…into the city's main water supply. (*PT* 283)[46]

Ultimately, it might be said that the fathers of the Merchant City are in some respect the fathers of the Worker's City, the role played by the former in engendering the impetus driving the latter – in the case of Bell, creating a socialist both ideologically and physically – suggesting a meaningful relationship between them within a single historical narrative.

The reading of *Poor Things* I have offered is one whose co-ordinates overlap the models of both Jameson and Hutcheon. Placing the novel within the context of historiographic metafiction, its incessant textuality parallels Hutcheon's account of the genre. At the same time, the novel also stresses the importance of historical consciousness in a manner similar to Jameson. This dual concern with the historical process and the means by which it is represented offers *Poor Things* as engaged in something akin to *Lanark*'s cognitive mapping. Where the latter was concerned with sketching the co-ordinates by which contemporary Glaswegian realities are constituted, *Poor Things* attempts the same along the temporal dimension. As such, its concern is not solely with Victorian Glasgow but the relationship this bears to the society which forms its present consequence, and the ideological repercussions of the means by which this relationship is described. It is here that Jameson's blank simulacra make their entry into the novel, not as a feature of the novel itself, but as an aspect of contemporary society which *Poor Things* 'maps'. Unlike the self-conscious simulacra which offer some hope from Jameson's waning of historicity, however, *Poor Things*' does not cast these commodified representations as the endemic state of postmodernity. Rather, the false representation of history is situated both as a continuing result of the nature of historical method and as a recent process of commercial co-option which, if it shares features with Jameson's postmodernism, remains one degraded strand of contemporary historical representation

Perhaps the clearest example of the interaction between these concerns comes with the incorporation of Elspeth King and Michael Donnelly, focussing attention on what has come to be known as the Elspeth King Affair. It is suggestive of the affinities

between Gray's political and historiographic concerns that one more direct, and avowedly factual, engagement with this controversy begins with a nod towards *Poor Things*' other lesson, observing that '[p]eople trying to write true accounts (instead of entertaining stories) should first say who they are and what led them to write' (Gray, 1990(a), 54). The account he goes on to relate centres on King's dedication, 'work[ing] overtime to acquire and preserve evidence of a local culture that was being hustled into the past'(*PT* vii). Artefacts which include, according to *Poor Things*, the novel itself, which in emphasizing the physicality of its absent original underscores, as Kaczvinsky suggests, 'how texts, like memory, can be lost through the accidents of history or the willful disregard of the power structure'(Kaczvinsky, 2001, 797). The increased rate at which Glaswegian history is hustled into the past is here related to a lack of concern with the preservation of artefacts, directly expressed when Glasgow city council threatened the People's Palace. That this, too, is aligned with the Culture City project is signalled by the fact that Worker's City formed in response to King and Donnelly's situation, to aid their fight 'not for their careers, but to safeguard the place itself, along with its tremendous collection of socio-historical relics, which they rightly regard as the property of the Glasgow people' (Kelman, 1992(b), 47). Most damningly of all, Gray ascribes this disregard for history to a desire for profit on the part of the council at odds with the public resources the novel celebrates, where King's position was threatened because '[s]he dislikes the sale of public property to private companies, and the leaders of the district council wish to sell Glasgow Green near the Palace to English companies who will turn it into a vast commercial leisure centre' (Gray, 1990(a), 56). Further, the council's attack on King is also shown to be an attack on a version of Glaswegian

history at odds with the values displayed in the council's adherence to the profit motive.

The version of history, in fact, which *Poor Things* itself relates, where, Gray writes,

> Glasgow's Labour Party leader, Pat Lally, has defended… [King's demotion]
> with great warmth. Why? The Labour Party has ruled Glasgow for most of this
> century. The Palace was a museum showing some of the culture which put
> Labour in power, a culture of trade unions and radical struggle, whose finest
> leaders – Keir Hardie and John MacLean – were both international socialists and
> Scottish nationalists. (Gray, 1991(a), 46)

Making the link between King's treatment and the political repercussions of historical

accounts more obvious, Gray goes on to suggest that Donnelly lost his position for

writing an article which suggested that she had been demoted 'because she reminded our

local government of its unfashionable past' (Gray, 1991(a), 46). The valorization of

public resources, philanthropic motivation, the preservation of history and escape from

hegemonic political narratives celebrated in *Poor Things* directly enter the real world at

the conclusion of one of Gray's non-fiction interventions: '[h]ooray for the hard-

working, low-grade public servants who give the public a better service than they

expect, and have no political sense. Our country is rotten with the other sort' (Gray,

1990(a), 56).[47]

After Postmodernism? : *A History Maker*

A History Maker represents Gray's most extensive engagement with the 'postmodern' as a category and is taken by some as an expansion on his previous criticisms. Williamson thus casts the novel as 'a special treat for the reader who is less than enamoured by post-modernists and their conservative, metaphysical, dog's dinner of an approach to history' (Williamson, 2002, 178). Bernstein, clearly out of love with postmodernism, confirms this treat when, having avowedly rejected postmodernism in interpreting Gray's work, he returns to this category in approaching the novel. Postmodernism here enters Bernstein's analysis, however, not as a category to which the novel belongs, but to which it relates. The world described by *A History Maker* is, Bernstein suggests, a parody of our own, 'a world that includes parodically extreme versions of things common on today's developed countries' (Bernstein, 1999, 139). Not only does 'academically defined postmodernism' (Bernstein, 1999, 139) appear as one such trend, the theories which comprise it serve to further populate Gray's parody. It is with an emphasis similar to Jameson's homeopathic postmodernism that Bernstein suggests Gray's thrust, casting *A History Maker* as an attempt to undo postmodernism through parody.[48] Indeed, it is with reference to Jameson that Bernstein identifies Gray's partiality, comparing the two not as commentator and subject, but as two alternative commentators, where

> Jameson's critique is non-judgemental (except in his typical good-humored, committedly Marxist mode), but when these characteristics emerge in Gray's

novel they are meant as some of the most damning satirical brush strokes he can muster'. (Bernstein, 1999, 145)

It is arguable that for all the claims on the latter's cover, this novel represents Gray's break with postmodernism far more than did *Poor Things*. Until the publication of *Old Men In Love*, it seemed his final work to invite the postmodern tag. Yet, to note its position as the climax of Gray's 'technical' postmodernism is already to question Bernstein's conclusions. Blending tropes drawn from science-fiction and postmodern theory, the world of *A History Maker* – like the warrior house which resembles 'a futuristic village in a 1930s Hollywood movie or a postmodern art gallery designed sixty years later' (*AHM* 63) – seems a typically 'postmodern' hybrid, an identity compounded in that the genres involved are those most strongly entwined with postmodernism itself. Such hybridity continues on a formal level, the narrative swamped by appendages and illustrations which, if less intrinsic to the novel than those of *Poor Things*, nevertheless continue Gray's graphic experimentalism. Indeed, Gray's use of parody may in itself signal towards postmodern status, pastiching genres just as the 'archaic appearance' of the warrior house pastiches styles. This point is particularly problematic given the competing formulations of parody offered by Jameson and Hutcheon, neither of which allow the satiric thrust identified by Bernstein. For Jameson, pastiches have lost their capacity for critical commentary, while for Hutcheon, the notion of repetition with difference expands the satiric denial found by Bernstein into a more complex negotiation through ironic space, 'install[ing] and reinforce[ing] as much as undermin[ing] and subvert[ing] the conventions and presuppositions it appears to challenge' (Hutcheon, 1995, 1-2). Such observations may seem irrelevant to Bernstein's argument, where the

novel is only 'postmodern' by association. Yet this association is made stronger, not only by the novel's own generic affiliations with postmodernist fiction, but by its reliance on postmodern theory, whose accounts are seemingly affirmed in their shared recognition of its targets.

The possibility that Gray may offer implicit support to theories of postmodernity as accounts of current trends is of crucial importance given his more general rejection of postmodernism as solipsistic. Indeed, it is here that Gray offers one of his most direct criticisms in these terms, condemning postmodernism as a codification of the capitalist world-view and a means of ensuring its continued supremacy. As the present is lost to the imagination, Kittock writes, so too are its possible futures, and even the concept of change, where

> [c]ritics called their period *postmodern* to separate it from the modern world begun by the Renaissance when most creative thinkers believed they could improve their community. Postmodernists had no interest in the future, which they expected to be an amusing rearrangement of things they already knew. (*AHM* 203)

Gray's own amusing rearrangement of things we know here takes on a paradoxical character, at once an attempt to break through the apolitical blankness of postmodern simulacra, to comment on this aspect of postmodernism, and to fulfil those representative functions which this condition supposedly denies. Here Gray's recurrent strategy of borrowing from previous theoretical and fictional models proves particularly effective, offering entities which are at once recognizable as postmodern simulacra yet intensified in a manner which casts them simultaneously as their parody and as a representation of both an estranged present and an alien future. Thus the 'wristcom' (*AHM* 12), a common trope in early science-fiction, functions as both clichéd generic

trapping and shorthand for futuristic alterity. At the same time, its actual employment – reduced, effectively, to a wrist-watch – signals the extent to which present technology matches previous visions of the future. Elsewhere, this strategy is repeated with regard to both science-fiction and postmodern theory, as Gray's literalization of theoretical discourse describes a postmodern present rendered less recognizable through being rigorously upheld.

Before examining the facets of this futurized postmodernity, it is first important to consider the basic significance of its futurity, for the matriarchy, unlike Unthank, shows a fantastic reimagining of the present firmly located along the historical axis. Kittock's suggestion that postmodernists thought the future a rearrangement of the past offers the most fundamental reason for this choice, implicitly undermining this concept through imagining a situation beyond the present. As part of this, however, postmodernity's transferral to the future also points towards its need to conceive itself as modern in some sense beyond mere contemporaneity, recalling Frow's analysis of postmodernism's discursive logic. Indeed, moving beyond Frow's suggestion that 'the use of dichotomy as a machine for the infinite generation of quasi-historical transitions'(Frow, 1997, 36) is as much modern as postmodern, Kittock suggests this practice as trans-historical, where '[b]reaking the past into easily labelled sections is a habit as ancient as thought' (*AHM* 195). Indeed, the diverse forms in which moments have conceived of themselves in opposition to the past act for Kittock as epochal markers in themselves, and an account of '[w]ays of doing so is a brief account of mankind' (*AHM* 195).

What follows, then, is an attempt at historicizing the notion of history, the central pattern in its evolution the elaboration of the notion of historical change. Beginning with the static temporality of prehistory, Kittock goes on to describe the blank epochal division of past and present known to the Chinese and Egyptians, then the more meaningful relations of historical change seen in the continual process of improvement envisioned by the Romans or the transformation posited by Christianity as history's end. Each schema is given its own political ramifications, the worst of which are reserved for those dominated by stasis, seen to foster a similar paralysis in society. Thus '[b]efore civilization destroyed such people' (*AHM* 196), prehistoric society was changeless, while the monopoly on writing held by the Egyptian priest-class allows them to figure their power structure as eternal. Schema fixed around a notion of historical change, meanwhile, are afforded a more complex evaluation. The Roman model of continual improvement, 'later adopted by the officer class of empires too recent to claim they had always existed' (*AHM* 198), again re-affirms the status quo, valorizing present over past while lacking the teleological end necessary to contrast present with future. Christianity, by offering eventual perfection, provides this critical function, although the divine basis of its epochal division is again amenable to stasis. This danger is forestalled in its Marxist revision, which, by envisioning a future 'to be created by human effort instead of God'(*AHM* 201-2), places an emphasis on active participation in change and, indeed, reveals the role of the notion of historical change in fostering collective action. Like the Enlightenment project, however, which fused Roman progression and Christian perfection on a similarly secular basis, Marxism is also susceptible to misuse, allowing the Soviet dictatorship to claim the justification due to a realized utopia. Similarly, the

Enlightenment shifts from a progressive movement to a denial of progress, 'so pleased with their part of Europe that they thought history had reached a lasting state of perfection' (*AHM* 200), an oblique reference to Hegel which, as shown below, also criticizes postmodern theory.

While the ramifications of envisioning historical change here stem from the relationship(s) between present and future, Kittock's final word on the matter examines that between present and past. Drawing attention to the matriarchy's genesis through progressive social action, O'Rafferty, her source, emphasizes this process' gradual nature, asserting that his society '*grew from more than two thousand years of decent people struggling to live as Jesus advised*' (*AHM* 204). The practice of periodization here appears as an obstacle towards understanding this relationship where, he warns, '*[c]alendars were invented to help us keep appointments with each other. Using them to cut us off from a host of the dead is like using a fire to burn a library instead of keeping it warm*' (*AHM* 205). This danger is borne out in some of the attitudes towards the past expressed within the matriarchy. As Kittock explains, a tripartite division of time into prehistory, history and their own stage 'misled many into treating history as a painful interval between prehistoric tribal communities and modern co-operative ones' (*AHM* 203). To Wat's brother, who has willingly chosen a life of violence, the valorization of present over past nevertheless remains total; as he explains 'I hated history when I was wee. When Granny Pringle showed us films from those days I had nightmares' (*AHM* 33). The self-proclaimed modernists of the twenty-third century have superseded their twentieth-century namesakes. Where Stephen Daedalus protested that '[h]istory…is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (Joyce, 1992, 42), for them history is a

nightmare from which humanity has already awoken. They are glad that history is 'a thing of the past'(*AHM* 32).

The dangers of postmodernism's meta-narrative of apocalyptic breakthrough are thus, in this characterization, two-fold. The process of epochal opposition which allows for conceptualizing historical change here denies such a conception through obscuring the processes by which present and past exist in a meaningful continuum. At the same time, historical change is itself posited as a feature lost in this disjuncture, leaving the future a repetition of the past and present. In this respect, Gray repeats the conclusions of theorists whose claim, as Heise describes it, that 'Time is obsolete. History has ended' (Heise, 1997, 11) holds a privileged place in characterizations of the postmodern. Interrogating the issue within a number of contexts, these coroners of history have submitted a variety of often incompatible reports. Yet there are similarities enough to recognize broad patterns within this body of theory, prompting Heise to suggest two loose camps into which the field might be broken.

In the first of Heise's theoretical families, history is understood in a broadly Marxian sense as a dialectic interplay of opposing forces. A dialectic which has 'exhausted itself and led society to a stage in which all that can be expected of the future is a continuing replay and spread of already familiar modernization processes' (Heise, 1997, 17-8). Initially popular among the left, this model received an understandably pessimistic interpretation as the premature foreclosure of progress. Given his own commitment to progressive change it might be expected that Gray would offer a positive reception, if not to these theories' final claims then to the negative judgements they make of such a situation. Interestingly, however, one of the novel's clearest parallels

with this trope is with a more recent realization, whose positive evaluation of stasis is 'exceptional in contemporary theories of posthistory' (Heise, 1997, 20). This is Fukuyama's account of capitalism's final triumph, interpreted by some as conservative propagandizing; his goal, for Micheal Dunne, is 'religitimating material inequality as a social good in avowedly egalitarian societies while maintaining the gap between the rich North and the impoverished South' (Dunne, 1992, 354). Others have read Fukuyama's claims as without such propagandistic ends. Here Fukuyama's point is not merely the celebration of our present system, but describing a situation where, in Peter Fritzsche's terms, 'we have stopped thinking about what might lie beyond capitalism and democracy…we have all become neoconservatives; even leftists are mostly lapsed Marxists who are now simply social democrats' (Fritzsche, 1992, 817). As Fritzsche goes on to conclude, even for those who dismiss Fukuyama's appraisal of capitalism '[t]his disenchantment might be sad, but it rings true'(Fritzsche, 1992, 817). Whether or not Gray accepts Fukuyama's argument, it is easy to see how such an analysis of our waning ability to conceive of a different – better – future might chime with Kittock's argument above.

Heise's second strand of posthistorical theory is equally pessimistic. Here emphasis lies not on change's absence, but on its opposite, an 'enormous speed-up in the existential rhythms of individuals as well as societies over the last three or four decades' (Heise, 1997, 21). As is seen in the central role given to universalized capitalism within this strand, the incessant changes which so typify postmodern experience need not represent meaningful historical change in themselves, other than as index and repercussion of the more fundamental changes establishing postmodernity. At heart,

history's demise is here due to its unavailability to the individual, where the saturating presence of a present rendered paradoxically static by continual change obscures both past and future. While Heise rejects any simplistic technological determinism as explaining this shift, she does note how scientific innovations, particularly the fusion of computers and communication networks 'have foregrounded mainly two temporal values: simultaneity and instantaneity'(Heise, 1997, 23). The effect of communication networks, rendering global events simultaneously perceptible, and co-existent with the repeated images of the past, is here to insert the individual in an inescapable present without temporal extension.

While there is utility in Heise's bipartite division of post-history theory, other theorists resist classification by straddling this divide or by offering further mechanisms for history's end. One such is Jameson, who, while ultimately tracing history's demise to the globalization of capitalism, does so by a number of routes. One such route clearly belongs within Heise's second group, where

> our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve. (Jameson, 1988(b), 28)

As much as this 'perpetual change' is suggested as in itself responsible for history's loss, however, Jameson also lays blame upon the obliteration of past traditions which is its result. Paralleling postmodernity with the Scottish Enlightenment, he contends that the latter's stadial model of history resulted from the availability of contrasting, 'previous' stages of society in a way no longer viable. Here the waning of historicity is a direct result of the commodity form's expansion, 'a function of precisely that universalization

of capitalism. Where everything is henceforth systemic the very notion of a system seems to lose its reason for being' (Jameson, 1998(a), 43). Such a notion effectively incorporates aspects of the first group of theories, insofar as the possibility of change *as an idea* is dependant upon recognizing the existence of alternatives. To a degree, then, it is the present system's ubiquity which renders the concept of change inoperative. The structure of the system itself, predicated towards continual change, likewise plays a part. Further, the inviability Jameson ascribes to historical representation also leads to the inoperability of historical consciousness, where the representational apprehension of history is itself victim of the changes it must be called upon to describe.

Given the generic affiliations of *A History Maker* – a science-fiction novel combined with a theoretical account of 'history' as both occurrence and concept – it is interesting to consider the relationship Jameson describes between science-fiction and historical consciousness. Indeed, for Jameson it is this relationship which is responsible for the genre's growth, just as, following Lukács, he suggests a similar function for the nineteenth century historical novel. Although he does not employ the term 'postmodern' – writing roughly contemporaneously with his initial foray into the topic – Jameson's description of the shift from historical novel to science-fiction repeats many of the features of postmodernity's relationship to history mentioned above. The coexistence of forms of organisation is here related to Scott's development of the historical novel, 'uniquely positioned for the creative opening of literary and narrative form to this new experience: on the very meeting place between two modes of production' (Jameson, 1982, 149-50). In contrast, he offers Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*, represented in all but name as a nostalgia film, where

> [t]he sense that this determinate moment of history is, of organic necessity, precursor to the present has vanished into the pluralism of the Imaginary Museum, the wealth and endless variety of culturally or temporally distinct forms, all of which are now rigorously equivalent. (Jameson, 1982,150)

Where Jameson elsewhere limits his consideration of this transformation to the postmodern era, here the shift is relocated to the late nineteenth century, following Lukács' suggestion that at this time

> the severance of the present from history creates an historical novel which drops to the level of light entertainment. Its themes are indiscriminate and unrelated and it is full of an adventurous or emptily antiquarian, an exciting or mythical exoticism. (Lukács, 1989, 183)

Observing that 'the moment in which the historical novel as a genre ceases to be functional, is also the moment of the emergence of SF' (Jameson, 1982, 150), Jameson raises the question of whether the latter had supplanted the former as a means of negotiating the historical process and, if so, the function we might ascribe in this regard.

Beginning with the supposition that science-fiction's function with regard to the historical process is that it 'registers some nascent sense of the future, and does so in the space on which a sense of the past had once been inscribed' (Jameson, 1982, 150), Jameson draws out two complex operations involved in this function. The first of these effectively reverses the effect on the present assumed for historical fiction. The historical novel's purpose for Jameson was not simply to represent the past, but to evoke its relationship to the present as part of a historically-determined progression. The same becomes true for the historical moments projected onto our future, the present moment here analogous to the past of the historical novel. What this amounts to is the defamiliarization of the present, otherwise 'inaccessible directly…numb, habituated,

empty of effect'(Jameson, 1982, 151), but in a new form of defamilarization in which 'its multiple mock-futures serve the…function of transforming our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come' (Jameson, 1982, 152). If the present moment has lost the ability to conceive of itself as the determined outcome of past events, science-fiction preserves the temporal extension of historical change in the opposite direction.

Before briefly considering the second of Jameson's functions of science-fiction later in this chapter, it might first be fruitful to situate *A History Maker* in terms of those he has so far offered for both science-fiction and the historical novel. Gray's claim on the dust-jacket of early editions that this 'kilted sci-fi yarn' was '[s]timulated by Alan Bold's criticism that his books are insufficiently Scottish' overtly signals the novel's confluence in this regard. As Bold later clarified, 'I did not say his books were insufficiently Scottish in the obvious sense. I suggested…that his work was insufficiently Walter Scott-ish' (Bold, 1994, 8). Certainly *A History Maker* responds to this more specific criticism, at least on a thematic level. Dryhope tower, a prominent landmark in the novel, was recognized by Scott as the birthplace of one of his ancestors, Mary Dryhope, whose marriage to 'Auld Wat' is commemorated in the central protagonist. The main text is preceded by an engraving of the tower and followed by one of Hogg's cottage. As Bernstein suggests, '[a]ll that we learn of Wat Dryhope…is bracketed between acknowledgements of the giants of early-nineteenth-century Scottish literature, two writers whose work was intricately linked to a shared fascination with Scottish history and borders folklore' (Bernstein, 1999, 135).

The recollections of Scott which stud *A History Maker* render him an inescapable presence. Exactly how this should inform a reading of the novel is however far from certain. In parallel with these references come further echoes from Scottish history, many of which, such as the 1138 namesake of Dryhope's 'Battle of the Standard', possess no overtly meaningful relationship with their matriarchal resurrection. To Böhnke, these references 'seem to be thrown in more by chance than by any overall plan or design' (Böhnke, 2004, 224), a strategy which suggests their significance as stemming more from their 'historical' nature than from the specific entity recalled. Indeed, if Scott's presence is classed among these, the 'fascination' with Scottish history identified by Bernstein endows his appearance with a self-conscious element, flagging the magnetic effect which such images possess for the novel. A more meaningful significance for Scott's place among these anachronous quotations may be found in the product of his fascination with history, those novels which rendered Scott himself a 'history maker'. As Craig outlines, Scott is often ascribed a dual legacy here. On the one hand, his novels initiate a process of engendering historical consciousness, where '[i]nsofar as the nation itself is primarily a narrative that unites the past to the present, Scott's novels provided the generic means by which the nation could be narrated as a product of history' (Craig, 1996, 117). At the same time, he also 'carries the burden of having invented a Scotland which displaced the real Scotland in favour of his romantic illusions' (Craig, 1996, 117). Here the novel's clichéd scotticisms show the Scottish and the Scott-ish in collision, and a further level is added to Gray's restatement of Bold. As Peter Cudmore recognizes, the parodic Scots which tints the novel shows Gray 'deliberately overstating the superficiality of this kind of place-names and Scots-word

approach to Scottish identity' (Cudmore, 1995, 89). The same might be said of its superficial recollection of romanticized historical images, key signifiers of Scottish identity following Scott. Indeed, as might be suggested by Murray Pittock's claim that Scott 'invented Scotland as a museum of history and culture, denuded of the political dynamic which must keep such culture alive and developing' (Pittock, 1991, 87), both the depthless nature of the novel's historical images and the political stasis of its world share in its Scott-ish Scottishness.

As much as *A History Maker*'s transformation of Scottish history recollects the simulacra of postmodernity, it is equally suggestive, then, of a romanticized Scottish identity. Likewise, the matriarchy's stasis signals towards both post-history theory and that undynamic hinterland which Craig describes at length, 'Scotland as left by Scott…a timeless world that is outside the causality of real history' (Craig, 1996, 118). In either case, this thematic recollection of Scott is extended into a series of formal similarities – and pointed dissimilarities – which situate the novel with regard to Scott's oeuvre. The central such similarity is the novel's concern with conveying historical transition, self-consciously noted by Kittock, who claims that '*like Walter Scott in his best novels,* [Wat] *gives a reader a sense of being at mighty doings*' (*AHM* xi). Here Wat is offered a dual role as witness to transition in both narrative and actuality. It is principally with regard to the latter function that Wat himself represents one of the novel's debts to Scott. The key feature which Wat shares with his Waverley Novel ancestors is his status as onlooker, fortuitously present at crucial historical moments whose instigation and resolution lie outwith his volition. Unwittingly bringing about the first such event in the novel – the transformation of strategy which follows the Battle of the Standard – through

compliance with a plan he openly disavows, and taking an even more innocent role in the second as carrier of a disease vital to Puddock's Shigalyovite Revolution, Wat's ambiguous position between protagonist and bystander emphasizes his effectiveness as disengaged witness. Only in retrospect does he realize his role, situating himself as a pawn in a system of forces he cannot comprehend. The same affinity with Scott's heroes can be seen in Wat's personal life, which displays something like their romantic passivity. In general outline, then, Welsh's description of the archetypal Waverley hero, who 'stands at the center of the struggle. He may not move, but his chances, his fortunes are at stake. He is a victim, at the mercy of good and bad agents alike. He never aspires to property, nor actively courts the heroine' (Welsh, 1963, 41) serves to characterize their successor.

Consideration of Wat's relationship to some of the details of Welsh's account is key to establishing Gray's motivations for revising Scott. The hero of the Waverley novels, Welsh explains, is 'seldom a leader of men [although] …[h]e is always a potential leader, because of his rank as a gentleman' (Welsh, 1963, 35). The same is true of Wat who, while he resists attempts to make him his father's successor, ultimately accepts the position. His more basic career choice is equally derived from his status as gentlemen, a situation shared with Scott's heroes who 'do not regularly earn a living, but when pressed by circumstances they favour, at least in theory, military employment'(Welsh, 1963, 221). 'Gentleman' is defined in this instance not by Wat's class but by his gender, and his situation within a classless society. Freed from the necessity of labour by the powerplant and debarred from a public career by leaderless matriarchy, most men are now 'gentlemen'. This fact is brought home in Wat's

denunciation of Crook-Cott, a military volunteer from one of the few alternative

professions, manning the information network. Attacking this 'STUPIT NYAFF!' (*AHM*

88) for his switch, Wat explains that '[m]en become soldiers…because we're no good at

anything else'(*AHM* 88). Where Wat stands in contrast to his Waverley precursors is in

the underlying system of values which engenders their passivity. In Welsh's analysis,

this feature of the Waverly hero ultimately expresses commitment to civil society, and

more specifically its notion of property, each becoming

> a passive hero because, in the words of Edmund Burke, a member of civil society
> surrenders the right "to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause. He
> abdicates all right to be his own governor…" [h]e abandons, in other words, all
> these various possibilities of action. (Welsh, 1963, 57)

While Wat's own passivity likewise results from the rules governing his society, this is

closer to dissatisfied impotence than compliance. This dissatisfaction is expressed

symbolically, as in Wat's choice of mate. As Welsh would have it, the union of the

Waverley hero and his passive bride is ideologically loaded, where '[b]ecause she is part

of society and accepts the existing state of things, the blonde heroine – and her consort –

may be trusted with real property'(Welsh, 1963, 116). Delilah Puddock, 'the shining

cunt at the end of [Wat's] personal tunnel' (*AHM* 112) may be ascribed no definite hair

colour, but her destructive and overtly sexual nature suggests her as parallel to Scott's

dark heroines. Further, while the happy resolution of their marriage leads to the Scott

heroes' receiving 'the immortality of rank and of property'(Welsh, 1963, 227), the

destiny of Wat and Puddock is a life of continual fighting as gangrels – the one group

without property in this era of communal ownership – culminating in ignoble death.

While Wat's passive seduction by Puddock may recall the compliance of the Scott hero,

this, and his enmity with her in marriage, suggests rather his desire for change of any sort, even the exploitation which he finds otherwise unacceptable.

The desire for change which motivates Wat is at once a desire to escape from his own world and a valorization of the protagonist he aspires to be. Sickened by meaningless bloodshed, he asks for something which 'stops memories'(*AHM* 27). Unexpectedly, given Gray's emphasis on the written word as repository of memory, Wat turns to narrative. More specifically, Wat's desire is for a narrative which bears witness to historical transition, which will supplant war games with '[a] period of excitement when folk thought they were making a better world'(*AHM* 28). While the book Kittock recommends, *Ten Days That Shook The World*, is not a historical novel, it fulfils a similar function as witness to a moment of revolutionary change, paralleling the '*seven crucial days*'(*AHM* x-xi) of the Shigalyovite revolution. Her making this suggestion 'without lifting her eyes from the novel on her lap' (*AHM* 28) – the Scottish proto-science-fiction, *Voyage to Arcturus* – further suggests the analogous function of this genre, allowing escape not into the past but to imagined alternatives. These forms of narrative temporarily overcome the inescapability of the matriarchy. Wat's desire for historical narrative thus shares its ultimate cause with his unsuitability as a protagonist for a historical novel, for the fact that Wat's passivity is the result of the inescapability, rather than acceptance, of the system he inhabits, sets limits on his effectiveness as a witness in the Waverley mode. That the two facets of the character are closely interrelated is a repeated notion within accounts of the Waverley novels, as when Daiches claims their protagonists as 'not heroes in the ordinary sense, but symbolic observers' (Daiches, 1956, 93). Even Welsh, who rejects 'the idea that Scott's hero is

helpless because he stands for neither one historical force nor the other'(Welsh, 1963,

56) – a prominent supposition in the wake of Lukács' suggestion that Scott sought a

'"middle way" between the extremes' (Lukács, 1989, 33) – accepts this position, where

'his hero is an observer – even a vacationer – and so is the reader. He is committed to

the civil state, and observes the uncivil' (Welsh, 1963, 57). Closely connected to this is

the idea of a geographically-aided contrast between societies. Here again the

inescapability of his world system limits Wat's effectiveness as a witness, restricting

observation to his own stage of history.

A further, more practical, ramification of this loss of outsider status can be seen

in Scott's own justification for his heroes' passivity, generally cast as

> foreigners to whom every thing in Scotland is strange…a circumstance which
> serves as [the author's] apology for entering into many minute details which
> are…addressed to the reader through the medium of the hero'. (Scott qtd. in
> Welsh, 1963, 51)

As author as well as subject, this feature limits the effectiveness of both Wat and his

narrative as witness to change; just as Wat requires no explanation for his world, so too

does his text assume his readership's familiarity. Helpfully, the novel as a whole seeks

to remedy this situation in a series of notes, met with a mixed response on the part of

reviewers. To Imlah this opportunity for Gray's pseudo-non-fictional discourse seems

superfluous, for 'whereas the apparatus of *Poor Things* branched off the vitality of the

story, the buttressing here seems deployed…to bump a bit of fun up to the scale of a

book' (Imlah, 1994, 22). Birns, offering a more positive appraisal, nevertheless agrees in

privileging the opportunity these notes provide for Gray to address the reader over their

explicatory role with regards to the world described in the main narrative. 'This

commentary', Birns suggests, '…occasionally affords insights into the plot. But it

mostly serves as a vehicle for Mr. Gray's opinions on various political, literary and

philosophical questions' (Birns, 1996, 18). Interestingly, a contrasting – and arguably

more correct – evaluation is given by a critic writing in the populist science-fiction

press. Paying scant attention to the events of Wat's narrative, Langford suggests the

novel as noteworthy because '[u]nless you read the scholarly-looking notes at the

end…you won't learn what the story was actually about' (Langford, 2005, 34). The

importance of Langford's observation lies in part in its implicit inclusion of some of the

points raised by Imlah and Birns. As they suggest, the mask of Kittock allows Gray to

didactically address the reader. Further, the notes' repeated digression attests to their

autonomy as implied by Imlah. Where Langford differs from these critics is in the

implication that the digressive autonomy of Kittock's notes plays a necessary function in

understanding the novel, a process of interpretation which includes both the events of

the diegetic world and the their thematic import. With yet further reference to Gray's

antecedent – and to Cudmore's superficial Scott-ishness – Kittock offers her own

account of her relevance. '*Like Scott,*' she explains,

> *he tells a Scottish story in an English easily understood by other parts of the*
> *world but leaves the gab of the locals in its native doric. This shows he wanted*
> *his story read inside AND outside the Ettrick Forest, and I have warstled to help*
> *this by putting among my final notes a glossary of words liable to ramfeezle*
> *Sassenachs, North Americans and others with their own variety of English.*
> (*AHM* xi)

As this quotation indirectly reveals, Kittock indeed fulfils this function, glossing such

terms as 'ramfeezle' ('muddle; confuse; exhaust'(*AHM* 159)). However, the primary

purpose of Kittock's notes lies not with regional dialects, but in detailing the

significance of features of matriarchal society alluded to by Watt. The primary function

of Kittock's 'NOTES & GLOSSARY EXPLAINING OBSCURITIES' (*AHM* 157),

then, is to explicate details obscured not by geographic variance but by a temporal one.

As Bernstein observes, 'Kittock and the gangrels are the only characters in the novel

who seem to be able to use the past for anything other than a form of escape, and their

ability to do so is significantly linked to reading (Bernstein, 1999, 146). In this instance,

it is also linked to writing, as the escape into the past offered by Kittock's library enables

a historical consciousness which manifests in her annotator's explication. In explaining

what the story is 'about' in a literal sense, Kittock simultaneously enacts that thematic

focus of the novel which she elsewhere describes in abstract terms.

If the unavailability of the past represents one limitation to Wat's effectiveness

as witness to change, so too does the unavailability of the future. This temporal

foreclosure is again emphasized within Wat's narrative, the true moment of historical

transition – the reorganization the matriarchy – lying beyond his text. Further reinforcing

this foreclosure is the situation in which Wat finds himself as his society changes,

slipping from the matriarchy into the earlier social formation of the gangrels, and from

written history into oral narrative. Again, Kittock partially overcomes this failure by

providing a detailed account of the Shigalyovite revolution. The same detail is not

however present in her account of its outcome, given only brief and partial description.

Key to interpreting Kittock's limitations here are the relationships which both the

matriarchy and its successor bear to utopian prophecy. Although the matriarchy shows

humanity at a stage in which it has, as Berthold Schoene identifies, 'shrugged off the

trammelling onuses of economic deprivation, political strife and marital coupledom'

(Schoene, 1996, 151-2), it is largely these utopian elements which are held up to criticism, most obviously in their combined effect of denuding human action of meaning. Wat's call for the excitement of building a better society, echoing Gray's repeated charge to 'work as if you live in the early days of a better nation' again sees a rejection of the matriarchy based on its very perfection.[49] The end of Necessity which forms the teleological focus of the Left here robs the 'work' of progress of historical significance. A further meaning can also be seen in the more prosaic sense of 'work', for productive activity repeatedly appears in Gray's vision of a better nation. 'Heaven', he has explained, 'is the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Republic where everyone lives by making and doing good things for each other' (Anon., 1993, 3), a notion of work without exploitation which places productive activity at the centre of social interaction. As William Harrison has identified, this 'call for a regenerative impulse built powerfully upon the Scottish work ethic…that can overcome welfare inertia and transnational capitalism' (Harrison, 1995, 163) is extensively present in Gray's work. This is true of *A History Maker*, whose hero yearns for 'the hard work of making an old-fashioned house together [which] would teach us to depend on each other and love each other more than other men and women love each [sic] nowadays'(*AHM* 53). If Wat's struggle for social reorganisation stems from a desire for meaningful 'work' in a historical sense, the society he hopes to bring about is one in which everyday work recovers the meaning endowed by necessity. Such is the world eventually achieved, for among the details Kittock offers for post-matriarchal society is the fact that women now use powerplants 'enough to keep them independent of us [men], not enough to make us dependent on them' (*AHM* 211). Here three of Wat – and Gray's – criticisms are resolved, as a

moment of historical change re-establishes both sexual equality and meaningful labour.

Defined merely by the resolution of the problems attendant upon the preceding stage, the

true utopia of *A History Maker* appears not as the world Kittock describes, but that

which eludes her description.

The question as to why utopia eludes the historically-conscious Kittock has

several possible answers, some of which bear relevance not only to *A History Maker* but

to Gray's previous works. Although this thesis has placed greater emphasis on the

negative half of Gray's interest in 'freedom' and 'government', the former nevertheless

haunts his fiction. The personal freedom found by Jock is only tentatively realized,

occurring after the novel's conclusion and ultimately reduced to its association with

action in Jock's resolution that he will 'not do nothing'. Where freedom is envisaged on

a societal level its realization comes in a minimal and parenthetic form, in the

gnomically described 'Hyper-Utopian Euphoria' (*L* 498) of *Lanark*'s index, or the

'feminist socialist revolution' (*SL* 247) outlined in *Something Leather*'s postscript. That

such utopias lie outwith Gray's direct focus may be traced in part to his strategy of

diagnostic satire. Gray himself suggests this much, noting that 'Tchecov said his works

were meant to say, "My friends, you should not live like this." If my writing has a deep

meaning it cannot be deeper than that'(Vianu, 2004, Par.25). Further, he contends,

'[o]nly folk with perfect faith in one god or one political system believe that they have

the answer to every great question. I have not' (Vianu, 2004, Par.25). Utopia thus eludes

Gray for practical reasons, its construction dependent on an unavailable certainty as to

its characteristics. Interestingly, a similar inability to envisage 'that place beyond all

history (or after its end) which we call utopia' (Jameson, 2004, 36) appears in Jameson's

postmodernity. Here the waning of our ability to conceive of a better future revolves not around the practicalities of future society, but the basic requirement of our imagining something other than our world. As with the associated waning of historicity, Jameson again posits this as resulting from the inescapability of postmodern social organisation, where 'it is difficult enough to imagine any radical political programme today without the conception of systemic otherness, of an alternative society, which only the idea of utopia seems to keep alive' (Jameson, 2004, 36). It is this essentially negative characterization of utopian literature's purpose which Jameson suggests as the second function of science fiction, its

> deepest vocation…to bring home, in local and determinate ways, and with a fullness of concrete detail, our constitutional inability to imagine Utopia itself….as the result of the systemic, cultural and ideological closure of which we are all in one way or another prisoners. (Jameson, 1982, 153)

The absence of detail in Kittock's account of 'true' utopia, and its plenitude in the matriarchy, sets *A History Maker* in an interesting relationship to Jameson's description of utopian effect. While the matriarchy itself chimes with Jameson's account of utopian science-fiction through juxtaposing an extensively realized future world with the present which bore it, the post-matriarchal state seemingly resists such a function through positing this change abstractly, lacking in the local, determinate relationships associated with the genre. Rather than denying the utopian function, however, this strategy may represent its recurrence in a purer form, for as Jameson describes, utopia

> is most authentic when we cannot imagine it. Its function lies not in helping us to imagine a better future but rather in demonstrating our utter incapacity to imagine such a future – our imprisonment in a non-utopian present without historicity or futurity – so as to reveal the ideological closure of the system in which we are somehow trapped and confined. (Jameson, 2004, 46)

While there are various reasons for Gray's reluctance to delineate the novel's final utopia, it can therefore be taken to suggest both an acceptance and a disavowal of the situation which utopian fiction highlights. The postmodern world without change, represented and damned as the matriarchy, is similarly realized on a formal level through the novel's inability to imagine the post-matriarchal future. At once a symptom of this world without history and a reminder that such stasis is illusory, the posited occurrence of indescribable change serves to both highlight the symptomatic blindness of this 'good state' and to remind the reader that '*good states change as inevitably as bad ones*' (*AHM* xv). Davidson's suggestion that 'the novel is unable to directly demonstrate the consequences of radical social change or Utopia' (Davidson, 1999, 211) is therefore true in this sense, but requires several provisos. By defining his final utopia through only its alterity, Gray is certainly unable or unwilling to demonstrate the consequences of utopia's appearance, but is equally concerned to uphold its possibility. Further, the 'consequences' of utopia are in some sense also retroactive, represented in the ramifications of its conception. These consequences, the result of feeling as if you live in the early days of a better nation, are demonstrated at length. Key to distinguishing the negative realizations of utopian propagandizing is, as suggested above, their tendency to foster stasis. In its more positive effects utopia is again associated with building a better nation, in such groups as the Christians who 'revolted against their priests and landlords and demanded some heaven at once' (*AHM* 199). The negative consequences of utopian thought are thus the result of their removal from history, and so from meaningful human action, whether by presuming historical change as impossible –

as in the matriarchy or Hegel's Prussia – or through positing utopia as beyond the historical continuum. Calder's suggestion that Gray adheres to a Whiggish model of history based around inevitable progress, where 'each generation had added good new social and scientific and artistic works to those of the past, thus giving more people comfort, security and freedom for the future' (Calder, 2000, 5), is perhaps an overly simplified characterization of his beliefs. Certainly, his own histories repeatedly highlight retrogression. Yet there remains a degree to which Gray approaches these as hideous detours, and it is the possibility of such progress, and the human activity this hope fosters, which leads Gray to valorize our ability to conceive of utopian change. The obscuration of Gray's final utopia thus serves to both recognize postmodernity's inescapable self-image in all its complicity, while preserving that hope which it seemingly denies. Indeed, in its abstraction Gray's utopia becomes a signifier of the utopian possibilities of change itself. In the same interview in which he described the Scottish Co-operative Commonwealth, Gray preceded this vision with a more fundamental answer. Asked to give heaven's location, he replied '[t]he future' (Anon., 1993, 3).

The coincidence of Gray's true utopia with the pseudo-utopia of the matriarchy suggests a further proviso to Davidson's comment, for here the more practical consequences of social change – if not utopia, then a significant step towards it – are demonstrated at length. Indeed it is in tracing this change that Kittock's notes find their primary purpose. There are here moments where it is less the alterity of the world in which Kittock writes than the basic presupposition of historical distance which allows for the defamiliarization of the present, as when she represents the Conservative

campaign against travellers as one instance in a centuries-old battle between 'gangrels' and landlordist governments (*AHM* 163). Even on this point, however, the defamiliarizing effect of casting present as past is heightened through this analysis being made not merely at some future point, but in an era when this particular sub-plot has been concluded. This technique is reminiscent of Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, whose many footnotes offer a defamiliarized account of capitalism designed to explain a 'ludicrous' system to a utopia with 'seven centuries' advantage over those who lived in that time' (London, 1984, 92). While Gray is sure to undermine the perfection of his future state – a condition necessary to preserve its historical identity – his defamiliarization of the present thus rests in a large part upon its status as other than our own society, and the assumption of changes which separate – yet in terms of historical consequence, ultimately join – the two. Given the central position of capitalism as a defining characteristic of our own epoch it is clear that a transformation of the means of production would be one means of structuring this alterity. Such a world is represented in the powerplant, which by providing goods without labour allows a fundamental change to economic organisation. Indeed, here Gray's account of change displays a level of technological determinism, for while Wat's explanation for his interest in the Russian revolution again valorises collective human effort, 'folk who struggled to stop all that…They were the greatest heroes' (*AHM* 33) it is his brother who points towards the cause of social transformation when he concedes '[w]ell, mibby, but it was the powerplants that stopped all that' (*AHM* 33).

The central role taken by the powerplant in establishing that alienation of the present which Jameson identifies with science-fiction brings this function into

problematic contrast with the more orthodox defamiliarization more generally practiced by Gray. The novel's dual focus, whereby the matriarchy is at once an estranged representation of the present and an attempt to estrange the present through representing the future need not in itself undermine either function. Indeed, the defamiliarized recurrence of features drawn from the contemporary world is itself a part of this second strategy, offering those traces which reinforce the position of the present as seed of the future. With the powerplant, however, a distinction is established between the matriarchy and our own society which would appear to fundamentally undermine the former's ability to represent the latter. That sense in which the present moment is defined by capitalism, while it renders its supercession so effective a means of establishing futuristic alterity, would appear to deny the matriarchy's position as equally representative of the present. To the extent that the powerplant ushers in historical stasis through domination of the social world, however, a parallel is established between the matriarchy and Jamesonian postmodernity, which posits a similar domination by the economic sphere. The operation of the powerplant, resurrecting past artefacts, likewise recalls Jameson's commodification of history. Further, the effect which Joe suggests for the powerplant, the end of history through the resolution of dialectical struggles characteristic of previous epochs, might be seen to refer to Fukuyama's analysis of contemporary capitalism. In each of these instances, the structural parallels between the powerplant's significance in the matriarchy and capitalism's role in accounts of postmodernity mount up, yet in none of them is the basic assertion of its alterity undermined. While it may bear similar effects to capitalism, in tracing these effects to a

system organised on a contrasting basis the powerplant is distanced from a direct identification.

While attention has here been brought to bear upon a seeming contradiction in the powerplant's metaphoric representation of capitalism, comparison with Gray's earlier allegorical structures shows that such contradictions need not deny this function. That such comparison is relevant is suggested by Belfield, who reads the novel as 'a logical extension of Gray's Axletree stories. For Axletree read Powerplant; for 'perimeter tribes' read 'gangrels'' (Belfield, 2002, 106). There is a particular significance to this relationship, for, as shall be considered below, comparison between some of the readings which may be mapped onto the axletree and powerplant mark the latter image as bearing a specific relevance to postmodernity. Of more basic importance is their shared polysemy, that 'allegorical over- or under-definition (achieved by a whole cluster of possible real-life references that cannot be assimilated into a single reading)' which, for Witschi, '…makes for the postmodern allegorical nature of Gray's axletree fable' (Witschi, 1991, 121). The axletree, at once tower of Babel, Christian utopia and symbol of centralized power operations, creates an allegorical system which resists simplification to a single hermeneutic code, and so offers evidence towards a similar multiplicity of reference in Gray's depiction of the powerplant. Neither the Axletree nor Unthank's diseases, however, offer contradictions as inescapable as those of the powerplant. While the axletree serves to represent both institutionalized power and early Christianity, both consumerism and the trade union movement, these readings stem from localized instants within the text and find a resolution within its diegetic world through the suggestion that each is a factor operating within a single system. The

multiple significances of *Lanark*'s disease metaphors, meanwhile, achieve their polysemity through simultaneous reference not to opposing entities but to separate contexts. Further, part of *Lanark*'s overall thematic import is a perceived inter-relationship between economic exploitation and interpersonal dysfunction which such interpretative yoking highlights. With the powerplant, at once symbol of capitalism and of capitalism's negation, Gray's polysemous allegory reaches a new level of contradiction. As with these earlier examples, however, this contradiction is not only largely irrelevant to each separate reading, it also adds a further level of significance to the powerplant's characterization of capitalism. The powerplant is in this regard neither capitalism nor its opposite, but capitalism denuded of some of its defining features, and in this respect the contradictions of the powerplant offer a further signal towards accounts of postmodernity.

The contradiction by which capitalism here strives to become its other revolves around the notion of exploitation. It is the non-exploitative nature of the powerplant which establishes it as capitalism's successor, a distinction reinforced by the extent to which the novel represents capitalism as reducible to exploitation. Thus, while Puddock's scheme is clearly aimed towards resurrecting capitalism, the term by which she describes this system is '*the competitive exploitation of human resources*'(*AHM* 118). The manner in which capitalism is here realized again recalls Gray's previous economic metaphors. Puddock's use of the term 'human resources', a redeployment of conventional phraseology, repeats the reduction of humans to raw material seen in Unthank's diseases. This reification is again shown as a result of capitalism's internal logic, and as a means of rendering exploitation palatable, for 'when exploiting people it

is best to think them a passive substance like oil or earth'(*AHM* 118). Interestingly, *Lanark*'s depiction of economic relationships already shows moves towards denying human labour its proper place within capitalism. As with Puddock's account, the exploitation of disease sufferers casts them in an essentially passive role, incorporating labour power as a trace memory in the image of a Dragon's energy, only fully re-inserted with Coulter's non-metaphoric depiction of the shop floor. With this belated signal towards labour's place within capitalism it is clear that Gray does not intend to represent it as a system divorced from labour, only, perhaps, to replicate within his account something of capitalism's own self-image. In the pseudo-utopian production of the powerplant, this representation comes closer still to capitalism's self-image, yet behind this labour-free, non-exploitative façade remains the ghost of human resources. The passive consumption introduced as cannibalism in *Lanark* and re-figured as prostitution in *1982, Janine* and vampirism in *McGrotty and Ludmilla* returns here in the feeding, not of the appetites of those within the capitalist system, but of that system's productive apparatus. Conceding that his previous career was not without its advantages, Wat explains that '[a] good thing about satellites is their lack of nourishment for our kind of powerplant, so men and women earn their living room by working together as equals. The men have no time for warfare' (*AHM* 44). From this, Tiitenen has identified the 'more sinister element to this powerplant system…Perhaps wars are necessary so that the supply for the mysterious powerplant system can be guaranteed'(Tiitinen 1999(b), 274).

While no direct link is established, several references suggest exploitation's persistence within the powerplants. After battle, the dead are dissolved within the

powerplants. Immediately following this, the plants create new items, including foodstuffs. Wat, watching the power plants' vapour trails – reminiscent of factory chimneys – notes how '[t]he lines were more emphatic today, as always after big funerals'(*AHM* 30). It is again left to Kittock to add detail, not only confirming the cannibalistic element to powerplant food, but suggesting the self-deluding hypocrisy of its consumers. As she notes, '[t]he extra fertilizing of the powerplants' roots after large funerals let them deliver meat with unusual speed. Most families avoided the taint of cannibalism by being vegetarian for a fortnight'(*AHM* 166). Again we recall Jameson's suggestion that the role of reification in postmodernity includes reference to the term's second meaning, 'the "effacement of the traces of production"' (Jameson, 1991, 314). The contemporary system, in which an advertising-engendered utopia elides the exploitation upon which it is founded, finds a fitting parallel in the matriarchy's soldiers, the human resource whose flesh fuels the powerplant.

If the spectral persistence of labour within the powerplant signals towards Jameson's analysis of what lies behind postmodernity's surface, this parallel is strengthen by the novel's insistence that this surface is all there is. One sense in which this is the case derives from Jameson's comments on the mutual inter-penetration of the aesthetic sphere and the commodity form, here emblematically united in the powerplant. While the powerplant represents a reconception of production staged around clearly imaginary technological processes, it invokes similarities with contemporary science. Powerplant production is described in terms which recall both stages of the design process and the visual (re)productivity of computer technology, beginning with 'a low humming [as] the objects appeared as diagrams on the stalk…With sharp detonations the

images became solid things'(*AHM* 25). If the keyboard interface by which the powerplant is harnessed strengthens the parallel between this operation and computer technology, it also expands the range of parallels available. Described as the 'organ'(*AHM* 25), it asserts in one sense the powerplant as biotechnological, as do its 'stem' and 'roots', and the power*plant* itself. It is also an organ in a further sense, and if its programmers are artists by analogy through the virtuosity required for its operation – where '[a]ll housemothers were skilled musicians since anyone who could play Bach's Mass circa 1740 easily managed the fingering which summoned the components of a Triumph motor cycle'(*AHM* 165) – they are artists in practice also. The organ, which 'could draw from the powerplant every recorded form of music, art and industry'(*AHM* 165) here anticipates the population of the matriarchy with disparate simulacra at the same time placing aesthetic experiences in equivalence with commodities. In addition to this, the organ's operation – made 'easier on the ear by blending it with chords from the *Agnus Dei* by Carver, Palestrina, Bach and Berlioz'(*AHM* 25) – transforms production into an aesthetic experience. [50] Indeed, the music which accompanies the 'orders of the day' (*AHM* 25) – beginning with 'a *Sanctus* which had preceded the miracle of transubstantiation for centuries before' (*AHM* 24-5) – casts production not only as an aesthetic, but religious performance. In a reversal of the mass, the bodies and blood of men become the daily bread.

The powerplant's situation as meeting place of the technological, the miraculous and the ghost of labour sketches a further link to Jameson's analysis of postmodernism. Drawing attention to urbanization's effect on the natural world, both as physical presence and as representational force, Jameson argues for a reconception of traditional

notions of the sublime. In one sense, this can be approached as a shift from a natural to a *technological* sublime. More specifically, just as the power of the natural sublime signalled towards the unrepresentable power of the divine, so too is the technologised postmodern sublime translatable into a still-greater force. Jameson's identification of what such a force might be reconcieves the link between the natural world and its imminent cause within a Marxist framework. Here the technological sublime is ultimately representative – even as it fails at any ultimate representation – of

> that enormous properly human and anti-natural power of dead human labor stored up in our machinery – an alienated power… which turns back on and against us in unrecognisable forms and seems to constitute the massive dystopian horizon of our collective as well as our individual praxis. (Jameson, 1991, 35)

Here a precursor for the postmodern technological sublime is perhaps implied in movements such as the Italian futurists, whose celebration of modernization was ably sustained through representing the technologies which serve to define their era. Where the technological forms borrowed by modernism lend themselves to being harnessed in representation, however, in the current era 'we have less to do with kinetic energy than with all kinds of new reproductive processes' (Jameson, 1991, 37), whose technology is that of 'the computer, whose outer shell has no emblematic or visual purpose' (Jameson, 1991, 37).

The powerplant can here be read as both an attempt to utilize the technological sublime, and to recognize its limitations. In the post-industrial matriarchy, the natural sublime has returned. Riding through the countryside, Wat finds himself 'soothed for a while by lonely distances…[where][h]ouses, cultivation, everything human was hidden in dips between a wilderness of grey heights' (*AHM* 60) Yet the context of religious

ritual reserves for the powerplant connotations of the sublime, just as its equality with

the mountains in awesome obscurity, '[v]apour from powerplants…buried in ragged

cloud which dimmed the highest summits'(*AHM* 60), lend it some of the sublimity of

nature. With a name that recalls nuclear power, and a form that mimics both computer-

and bio-technology, the powerplant is nevertheless asserted as technological in focus.

The lack of emblematic purpose associated with these forms is here intensified by their

return as a fictional technology unknown to the reader. Its unknown inner operations as

powerful as a nuclear reactor, and just as unimaginable, its surface as static as a

computer, the powerplant is an uneasy representative of the forces of production. Yet

represent them it does, and here the limitations of the postmodern technological sublime

are turned to Gray's advantage, providing an emblem for a system which resists

representation. The effort by postmodern capitalism to represent itself as divorced from

human exploitation is here joined by a more innate aspect of postmodernity's

unrepresentability as considered in chapter two. Here the powerplant, under similar

limitations to *Lanark*'s conspiracy trope, may be placed among the reproductive

networks whose postmodern play has been interpreted by Jameson as 'a degraded figure

of the great multinational space that remains to be cognitively mapped' (Jameson,

1988(a), 356), 'a distorted figuration of something even deeper, namely the whole world

system of present-day multinational capitalism'(Jameson, 1991, 37). Here the diffuse

nature of the powerplant metaphor on a formal level, open to multiple interpretations,

shows the same awareness of the limitations of allegorical mapping incorporated into

Lanark, while at the same time sketching something of the system this mapping

describes. *Lanark*'s Creature, which preserved its agency, its de-centred nature and its

status as provisional map through a representation which hesitated between allegory and self-conscious simile, may likewise be traced to both these concerns. In respect of the latter concern, to incorporate a likeness of contemporary capitalism within this figuration, the Creature does however represent something of a failure. Less an individual agent than a label for the systemic 'conspiracy' of capitalism, the Creature's diegetic realization shares with its formal construction in evoking the decentred nature of contemporary capitalism. The site of its operations, the institute, is nevertheless given as fixed and single, a spatialized metaphor for the meeting-place between individual and system. As Belfield's comparison between the powerplant and the axletree reveals, in *A History Maker* this limitation is overcome and the diffuse nature of capitalism is taken up within the allegorical model itself. Understanding the powerplant as 'a thinly-disguised, highly over-determined rebus; a realisation-in-form of the metaphors used to describe the self-regulating, self-perpetuating ideological and political systems which in historical time "preceded" it' (Belfield, 2002, 108), Belfield notes how the multiple, independent occurrence of powerplants across the globe implies that 'it correlates with the capitalist machine, not as the 'centralised imperial power' Gifford associates with the Axletree, but capitalism as it relates to supra-nationalism' (Belfield, 2002, 108).

The powerplant represents an interesting development on *Lanark*'s allegories not only through representing capitalism and productive processes within a single figure, infinitely reflected in multiple imagined recurrences, but by restoring to these individual powerplants something of the collectivity of the Creature through suggesting each as nodes in a global network. In one sense, this is achieved through the recollection of information networks which Jameson ascribes to such use of reproductive technology. It

is also suggested in the inter-relationship between the powerplants and Gray's recurrent

means of indicating economic organisation, the trope of conspiracy. The attitude towards

conspiracies expressed in the matriarchy re-affirms both the association of this trope

with capitalism and its own post-capitalist status. '[S]ecret societies', Wat claims, '(like

governments, stock exchanges, banks, national armies, police forces, advertising

agencies and other groups who made nothing people needed) had ended with the

historical era'(*AHM* 108). Kittock strengthens this association between conspiratorial

groups and capitalism through offering them an ironic justification, fulfilling a need

created by the very system they represent. As she explains,

> All these organisations existed to create and protect money which everyone
> needed in the last centuries of the historical era. Wat did not know the wonderful
> value huge amounts of money added to the lives of those who owned them.
> (*AHM* 182)

In such a situation, it is clear that the one self-confessed conspiracy of the novel,

Puddock's Shigalyovites, while they may re-affirm the link between capitalism and

conspiracy, cannot act as a straightforward representation of the former's operations. A

conspiracy not to make capital, but to make capitalism, the Shigalyovites, unlike the

Creature, cannot presuppose the complicity of a populace implicated in a pre-existing

system, a point shown in Puddock's open seduction of Wat.

While an identification of the Shigalyovites with capitalism works to confirm

this system's obsolescence, the novel does offer a further conspiracy more amenably

implicated in its economy. Rather than operating as a direct indication of the capitalist

system as a whole, this conspiracy is instead established through reference to those

governmental structures which Gray has already suggested as its tools. Wat's realization

of these groups suggests a similar obsolescence for governments as that alleged for capitalism, or else the transformation of the form which governments take. It is with this transformation that the novel begins, in an epigraph which works to recuperate the term 'economics'. Just as, as Wat later explains, '[t]he adjective *political* became meaningless a century and a half ago' (*AHM* 105), so the novel's epigraph describes the obsolesce of '*political* housekeeping – the art of keeping [politicians]…bankers, brokers and rich supporters well supplied with money' (*AHM* v) and returns to economics its original sense as 'the art of keeping a home weatherproof and supplied with what the householders need' (*AHM* v). It is to government in a similarly limited sense that Wat turns when he considers the possibility of conspiratorial groups persisting within the matriarchy as his 'head ached with efforts to imagine reasons for secrecy on an earth whose largest government was the family and where each family had what it needed'(*AHM* 108-9). Given the position of men within the household system – divorced from material production – the hierarchy by which this domesticated persistence of government operates can be reformulated in the statement that '[t]he modern state depends on women minding their houses' (*AHM* 117). For all the domestic associations of such a claim, however, several features of this government repeat characteristics of Gray's earlier conspiracies. Firstly, the matriarchy – more properly, perhaps, the grannytocracy – shares in several of their functions. As Kittock explains to Wat, the 'gossip' of great-grannies 'has been the only government and police the world has needed for more than a century – if you're ignorant of that then you don't know what keeps modern society stable'(*AHM* 151). With mention of the 'stability' sought by *Lanark*'s eponymous ministry, a parallel with capitalist conspiracies is established as

methods of social control aimed towards their own continued replication. Where the various 'heads' of these previous conspiracies are located as the 'owners', their replacement by grandmothers would seem to imply a more benign concern. Yet, as Kittock comments, the 'prosperous minority for whom the rest exist'(*AHM* 186) has had many names, even, 'in twentieth-century England where social manipulators were too modest to declare themselves…The Middle Class' (*AHM* 186). While matriarchal production is represented as operating collectively, it is clearly within female ownership. More important to the conspiratorial elite than ownership of production, is, as Polyphemus explains to *Lanark*, ownership of time. While both the need for others to sell their time and the very concept of time as an aspect of production have here been abolished, the luxury of time is again central to establishing the manipulating group, as '[a]mong modern folk the very calm healthy intelligences of old women had most leisure to ponder and exchange news about their families'(*AHM* 205). In their 'exchange of news', these women again reflect earlier conspiracies, joining together domestic power to form a diffuse network of globalized social control. The secrecy which Wat considers irrelevant to modern concerns returns here, represented by Kittock as a side-effect of this system of government, rather than as a conscious choice. Describing common strategies for neutralizing potential threats to stability, she explains how such control 'only reached men through remarks made by aunts, sisters or lovers, so like Wat most fighting men did not notice the power of the grandmothers'(*AHM* 206). A more sinister side to this manipulation is perhaps implied by her next note, observing the involvement of western countries in destabilizing economies for profit where, '[s]ince

these governments were nominally democratic the assistance was given chiefly through *secret* intelligence networks'(*AHM* 187).

Kittock's mention of 'secret intelligence networks', presumably designed to contrast with ' [t]he modern intelligence net [which] was open to everyone'(*AHM* 108), highlights another innovation beyond previous uses of the conspiracy trope, further aligning this model with theoretical descriptions of postmodernity. The intelligence network can in itself be interpreted as an exaggeration of the internet, and a representative of the wider networks of reproduction and communication of which the internet is but one example, elsewhere invoked by the powerplants. Indeed, in the case of the intelligence network the relationship between network and conspiracy is both more complex and perhaps more effective in mapping postmodernity. Rather than the network representing an extension of the grannytocracy, this position is reversed; not only is the 'gossip' constituting the conspiracy enabled by the network, it is effectively supplanted by it. Where individual conspirators can admit 'we're too ignorant, but the network is sure'(*AHM* 125), the network itself becomes the mind of the conspiracy. In this respect, the intelligence network even supplants the trope of conspiracy as an image of contemporary capitalism. Explaining his decision to abandon life as a mandarin, Crook-Cott suggests that he does it because he 'enjoyed spreading consternation through an eternal network which thought me a dependable unit. I like the amazement, admiration and grief my sisters, aunts and grannies now feel'(*AHM* 90). As with several of Gray's previous protagonists, Crook-Cott's joy stems from his assertion of autonomy in the face of entrapping systems. Indeed, in this respect he represents a uniquely postmodern development on his precursors, for in his specific resistance to the

intelligence network Crook-Cott implicitly invokes Baudrillard's notion of cool

seduction, the internalization of the manipulative powers of the media

> which freezes individuals into functioning as terminals of media and
> communication networks who become part and parcel of the very apparatus of
> communication. The subject…becomes transformed into an object as part of the
> nexus of information and communication networks. (Kellner, 1989, 71)

At the same time as he invokes this, Crook-Cott implicitly denies it, surprising his

network through renouncing his position as node. Such a renunciation is, however,

illusory. As his comment suggests, Archie's rebellion is against not one but two

networks, the intelligence network and the grannytocracy. While he may surprise this

latter conspiracy, he cannot escape it, unless he renounces his position in the powerplant

economy. Further, the co-extensive interpenetration of intelligence network and

grannytocracy implies that his leaving the former in fact represents a shift in his position

within a greater network of which both are part. Most compelling of all is the fact that to

'leave' the intelligence network is in this instance to enter into a third such inter-related

network, that which – through the aftermath of the wars it broadcasts – feeds the

grannytocracy's powerplants. In becoming a soldier, Crook-Cott chooses his place as

node of the media.

If this combination of separate networks shows Gray expanding on his

conspiracy model to better reflect postmodernity, the strategy is further compounded by

the inclusion of the public eye. Like the grannytocracy, the operations of the eye are

directly related to the matriarchy's means of production and, through the role of

'[m]edia people'(*AHM* 103) in the Shigalyovite revolution, with the more overtly

capitalist system which preceded it. As with the information network, the public eye

shows a realization of the conspiracy trope in a form which allows for the inclusion of features from postmodern theory generally cast as a result of media dominance. Indeed, while it was not until publication of the novel that the information network or the grannytocracy took their final roles, media domination was a prominent feature of *A History Maker* from its earliest forms. As one outline of Gray's play explains, 'almost the only men to live beyond the age of thirty-five are those working in the television service, which is the only centralized organisation in existence' (Gray, NLS Acc. 9247/1(d), 1965(b), 1). Further, those excluded from this group may also be described as working for television. Not only is there no mention here of the intelligence network, gangrel bands or space colonization projects which give the novel alternatives to television, but the central feature of the story in all its forms, the warfare itself, is directly attributed to the media. As Gray wrote in a further synopsis, 'the battles are bloody, for they are televised' (Gray, NLS 9247/1(d), 1965(b), 1). In these early drafts, not only is television ascribed an un-postmodern centralized hierarchy, it is given a recognizable face in a 'distinct caste' (Gray, NLS Acc. 9247/1(d), 1965(b), 1) of televisers physically present at the scenes they report. In the final novel this situation is brought closer to classic accounts of postmodernity. The first chapter of Wat's account, 'public eye', opens with a description of the innovation to which this neologism primarily refers, one of the remote-controlled levitating cameras which film the matriarchy's battles. Later, these devices will be conflated with the 'public eye channels' which operate them, and with the public at large to whom such 'eyes' are indeed extensions to their sensory organs, such as the fans who 'adored [Wat] for qualities they had noticed through the public eye' (*AHM* 95). If there is any suggestion of a central

agency behind these technologized nodes, it is in the eyes' reverse-broadcasting of their

masters, as within each public eye can be seen 'people working in the centre…[who]

record visions and noises…and comment on them' (*AHM* 1). Yet this 'centre' cannot

refer to the network as a whole, split as it is between separate 'public eye companies'

(*AHM* 76). Nor, tellingly, does it provide unmediated access to the media people shown.

Replacing reporters with public eyes allows the network physical presence through its

technology rather than its human element; matching the near-hallucinatory quality of the

'visions' it gathers, what the eye reflects back from its centre are not 'people', but

'appearances of people' (*AHM* 1), literally distorted simulacra.

The close association developed in this chapter between the narration of events

and their reception by the public eye establishes a formal reflection of the observation in

one synopsis that television is 'the only source of information' (Gray, NLS Acc.11203/1

(f), 1993, 3). The opening description of this 'crystalline globe'(*AHM* 1), while it shows

the narrative's point of view as distinct from the eye, highlights its importance through

making it the text's initial focus. As the public eye moves, Wat's account follows. Its

ability to teleport, where

'[t]he public eye vanishes

and reappears'(*AHM* 2) reflects the ability of a television broadcast to

jump-cut, further establishing an association with television through a design between

each line which, if a fitting illustration to the novel, would also serve as a channel logo.

On the second appearance of this design, the association of the eye with a collective

apprehension of events is made even clearer. Here, describing Shafto and his herald,

'[o]ur point of view remains between them/until they ascend the besieged hill'(*AHM* 6).

Later, with the return of these figures to their camp it is the lack of a cut which is

emphasized. Here '[t]he public eye remains'(*AHM* 12), as, indeed, does the narrative, at

least until the eye is warned that this meeting is private. This association of the narrative

with the eye is strengthened by the extent to which it is responsible for providing

information. At the novel's opening, the soldiers are 'shadowy figures'(*AHM* 2), only

visible when illuminated by the eye, both metaphorically and, when '[a]sudden beam of

light from the globe lights a fourteen-year-old boy'(*AHM* 2), literally. Until the battle

commentary names them as Ettrick and Northumbria, the two sides appear vaguely, as 'a

small army…surrounded by a large'(*AHM* 1). Similarly, the back story to this first scene

is given through the voice of the commentators. Or rather, with the agency of

commentators erased in phrases such as 'says the public eye'(*AHM* 3), through the voice

of the eye itself. This process continues through the eye's pre-battle interviews, and

culminates with the battle, where the reader apprehends Douglas's strategy only through

the eye's commentary.

     Given this coincidence of the media and our apprehension of events, it is not

surprising that the battle seems more representation than reality. The movements of the

soldiers would, we are told, 'seem theatrical to observers used to the conscript or

mercenary troops of the historical era'(*AHM* 6), even the smallest of their number

adopting 'the poised dignity of a commander in a painting by Velasquez'(*AHM* 6). Only

Wat seems out of step with the others, but he too is reduced to representation, standing

like 'a morose actor who would prefer to be in a different play' (*AHM* 7). This theatrical

element to the battles is later criticized by Wat as an effect of the eye, which 'exists to

make entertainment out of serious war games'(*AHM* 86). Wat's oxymoronic description brings into question the seriousness of this enterprise, and the extent to which the battles may be separated from their transformation into entertainment. Certainly, the eye's parodic sports commentary is a key means by which the battle is cast as entertainment. Yet in their rule-based regulation the battles have already taken on the structure of a sport, a fact emphasized in this clash between Ettrick – who share their names with prominent Scottish rugby players (Whiteford, 1997, 206) – and Northumbria, who recall their history in such emblems as 'the Milburn football'(*AHM* 3) and 'Charlton winged boot'(*AHM* 3).[51] More significantly, the ultimate cause of these battles is a desire for war which mimics the essentially meaningless performances of sport. Several possible reasons for fighting are offered by various characters in the novel, none of them conventional. We are told that men 'fought battles and became heroes because they were afraid to grow old'(*AHM* 55), or, more cynically, because [they're] no good at anything else'(*AHM* 88). In a more positive light, Wat explains that '[s]oldiers don't fight to kill each other…[but] to win the respect due to courage'(*AHM* 59). As will be briefly discussed later, these various motivations resolve into something like the *Thymos* – a desire for recognition – which Fukuyama incorporates into his mechanism for a universal history. Even the second of these motivations, the uselessness of soldiers in all other respects, is revealed as implicitly equivalent to this desire; Wat here compares the impotence of soldiers not with the omnicompetence of women, but with men such Crook-Cott who, possessing other skills – and, in the information network, an alternative means of broadcasting them – need not risk their lives for acclaim.

If the need for war is based on the desire for recognition, then it is vital that battles take place within the public eye. Douglas recognizes as much when he reminds his men that '[t]here is the eye which will show the world how the Ettrick clan will die'(*AHM* 9). Shafto's call for Ettrick to surrender repeats and expands this concern, reassuring them that they would not lose 'the admiration rightly owed to you by the viewing public, your allies, family, enemies and posterity'(*AHM* 7). If the battle for the standard represents the battle for recognition, this is effectively the battle for ratings. It is for this reason that the new strategy employed by Douglas is taken up enthusiastically by other soldiers. In effect, the success of a wargame rests on the extent to which its participants collude with the media to create entertainment, overcoming a situation where '[m]any in the public eye are bored frantic by broadcasting the same old war games. The viewing public are also bored'(*AHM* 115). A variation on this idea appears with specific relevance to history when comments made by Joe draw out the role of the public eye in his conception of the historical record. One is a repetition of the concern for ratings, translated from the extent of recognition into its longevity, when he asks his brother '[h]ow would you like to die, Wat, if not in a battle that folk would replay for centuries?' (*AHM* 34). Another comment brings the possibility that history itself begins when audiovisual recording becomes possible, where '[w]ee lads of fourteen have never chosen to die like that before – not since the dawn of television'(*AHM* 32). Immediately following this he observes that 'If history wasnae a thing of the past I would say Ettrick *made it* two days ago'(*AHM* 32). Together these comments raise the possibility that the media are now central to the concept of history. An event is only real if it is represented,

and only active within history if it is recorded and repeated. Most of all, it is only historical if it provides fresh entertainment.

Several features of *A History Maker* have led commentators to draw parallels between present conflicts and those of the twenty-third century, a comparison confirmed most surely by the increasing integration of warfare and the media and, by association, through the canonical quality of the Gulf War in postmodern theory. This position as exemplum of postmodernity rests in large part upon Baudrillard's claim that *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, an argument whose tangents possess differing levels of relevance to *A History Maker*. Baudrillard's lengthy preoccupation with deterrence as a simulation rendering true war impossible, for example, has little applicability in the matriarchy. Yet, in establishing the impossibility of war by other means, Gray describes something similar to deterrence's effects. Playing out wars without political repercussions, the soldiers of the matriarchy might find themselves debarred from achieving true war for similar reasons as those in the Gulf. Principal among these is the perceived lack of consequences which Baudrillard associates with the Gulf War, a claim which has led some, such as Christopher Norris, to level charges of solipsism. A more sympathetic interpretation comes from Paul Patton, who, noting the war's undeniable human cost, nevertheless suggests '[t]he final irony…that, apart from the massive damage and suffering inflicted upon Iraq, and the short-lived political and economic benefits at home, very little changed as a result of the military conflict' (Patton, 2000, 19-20). The wars of the matriarchy, in which the situation of both parties is separate from the battle's outcome, share this irrelevance. Indeed, such loss of consequence is the grounding presupposition of the matriarchy's battles, risking only the lives of those

directly involved, and empty signifiers of victory or defeat. Such is also the case in

Baudrillard's reading of the Gulf conflict, in which '[u]nlike earlier wars, in which there

were political aims either of conquest or domination, what is at stake in this one is war

itself: its status, its meaning, its future' (Baudrillard, 2000, 32).

It is in terms of this displacement of war into its simulation models –

'[e]xchanging war', he writes elsewhere, 'for signs of war' (Baudrillard, 1994(b), 62) –

that Baudrillard's argument on the Gulf incorporates the media. It is also in this regard

that the Gulf war's non-occurrence relates to the disappearance of history. It is unclear to

what extent Baudrillard claims the 'end of history' trope as true. Indeed, relevant aspects

of Baudrillard's argument would here seem to feed back upon themselves, for in one

respect the end of history represents the end of truth-status. While the title of one essay

collection, *The Illusion of the End*, would seem to locate the object of its commentary as

a *belief* in history's end, its content suggests otherwise, an ambivalence which continues

in his attempts to sketch the cause of its demise. There are, he claims, '[v]arious

plausible hypotheses' (Baudrillard, 1994(e), 1) for the end of history, three of which he

goes on to offer, in each case reserving a special place for the media. In one of these

hypotheses, history meets its end via the massification of the populace as touched upon

in Crook-Cott's cool seduction. While Baudrillard's scientific metaphors perhaps work

more to obscure than to reveal the mechanisms behind this change, the net effect,

whereby 'the perception and imagination of the future are beyond us' (Baudrillard,

1994(e), 4) clearly chimes with the matriarchy. A more readily graspable mechanism for

history's demise is offered in the first of Baudrillard's hypotheses, which recapitulates

Heise's first variant in posthistory theory. Alledging that events must possess a certain

slowness and distance from their perceiver in order to be adequately synthesized within history, Baudrillard sees this requirement as denied by an acceleration which involves both the speed of change attendant on the modernization process and the temporal effect of communication networks. In one sense, the relevant temporal distortion can be approached as resulting from the emphasis the media places on simultaneity, allowing perception of spatially distant events in 'real time'. This finds realization within the novel when a battle's end is greeted with an exhortation to 'switch to the banks of the Alamo for a peep at the big fight between the Tex and Mex sharpshooters'(*AHM* 18). Others, the commentator notes, will 'stay with us here to learn the final body-count'(*AHM* 18) of 'what may be eventually voted The Battle of The Century'(*AHM* 22), a reference to post-match analysis which, in both closing off the battle and situating it within its 'historical' context, perhaps recalls a second aspect of the media's transformation of temporality. Such temporal foreclosure is noted by Jameson, when he describes 'how Nixon and, even more so, Kennedy are figures from a now distant past' (Jameson, 1988(b), 28). From this he suggests that 'the very function of the news media is to relegate such recent historical experiences as rapidly as possible into the past' (Jameson, 1988(b), 28). The effect of the media's recording and broadcasting of events is thus, paradoxically, to 'help us forget' (Jameson, 1988(b), 28). At issue is here is not merely a second manifestation of the disorientating speed of the media, but the element of 'distance' which he ascribes to the prematurely historical. It is indeed possible to draw from this distance a more positive appraisal of this function, as with the alternative conclusion offered by Mark Currie, who finds here the historical consciousness which Jameson himself calls for, 'the sense…that one is part of the narrative of history, so that

the present is experienced as if it were always already narrated in retrospect' (Currie, 1998, 97). Yet this element of distance likewise acts to separate the present from its ever more recent past, manifesting those barriers which the novel condemns.

While this multiplication of historicized media-images does not feature among Baudrillard's hypotheses for the end of history, its effects can be clearly traced in his discussion of the Gulf War. The archival function of the media, associated in *A History Maker* with the entry of events into history, here finds similar appraisal. Rather than establishing the historical character of events, however, such archives instead bolster the illusion of their historicity, where 'there will be something to see for the viewers of archival cassettes and the generations of video-zombies who will never cease reconstituting the event, never having had the intuition of the non-event of this war' (Baudrillard, 2000, 47). Patton's explication of this image in terms of '[t]he proliferation of archival information including taped audio-visual records [which] allows the event to become utterly dispersed into a morass of conflicting interpretations and hypotheses about what really happened' (Patton, 2000, 14), offers one means of approaching history's demise by this mechanism. Again, the media's emphasis on simultaneity finds a role, in this case in the reconstitution of events which, in rendering them available to the viewer, simultaneously denies their crystallization into a fixed historical narrative. In citing this as the reconstitution of a *non-event*, however, the effect of archival images is more directly related to the loss, not of history, but of the real. The non-existence of the Gulf War at the hands of the media thus invokes the 'stereophonic effect' (Baudrillard 1994(e), 5) which provides the third of Baudrillard's hypotheses on the end of history. Here an analogy is drawn with advancements in sound reproduction by which music

'disappears into the perfection of its materiality, into its own special effect. Beyond this point, there is neither judgement nor aesthetic pleasure. It is the ecstasy of musicality, and its end'(Baudrillard 1994(e), 5). The same is true of history, which reaches perfection in current affairs coverage. Here,

> we have passed that limit where, by dint of the sophistication of events and information, history ceases to exist as such. Immediate high-powered broadcasting, special effects, secondary effects… These are all things which cast a radical doubt on the event. (Baudrillard 1994(e), 5-6)

News is thus a simulacrum of history and '[r]ight at the very heart of news, history threatens to disappear'(Baudrillard 1994(e), 6).

So closely does the end of the real coincide with the end of history in Baudrillard's thought that it is equally felt in his first two post-history hypotheses. The gravitation of the mass is the death not only of history, but of meaning. Likewise, the acceleration of his first hypothesis is given as

> the acceleration of modernity, of technology, events and media, of all exchanges – economic, political and sexual – [which] has propelled us to 'escape velocity' with the result that we have flown free of the referential sphere of the real and of history. (Baudrillard 1994(e), 1)

While both the metaphor of 'escape velocity' and the causes he identifies for it imply a basic similarity to such alternative post-history theories as Harvey's Time-Space compression, therefore, this account would appear more properly compatible with his own wider corpus of theory. Baudrillard's early quasi-Marxian work culminates in a vision of the contemporary world dominated by signifiers set in equivalence with each other, to the detriment of their referential function. In addition to the schematic offered in *The Mirror of Production*, tracing the historical development of this situation as

ordered by the commodity form, Baudrillard would later describe, in 'The Orders of

Simulacra', a related transformation in the development of representation, from the

transparently ordered sign-system of the feudal era, through the liberation of the sign

under the bourgeoisie. The simulation models which comprise the hyperreal are

inextricably linked with the development of modern media. The cool seduction of the

individual is their incorporation, not only within the network itself, but within the

simulation models it generates, and the social control which Baudrillard locates on the

level of signification in the form of the code becomes endemic and total as reality itself

is lost behind its simulations.

As discussed in my introductory chapter, the extent to which Baudrillard can be

installed as a postmodernist is debatable. It is clear, however, that various aspects of his

voyages in hyperreality have become established tropes of postmodern theory. Indeed,

where Baudrillard does explicitly invoke postmodernism, the characteristics with which

he associates it are those expanded on in Jameson's account. In contemporary art,

Baudrillard suggests,

> [i]t has all been done. The extreme limit of these possibilities has been reached.
> It has destroyed itself. It has deconstructed its entire universe… All that remains
> to be done is to play with the piece. Playing with the pieces – that is postmodern.
> (Mele and Titmarsh, 1993, 95)

On the level of aesthetic criticism, this recalls Jameson's emphasis on fragmentation and

pastiche. Applied more broadly, it again associates the postmodern with history's

demise, a cultural exhaustion in which 'one is in a kind of post-history which is without

meaning. One would not be able to find any meaning in it. So, we must move in it, as

though it were a kind of circular gravity. We can no longer be said to progress'(Mele

and Titmarsh, 1993, 95). Postmodern non-history is found here in the recombined forms

of a blank past, a notion with clear relevance to Jameson's postmodern historiography.

Indeed, Baudrillard elsewhere describes history's resurrection in terms which could

conceivably be taken from Jameson. Considering the promotion of the French

Revolution in contemporary French culture as a means of forgetting the past, Baudrillard

ascribes history's demise to its commodification,

> shifting it from historical space into the sphere of advertising…This is how we
> have manufactured for ourselves, with great swathes of promotional images, a
> synthetic memory which serves as our primal reference, our founding myth, and
> which, most importantly, absolves us of the real event of the Revolution.
> (Baudrillard 1994(b), 23)

Even the historiographic double-bind in which Jameson has inserted the contemporary

subject arises here. Already implicit in the relationship Baudrillard sketches between

simulacra and now-absent reality – where '[t]he media mix has become the prerequisite

to any orgasmic event. We need it precisely because the event escapes us ' (Baudrillard

2000, 75) – in the area of history this is realized as something akin to Jameson's craving

for historicity fed by its substitutes, where '[t]his revival of vanished – or vanishing –

forms, this attempt to escape the apocalypse of the virtual, is a utopian desire, the last of

our utopian desires. The more we seek to rediscover the real and the referential, the more

we sink into simulation, in this case a shameful and, at any event, hopeless simulation'

(Baudrillard 1994(c), 117).

Drawing attention the novel's many recombined anachronisms, Sonia Villegas

has argued that

> [t]he irony behind Gray's adoption of the [science-fiction] genre in *A History
> Maker* consists exactly not just in his presentation of the foibles of contemporary
> society, as most science-fiction novels do, but it lies peculiarly in the fact that

twenty-third century Great Britain has returned to a pre-historic origin. (Villegas, 2001, 189)

More accurately, the Scotland of the twenty-third century has returned to pre-history, just as it has returned to history, while remaining part of a 'post-historical' future. While the matriarchal and tribal organisation of society points to the Picts, other features seem drawn from later eras. As considered above, such anachronistic imagery need not be interpreted in terms of postmodern theory alone. The variety of the novel's anachronous resurrections, however, does seem to privilege a postmodern interpretation. While these anachronisms receive no explanation within the novel, one public eye commentator comes close to this when he suggests their recurrence for 'sentimental reasons'(*AHM* 15). In the matriarchy nostalgia cinema expands into a nostalgia world. Further, the relevance of postmodernity to the novel's anachronisms is confirmed by their coincidence with networks of reproduction. In one respect, this is seen in the media's role in generating these images. A further aspect of this association stems from the already aesthetic basis of many of these 'historical' images. The collage which decorates Annie's walls – 'Donald Duck, Botticelli's Venus, Robert Burns, Alice in Wonderland, Krishna among the cowgirls, King Kong, Rodin's *Kiss*, Dracula, Marilyn Monroe and modern stills of famous soldiers from their most violent battles'(*AHM* 48) – marks a concentrated example of Jameson's 'fashion-plate' images of history. This finds a counterpart in *Homage To Ettrick*, an opera bearing all the hallmarks of Jamesonian aesthetic production. Purporting to be a 'completely new spectacle'(*AHM* 77), this cloud circus is in fact comprised of pastiched recombination, not only of '*Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Milton…MacDiarmid, Hamish Henderson et cetera*'(*AHM* 129), but of pre-

existing music and, indeed, pre-existing clouds. Among the crew of this production is one figure who carries this emphasis on anachronistic spectacle from the realm of the aesthetic to that of all communication. This is Lulu Dancy, Delilah Puddock, or Meg Mountbenger – her numerous names already bringing her identity into question – an avatar of simulation who 'loved sounds and appearances more than solid forms'(*AHM* 152) and who, as both media person and Shigalyovite revolutionary, combines the networks of communication with the matriarchy's sublimated capitalism. Further, Delilah's initial appearance, conducted through a public eye, is simulacral, as in 'a tiny, distinct very girlish English voice which became tough American then huskily Germanic'(*AHM* 99) she claims such fictional identities as 'Tinker Bell'(*AHM* 99) and 'Phyllis Marlowe'(*AHM* 99). Her physical appearance, too, represents a seduction through resurrected forms, her public eye displaying 'a mouth with full lips precisely crimsoned in a 1940s Hollywood fashion which had been revived at least thrice a century since' (*AHM* 101), her physical presence cast in 'the rape-inviting position imposed on Jane Russell by a millionaire who had owned some of 1944 Hollywood'(*AHM* 112-3).

> As Bernstein has described her
>
> [r]ather than having a unitary personality Meg is a tissue of retrieved data, the nightmare product of the superficial but massive information storage and retrieval phenomena of public eyes and open intelligence archive…She stands as the living embodiment of Fredric Jameson's earmarks of the postmodern. (Bernstein, 1999, 114-5)

Further, as an immortal neo-sapience she faces a life too long for memory, a situation prompting each neo-sapience to record 'a summary of what their renewed cells would find useful to know'(*AHM* 177). Drawing attention to these false memories as

'information…[not]sensed experience'(*AHM* 177), Bernstein has rightly argued that

'[w]ith their virtual memories copies for which there are no originals, the neo-sapiences

are consumers of Baudrillardian simulacra'(Bernstein, 1999, 144). From this, Bernstein

goes on to represent Gray as engaged in a wholehearted rejection of postmodernism.

Certainly Gray would seem to agree with 'most intelligent people [who] had come to

prefer sensed experience to manipulating units of information'(*AHM* 177). In this

respect, Wat's rejection of neo-sapience is only one appearance of a repeated quest for

the real over the simulated; in early drafts he is initially trained, not for immortality, but

for television. Talking to the people of Ettrick, he acknowledges the preferability of

face-to-face human communication, observing that 'I suppose you've come here to learn

things you might not get from the public eye'(*AHM* 86). Resolving to escape the cool

seduction of the media, Wat aims 'to dissolve that mindless unity by the calm delivery

of sensible information'(*AHM* 85). While his instruction to a misplaced camera at this

meeting is literal, then, there are is also a thinly-veiled nostalgia for the unmediated

when Wat announces '[t]his is Wat Dryhope about to speak to friends. Will the public

eye please shift from between us?' (*AHM* 85).

The same concern for the real over the simulated is seen in the early stages of

Wat's seduction where, unlike Baudrillard, he makes plain that simulation is not

preferable to physical reality, that, '[a]s you're synthesized from the soundtracks of

ancient movies I won't get much joy from *that* meeting'(*AHM* 101). Ultimately, Wat's

desire for the real is realized in his desire for real warfare. A desire for genuine history is

also suggested in his response to simulated memory. While his basic rejection of

information-based summaries would appear to privilege experience over simulation, his

comment that '[o]ur memories *are* our character'(*AHM* 38) also shows the importance

placed on memory in determining identity. By extension, this might also apply to

history, reflected in the comments with which Kittock closes her introduction. Here she

alleges that Henry Ford's claim that '*History is bunk*' (*AHM* xiv) was directly related to

his inability to understand economic forces, where '*ignorance of the past fogged his

view of the present and blinded him to the future*'(*AHM* xv). At this point we are

returned to a central theme of the novel, a concern with the manner in which the world

operates which can only be met by an understanding of how it developed. The tension

between Kittock's project – understanding her society's relationship to history by

historicizing the manner in which such a relationship can be realized – and the society in

which she lives might here be approached as a tension between the ahistoric and the

analytic power of authentic history. In other words, for a critic such as Bernstein,

between 'postmodernism' and the values espoused by Gray. Certainly his claim that the

appearance of postmodern features within the society Gray describes represents a

parodic rejection of the same is supported by the novel's signalling towards an alternate

possibility in the form of Kittock's historically-conscious literacy. Her rejection of neo-

sapience likewise stems from a desire to engage with the world, realizing that she

'needed the world's wonderful big smallness'(*AHM* 153). The form of her engagement

reinforces this reading, separated from her contemporaries by dwelling in a tower with

no link to the intelligence network. Even the networks of material reproduction perform

a limited appearance in her life, taking 'nothing from the powerplant but poultry food

and books for the gangrels' (*AHM* 153). In the place of the intelligence network and the

media, Kittock has books, which, if they are the product of the powerplants remain

separate from and superior to them; as the powerplants in certain areas die, '[k]nowledge unique to these districts – music, stories and local records – only survived now in memories of the living and a few old books that were mainly read by gangrels'(*AHM* 209).

While Bernstein is right to suggest that Gray offers both a parodically intensified image of postmodernity and a valorization of factors generally considered absent from it, he is wrong to represent this as a wholesale rejection of postmodernism. One possible reason for Bernstein's response lies in his vague application of the term 'postmodern' to cover both features described within postmodern theory and the theories themselves. Both, it would seem from Bernstein's analysis, are rejected, a stance seemingly supported by Gray's comments on theoretical postmodernism. Yet if theoretical postmodernism is represented as an attempt to inculcate the values held by the controlling classes, unconcerned with or even antithetical to reality, this judgement is called into question by Gray's own strategy. The various engagements with theoretical descriptions of postmodernity encountered above parallel, as I have suggested, Gray's previous appropriations from theory to provide metaphorical frameworks in which to formulate his own epic representations. While the descent into simulation and the content of postmodern theory are both criticized for obscuring everyday reality, in levelling this charge at the former he implicitly accepts the latter's ability to do the opposite. Here the comparison Bernstein makes between the more accepting analysis of Jameson and Gray's seemingly parodic response may be illuminating, recalling as it does a point made by Jameson himself in contrasting his own rejection of the capitalist system with the reasoning by which he commits himself to this noted tolerance. While

Jameson has criticized various features of postmodernity on both moral and ideological grounds, his own project offers no direct resistance to postmodernism, instead concerned with its analysis. The same is to some extent true for Gray himself, for any moralizing agenda on his part remains largely implicit within the map he offers. Thus, in attempting this analysis of postmodernity through its representation, even aspects of postmodern theory which he seeks to reject must in some way become incorporated into his model of the world.

One further postmodern theorist whose conclusions Gray seems to accept is Fukuyama. Several areas of congruency exist between Fukuyama's thesis in *The End of History and The Last Man* and Gray's thought, not least the neo-Hegelian framework of dialectical development in which Fukuyama develops his universal history. Perhaps the most obvious area of agreement between the two can be seen in Gray's depiction of the 'widespread male boredom' (*AHM* 117) which results in simulated war, very easily related to Fukuyama's *Thymos*, 'the struggle for recognition [which] drove history from the first bloody battle'(Fukuyama, 1992, 288). While Fukuyama figures this need for recognition as a positive force, responsible for the agitation which has led to liberal democracy, he goes on to consider whether democracy will ever satisfy this desire. He concludes that it may not, and in the potential repercussions of the thymotic drive he anticipates several solutions also arrived at in the matriarchy. One with obvious relevance to Gray's twenty-third century is the sense of personal recognition through active engagement with others which only intimate communal association can provide, where 'a strong community life is… democracy's best guarantee that its citizens do not turn into last men' (Fukuyama, 1992, 323). Another is the channelling of the thymotic

drive into '*contentless* activities that can win [last men] recognition' (Fukuyama, 1992, 319), a process alluded to in Wat's comments on the Crook-Cotts. The most important of the novel's contentless activities is of course its battles, and if Fukuyama fails to offer this solution it is for the readily acceptable reason that a 'safe' battle is a matter for science-fiction; for Fukuyama, it is the possibility of thymos-led warfare which these other solutions are designed to counter, where

> [e]xperience suggests that if men cannot struggle on behalf of a just cause because that just cause was victorious in an earlier generation, then they will struggle *against* the just cause. They will struggle for the sake of struggle. They will struggle, in other words, out of a certain boredom. (Fukuyama, 1992, 330)

In the basic situation engendering the last men, however, we find a crucial area of contrast. Fukuyama grounds his claim that history has ended in the belief that history, driven by a mechanism uniting the human desire for recognition with an ever-increasing expansion in technological resources, has reached a point in which society can proceed no further: liberal democracy and free-market capitalism represent its apex. In this respect, he argues 'history has come to an end if the present form of social and political organization is *completely satisfying* to human beings in their most essential characteristics' (Fukuyama, 1992,136). As the earlier quotation from Dunne suggests, such an argument can be regarded as an attempt to justify the present system. In answer to this, Fukuyama has offered a judgement which, if it engages more directly with inequality, nevertheless does little to dissuade the reader from inferring a propagandistic element to his work; '[n]o one likes the moral implications of capitalism or imagines that the way it distributes gains is perfectly just', he has conceded, 'Socialist schemes of distribution are arguably fairer in a moral sense. Their chief problem is that they don't

work' (Fukuyama, 1995, 29). The result of this is that while Gray's imagined future

shares in Fukuyama's concerns for man's final state, and in his diagnosis of a

contemporary society which has 'trouble imagining a world which is radically better

than our own, or a future which is not essentially democratic and capitalist'(Fukuyama,

1992, 46), he stops short of accepting history's demise in this way. Indeed, not only

might Fukuyama be included among the solipsistic theorists of postmodernity in this

respect, he is also implicitly criticized as repeating a pattern of thought rejected by

Kittock in her comments on Hegel. As Tiitinen has observed, this response to Fukuyama

is taken up within the fabric of the novel's diegetic world whereby, by imagining a stage

beyond capitalism, '[w]hat is post-historical for Fukuyama is still historical in Gray's

world'(Tiitinen, 1999(b) 273). Further, in contrast to the stable system of organization it

is adjudged to be by Fukuyama, capitalism is here dismissed as a 'greedy

madness'(*AHM* 170) which almost destroys humanity.

If a critique of Fukuyama is implicit within the matriarchy when read as a post-

capitalist stage of society, regarding it as a metaphorical transfiguration of late

capitalism offers a similar judgement on Baudrillard. Again, the charge of solipsism is

common among Baudrillard's commentators, who lament the inadequacy of his work in

describing the continued existence of exploitation. Such dissatisfaction stems from the

fact that Baudrillard's understanding of the nature of capitalist hegemony – semiological

control on the level of the code – is at odds with the categories of analysis in which

capitalism is conventionally understood. Given his grounding supposition that such

categories have been superseded, Baudrillard's inability to engage with them can be

represented as a virtue, a judgement given by Gane when he suggests that their use

would cripple Baudrillard's analysis (Gane, 1991, 13). More generally, it is figured as a major drawback, as when Zurbrugg concludes that

> [t]he fatal weakness in Baudrillard's seductive melancholia … is its compulsive neglect of the substance of contemporary culture and its insistence upon the correspondence between everyday reality and apocalyptic terminology; a delusion that becomes doubly delusory when this terminology derives from outdated muses and metaphors. (Zurbrugg, 2000(a), 83)

Just as he charges Jameson with a 'theoretical blindness' brought about by rigid commitment to his own ideological presuppositions, so too does Zurbrugg tar Baudrillard with this regrettable symptom, where

> [t]he weaknesses of much postmodern cultural theory arise precisely from its author' [sic] reluctance to suspend, and perhaps sacrifice, their "pre-established rules"…In consequence, postmodern critical theory all too frequently caricatures postmodern cultural practices in terms of simplistic existential and conceptual shifts which, perhaps more than any other factor, determine the specificity of postmodern creativity. (Zurbrugg, 2000(b), 55)

Zurbrugg's choice of the word 'caricature' in describing the relationship between postmodernity and its theoretical representations is fitting, for this is, for Baudrillard at least, exactly what they are revealed to be. To Baudrillard '[t]he secret of theory is that truth doesn't exist…The only thing you can do is play with some kind of provocative logic' (Lotringer, 1993, 124), and it is as a provocation of this sort, the result of a 'fictionizing' process which '*play[s] out* the end of things' (Baudrillard qtd. in Zurbrugg, 2000(a), 67) that he seems to suggest we read his own writings. Indeed, critics of Baudrillard have afforded him some utility when this intensification process is recognized. Thus, Norris admits, when commenting on the absurdities of Disneyland, television commercials and so forth,

> it is only fair to say that, at his best, Baudrillard is a sharp-eyed diagnostician…But his own arguments take on a similar absurdity when he pushes beyond this level of diagnostic commentary to claim that we have arrived at a stage of terminal indifference with regard to issues of truth and falsehood. (Norris, 1992, 22)

Such a possibility severely problematizes the claim that Baudrillard is neglectful in his failure to recognize aspects of social reality which contrast with the world-view he elaborates. Most of all, it problematizes the relationship between Baudrillard and *A History Maker* which, if it repeats these same charges against postmodern theory in general, does so while enacting a similar process itself. For Durham, who argues that Baudrillard 'presents as theoretical knowledge what would be more accurately described as the elaboration of the "originary fantasy" of consumer society'(Durham, 1998, 21), the import of his relationship to capitalism is two-fold. It can be approached as a mark of complicity, the representation of a legitimating myth for contemporary socio-economic organisation. At the same time, it can prove a useful tool for this system's critics, its interest lying 'less in the truth or falsehood of its claims than the fact that it renders the dominant tendency visible in all its hallucinatory splendor' (Durham, 1998, 62). The dominance of the media, the triumph of simulacra over the real, and, most of all, 'the realization of the most deep-seated fantasy of capitalism itself: that of capital without labor or society' (Durham, 1998, 62), appear here as a means of grasping the logic of the system. The same point can be made for the appropriation of these theories in *A History Maker* where, as we have seen, the truth of these assertions is upheld at the same time as their falsehood. If the novel's depiction of media-dominated hyper-reality suggests a partial acceptance of postmodernity whereby its theoretical descriptions are taken as evidence for genuine, but rejected, social trends, the form of this rejection establishes the

limitations of postmodern theory. In its parodic intensification of these trends,

accompanied by their juxtaposition with their opposites in a surviving enclave of literate

humanity, *A History Maker* shows both the process of exaggeration by which

postmodern theory is elaborated and the ideological blindness which leads to its more

pessimistic conclusions

Gray's choice of technique would thus appear to signal several strategies on his

part. At heart, what is involved seems something like a reversal of the process of critical

appropriation which Gray has repeatedly feared, where fiction is seen to appropriate and

transform tropes originally realized within criticism. In part, this appropriation shows

Gray implicitly supporting postmodern theory's conclusions. Where the lens of

postmodern theory is a distorting one, misrepresenting the continued presence of

features at odds with its grounding presuppositions – from the survival of human

communication outwith electronic media to the exploitation at the heart of capitalism –

his engagement with theory works to raise these problems. Both ends are achieved

through his strategy of parodically extreme literalization, in which the return of present

society in unrecognizable forms both renders it subject to estrangement and raises the

degree to which such theories are in any case estranged from reality as many experience

it. Interestingly, the previous quotations from Baudrillard reveal the extent to which

Gray is here involved in a process of extrapolation very similar to that conducted by

Baudrillard himself. This similarity extends into the generic affiliations of their work. If

Gray has created a science-fiction narrative which draws from social theory, one means

of preserving utility for Baudrillard's writings while nevertheless recognizing their

limitations is to regard them as the reverse, as a fictionalized extrapolation of future

possibilities. Here, Kellner has suggested, his intensification of genuine social phenomena is contained through approaching the result as 'some great dystopic fiction…which takes current trends to possible conclusions, and provides instructive warnings about certain social tendencies and phenomena'(Kellner, 1989, 203). Such a possibility is recognized by Baudrillard himself, who has characterized his provocative fictionalizing as 'a way of following through the extremes to see what happens. It's a bit like a theory-fiction' (Mele and Titmarch, 1993, 82). There is also, he notes 'a little theoretical science-fiction in it'(Mele and Titmarch, 1993, 82). Here Gray incorporates the form, as well as the content, of postmodern theory into his parodic appropriation of the same, while at the same time undermining certain of its conclusions through undertaking a project of prophetic extrapolation which might parallel Baudrillard's in a less problematic sense. With *A History Maker*, Gray offers an account of postmodernity as distorted as any by Baudrillard, yet returns to it both the negative associations postmodernist solipsism denies, and the hope for change which it cannot encompass. In the face of B-effect, Gray repeats his call to 'Work as if in the early days of a better nation.'

Conclusion: Reading Postmodernism in Gray

While *A History Maker*'s lengthy engagement with postmodernism may cast it as a fitting subject with which to draw to a close a consideration of Gray's relationship with the term, the novel does not stand as his final word on the matter. Since its publication Gray has continued to comment on the subject through interviews and postscripts, raising points which remain in line with his characterisation of postmodernism as outlined in chapter one. While the three collections which have followed *A History Maker* show Gray distancing himself from postmodernism in practice, continuing what Gifford terms 'the low-key, realist vein of half of *Unlikely Stories* and much of *Something Leather*' (Gifford, 1996, 4), Gray's subsequent novel, *Old Men In Love*, displays many of the hallmarks which first earned Gray the postmodernist tag. Indeed, while the 'editor' Gray's musing that he will pepper the novel not with footnotes but '[m]arginal notes. I like widening my readers' range of expectations'(Gray, 2007, 8) may work as a pun on page layouts, it fails as a statement of intent. Any reader who expects Gray to present a fictional text as found, to adopt faux-critical personae, make ample use of paratexts, to mix factual and fictional writing, or to recycle material will find little widening here. Except, perhaps, in the extent to which these techniques are deployed. As noted by Sidney Workman, himself recycled here, one section of the novel represents a regurgitation of itself, recycling taken 'beyond a joke' (Gray, 2007, 309).

The reception given to *Old Men In Love* by reviewers outwith fiction was certainly more favourable. Yet many critics would agree with James Purdon that this is

'not a very satisfying novel' (Purdon, 2007, 24), even, perhaps, 'a cynical effort, a vehicle for publishing a selection of otherwise unprintable reworkings' (Purdon, 2007, 24). Again, a previously encountered facet of Gray's fiction repeats itself, here the opprobrium with which critics received *Something Leather*. With this novel, however, Gray's reheated material has been rendered more palatable through its visual design and stylistic playfulness, both of which have been widely praised. As Christopher Taylor's turn of phrase suggests, explaining that Gray makes the novel 'more enjoyable than it might sound by unpacking his box of tricks' (Tayler, 2007, 16), the valorised aspects of *Old Men In Love* are those techniques of ludic trickery which first led critics to cast Gray as a postmodernist. Indeed, it is tempting to consider that this novel sees Gray coming closest to the demotivated playing out of such games which some critics have suggested as a danger of certain postmodernist readings of his earlier works. Postmodern techniques are here largely decorative devices, with no other readily apparent function. Unless this seeming lack of motive is itself ascribed a function, in something like Stevenson's parodic post-postmodernism, it would appear that *Old Men In Love* achieves the superficial postmodernism which Gray has so often criticized.

That the most interesting feature of *Old Men In Love* is its postmodern pyrotechnic display potentially rehabilitates even the most superficial application of the term to Gray's work. The ability to describe a number of tropes whose contemporaneous and potentially inter-related predominance has led to their description under the common heading 'postmodernism' certainly endows the term with some degree of utility where these tropes are so clearly expressed. To this extent, then, the 'postmodern' tag may be clearly – and to the extent that discussion might focus upon these surface features,

usefully – applicable to the novel. As laid out in the opening chapter of this thesis,
however, the question as to whether a text 'is' postmodern, or even the utility of
postmodernism as a critical tool – irrespective of whether this entity is so
unproblematically mapped onto the text at hand – is problematized by several attendant
factors. Where postmodernism operates as an entity on the level of surface stylistics,
limitations are potentially placed on its usefulness through an inability to aid
interpretation of a text on any but this level. There is also the danger that any
postmodernist reading whose theoretical co-ordinates are established on the stylistic
level may be blinded to features of a text of greater importance which lie outwith the
postmodern paradigm. Such is a possibility even where any postmodern techniques
present are directly linked to a text's greater concerns. Further, attempts to expand the
term postmodernism may lead to a similar blinding whereby identification of a text's
postmodern stylistics can be taken to imply a spurious relevance for any theoretical
model held to animate these. The expansion of postmodernism beyond stylistic traits to
encompass and indeed re-focus upon such theoretical models likewise poses the question
as to which such model is immediately relevant for the exploration of any given text.
Where such models stand as imagined constructs mapped onto the realities of an at times
ill-defined postmodernist canon, the potential utility of each is shown to differ through
the elaboration not only of varied, but at times directly antithetical, configurations of the
term. Further, this variation can itself modify the effect of previously mentioned areas of
potential limitation, where a given factor – most compellingly, perhaps, the danger of
eliding a text's political commitment within a postmodernist reading – may be present to
greatly differing degrees in competing models.

The previous chapters of this thesis represent an attempt to gauge the extent to which the various configurations of the postmodern may be usefully related to Gray's fiction. As such, while the focus of discussion has been the exploration of Gray's work, this has also functioned as an exploration of postmodernism itself. In this respect, structuring the argument around Gray's fiction serves several useful purposes. Firstly, by figuring postmodernism as primarily a tool of literary criticism it is possible to bracket off extra-literary manifestations of the term, other than where such models relate directly to the form or content of Gray's fiction. Further, insofar as the term has become almost over-loaded with at times contradictory definitions, allowing its entry into this thesis in forms dictated by their relevance to a work places limitations upon the term which render this complexity more manageable. Here both the diversity of Gray's output and the noted preoccupations which nonetheless thread through his oeuvre prove themselves amenable to exploring the postmodern. While the former aspect allows a similarly diverse range of definitions of the term to be considered, the latter allows the development of criteria by which to structure the exploration as a whole. Most notable among these criteria is the need to reconcile the seemingly apolitical or reactionary qualities popularly ascribed to postmodernism with Gray's avowed political convictions. As discussed in the opening chapter, the notion that postmodernism is innately apolitical is not universally valid. Subsequent chapters should go some way towards refuting the notion that postmodern readings of Gray's fiction inevitably denude it of political significance.

By introducing notions derived from Fredric Jameson as the first major theorist to be considered in tandem with Gray, this thesis reaffirms the central position afforded

here to postmodernism's political significance. Likewise reaffirmed is the openness with which the postmodern heading is interpreted, for while Jameson has provided arguably the most politically committed of accounts of the postmodern, this account stands distinct from postmodernism itself. Operating not as a postmodernist theorist but as a theorist of postmodernism, Jameson repeatedly asserts the extent to which his own project displays values which directly contrast with his subject matter. This distinction is particularly relevant to my discussion of *Lanark* in the degree to which it is with Jameson, rather than the postmodernism he describes, that the novel's sympathies lie. Indeed, it is important to note the extent to which the model of 'Jamesonian postmodernism' brought to bear upon *Lanark* is one which disregards many of the key features he ascribes to postmodern literature, such as superficiality, lack of effect, or the unavailability of the authorial voice. Among the few traits which do survive is the notion of inevitable entanglement in the system of global capitalism, which Gray's fiction casts, for both its characters and itself, as something less than the disarming complicity Jameson describes. Likewise shared with Jameson's account of postmodern fiction is the conspiracy trope, here deployed far more successfully than Jameson seemingly allows. To these may be added traits which properly belong not to Jameson's postmodernism, but to his vision of economic postmodernity – which proves far more compatible with the world *Lanark* describes – and to that resistant strand of postmodernism which Jameson sketches without asserting its existence. Here the novel displays an affinity towards Jameson's own project, with its injunction towards the totalised understanding of postmodernism. The form by which the novel attempts this is one which strives towards those very criteria which Jameson likewise installs as necessary for achieved

cognitive mapping. Where *Lanark* falls short of his demands, the novel's meditation on the problems attendant upon mapping hints at reservations similar to Jameson's own. Where it succeeds in giving representation to contemporary society, this is for the most part conducted through techniques similar to those called for by Jameson, and depicts a system again broadly aligned with that which he describes. In short, and in contrast with Bernstein's claim that postmodernism is irrelevant to Gray's work as such 'periodization does not strike [him] as particularly helpful in understanding Gray's novels'(Bernstein, 1999, 29), the relevance of Jameson's postmodernism to *Lanark* resides in exactly this periodic function. Not, in this instance, as denoting a period in literary history, but as describing a moment in capitalism's development, and the problems which literature confronts in representing this system.

If the relevance of Jameson to Gray's debut novel is established in part through the similar conclusions each draws as to the organisation of contemporary society, the model of postmodernism employed in chapter three would appear to possess an opposite relationship. Representing not the work of a single theorist but a generic blend of positions focused upon postmodernism's seemingly superficial play, the postmodernism introduced here would seem a straw man built only to be rejected. Yet if the postmodernism encountered in chapter three comes closest to the narratologically-fixated 'standard postmodern interpretation' (McMunnigall, 2004, 338) feared by McMunnigall, its use here in exploring *1982, Janine*, *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* and *McGrotty and Ludmilla* indicates the extent to which attention to such concerns need not entail the elision of political significance. Evaluating the degree of utility revealed within postmodernism through its use in interrogating the fiction considered in chapter

three again requires distinctions to be marked between separate facets of the term. Certainly, the accepted catalogue of postmodern stylistic traits allows for the identification of several important features of *1982, Janine*, and to a lesser extent the novellas. Moving beyond the catalogue to identify the ends to which such traits are deployed, however, leads to a potential divergence. Certainly, the thematic significance accorded to such traits, 'that shattering of fictional illusion and…self-consciousness about the act of writing that are among the requirements of postmodernist fiction' (Alexander, 1990, 4), broadly matches the localized thematic concerns displayed in the works themselves. In the London novels the conscious manipulation of words and appearances is cast as a cynical exercise by which power is maintained and achieved, at once a means of obscuring or misrepresenting reality and of enforcing a new reality upon others. Kelvin, in his Nietzschean nihilism and consequent self-refashioning, here shows the liberatory aspects of Lyotard's irruption of postmodern disbelief. The negative side of this notion, where dominant representative practices sculpt the reality of human relationships to repressive, ends is likewise brought out by such theorists of 'de-doxifying' postmodernism as Spanos or Hutcheon. What the concerns of the novellas do not chime with is the import of such theories as they appear to many of their critics, be it Miller's 'typical postmodern reading' (Miller, 2001, 315) which stresses 'the essential fictionality of the so-called "real" world' (Miller, 2001, 315) or Cunningham's reference-less 'abysm of textuality, of the kind that postmodernist criticism and… fiction offer us as the necessary and normal state of writing' (Cunningham, 1994, 9). While the London novels stress the importance of representation in shaping reality they do not deny a real world in which these effects are felt. Likewise, while they make no

claim towards direct reference, their treatment of the representational theme nonetheless functions as a comment on real-world operations.

The danger of postmodernism's denying reality, whether viewed as one inherent to postmodernist fiction itself, or as a potential effect of a work's being interpreted in terms of postmodernist theory, is more clearly displayed in consideration of *1982, Janine*. Far outstripping the London novels in its use of canonically postmodernist techniques – yet stopping short, perhaps, of a fully postmodernist identity through locating the majority of these techniques as arising on the part of the narrator – *1982, Janine* helps to exemplify the latter danger in the extent to which narratologically-oriented readings such as those of Szamosi or Witschi have focused on these traits as seemingly unrelated to any political concerns. To the extent that the danger of solipsism is inherent within postmodernist fiction itself, the cowardly and self-deluding narrator serves well as an emblem for the genre, his desire not to 'think about fucking POLITICS'(*J* 66) amply aided by his descent into fabulation. In this respect it is possible to read *1982, Janine* as an implicit criticism, if not of postmodernism, then at least of traits which Gray elsewhere associates with the term. Obsessively shifting the focus of his attention not only inward to fantasised worlds, but more towards the construction of said fantasies than their content, Jock becomes representative of the solipsism which Gray associates with the term. It is important to remember, however, that Gray's accusations of solipsism are generally levelled not at authors of narrative but at their professional interpreters, on the level of which he posits the entity 'postmodernism'. Likewise, while Gray clearly intends a criticism of the solipsism which Jock represents, even within his fantasies political reality is posited as ultimately inescapable, manifest as

a reflection of the system of domination which he inhabits. Indeed, countering any implicit criticism of postmodern concern with the act of narrating with an implicit justification, it is through his very fabulations that Jock comes to realise his position within this system, showing them to be a fragmented, metaphorical attempt to describe and master political realities which parallels Gray's own epic maps.

This question as to whether the seemingly solipsistic playing out of postmodernism can convey an image of, and comment upon, contemporary reality continues to take a key position in chapter four's consideration of *Poor Things*. Here, however, the primary model of postmodernism employed is one in which the conjunction of historical reference and self-conscious narrativity is already presupposed, Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. Alongside this is presented a related stance upon historiography from Hayden White, and a competing model of postmodern history, again drawn from Fredric Jameson. It is interesting to note here the extent to which seeming points of contention between these three theorists can be largely ascribed to misleading acts of simplification. One area where we might not expect to find obvious disagreement is between Hutcheon and White. The former's suggestion that postmodern historical fiction foregrounds uncertainty through exploring the conditions of historical narrative draws heavily upon White's related reservations on historiography. At the same time, however, Hutcheon insists upon the recognition within Historiographic Metafiction of the previous physical reality of earlier moments and of the continued possibility of a process of historical reference which allows these to be represented in narrative. Both these points would seem at odds with the popular understanding of White as a nihilistic relativist for whom all possible accounts of the past are valid. Yet,

as was shown in even the brief consideration which White receives in chapter four, this understanding of White's thesis represents a gross simplification of his position, which installs a commitment to work within the confines of the historical record as the key defining factor distinguishing history from fiction. That White's focus falls largely on the similarities between these two discursive modes indicates, not that history is in any sense fictional, but that the resources of narrative are deployed by each in a similar way.

A more obvious area of contention in the question of historical representation is the competing characterisations of postmodern historical fiction offered by Hutcheon and Jameson. As noted in chapter four, Hutcheon traces these differences to Jameson's simplification of the issues under consideration. Insofar as this implies that the value-less simulacra with which Jameson populates postmodern history cast as the essence of the genre just one aspect of a literature which continues to engage with and represent historical processes, Hutcheon echoes a potentially valid criticism of the sort raised by Zurbrugg. Where the simplification she ascribes to Jameson's thesis lies in his reduction of the term history to an orthodox Marxist conception of the historical process, she is on more dubious ground. Indeed, here it would seem that Hutcheon herself is misleading in her simplification, replacing Jameson's complex understanding of the term History with what he regards as the central function at its core, and reducing this – the need for a narrative which meaningfully relates individual moments in history – to a call for the single narrative of Marxism with a specificity which Jameson suggests but does not demand.

Where all three theorists stand in agreement, then, is the vital role reserved for narrative in the process by which history becomes understandable. The same is true of

Gray himself, and the multi-faceted exploration of this process which he provides in *Poor Things* represents an interesting surface on which to negotiate between these theorist's positions. The same is true of Jameson's own chosen representative of ahistorical postmodern history, Doctorow's *Ragtime*. From the competing interpretations which Hutcheon and Jameson place upon *Ragtime*, one can thread together the possibilities they raise into a spectrum of relationships which postmodern historical fiction may bear to history. At one extreme stands Jameson's vision of depthless pastiche, shading into a knowing revision of the same designed to highlight the seeming inescapability of this situation. At the other extreme, Hutcheon reserves a place for the survival of that ability in fiction to meaningfully evoke the past which Jameson's postmodernity has lost. This in turn shades into a similarly knowing play with pastiche designed to highlight, not the postmodern loss of the historical referent, but the already inescapable textuality in which that referent is evoked. In the various strands of Gray's novel, each of these positions may find some support. In his implied criticisms of the Culture City project Gray offers a specific example of ahistorical pastiche obscuring the real connection between historical moments. This is aligned with the obvious fictionality of his own account of the past in a manner which, if it does not uphold Jameson's suggestion that this is the universal situation of the postmodern writer, nonetheless chimes with his world of fashion-plate simulacra. That this conclusion is cast as one possible configuration of historical representation among many suggests a greater affinity with Hutcheon's model than with Jameson's account, an exploration of the conditions under which this process occurs rather than a simple representation of the process itself. The same conclusion is even more apparent when considering the novel's

treatment of history as a whole, in which the apparent equality of history and fiction and multiplication of "historical" narratives brings to mind a reductive reading of White as relativist. Yet, while the explosion of multiple referents which attends the naming process in the novel openly avoids the illusion of on-to-one correspondence associated with realist historical fiction, the use of this process to evoke thematically relevant historical figures nonetheless asserts the ability of a fictional narrative to pass comment on history. Further, despite the suspension of disbelief which attends the novel's competing ontologies, the absolute relativism mistakenly ascribed to White is implicitly undermined here by the emphasis laid on the reader's judgement in imposing a hierarchy upon them. In terms of the analogous mis-representation of the (then) present, the need for such judgement is shown in the disparity between Bell's experience of other nations and their value-laden representation in *Punch* magazine. The reader is here warned to bear in mind both the possibility of ulterior motives in a specific narrativisation of reality – directly related to the writing of history by Astley's lectures – and the need to compare such narratives with known experience of what they represent, alluded to in the 'editor's' search for documentary evidence and Victoria's invocation of common sense. That *Poor Things*' readership has largely avoided making such judgements on the novel, or else implicitly sided with the least commonsensical account, is a result of its overt status as fiction, enacting, rather than inhabiting, the situation of the historian.

Unlike the postmodernisms considered in previous chapters, the relationship between *Poor Things* and historiographic metafiction might perhaps be reduced to the notion that the former 'is' the latter. Where the appearance of postmodernist techniques in *1982, Janine* suggested the relevance of the term, their deployment to ends directly

opposable to the apolitical philosophy with which they are often associated debarred such a direct association. In the case of *Poor Things* similarities arise with Hutcheon's description of the genre both on the level of technique and the concerns these techniques seem to generate. To extend this observation into an assertion that *Poor Things* 'is' postmodern, however, would be to enact the same reductive apprehension of the term which McHale identifies in Hutcheon's own writing, where postmodernist literature and the more specific sub-genre of historiographic metafiction are apparently suggested as identical. In this respect, it is interesting to note that Jameson's competing account of postmodernist historical fiction maintains some utility in a similar fashion to that seen in *Lanark*, where the appearance of ahistoric simulacra as one, negative, strand of historical representation stands again as a parallel to Jameson's account of a wider situation. Similarly, just as *Lanark* echoes Jameson's sketched conclusions on cognitive mapping, so too does *Poor Things* share in recognising both the incessant textuality of history and, more importantly, the crucial role which Jameson reserves for narrativisation in understanding the historical process. Indeed, while the evocations of Glasgow's historical development aligns the novel's operations more with Hutcheon's assertion of historiographic metafiction's continued ability to convey a sense of the past, the quasi-Marxian concerns displayed in the strands of history thus depicted suggest the further affinities between Jameson and Gray.

As noted at the outset of the previous chapter, such affinities between Gray and Jameson are readily apparent in *A History Maker*. Even here, however, where Gray comes closest to affording postmodernism some degree of existence within, rather than as purely mapped onto, aesthetic artefacts, a clear distinction is marked between

registering affinities with postmodern theories and seeming to embody them. As in the case

of *Lanark*, the diegetic world described by the novel makes clear the relevance of

Jameson's account of postmodernity, a relevance here intensified by the extent to which the

matriarchy not only echoes Jameson and his Baudrillardian sources, but consciously draws

upon them. A further area of congruity can be seen in the implicit value judgements which

the novel passes on the world it describes, for while Jameson explicitly disavows such

moralising in his attempt to understand postmodernity, he is clearly far from welcoming

towards the recent irruption of a world dominated by capital and the simulacra. Where

Gray's satiric intent proves problematic in mapping Jamesonian postmodernism onto the

novel is instead in the basic fact of its operation, embodying an alternative system of values

which Jameson generally casts as impossible. As previously noted, however, Jameson does

concede the possibility of residual enclaves of resistance standing as as-yet unconquered

relics from an era less-dominated by the market. Likewise, he sketches with greater

frequency the possible survival of this resistant urge even within an era where critical

distance from the system of commodities has been lost, reformulated in such techniques as

the black simulacrum. In light of these more optimistic strands of Jameson's

postmodernity, it is therefore possible to conceive of *A History Maker* as inhabiting both

possibilities, with the still extant historical consciousness of Kittock an anachronous relic

aiding in the rejection of the ahistoric world of simulacra more generally enacted through

its parodic intensification.

A further similarity between *A History Maker* and Jameson's model of the

postmodern is the readiness with which both accounts act as commentaries not only upon

postmodernity, but on its theoretical accounts. It is in this respect, with regard to the corpus

of post-history theory, that the Gray area of the novel's exact relationship to postmodern theory becomes most complex. In borrowing tropes from these theories, the novel is postmodern in a conventional sense, in that features of the novel may be identified and explicated through recourse to the theories themselves. At the same time, the novel also apes the condition of postmodern theory, by openly discussing the issues involved and by implicitly representing them on the diegetic level. As with Gray's other engagement with critical theory, this semi-fictionalised intervention works to both bolster and refute the conclusions drawn by others. This heterogeneous response can be exemplified by the relationship the novel bears to Fukuyama's thesis of the end of history, where both the events of the novel and Kittock's commentary criticise the notion through representing the present era's supercession and yet, in the features populating the matriarchy, also share in his analysis of the problems facing the last men and so would seem to partially accept their validity.

The net effect of these parallel readings of Gray and the postmodern, considered as an exploration of the latter, is to affirm again the term's heterogeneity, and to highlight both the dangers and opportunities which this confers. The question as to whether Gray's work is postmodern is thus exploded into the question as to which forms are taken by both 'postmodernism' and, indeed, the 'is' conjoining the two. Postmodernism may therefore be realised as a catalogue of stylistic features, and perhaps attendant concerns, which may be present on the surface of the text, either seemingly simplistically realised – as with *Old Men In Love* – or subsumed within a framework predicated towards other ends, as with *1982, Janine*. It may be taken as denoting a development relevant to the period after modernism or as a recent economic formation which represents a change to capitalist

modernity, or, given the extent to which these aesthetic developments have been traced to their economic conditions, something which hybridises both categories. It may be taken as a philosophical development which draws previous certainties into question, or as an economic and cultural situation in which such certainties are no longer tenable and related philosophical developments appear as symptomatic justifications for the change. Attendant upon the many variant models within these postmodernisms are equally diverse potential relationships with a given text. A text may thus 'be' postmodern through exemplifying these techniques or concerns, whether to express or to critique them. It may 'be' postmodern through representing a development upon the practice of its modernist precursors, such that even an avowed modernist such as Gray may be placed under this heading. It may 'be' postmodern through a close relationship with economic postmodernity, whether by expressing the logic of this formation, or more diagnostically describing either the situation of the text in this era or the more basic organisation of postmodernity itself. Likewise with regard to philosophic postmodernity, a text may bear a meaningful relationship to this notion through supporting its many claims, or through modifying or refuting them, a spectrum of relationships which may include situations in which a text unselfconsciously belongs within the postmodern movement, reaches conclusions which may parallel or appear to parallel philosophic postmodernity, or even consciously passes comment upon postmodern theories themselves. To further complicate these possible relationships it must be remembered that even where one such relationship exists with a given model of postmodernism, other models may express enough variety to demand quite different basic relationships to the text. In light of the complexity of this situation it may even seem understandable to conclude that the term postmodernism should

be jettisoned entirely. Yet, in showing the potential value of these varying applications of the term in interrogating a text, the term's continued use as a viable resource has been established, so long as certain provisos are met. One such proviso is that any use of the term should make clear the specificity of its deployment – the specific model of postmodernism, and the relationship which the text bears to it – in a given situation. The awareness of the term's fluidity which occasions this move should likewise caution against taking a single realisation of postmodernism as the fixed essence of the term, a conclusion which should further work to prevent the dogmatic imposition of any given 'postmodern' theoretical parameters which may go against the grain of a given text. In this manner, even an obviously politicised and avowedly anti-postmodernist author such as Gray may be usefully considered in relation to the postmodern without necessarily enacting the critical appropriation he so fears.

ENDNOTES

[1] In addition to Thaw, Lanark and Nastler, Gray has suggested the Oracle, too, as autobiographical; his war-time evacuation was, he explains 'used in the *Lanark* Oracle's Prologue' (Gray, 2002, 33).

[2] Such a slip appeared in some editions of *Unlikely Stories, Mostly*.

[3] Murray and Tait's caution is justified by the fact that at least one such reference ('In a wee while, dearie' (*L* 492)) directs us to an unprinted chapter, but in fact appears earlier (*L* 506).

[4] A chronological summation of these chapters is given in Martinez, 1995.

[5] To pre-empt the importance of Gray's postmodernism in Lumsden's argument, it is interesting to note that, while the didactic content of *1982, Janine's* afterword leads her to figure Gray as reactionary, for other commentators – such as Eleanor Bell – the manner in which this intervention is conducted casts it 'in the style of much postmodern fiction'(E. Bell, 2001, 133).

[6] For a reading supporting Gray here, see Kelly, 2003-4.

[7] In this respect Tiitinen identifies a recent shift in Gray's critical reception, moving the focus away from his works' postmodern qualities and towards their political concerns. As she makes clear, however, this change responds less to the works themselves than to negotiations within critical discourse; noting that Gray's work consistently evinces 'the same combination of artistic and political concerns' (Tiitinen, 2004, 21), she suggests that 'the change is due to the topics that critics prefer to discuss or that the critical climate seems to favour' (Tiitinen, 2004, 21).

[8] Further, it may be one which her 'editor' has written. As Gray remarks, 'Janice Galloway says her commentaries on Brontë and George Elliot have Gray fingermarks all over them' (Gray, 2000(b), 630), and the observation of Sterne's postmodernism is certainly one print which may mark him as perpetrator. Indeed, Calder, who notes that 'my glosses here ain't as I wrote 'em' (Calder, 2000, 8) goes on to discuss what 'Alasdair' [*sic*] says *A Propos De Tristram Shandy'* (Calder, 2000, 9).

[9] For useful overviews of the term's expansion, see Bertens, 1995.

[10] See Hutcheon, 1995, 26.

[11] Several facets of Jameson's analysis here suggest themselves as reasons for the loss of parodic effect, most notably the fragmentation of language into a multiplicity of codes and thus 'the unavailability of the older national language itself' (Jameson, 1992,17), which Jameson regards as necessary to create ironic space.

[12] This situation is described in Gifford's paradox 'that there is a Scottish fictional tradition, *but that that tradition is precisely about the writer's repeated sense of there being no tradition*' (Gifford, 1985, 14).

[13] The question of whether Gray intends Thaw's comments to be read didactically, symptomatically or ironically is one considered in Gifford, 2004. Evidence for didacticism can be found in an article of 1962 which claims that '[i]f the material structure of Glasgow vanished one night…In three years Tokyo or the Ruhr would have increased production to replace the missing source of machine-parts and lavatory pans and nothing worthwhile would remain of Glasgow but a few recorded street songs, a book of Bud Neill cartoons and the Para Handy stories of Neil Munro' (Gray, NLS Acc. 9247/37, 1962, 3).

[14] Such an evaluation of *Lanark* on both a local and international level was shared with further early responses to the novel. William Boyd, for example, noted that 'it is important to stress that this book is more than a provincial or regional classic. *Lanark's* ambitions are large and so are its achievements…indeed, it's rare to come across a novel so rooted in a particular city and yet so accessible to those outside'(W. Boyd, 1981, 219).

[15] Miller's brief consideration of postmodernism is restricted to two strands, which he has identified as 'textualist' postmodernism (exemplified by McHale) and Jameson's 'Marxist' postmodernism. This simplification seems particularly restrictive in the light of similarities between his own reading of Gray's fiction as an existentialist response to modernism's false transcendence and the postmodernism described by Spanos.

[16] See Randall Stevenson, 1999, Miller, 2001, and Smethurst, 2000.

[17] While the notion of Thaw's death prior to resurrection is implicitly accepted by the many commentators, this is not generally expanded into an argument seeking to fix the diegetic relationship between competing ontologies. Even Lyall, who accepts that '[f]or Thaw/Lanark, the experience of

Unthank is enclosed by his own multiple deaths'(Lyall, 1993, 51), does not assert a definite ontological basis for Unthank as afterlife.

[18] The claim that referencing the *Sunday Post* represents a commitment to Scotland's working-class is undoubtedly problematic. As Gardiner characterizes it, the *Post* is known for 'subliterary stories…whispered with a placating smile so as not to disturb those in power' (Gardiner, 2005, 182). Thus, as suggested in Nairn's revision of Diderot – where 'Scotland will be reborn the day the last minister is strangled with the last copy of the *Sunday Post*' (Nairn, 1970, 54) – the newspaper appears most frequently as a counter-revolutionary tendency. What cannot be denied, however, is that the *Post* has long served as a clear reference point within Scottish culture, at one point read by over 79 per cent of Scotland's adult population (Rosie, 1977, 26-7). Further, as Riach identifies, Wullie has constructed a self-image for Scotland which has been 'part of the national imagination since before the Second World War' (Riach, 2005, 23).

[19] Gray has made similar observations on eminences, commenting that while hillwalking 'I hugely enjoyed the views from the top. …that's a derivative from liking maps. On a map you can see where everything is and where you fit into it' (Anon., 1994,15).

[20] Gray has related an autobiographical parallel to this episode which suggests it as one reason why he sought employment outwith industry. Describing how, when absent from school, he would lie in bed listening to the factory horns, Gray recalls how he 'had this vision of thousands and thousands of men in dirty work clothes, and streaming into a hard, grinding, rather painful and frequently boring job, and I thought, "This is what keeps the world going, although don't let it be me"'(Delaney, 1990, 8).

[21] See especially *L* 31.

[22] Polyphemus' name may also suggest him as Gray's further autobiographical/didactic representative, since, as Charlton relates, this role was taken by Gray in his school adaptation of the *Odyssey* (Charlton, 1991,12).

[23] Such misinterpretation was not universal among the novel's initial reviews. Tait, for example, treats the pornographic as just one element, concentrating on the more general senses in which the novel depicts the world as 'a horrible domain of mutual exploitation' (Tait, 1984, 45), while Murray notes that with Jock's re-definition of 'fuck' in terms of profitable exploitation, 'The application is not only sexual… No more than *Lanark* can *1982 Janine* be labelled and limited' (Murray, 1984, 5).

[24] In identifying this sub-canon – comprising *McGrotty and Ludmilla*, *The Fall of Kelvin Walker* and *Something Leather* – I follow Bernstein in noting that the dissimilarities which distinguish Gray's adapted dramas from his 'original' prose works appear less marked in the similarly recycled *A History Maker*.

[25] This use of Babel to symbolize the conjunction of stratification and language is also taken up in the pentateuch of stories bound by the two Axletree narratives. While a revision of the Babel-myth in this frame-tale sees it acting as a polysemic metaphor, it is more obviously returned to questions of class in the central story, "Logopandocy", where Milton and Urquhart debate its fall. The latter sees the disintegration of language as operating horizontally, chiming , perhaps, with Jock's self-conscious shaping of scientifically-oriented language, as '[e]very trade and profession fortifies its power in the state by turning its mastery into a mystery' (Gray, 2001(d), 170). For, Milton, however, tower, crime and punishment are all vertical. Here the sin of Nimrod's people was '[t]*he desire for supremacy over their own kind*' (Gray, 2001(d), 167), itself enacted through a recipe of (linguistic) separation, for 'men who overmaster their own kind cannot continue to deceive and servilize them without the cloak of a different language' (Gray, 2001(d), 168).

[26]That Linda may specifically have Kelman in mind is suggested by the fact that a character of this name appears in his "The Hon"(Kelman, 1999).

[27] Kelman has also experimented with techniques similar to those of *Something Leather*, which Gray suggests as inspiring his own attempt (*SL* 252).

[28] That I focus here on the Scottishness of Jock's tears may suggest an unnecessary limitation in how this moment is read. As Berthold Schoene-Harwood suggests, this moment can be interpreted outwith a national context, as part of what he sees as Gray's development towards *ecriture feminine*, here 'consigning the articulation of Jock's emotionality to a pure writing from the body. His tears materialise as printed words on the page' (Schoene-Harwood, 2000, 143). Insofar as this reading unites Jock's climactic

renegotiation of gender identity with his earlier desire for linguistic control, however, it is clearly compatible with my own. Compare also the Scots which follows Jock's breakthrough, 'We didnae know how to be good to each other' (*J* 339) with that following Hislop's breakdown, 'they wullnae lea' me alane' (*J* 337). While Jock begins to understand his complicity in the world's unintentional relations of cruelty, Hislop can see only its inevitability; both, however, have let down their linguistic defences.

[29] A canonical example of this trope appears in McIlvanney's *Docherty* (Mcilvanney, 1983).

[30] Gray is not alone in associating vernacular language with emotion, from the clichéd association of Lallans with sentimentality to Hagan's identification of one role of Scottish dialect within fiction as stemming from its function 'as an indicator of psychological states of mind' (Hagan, 2002, 126).

[31] Jock shares this concern with his own clothing; as Stenhouse observes, '*1982, Janine* is full of obsessive descriptions of bodies, but crucially not of Jock's own…As a substitute for references to Jock's body we get references to his clothes…[which] create an impression of a normal personality'(Stenhouse, 1996, 116). An impression which, given the role of his 'Harris tweed three-piece suits and blue bow ties' (*J* 246) in misrepresenting himself as posh, is shown to be as fraudulent as that constructed in language.

[32] This name also appears in Gray's 'Near The Driver' (Gray, 1994(c), and Gray, 1987) a satire on progress in which a Glaik-bound automated train stands in for an increasingly dehumanized capitalism.

[33] The identification of power structures with 'traps' becomes explicit with regard to *1982, Janine*'s concern with language when Jock, explaining to Denny that she was 'born in a trap…and will live and die in that trap' (*J* 214), suggests that attempts to escape will fail through language; her voice will 'sound stupid and funny' in contrast to the 'brave, loud, haw-ha voices' (*J* 215) of the establishment, noted as 'trap rhetoric' in Gray's marginal gloss.

[34] Continuing the possible conflation of Jock, Gray and Dad, this thought also occurs to the latter, who asserts 'I enjoy writing. I forget myself when doing it as much as Leo forgot himself when driving a fast car' (*SL* 192).

[35] A continuation of this theme, blending Jock's escape into fantasy and Leo's escape in his car – already seen in *Lanark*'s 'Mohomes' – is found in 'The Trendelenburg Position' whose narrator shares Jock's pessimistic Thatcherism-by-default. His only belief is 'in Virtual Reality' (Gray, 1994(d), 105), which 'will not only release you into an exciting world of your own choice; it will shut out the dirty, unpleasant future my wife keeps worrying about' (Gray, 1994(d), 108-9).

[36] Jock uses this irony more consciously when relating Glasgow's decline to the siting of Polaris, there being 'no connection…it is just a harmonious coincidence' (*J* 136).

[37] McMillan also offers a convincing analysis of the portrait (McMillan, 1995), while Stirling's more extensive reading of gendered national allegories in Gray's work similarly emphasizes the Strang engraving (Stirling, 2000).

[38] In addition to these inter-relationships between visual and linguistic elements, the novel's visual images may also generate further signification on a quasi-autonomous basis. March, for example, has found in the notes' juxtaposed images of colonial exploitation and the edifices of Glaswegian prosperity a wholly visual exploration of the imperial experience (March, 1999, 3).

[39] Multiple strands of nomenclative reference may be found outwith *Poor Things*; Ozenfant, suggested as having both historical and intertextual reference by Craig, as 'the good doctor Freud…who will plumb the fantasies of the child's – 'enfant'- psyche in order to release the adult into the Oz-world' (Craig, 1991, 97), is given a separate significance by Miller who suggests reference to Cubist painter Amédée Ozenfant (Miller, 2004, 306). Nonetheless, in these examples it is the information conveyed, rather than the manner of its conveyance, which demands attention. In the dense significance of *Poor Things*' names, both aspects are stressed.

[40] The textual nature of Charcot is further flaunted by the paratextual revision of the Strang portrait, suggesting the authenticity of his 'appearance' within the novel as a further effect of interpreting sources. Interestingly, this notion continues thematically with regard to Strang's other sources; '[t]he portrait of McCandless', Gray explains, 'was taken from Paul Currie, of Baxter from Bernard MacLaverty, of Bella from Moray McCalhine [sic. Morag McAlpine]' (Axelrod, 1995, 114) the latter two being a fellow writer and Gray's publisher (and wife) respectively, the first a bookseller (Byrne, 2000).

[41] Interestingly, while 'Gray' serves to exemplify, rather than comment upon, this situation, early drafts share this recognition of history's partiality, inclining 'to Aristotle's view, that good fiction contains more truth than most history, because what people make only works by being intelligently crafted, while history must record many irrelevant accidents, just because they happened.' (Gray, NLS Acc. 10749/50, 1992(a), A).

[42] This process – and Gray's cynicism towards it – are implicit in his account of 'William, Boss of Normandy', who 'carefully destroyed homes, harvests, cattle and farming tools, making a famine to kill all survivors….Official gossip has ever since called him William the Conqueror. They should have called him the Waster' (Gray, 2000(b), 60).

[43] While McCandless is the novel's most overt proponent of evolution, early drafts give 'Darwinism', rather than 'Malthusiasm' as Astley's professed faith (Gray, NLS Acc. 10749/34, 1991(d), 150).

[44] This aspect of Bell's genesis is even clearer in early drafts, where her brain is not taken from her womb, but from a further reject of society (Gray, NLS Acc. 10749/4, 1991(b), 16).

[45] While Victoria's retreat into ineffectual hermitage is a far from positive representation of socialism, if this functions as a criticism it is more likely directed towards the forces driving her to this state, recalling Gray's affectionate portrait of his friend Bill Skinner in 'A Small Thistle' (Gray, 1995(b)).

[46] That of his four contributions to Saunders' *Glasgow Diary*, two describe the construction of the Loch Katrine reservoir in the face of opposition from Glasgow's powers-that-were – as 'as anti-socially demented by their greed for profit as ourselves' (Gray, 1984(a)) – indicates the extent to which water preoccupies Gray as a symbol of struggle against vested interests.

[47] See also King, 2002.

[48] The possibility that *A History Maker* shows Gray parodying postmodernism is particularly interesting given Stevenson's suggestion that this might characterize Gray's work as a whole, the self-consciousness of his self-consciousness suggesting that 'postmodernism, once largely directed by the urge to parody and subvert conventional forms of writing, becomes in its turn a recognized, accepted form to be parodied and played with itself. Perhaps this makes Gray a post-postmodernist' (Randall Stevenson, 1991, 56).

[49] First appearing within Gray's oeuvre as motto to *Unlikely Stories, Mostly*, in the revised edition this phrase is set within an outline of Scotland. On its original appearance the motto is credited to Dennis Lee, whose poem "Civil Elegies" makes reference to 'finding a place to be/in the early years of a better civilisation' (D.Lee, 1972, Sect.9 Line 54-55). Here Gray's explicit rendering of the phrase's implicit nationalism and insertion of his repeated commitment to 'work' has made the motto uniquely his own. Ironically, the brief essay in which Gray makes this most clear, as a nationalist slogan which is 'inspiring but not boastful' (Gray, 2007(b), Par. 1), and which reflects the fact that '[a]ll should be glad to live where we can be good for others because our work helps them'(Gray, 2007(b), Par. 2) begins with a disavowal of the phrase's source in him.

[50] Here the compatibility between powerplant and postmodernity has been heightened in the transition from script to novel, both the aestheticization of the productive process and characterization of its results as miraculous simulacra being absent from the 1965 draft (Gray, NLS Acc. 9247/1(a), 1965(a)).

[51] In addition to these footballing associations, the novel's clan emblems also point towards further areas of reference. The 'Shafto buckle' (*AHM* 3), recalls the Northumbrian sword-dance 'Bobby Shaftoe', beginning 'Bobby Shaftoe's gaen tae sea, Siller buckles on his knee' (Bruce and Stokoe, 1998, 115). In a punning comment on male boredom, the 'Storey Pencil' may direct us toward Frank Machin, the dissatisfied rugby player of *This Sporting Life* (Storey, 1960).

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