Poéticas Inter-Artes
Interart Poetics

do texto à imagem, ao palco, ao écran
text to image, stage, screen and beyond

Organização de
ANA GABRIELA MACEDO
ORLANDO GROSSEGESSE

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Preface

Interart Poetics – text to image, stage, screen and beyond...

Following an interdisciplinary Colloquium organised in 2002 by CEHUM on the *Re-presentations of the body*, we aimed in the one we organised in 2003 under the title *Interart Poetics – text to image, stage, screen and beyond*, to continue (and thus keep open) the debate we had then started on the polyphonic dialogue among the different arts, their specific forms of rhetoric and their strategies of representation. Thus, counting on the presence of Professor Monika Schmitz-Emans (from the University of Bochum), then President of the German Association of Comparative Literature, as visiting scholar at the Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas, we invited our colleagues and research members of CEHUM for a one day symposium concentrating on the ample notion of "text", transdisciplinarily understood and seen through a wide variety of perspectives, semiotic codes and intermedial relations. Besides the researchers already mentioned, we were also very fortunate to have with us a colleague from the Faculdade de Letras do Porto, Paulo Eduardo Carvalho, a researcher in theatre studies and translator for the stage.

The relevance of a debate around this topic seems to us more and more flagrant today, as proven by the quantity and quality of creative and critical production (in literature, the movies, visual arts, or the stage), which focus on the "contamination" or "cross-fertilization" of texts (in the ample sense mentioned previously), leading to a growing awareness of the non-existence of fixed boundaries between the disciplines, without this necessarily meaning a lack of analytical rigour or critical ability. The notions of "cultural intertextuality", as well as "poetics and politics of culture", permeate this debate, bringing with them the echo of a heterogeneity of voices from Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva

and Roland Barthes, to Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, Andreas Huyssen, Mark Currie, Stephen Greenblatt, Susan Suleiman, Norman Bryson or Mieke Bal ... amongst others, that is, ranging from heterodox formalism and Marxism, to post-structuralism, postmodernism, semiotics, gender and cultural studies. Our purpose was to analyse the text as a site of "ideological contestation" (within the global context of a politics of culture) and simulta-neously as the staging of power relations, as suggested by Christian Moraru (2001: 31), a concept which takes on a wider meaning when articulated with its twin, a poetics of culture, or a sociological poetics, in the Bakhtinian sense. Simultaneously, and consciously going against the grain of a certain anxiety over the supposed elimination of the "textual isolation" of literature, [referring again to Moraru in a cross-reference to Stephen Greenblatt (1988: 95)], we believe that this widening of the textual debate beyond the borders of the strictly literary will not "toss us up into a realm beyond forms, books, texts, and discourse" (Moraru, ibid., p. 32). Rather, this conceptual and critical "opening up", this awareness of the "permeability of boundaries" (Greenblatt, ibid.) will allow us to "read" texts in a wider cultural horizon, inscribed in relations of dialogue and existing interactively with other texts.

To all those who made this dialogue happen on the occasion of the Colloquium and now, *textually* represented in the essays that compose this volume, our deep gratitude, and the promise that the dialogue will go on!

3 de Julho 2006

Ana Gabriela Macedo

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Introdução

Poéticas Inter-Artes – do texto à imagem, ao palco, ao écran

Na sequência de um Colóquio por nós anteriormente organizado em torno das "Re-presentações do Corpo" (2002), foi nossa intenção, ao promovermos este outro em 2003, igualmente de cariz transdisciplinar e inter-departamental, o qual denominámos "Poéticas Inter-Artes – do texto à imagem, ao palco, ao *écran* ...", abrir de novo, ou melhor ainda, *manter aberta* a porta ao diálogo polifónico entre as várias artes e as respectivas especificidades das retóricas e estratégias de representação, características de cada uma delas. Aproveitando a presença entre nós da Professora Monika Schmitz-Emans (Universidade de Bochum), então Presidente da Associação Alemã de Literatura Comparada, convidámos os colegas do Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas e investigadores do Centro de Estudos Humanísticos, a debruçarem-se interdisciplinarmente sobre o conceito lato de "texto", perspectivando-o através de uma variedade de códigos semióticos e relações intermediais. Para além destes investigadores, contámos ainda com a presença de um colega da Faculdade de Letras do Porto, Paulo Eduardo Carvalho, especialista em Artes Dramáticas e tradutor de teatro.

A pertinência de um debate em torno destas questões afigura-se-nos irrefutável nos dias de hoje, e sobejamente evidente na quantidade e qualidade de produção criativa (na literatura, no cinema, nas artes plásticas, no teatro), e de estudos críticos (em larga medida, em consequência dos primeiros), cujo foco é a "contaminação" ou a "fertilização cruzada" de "textos" (no sentido lato), olhares e pontos de vista, radicados numa acentuada dissolução das fronteiras estanques entre as disciplinas, sem que necessariamente isso signifique perda de capacidade analítica ou de rigor crítico das

mesmas. Noções de "intertextualidade cultural", assim como as de "poética e política da cultura", atravessam este debate, trazen-do-nos ecos, à primeira vista dissonantes, de teóricos que vão desde Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva e Roland Barthes, até Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, Andreas Huyssen, Mark Currie, Stephen Greenblatt, Susan Suleiman, Norman Bryson ou Mieke Bal ... entre outros, isto é, passando pelo formalismo e marxismo heterodoxos, até ao pós-estruturalismo, ao pós-modernismo, à semiótica e aos estudos culturais. Propomos aqui à análise o conceito de texto como espaço de "contestação ideológica" (aliado à noção de "polí-tica da cultura") e simultaneamente palco de relações de poder, tal como é sugerido por Christian Moraru (2001: 32), conceito este que assume um sentido mais amplo se articulado com o conceito gémeo de "poética da cultura", ou "poética sociológica", no sentido bakhtiniano. Simultaneamente, contrariando uma certa ansiedade (a vários títulos legítima) em relação à suposta abolição do "isola-mento textual" da literatura, cremos que este alargamento do "debate textual" para além das fronteiras do estritamente literário não nos lança para um "universo informe", um horizonte "para além de" livros, textos e discurso, tal como afirma ainda Moraru numa referência cruzada a Stephen Greenblatt (1988: 95); bem pelo contrário, este alargamento significará antes que este mesmo hori-zonte "sócio-histórico" seja sentido como "um texto cultural em sentido lato" que não assenta na definição de texto como "entidade estável" e auto-protegida, isto é, de fronteiras impermeáveis a inter-acções com *outros textos* (Greenblatt, ibid.), mas antes se funda-menta no diálogo profícuo entre uma variedade de textos culturais.

Passemos agora aos ensaios incluídos neste volume.

O ensaio de Monika Schmitz-Emans, intitulado "Kafka's Metamorphosis: Observations on Kafka's Reception of the Comics", propõe um estudo da recepção da obra de Kafka na banda dese-nhada, analisando detalhadamente as consequência de uma tal "metamorfose" de um autor erudito em formato não-canónico, "for beginners". Tal como a autora afirma, a questão preliminar será questionar a legitimidade de tal apropriação pela cultura de massas: estaremos perante mais uma deplorável "americanização" da cultura ocidental, reduzida à dimensão de "fast-food" cultural? Ou poderá até o leitor mais conservador entender este "gesto sacrílego" em prole da sua função didáctica? Estas questões são muito pragmaticamente respondidas pelas leis do mercado, face a

uma população cada vez mais empobrecida em termos de compe-
tência de leitura e à preponderância de uma cultura visual no
mundo actual, afirma a autora. Contudo, a questão essencial que se
deverá colocar é outra: será que as "versões" em banda desenhada
dos clássicos literários são necessariamente versões menores, ou
"light", significando assim a impossibilidade de aquelas serem ava-
liadas enquanto objectos artísticos em si mesmos? Existe uma tra-
dição, que vem desde a Antiguidade clássica de transformar/adap-
tar cenas mitológicas e fábulas poéticas a objectos de cerâmica;
as narrações bíblicas foram desde cedo transformadas em ima-
gens para serem "lidas" pelos fiéis. Porque não poderão então os
clássicos da literatura mundial sofrer idêntica transformação, sem
prejuízo do seu estatuto e da sua função social? A interpretação
do *cartoonista*, assemelha-se mais a um *comentário* sobre o texto
original do que a uma tradução, por mais fiel que esta tente ser,
afirma a autora.

Estas são algumas das questões fundamentais que orientam a
análise original e amplamente fundamentada de Monika Schmitz-
-Emans, no texto inaugural deste volume, levando-a a percorrer
uma variedade de adaptações da obra de Kafka a banda desenhada,
ou de ilustrações dos seus textos, entre as quais é citada a versão
ilustrada das *Metamorfoses* pelo português Pedro Nora (2001).

O texto de Marie-Manuelle Silva (Universidade do Minho),
intitulado *"Le Voyage au Bout de la Nuit de L. F. Céline* par J. Tardi:
un blasphème?", procura demonstrar quais os jogos retóricos em
questão e a estratégias discursivas utilizadas por Tardi na sua
"versão pictórica" do célebre romance de Céline, partindo de um
comentário do próprio Tardi sobre a sua obra como uma "blasfé-
mia", referindo-se a uma notícia publicada pelo periódico francês
"Libération": "Céline abâtardi ... Un blasphème!" Tendo porém a
obra de Tardi vendido 120.000 exemplares, dificilmente se lhe
poderá negar um estatuto autónomo de objecto artístico e simples-
mente relegá-la para o *lugar-sem-nome*, um qualquer subgénero
("bâtard par excellence", ironiza a autora), ao qual pertencerão as
obras que, como esta, se filiam no cruzamento entre o verbal e o
visual, o literário e o pictórico. Recusando a sedução fácil do leitor
habitual de banda desenhada através da redução do texto original à
intriga romanesca, e sem, por outro lado, mergulhar num registo
meramente discursivo, Tardi, afirma a autora, encontra uma forma
de equilíbrio entre as estratégias discursivas e imagéticas da banda

desenhada e o confronto retórico com o discurso "canónico" da literatura.

Francesca Rayner (Universidade do Minho), em "'Wanderings into the labyrinth of theatre and gender': Cross-gender casting in *King Lear* and *Richard II*", explora minuciosamente a questão da representação de papéis masculinos por mulheres nestas duas peças shakespereanas (o *cross-gender casting* ou o *regendering*, como a autora afirma preferir chamar a esta estratégia performativa), através da análise discursiva e do efeito dramático no palco. A autora propõe-se assim indagar se "investir a mulher de um papel dramático masculino faz alguma diferença" a nível performativo e de representação da realidade, ou se "se trata apenas de um passo formal no sentido da igualdade dos géneros", e explica, citando a encenadora e directora artística Helen Alexander, se "ao mudar o género do actor, uma história fantástica se transforma numa história fantástica *diferente*". Em *Richard II*, (numa produção inglesa em que a actriz Fiona Shaw interpreta o papel do rei), a autora afirma que a questão que o *regendering* coloca, isto é, a distância entre a actriz e o personagem masculino, se articula, por um lado, com a sua percepção de Richard II como uma "criatura para além do género" e, por outro, com o questionamento do visual, o verbal e o auditivo, características do teatro contemporâneo. Na peça *King Lear* aqui analisada, igualmente produzida por uma mulher, Helena Kaut-Howson, a escolha para o papel do rei Lear recaiu sobre a actriz Kathryn Hunter já que, segundo a encenadora, se tratava de uma representação trágica da velhice, independentemente de questões de género. Assim sendo, a celebração de um universalismo acrescido constitui, segundo a autora, o ponto fulcral de ambas as representações, que assim se expõem e expõem esta problemática, nas palavras de Alan Sinfield, como uma "fissura na ideologia dominante".

Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Faculdade de Letras do Porto), propõe-se, no ensaio aqui apresentado, "Between Text and Stage: Inter-Arts and Intra-Ethics", reflectir sobre a relação entre o texto dramático e a sua encenação teatral, questionando simultaneamente as noções de teatro enquanto "arte derivativa" e "interpretativa". Partindo de um curiosa recensão de Virginia Woolf, escrita em 1933, sobre uma produção contemporânea do *Twelfth Night* de Shakespeare no *Old Vic* de Londres (peça em que actuava Lydia Lopokva, mulher de um dos membros do *Bloomsbury Group*,

Maynard Keynes), Woolf tece considerações precisamente em torno da "comparação" entre o texto dramático e a sua representação em cena, terminando por afirmar que, sem dúvida "Shakespeare escreveu simultaneamente para o corpo e para o intelecto". Usando como eixo estruturante da sua análise esta reflexão de Woolf, Paulo Eduardo Carvalho faz subsequentemente uma síntese diacrónica da evolução e modernização do teatro e do que chama a sua "emancipação" em relação ao texto, face à emergência da "produção" dramática e da direcção de cena. Entre outros, o autor refere o nome de Edward Gordon Craig, cuja obra "The Art of the Theatre" (1905), operou, diz-nos, nas palavras de Bernard Dort, uma verdadeira "revolução coperniciana", no sentido de autonomizar o papel do encenador e dar-lhe responsabilidades na direcção dos actores e na produção dramática até então não imputáveis à figura tradicional do "actor-empresário" ("actor-manager"). A obra de Craig vem contrariar o princípio aristotélico profundamente enraizado que via no texto dramático a essência mesma do teatro, considerando a representação como um correlato dispensável a qual, quando muito, se deveria reduzir a uma actividade interpretativa do texto.

Curiosamente, tal como P. E. Carvalho demonstra, este posicionamento aristotélico e logocêntrico tem ainda, nos dias de hoje, tanto entre gente do teatro, como entre teóricos e críticos, os seus fiéis seguidores, contrastando com as vozes dissonantes dos grandes visionários do teatro, entre eles Artaud, Appia, Craig, Meyerhold ou Robert Wilson, cujo legado, quer escrito, quer performativo, obrigou a uma radical mudança de paradigma em relação aos, globalmente denominados, Estudos de Teatro.

Vítor Moura (Universidade do Minho), num ensaio intitulado "Two Texts on Dance", debruça-se essencialmente sobre a obra "Café Müller" de Pina Bausch, para aí analisar o que chama a "fisionomia da solidão", quer através da gestualidade da bailarina enquanto personagem única em cena representando/dançando o próprio conceito de solidão; quer quando o mesmo conceito é representado/dançado por um par numa simbolização mais complexa – a da solidão existente no âmago da relação amorosa.

Num segundo momento do seu ensaio, a que o autor chamou "As emoções da dança", Vítor Moura analisa a dança enquanto linguagem específica, assente num "suporte metafórico". Nesta secção passa em revista distintas teorias sobre esta forma de lin-

guagem específica, que se baseia em "percepções do olhar sobre o movimento" e não em "conceitos formulados pela mente sob a forma de palavras", afirma o autor citando Selma Cohen. Sugere--nos ainda, através de uma referência à coreógrafa Martha Graham, que o objectivo da dança é "tornar visível a paisagem interior", isto é, diz-nos o autor extrapolando a partir desta metáfora, trata-se de tornar visível/palpável o modo como as emoções e os conceitos que constituem o nosso "mundo interior" estão *topograficamente* distribuídos. A discussão da tensão entre a expressão da "paisagem interior" e as leis da composição e da técnica da dança, sujeita, como qualquer código, a regras, ocupam a última parte deste ensaio. O autor conclui que, entre a alternativa de se cingir ao espartilho de um código específico e a necessidade de exprimir "autêntica experiência emocional", a dança moderna optou pela última, com base na ideia que "a técnica da composição só é válida quando é primeiro aprendida e depois esquecida" (John Martin).

O ensaio final deste volume, da autoria de Orlando Grossegesse (Universidade do Minho), tendo por título "*23 – nothing is as it seems*. Remixing Fact and Fiction in the movie and in «the making of the movie»", propõe-se explorar as "relações intermediais" entre o filme *23 – Die Geschichte des Hackers Karl Koch*, realizado em 1997 por Hans-Christian Schmid, e o livro com o mesmo título, produzido simultaneamente. Segundo o autor deste ensaio, o filme, sob a capa inócua de *thriller* cibernético, investigando o caso da morte suspeita de um "pirata informático", insere-se de facto no *boom* das teorias de conspiração. Tendo logo aquando da sua estreia sido êxito de bilheteira e premiado internacionalmente, o filme suscita, segundo Grossegesse, um renovado interesse crítico, quando analisada a relação entre 'factos' e 'ficções' à luz das referidas "teorias de conspiração". Considerado nesta perspectiva pelo próprio autor do guião, Michael Gutmann, o filme pode simultaneamente ser visto como um *Bio-Pic*, (narrativa fílmica de cariz biográfico), oferecendo uma versão pós-moderna do jovem Werther de Goethe, já que Karl Koch é, tal como Werther, um sonhador idealista e um narcisista melancólico, com pendor neurótico. A diferença fundamental entre os dois reside contudo na índole do "objecto" da sua obsessão: no caso de Werther, a paixão pela jovem Lotte, e, em Karl, a pirataria cibernética. Se ambos os jovens se caracterizam pela mesma rebelião contra o princípio da racionalidade burguesa, sentida como um instrumento de controlo e

de poder, ambos se consideram simultaneamente vítimas de um ambiente hostil e segregacionário. Contudo, o tema de fundo clássico e a aura de anti-herói bem como a reflexão sobre a manipulação de 'factos' pelos *media* foram completamente eclipsados pela recepção do filme através do tema da conspiração mundial. O facto de o realizador de *23* e o autor do guião terem em conjunto produzido um livro que se inscreve no género «the making of the movie», permite uma interessante revisão destas questões; a investigação em torno do caso de "ciber-pirataria", relatada no livro, constitui-se assim como uma divergência em relação ao tema supostamente inicial do filme – a "perseguição" do *hacker*. Este livro, lançado aquando do filme e conseguindo três edições no tempo recorde de quatro meses, constitui um parceiro de invulgar autonomia numa teia de "relações intermediais" entre filme e «making of the movie». O livro narra uma complexa investigação em torno de toda esta trama cibernética ou conspirativa que, segundo afirmações do próprio Michael Gutmann, terminado o período de rodagem do filme, ainda continuou, conduzindo a um documento auto-reflexivo que difere totalmente da organização melodramática do filme. Sendo assim, o projecto cinematográfico *23* transgride as estritas definições de género – Documentário fílmico? Narrativa metaficcional? Filme e livro complementam-se, afirma o autor do ensaio, e questionam-se mutuamente enquanto narrativas independentes e poéticas autónomas.

Por último, queremos expressar o nosso agradecimento a todos quantos participaram activamente no Colóquio que esteve na génese deste volume, e sublinhar o apoio incondicional que esta iniciativa recebeu da parte do *Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas*, na pessoa do seu Presidente. O nosso agradecimento ainda à *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia*, instituição que patrocinou tanto o Colóquio como esta publicação, realizados no âmbito do *Centro de Estudos Humanísticos* da Universidade do Minho.

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Kafka's Metamorphosis: Observations on Kafka's Reception in the Comics

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1. Comic strip versions of literary texts – an Americanization of high culture?

Strip cartoons in newspapers are the earliest form of comics. They were created in the United States more than a century ago, and consisted of colored panels in magazines, as 'comic supplements' to the weekend newspaper issues. As the predecessor of innumerable comic-strip characters, *The Yellow Kid*, invented by Richard Felton Outcault, appeared on the mass-media scene in 1895, initially in *New York World*, later on in *New York Journal* in 1896. Initially, comic strips were colored, but with Bud Fisher's successful stories of Mutt and Jeff (1907) black-and-white panels became popular as well. The history of comics as a graphic medium with an autonomous visual and verbal language was, however, initiated by George Herriman's *Crazy Kat* as late as 1910, because only then did the artist invent forms of graphic storytelling which were exclusively linked to the medium of comics. Until the end of the Nineteen-Twenties, these newspaper and magazine cartoons were generally humoristic, often taking on a satirical note; which is why they were called 'comics', even though new forms and genres emerged later on. In 1928 the first cartoon heroes such as Tarzan and Buck Rogers appeared with their endless adventures. This innovative turn did not only have thematic consequences, but also stylistic ones: more realistic drawing styles were developed.

With regard to the original 'comics' as well as to those graphic narrations about heroes who were not conceived of as comic-strip

figures at all it may be stated that the early history of comics is part of US-American cultural history. Only in the further course of the 20th century it has become a global medium of representation. Thus the discourses concerning processes of transforming literature into comic-strip versions have often been linked to discourses about cultural exports from the Old to the New World, and vice versa – in concrete terms: about the process of 'Americanizing' aesthetic heritages. According to deeply rooted prejudice there are mainly two ideas connected to this idea of adapting traditional forms and contents to 'American' forms of representation and reception: the idea of reducing cultural phenomena to a simplified, and at the same time more striking form, and the idea of submitting them to popular reception and marketing rules, to the rules of mass-media.

Until now, comic-strip culture has been developed and enriched to such a degree that general and simplifying statements about the aesthetics of graphic storytelling, about the production and reception processes of strip cartoons, should be avoided more cautiously than ever. On the one hand, for instance, there is still a large production of newspaper strip cartoons without aesthetic ambitions, on the other hand, the graphic novel has been established as a new form of art, and it is characterized by its affinities to literary narrations as well as to the visual arts. Aesthetic evaluations and scientific research, however, have accepted this challenge with remarkable delay only. It is not coincidentally that the director of the large Comic Museum in Angoulême (France), only recently, in 1998, asked a provoking question: "Why are Comics still in Search of Cultural Legitimization?" (Griensteen, 2000).

In spite of the long time in which comics have been neglected as a 'serious' issue of scientific interest, they have continuously assumed new functions, especially in didactical contexts. They are not only integrated into school books, they do not only serve as illustrations that are subsequently added to already existing, more discursive (verbal) forms of representation – they have actually become an autonomous medium of instruction. Especially in the United States it is customary for students to use comic books (especially from the series *For Beginners* and *Introducing...*) in order to obtain basic information about important authors, theories, and scientific discourses. European students – and probably not only students – are about to follow their example. The

expanding comic-strip production indicates an increasing impor-
tance of comics for learning and teaching processes. Remarkably
many of those graphic narrations are dedicated to providing infor-
mation about main works of world literature and their authors.
The *For Beginners* series, which has been continuously produced
by a publishing House in New York (Writers and Readers Inc.)
since 1975, includes, for instance, the issues *Brecht*, *Virginia Woolf*,
Hemingway, *Shakespeare*, and *Dante*. The *Introducing...* series,
which is cooperatively produced by an English and a US-American
publisher (Icon Books and Totem Books), is a similarly continuous
and successful project as far as the representation of theorists,
philosophers, and writers is concerned. *Introducing Kafka* is one
of the most ambiguous issues. But as a preliminary question: is it
legitimate at all to use the most canonized representatives of world
literature as subjects of strip cartoons? Does this tendency not
illustrate a deplorable inclination to 'Americanize' Western culture
by reducing it to fast-food portions? Kafka and strip cartoons: to
the more conservative reader this must sound like a sacrilege, at
best like a didactic measure: 'Kafka for beginners'.

The success of comic-strip versions of the classics may
generally be regarded as a consequence of the tension between the
value that Western culture still attributes to the knowledge of the
classic canon of literature on the one hand, and an increasing lack
of reading competence or at least of reading practice in our mainly
visual culture on the other hand. Visualized versions of the classics
seem to try to compensate for reading experiences at least partially.
Thus, the question for the legitimacy of literary comic-strip culture
is answered quite trivially by pragmatic realities and marketing
rules. However, another question remains: should we regard comic
versions of literary classics as pieces of art [1] or as childish 'light'
versions? In order to avoid oversimplified judgements in this
respect, we might recall the fact that in ancient times works of

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[1] Will Eisner has commented on the reception history of cartoons critically:
"For reasons having much to do with usage and subject Sequential Art has been
generally ignored as a form worthy of scholarly discussion. While each of the major
integral elements, such as design, drawing, caricature and writing, have separately
found academic consideration, this unique combination has received a very minor
place (if any) in either the literary or art curriculum. I believe that the reason for
this sits as much on the shoulders of the practiner as the critic." (Eisner, 2001: 5)

poetry were already translated into picture stories, as works of pottery often visualized Homeric fables and mythological scenes. Since then there has been a continuous tradition of illustrating canonical texts, especially biblical narrations, into picture stories. Medieval churches provided for painted histories, which were addressed to those who were unable to read, and this tradition of translating sacred texts into picture stories is still alive. Why, then, should works of world literature not be translated into pictures, if in an era of secularization they took over several functions of sacred texts? And even if we regard the transposition of literary narrations into visual images as an enterprise which inevitably disfigures the original, we have to take into account that strip cartoons are closely related to many works of literature in one important respect at least: they belong to a narrating genre. The idea of composing entire graphic 'novels' in the form of comics has recently been of formative influence on US-American as well as on European graphic art. At the same time pieces of narrative art have continuously been submitted to a metamorphosis by the creation of graphic translations. Already there are numerous comic-strip versions of world literature classics, and their number seems to be increasing rapidly. They are either published in continued series, as for instance in the *Classics illustrated* series, or as single volumes. There are comic-strip versions of literary texts compressed to one page, and there are refined and long-term projects transforming novels into picture novels, among which Stéphane Heuet's version of Proust's *Recherche* is probably the most ambitious one at the moment. (Proust/Heuet, 1998/2000/2002)

In more than one respect, graphic narratives like cartoons stimulate theoretical reflection upon the process of reading as such – and as well to the process of regarding visual pieces of art. According to art critics as for instance Ernst Gombrich and John Berger, pictures generally are 'read'. Complementarily, Will Eisner suggests regarding cartoons as a 'literary' form.[2] According to him, there is no substantial difference between reading a literary narration and a comic strip.

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[2] "In its most economical state, comics employ a series of repetitive images and recognizable symbols. When these are used again and again to convey similar ideas, they become a language – a literary form, if you will. And it is this disciplined application that creates the 'grammar' of sequential art." (Eisner, 2001: 8)

> The format of the comic book presents a montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills. The regimens of art (e.g. perspective, symmetry, brush stroke) and the regimens of literature (e.g. grammar, plot syntax) become superimposed upon each other. The reading of the comic book is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit. (Eisner, 2001: 8)

Quite a number of literary works – mostly canonical texts of world literature – have been transformed into cartoons. There is a great pre-history to that: the history of illustrations to literary works, of artists like Gustave Doré who transformed some classics of world literature into impressing picture sequences, or like Picasso who created a number of drawings which illustrate Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. One important difference between illustrating art and cartoon versions of literary works is, however, to be taken into account from the very beginning. Illustrations normally are subordinated to the text. Cartoonists, however, often proceed to a higher degree autonomously: usually they shorten the texts, change their sentences, replace complex phrases by simpler ones, indirect speech by direct speech – they simplify the structures. Often they do not even contain verbal elements at all. So the question for the interrelations between verbal and non-verbal languages obviously plays a key role in the poetics of cartoon (Carrier, 2000: 2). Strip cartoon story telling actually has a long and complex pre-history, which does not only include the entertaining parts of newspapers and journals, but as well works of secular and sacral art. Critics have regarded Hogarth and Chodowiecki as the ancestors of strip cartoon, and in modern art Picasso and Masereel have created examples of sequential graphic art.

The Italian writer Italo Calvino has several times pointed to the fact that his literary imaginations were from their very beginning closely related to the world of pictures. Calvino tells in a biographical note how he started to invent stories as a small child, when he regarded cartoons but was still unable to read the words. He added to the pictures his own words, starting from the idea that they were telling stories, and in his later works he sometimes rearranged this initial situation of telling stories about sequences of pictures – as for instance in his narration about *The castle of crossed destinies* (Calvino 1973; cf. also: Calvino 1993). Calvino's

experimental narrations suggest that the reception of comics can be related to the tension between word and non-verbal, 'silent' characters and hieroglyphs, respectively to the tension between the legible and the illegible. Reading 'illegible' comics may be regarded as a simile to the project of 'reading' an illegible visual reality, just as several protagonists of Calvino's narrations do – above all Signor Palomar. Calvino would certainly support the idea that picture sequences can be regarded as the allies of literature, as both dedicate themselves to the idea of deciphering an illegible world.

If a comic is composed only of non-verbal elements, it may be the reader who inscribes his own imaginative text into the pictures. Paradoxically enough there are comic versions of texts with only few words and sentences or even without any words, which seem to recall the hidden voice of the text just by their abstinence, as only the absent text provides for the coherence of the pictures. A comic version of Kafka's *Process* drawn by Woitek Wawszcyk (Moga Mobo, 2001: 103) consists of only eight small pictures, the first one showing a new born baby, the second one an eye opened in fright, the third one a naked man in bed who is visited by two men. Pictures four to seven tell how he is taken away by the men and stabbed in the presence of a giant bird. In the last picture we watch this bird flying away, while blood splashes from an invisible source. There is not a single word, except for the title that links the short pictographic story to Kafka's novel, in order to make us recognize the naked man (and as well the baby) as Josef K. It is the absence of visual words that recalls the memory of Kafka's text, as only the one who knows the novel can read everything the pictures tell. The bird, however, which does not appear in *The Process*, may be regarded as a link to Kafka's version of the 'Prometheus' myth or to *The Eagle*.

2. The Idea of Metamorphosis: Some preliminary remarks about Literature and the Visual Arts

Modern literature and art have been and still are fascinated by the idea and the topic of metamorphosis. The project of repre-senting processes (and, of course, their respective results) can be regarded as one of the main challenges that stimulate visual arts as well as literary writers. A number of reasons could be enumerated

in order to explain this leading interest. We can roughly distinguish between *thematic* interests in the philosophical, anthropological and scientific aspects connected to the idea of metamorphosis on the one hand (especially 'after Darwin', in a Brave New World, in the era of the famous sheep Dolly), and – on the other hand – such interests that are stimulated by the qualities of the *representing media* as such. Film history, for instance, has been characterized as the history of continuous attempts to visualize metamorphoses. We might state an analogous fascination by metamorphic processes and creatures with regard to the art of Comics – as a visual and at the same time sequential medium. Comics as well hold in trust Ovidian as well as Darwinian heritage. The most popular heroes of comic strips are semi-anthropomorphous creatures such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Heroes like Spiderman and Batman can easily be recognized as contemporary descendants of ancient prototypes: of Arachne, the spider-woman, of Ovid's mythological characters transformed into flying creatures, and – of course – of the vampires. Modern literature as well has dedicated itself to the idea and the connotations of metamorphosis, developing numerous strategies of representing transformations and of re-telling the old Ovidian stories. Kafka's name is closely linked to this project.

It is well known that Kafka refused to have a beetle or a similar animal shown on the cover page of his *Metamorphosis*. On October 25th, 1915, Kafka wrote a letter to his publisher Kurt Wolff expressing Wolff his disquietude about the idea of having an insect represented on the book cover. This letter is the only one in which the question of visualizing a piece of his literary work is discussed at all, and therefore Kafka's objection against a portrait of his famous protagonist Gregor Samsa must be taken even more seriously.[3] Several artists have interpreted Kafka's prohibition as a challenge to explore new ways of painting. The American abstract expressionist Robert Motherwell for instance has mentioned the

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[3] "Sie schrieben letzthin, daß Ottomar Starke ein Titelblatt zur Verwandlung zeichnen wird. Nun habe ich einen kleinen, allerdings [...] wahrscheinlich sehr überflüssigen Schrecken bekommen. Es ist mir nämlich, da Starke doch tatsächlich illustriert, eingefallen, er könnte etwa das Insekt selbst zeichnen wollen. Das nicht, bitte das nicht! Ich will seinen Machtkreis nicht einschränken, sondern nur aus meiner natürlicherweise bessern Kenntnis der Geschichte heraus bitten. Das Insekt selbst kann nicht gezeichnet werden. Es kann aber nicht einmal von der Ferne aus gezeigt werden." (Quoted in: Rothe, 1979: 22)

episode about the *Metamorphosis* frontispiece, and according to
him it offers a key to a main tendency in modern non-mimetic
art. If we take Motherwell's comment seriously, it is just Kafka's
skepticism about pictorial representations that makes him an ally
to modern painters.

> In October of 1915, (...) *The Metamorphosis* is published in a
> literary review, and then in book form a month later by the
> famed and estimable publisher, Kurt Wolff. Then something
> trivial on the surface, but profoundly interesting to a painter of
> my abstract expressionist generation, happens. Wolff throughout
> his career dared not only about fine writing, but also about a
> fine physical appearance to his books. Wolff informs Kafka
> that he has commissioned an artist to do a frontispiece for
> *The Metamorphosis*. Kafka is horrified and writes to Wolff: 'It
> occurred to me . . . that [the artist] might want to draw the insect
> itself. Please, not that – anything, but that! The insect cannot
> be drawn. I cannot even be shown in the distance!' (...). Dare
> I assert here that this recoil of Franz Kafka's to the benign
> intention of Kurt Wolff to illustrate his insect is identical in
> its reasons to the principal, and certainly principled, major
> preoccupation of my generation of abstract expressionist
> painters thirty years later in the mid 1940s (...) with the Second
> World War, the atomic bomb, and the beginnings of electronic
> era now exploding, only a monumental ambiguity would do ...
> (Motherwell, 1983: 264 f.)

But not only the abstract expressionist movement felt sympa-
thetic towards the author of *Metamorphosis*. In spite of Kafka's
verdict – or, perhaps, as a paradoxical reaction to it – there have
been numerous pictorial representations of Gregor Samsa since
then, showing insects and similar creatures. Kafka's episodes seem
to appeal to visual imagination just because they escape from
conventional notions. Caroline Leaf, a Canadian trick film artist,
has dedicated an impressive and almost speechless, though not
silent movie to the metamorphosis (*Mr. Samsa*). Recently, the
Portuguese cartoonist Pedro Nora has published an illustrated
version of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* that contains a series of graphic
variations about Samsa (Kafka/Nora, 2000). Kafka's texts seem to
question structures and relationships that are usually regarded as
self-evident: the readability of signs and the concept of reference.
Writers and visual artists are likewise confronted with that

challenge. In processes of visualizing works of literature – as Walls has emphasized – there is a connection between the former work of art and the later one, but this link can not be described in terms of causality and determination. That is why Walls characterizes it in a tentative and metaphorical way.

> Depiction is an act of construction, it brings the referent into being (...). In that sense, there is always something spectral – ghostly in the generic, since any new version or variant has in it all the past variants, somehow. This quality is a sort of resonance, or shimmering feeling, which to me is an essential aspect of beauty and aesthetic pleasure. But none of this is concerned with the adequacy of the depiction to its referent. (Pelenc, 1997: 14)

These reflections about the independence of visualizations should be well remembered even when cartoons of literary narratives are concerned. Even if the cartoonist tries to stick closely to the original text, his pictures are not to be judged in terms of adequacy or inadequacy, because they form an independent work of art. The relation between the cartoon pictures and their pre-text might as well be called "a sort of resonance". In principle, reflections about trans-medial processes like the transformation of a verbal narration into pictures should not be burdened by ideas of 'correctness' or 'adequacy'. In post-hermeneutic discourses at least it seems more than questionable whether there is something like adequate interpretation at all. But even if the compatibility between the original and its visual transformations is discussed it maybe that independent interpretations can reclaim to be works of art rather than devote translations 'for beginners'. Rather, the interpretation of a text given by a cartoonist might be compared to a commentary.

Kafka has intensely reflected upon the figurativeness of language as such, and this certainly is relevant for the transformations of his texts into painted figures, because figurative expressions invite to be taken literally and to produce visible images. It is significant that Kafka uses figurative expressions especially, when he comments on his own work and his identity as a writer.[4]

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[4] Cf. Kafka's diary, 6. August. [1914]: "What will be my fate as a writer is very simple. My talent for portraying my dreamlike inner life has thrust all other matters into the background; my life has dwindled dreadfully, nor will it cease to dwindle.

Language and verbal communication processes are reflected by
visual similes of physical actions, often aggressive and distorting
ones, as for instance in a rather famous diary entry from 1911.

> The bitterness I felt yesterday evening when Max read my little
> motor-car story at Baum's. I was isolated from everyone and in
> the face of the story I kept my chin pressed against my breast,
> as it were. The disordered sentences of this story with holes into
> which one could stick both hands; one sentence sounds high, one
> sentence sounds low, as the case may be, one sentence rubs
> against another like the tongue against a hollow or false tooth;
> one sentence comes marching up with so rough a start that the
> entire story falls into sulky amazement; a sleepy imitation of Max
> (reproaches muffled-stirred up) seesaws in, sometimes it looks
> like a dancing class during its first quarter-hour.[5]

Nothing else will ever satisfy me. But the strength I can muster for that portrayal is
not to be counted upon: perhaps it has already vanished forever, perhaps it will come
back to me again, although the circumstances of my life don't favor its return. Thus
I waver, continually fly to the summit of the mountain, but then fall back in a
moment. Others waver too, but in lower regions, with greater strength; if they are in
danger of falling, they are caught up by the kinsman who walks beside them for that
very purpose. But I waver on the heights; it is not death, alas, but the eternal
torments of dying." (<http://victorian.fortunecity.com/vermeer/287/diary1914.htm>)
– "Von der Literatur aus gesehen ist mein Schicksal sehr einfach. Der Sinn für die
Darstellung meines traumhaften innern Lebens hat alles andere ins Nebensächliche
gerückt, und es ist in einer schrecklichen Weise verkümmert und hört nicht auf,
zu verkümmern. Nichts anderes kann mich jemals zufriedenstellen. Nun ist aber
meine Kraft für jene Darstellung ganz unberechenbar, vielleicht ist sie schon für
immer verschwunden, vielleicht kommt sie doch noch einmal über mich, meine
Lebensumstände sind ihr allerdings nicht günstig. So schwanke ich also, fliege
unaufhörlich zur Spitze des Berges, kann mich aber kaum einen Augenblick oben
erhalten. Andere schwanken auch, aber in untern Gegenden, mit stärkeren Kräften;
drohen sie zu fallen, so fängt sie der Verwandte auf, der zu diesem Zweck neben
ihnen geht. Ich aber schwanke dort oben, es ist leider kein Tod, aber die ewigen
Qualen des Sterbens." (Kafka, 1986: 262 [6. 8. 1914])

[5] [<http://victorian.fortunecity.com/vermeer/287/diary1911pt2.htm>] – "Die
Bitterkeit, die ich gestern abend fühlte, als Max bei Baum meine kleine Automobil-
geschichte vorlas. Ich war gegen alle abgeschlossen, und gegen die Geschichte hielt
ich förmlich das Kinn an die Brust gedrückt. Die ungeordneten Sätze dieser
Geschichte mit Lücken, daß man beide Hände dazwischenstecken könnte; ein Satz
klingt hoch, ein Satz klingt tief, wie es kommt; ein Satz reibt sich am andern wie die
Zunge an einem hohlen oder falschen Zahn; ein Satz kommt mit einem so rohen
Anfang anmarschiert, daß die ganze Geschichte in ein verdrießliches Staunen gerät;
eine verschlafene Nachahmung von Max […] schaukelt hinein, manchmal sieht es
aus wie ein Tanzkurs in seiner ersten Viertelstunde." (Kafka, 1986: 90 [5. Okt. 1911])

Several metaphors and similes that Kafka uses to characterize his relations toward words and language provoke, in their concreteness, a graphic representation. In single cases, he even realized them by himself. Kafka used to draw occasionally, in order to distract himself or to meditate. A diary entry from 1910 explains the meaning of a sketch by commenting it as a metaphor of the writing process.

> All those things, that is to say, those things which occur to me, occur to me not from the root up but rather only from somewhere about their middle. Let someone then attempt to seize them, let someone attempt to seize a blade of grass and hold fast to it when it begins to grow only from the middle. / There are some people who can do this, probably, Japanese jugglers, for example, who scramble up a ladder that does not rest on the ground but on the raised soles of someone half lying on the ground, and which does not lean against a wall but just goes up into the air. I cannot do this – aside from the fact that my ladder does not even have those soles at its disposal.[6]

Kafka liked to figure out language particles such as letters and words as independent beings, which try to find their own business against the writer's intentions. In images that correspond to this idea, he usually expressed his feelings of helplessness. Words – as they appear in his imagination – are self-employed, self-sufficient beings, which – ambiguously enough – behave like living creatures.

> Almost every word I write jars against the next, I hear the consonants rub leadenly against each other and the vowels sing an accompaniment like Negroes in a minstrel show. My doubts stand in a circle around every word; I see them before I see the word, but what then! I do not see the word at all, I invent it. Of course, that wouldn't be the greatest misfortune, only I ought

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[6] [http://victorian.fortunecity.com/vermeer/287/texts.htm] – "Alle Dinge nämlich, die mir einfallen, fallen mir nicht von der Wurzel aus ein, sondern erst irgendwo gegen ihre Mitte. Versuche sie dann jemand zu halten, versuche jemand ein Gras und sich an ihm zu halten, das erst in der Mitte des Stengels zu wachsen anfängt. Das können wohl einzelne, zum Beispiel japanische Gaukler, die auf einer Leiter klettern, die nicht auf dem Boden aufliegt, sondern auf den emporgehaltenen Sohlen eines halb Liegenden, und die nicht an der Wand lehnt, sondern nur in die Luft hinaufgeht. Ich kann es nicht, abgesehen davon, daß meiner Leiter nicht einmal jene Sohlen zur Verfügung stehn." (Kafka, 1986: 11 [1910])

to be able to invent words capable of blowing the odour of corpses in a direction other than straight into mine and the reader's face.[7]

The critic Georg Guntermann has commented on quotations like this by stressing the vision of an independent life of the words (Guntermann, 1991: 135). Kafka regards language particles as living creatures, because he feels unable to govern them and dissatisfied with his own writings. He expresses the idea of failure in terms of strange and revolting word, letters, and sentences. In many of his visions, language itself performs dramatic scenes. For Kafka, texts and their elements have an existence of their own.[8] Generally, Kafka has a "bodily access to the act of writing", as Guntermann says.[9] It is deplorable that in Kafka's lifetime there was not yet an established comic strip culture in Europe, as comics are actually an artistic media that allows words to "jar against" each other, to fly about in space, to collide, to rub against each other and to perform their odd minstrel show.

3.   Kafka comics

The cartoonists Peter Kuper, Robert Crumb, and Will Eisner rather entered into a dialogue with Kafka than just illustrating his texts.

(A) Robert Crumb and David Zane Mairowitz – whose originally American Kafka Comic has even been translated into German (*Introducing Kafka / Kafka kurz und knapp* [10]) – created a

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[7]   Kafka, 1986: 20 [15. Dez. 1910]: "Kein Wort fast, das ich schreibe paßt zum andern, ich höre wie sich die Konsonanten blechern an einander reiben und die Vokale singen dazu wie Ausstellungsneger. Meine Zweifel stehn um jedes Wort im Kreis herum, ich sehe sie früher als das Wort, aber was denn! Ich sehe das Wort überhaupt nicht, das erfinde ich. Das wäre ja noch das größte Unglück nicht, nur müßte ich dann Worte erfinden können, welche imstande sind, den Leichengeruch in einer Richtung zu blasen, daß er mir und dem Leser nicht gleich ins Gesicht kommt."

[8]   Cf. Guntermann (1991), pp. 138-139.

[9]   Cf. Guntermann (1991): 142f., "Der körperliche Zugang zum Schreiben".

[10]   *Introducing Kafka* (Mairowitz/Crumb, 1994). The volume is part of a series of publications, "Introducing" important writers and scientists, scientific theories and ideologies. German version: Mairowitz/Crumb, 1995.

'translation' of several Kafka narratives which are framed by a biographical narration. The artists try to give a portrait of Kafka which is substantially formed of a montage of quotations, most of which are directly or indirectly referring to autobiographical reports, personal opinions, ideas, experiences, imaginations and reflections of Kafka himself – quotations of different sources which as the result of their thematic coherence form a pattern. Crumb and Mairowitz do not proceed in a strictly chronological order, but their book is organized according to different subjects that are linked together by associations and constructed analogies. This associative way of representation, especially the construction of parallels between Kafka and this fictitious characters, corresponds to Kafka's narratives that often neglect the leading difference between reality and imagination. A circle of subjects is presented, and Crumb continuously derives a great amount of his visual ideas by taking Kafka's expressions literally or by illustrating narrated scenes in a drawing style that quotes photography, but does not imitate it. With regard to its structure, the book resembles a film feature that combines materials of different provenience: a mainly biographical feature sketching episodes of an artist's life and illustrating it with scenes and tableaux from the artist's own imagination. Crumbs arranges his picture sequence according to film narratives, cutting scenes and linking them together according to the principle of visual logic and association.

The first thematic segment is dedicated to Kafka and "Judaism", and it contains as well pictures of the Jewish culture and history of Prague. Page 25 shows Kafka reflecting upon his problematic relation to Judaism: "What do I have in common with the Jews? I don't even have anything in common with myself!" The arrangement of the drawings reminds one of film representations. Even the legendary Golem – a quotation from Paul Wegener's silent movie – is strolling through the book and providing for atmosphere. There is a direct connection between the thematic complex 'Judaism' and the second: "Kafka and his father". We learn about their problematic relation, about the father's dominancy, which is expressed by the large measures of his body. The drawings are representing the personality of this hyper-present father from the perspective of the young son, and Crumb uses visual means to express psychical dispositions. We see Hermann Kafka spread over a world map. Kafka's childhood experiences are coined by his

father's dominance. Crumb here uses several visual devices in order to express psychical dispositions. As the literary 'hypotext' of these pages we can especially regard some passages from Kafka's *Brief an den Vater* (Kafka, 1954), where the oppressing bodily presence of Hermann Kafka is recalled by his son. Crumb's drawings resemble photos from a family album. They create a threshold between life and literature.

> At that time, and at that time everywhere, I would have needed encouragement. I was, after all, depressed even by your mere physical presence. I remember, for instance, how we often undressed together in the same bathing hut. There was I, skinny, weakly, slight; you strong, tall, broad. Even inside the hut I felt myself a miserable specimen, and what's more, not only in your eyes but in the eyes of the whole world, for you were for me the measure of all things. But when we went out of the bathing hut before the people, I with you holding my hand, a little skeleton, unsteady, barefoot on the boards, frightened of the water, incapable of copying yourswimming strokes, which you, with the best of intentions, but actually to my profound humiliation, always kept on showing me, then I was frantic with desperation and all my bad experiences in all spheres at such moments fitted magnificently together. What made me feel best was when you sometimes undressed first and I was able to stay behind in the hut alone and out off the disgrace of showing myself in the public until at length you came to see what I was doing and drove me out of the hut.

There is one episode which obviously appeals very much to Crumb. It deals with the crumbs under Mr. Kafka's table, and this in more than just one respect:

> (...) that was what your whole method of upbringing was like. (...) Since as a child I was together with you chiefly at meals, your teaching was to large extent teaching about proper behavior at table. What was brought to the table had to be eaten up, there could be no discussion on the goodness of the food – but you yourself often found the food uneatable, called it 'the swill', said 'that brute' (the cook) hat ruined it. Because in accordance with your strong appetite and your particular habit you ate everything fast, hot and in big mouthfuls, the child had to hurry, there was a somber silence at table, interrupted by admonitions: 'Eat first, talk afterwards,' or 'faster, faster, faster,' or 'there you are, you

see, I finished ages ago.' / Bones mustn't be cracked with the teeth, but you could. Vinegar must not be sipped noisily, but you could. The main thing was that the bread should be cut straight. But it didn't matter that you did it with a knife dripping with gravy. One had to take care that no scraps fell on the floor. In the end it was under your chair that there were most scraps. (pp. 147-148)[11]

Here, the drawings' relation towards the original text can be compared to the staging of a written play: The text is given, but can be slightly modified, the visualization is freely arranging a scenery, though dependent on a verbal outline. All the "Father"-paragraph is a visualized 'letter to his father'.[12] It gives testimony of the writer's *problematic attitude towards his physical existence* – and this topic exactly corresponds to Crumb's interest in representing bodies. These page about Kafka's relationship with his father directly leading over to a graphic narration of *The Judgment* (*Das Urteil*, pp. 19-35) in an abridged version; we see Gregor Bendemann, his

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[11] Cf. Kafka, 1954: 19: "(...) so war Deine ganze Erziehung. (...) Da ich als Kind hauptsächlich beim Essen mit Dir beisammen war, war Dein Unterricht zum großen teil Unterricht im richtigen benehmen bei Tisch. Was auf den Tisch kam, mußte aufgegessen, über die Güte des Essens durfte nicht gesprochen werden – Du aber fandest das Essen oft ungenießbar; nanntest es 'das Fressen'; 'das Vieh' (die Köchin) hatte es Verdorben. Weil Du entsprechend Deinem kräftigen Hunger und Deiner besonderen Vorliebe alles schnell, heiß und in großen Bissen gegessen hast, mußte sich das Kind beeilen, düstere Stille war bei Tisch, unterbrochen von Ermahnungen: 'zuerst iß, dann sprich', oder 'schneller, schnelle, schneller' oder 'siehst Du, ich habe schon längst aufgegessen'. Knochen durfte man nicht zerbeißen, Du ja. Essig durfte man nicht schlürfen, Du ja. (...) Man mußte achtgeben, daß keine Speisereste auf den Boden fielen, unter Dir lag schließlich am meisten."

[12] "Ich war [...] schon niedergedrückt durch Deine bloße Körperlichkeit. Ich erinnere mich zum Beispiel daran, wie wir uns öfter zusammen in einer Kabine auszogen. Ich mager, schwach, schmal, Du stark, groß, breit. Schon in der Kabine kam ich mir jämmerlich vor, und zwar nicht nur vor Dir, sondern vor der ganzen Welt, denn Du warst für mich das Maß aller Dinge. Traten wir dann aber aus der Kabine vor die Leute hinaus, ich an Deiner Hand, ein kleines Gerippe, unsicher, bloßfüßig auf den Planken, in Angst vor dem Wasser, unfähig Deine Schwimmbewegungen nachzumachen, die Du mir in guter Absicht, aber tatsächlich zu meiner tiefen Beschämung immerfort vormachtest, dann war ich sehr verzweifelt und alle meine schlimmen Erfahrungen auf allen Gebieten stimmten in solchen Augenblicken großartig zusammen. Am wohlsten war mir noch, wenn Du Dich manchmal zuerst auszogst und ich allein in der Kabine bleiben und die Schande des öffentlichen Auftretens so lange hinauszögern konnte, bis Du endlich nachschauen kamst und mich aus der Kabine triebst." (Kafka, 1989: 12f.)

dominant father, who condemns his son to death by drowning, and Gregor's self-execution. As a third subject, Kafka's problematic relation towards his body is visualized as a picture story about Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (pp. 39-55). We see and read a short version of the literary plot.[13] Hypochondria might be defined as a special way of illustrating emotions and obsessive ideas by corporeal images. In this regard the art of the hypochondriac resembles to the art of the cartoonist who uses bodies as signs as well. The subject of body and the desire for sanity is in a quite rude way leading to the topic of anti-semitism.

> All that occupied my mind was worrying about digestion, hair falling out, a spinal curvature, and so on, this intensifying in innumerable gradations, finally ending with a real illness. But since there was nothing at all I was certain of, since I needed to be provided at every instant with a new confirmation of my existence, since nothing was in my very own, undoubted possession, determinedly unequivocally only by me – in sober truth a disinherited son – naturally even the thing nearest at hand, my own body, became insecure; I shot up, tall and lanky, without knowing what to do with my lankiness??, the burden being too heavy, the back becoming bent; I scarcely dared to move or, least oft all, to do gymnastics, and so I remained weakly: I was amazed by everything (that did not trouble me) as by a miracle, for instance my good digestion; that sufficed to make me lose it, and so now the way was open to every sort of hypochondria, until finally under the strain of the superhuman effort of wanting to marry (...) blood came from the lung (...). (Marowitz/Crumb, 1994: 178 f.)

> Sunday, 19 July, slept, awoke, slept, awoke, miserable life. / When I think about it, I must say that my education has done me great harm in some respects. (...) Often I think it over and give my thoughts free rein, without interfering, but I always come to the conclusion that my education has spoiled me more than I can understand. Externally I am a man like others, for my physical education kept as close to the ordinary as my body itself was ordinary, and even if I am pretty short and a little stout, I still please many, even girls. There is nothing to be said about that. (19. 7. 1910)

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[13] Quotations in the framing text are usually marked. The characters do not always quote from Kafka's texts literally, sometimes Mairowitz transforms the originally indirect speech into direct speech.

Pages 57-58 show an illustrated version of *The Burrow*. Again they suggest that there are analogies between Kafka's animal figures and his distorted image of himself. The subject of body and the desire for sanity is in a quite straight and rude way leading to the topic of anti-Semitism. As a picture quotation, we see SA-men toughening up in physical training. The following part of the book is dealing with Kafka's refusal to get married, especially with his relation towards Felice Bauer. As the communication by letters was of pre-eminent importance in this story, there are two entire pages, which show letters. Here, by the visual representation of scripture, the difference between life and text is leveled; the writer's page appears as spatial reality. At the same time, imaginative creatures emerge from written pages: Kafka's nightmare about siren's claws grasping for him. In his 1917 diary Kafka had sketched this dream, in which he was running along endless streets, followed by a siren who would not let him escape – is taken literally (p. 67) and interpreted as the expression of his fear to get bond with a woman. The tensions between Kafka's professional commitment to the insurance company where he worked, and his dedication to lite-rary writing are associatively connected to this topic. In Crumb's visual interpretation of the narration about the *Penal colony*, the commander's face is looking like the superior clerk in Kafka's office. In this section again Crumb derives a great amount of his visual ideas by taking Kafka's expressions literally. So, for instance, we see Kafka tortured by noise and disturbance longing for a complete retirement into his nightly writing. His sensations gain a bodily presence. In a very condensed and accelerated way the following images give a sketch of the political situation in Europe from World War I to the mid twenties. Into this historical scenery Crumb and Mairovitz integrated an illustrated paraphrase of *The Trial*, and they especially stressed the parable *Vor dem Gesetz* (*Before the Law*) and Josef K.'s execution. When we return to historical times, we see Kafka, obviously suffering from his mortal illness, the first Czech republic is founded, increasing nationalism leads to anti-semitic aggressions and to *autos-da-fé*. We see Jews emigrating to Palestine, and we learn about Kafka's own dreams of emigration. A double-paged picture (p. 100 f.) which shows Kafka surrounded by friends and colleagues – among them are Max Brod, Franz Werfel, Ernst Polack, and his wife Milena – leads over to the next topic:

Dealing with Kafka and women, one of Crumb's drawings is conceived as the literal translation of Kafka's humorous idea that Milena who was 13 years younger than himself, might have been his Bar-Mitzvah present. We watch Kafka writing letters again. A labyrinthine line of scripture is formed by a quotation from Kafka's diary in 1922. The translation, however, is not correct. In the English version the quotation begins with the words: "The gesture of rejection which always met me did not mean 'I don't love you', but rather 'You can't love me much as you'd like to (...)" (p. 103). But the German word which should have been translated here is not "Geste" ('gesture'), but "Gestalt", 'figure' or even 'appearance' (Mairowitz / Crumb, 1994, p. 103).[14] According to a notation, Kafka reflected upon himself as a kind of wandering Jew, experiencing an opaque, meaningless and obscene world. This comment upon himself and his time is integrated into a pictorial quotation from George Grosz; and there is an explicit indication to its provenience (p. 134): "With thanks to George Grosz". Resembling to the style of Grosz as well, we see on page 153 a street scene with an execution, obviously the very epitome of cruel reality. Kafka, however, is floating above, carried by his sister Ottla who is represented as an angel, again in correspondance to a conventional metaphorical concept. Crumb's representation of the love story of Kafka and Milena is arranged as a combined quotation of texts and images: What we first see is the couple in paradise (p. 194), secondly the couple divided (p. 195), thirdly, Kafka's reflection about his relation towards Milena, fourthly, Milena as the "model" of Frieda in *Das Schloß* (*The Castle*, 1922). We may detect a kind of suggestive patterns in this arrangement: First paradise, secondly the loss of paradise, thirdly reflection, fourthly artistic processing. This means, that at least implicitly Crumb and Mairovitz integrate into their book a general model of artistic creation. In this respect, their book as another piece of art is self-reflexive – and a book for

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[14] Cf. Kafka, 1986: 357f.: "Die abweisende Gestalt, die ich immer traf, war nicht die, welche sagt: 'Ich liebe dich nicht', sondern welche sagt: 'Du kannst mich nicht lieben, so sehr du es willst, du liebst unglücklich // die Liebe zu mir, die Liebe zu mir liebt dich nicht.' Infolgedessen ist es unrichtig, zu sagen, daß ich das Wort 'Ich liebe dich' erfahren habe, ich habe nur die wartende Stille erfahren, welche von meinem 'Ich liebe dich' hätte unterbrochen werden sollen, nur das habe ich erfahren, sonst nichts."

beginners in more than one sense.[15] As Crumb and Mairovitz re-tell *The Castle* (1922), both drawings and texts stress the autobio-graphical dimension of this story. Several panels also represent Kafka the way he figured himself to be like in daydreams: as a farmer or a craftsman in Palestine. We even see him as serving in a restaurant, as with his last woman, Dora Diamant, he reflected about opening a Jewish restaurant in Tel Aviv. These pictures of an imaginary alternative to real life are no less realistically designed than the scenes from Kafka's 'historical' existence. Crumb neglects the difference between empirical experiences and dreams, just as Kafka himself connected inner and outer life and levelled their difference.

Contrasting with the daydreams-and-desires-section the final one deals with the topics of suffering, illness, and death. Kafka is tortured by phantoms who urge him to write (p. 142). In hospital, his deathly illness almost prevents him from speaking. As a simile of his illness – as a document of sublimation – the narration about *A Hunger Artist* (1924) is presented and retold (pp. 144-153). Instead of Kafka's own death we see the artist's decease. Again, in a sugges-tive way, the difference between imaginary and real characters is levelled. In the "Afterword" (p. 154) Max Brod receives the instruction to burn the unpublished scriptures of Kafka. Brod rejected to fulfil this ambiguous last will, but on page 155 we see some Gestapo men breaking into the apartment of Dora Diamant who 'ironically' proceed according to Kafka's wish for destruction. The book's final part is dedicated to doubtful visions of the future. We are taken to America, as Kafka's imagination has shaped it. Crumb and Mairowitz re-tell Kafka's fragmentary America-novel *Der Verschollene* (*The Man Who Disappeared*), which was called *Amerika* by Max Brod (pp. 166-173). The novel is interpreted as Kafka's ironical version of a new World that culminated in his description of the Nature Theater of Oklahoma. On the last double

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[15] It may even be that there are other patterns hidden in the book. Only months after I wrote the first version of this text, I started to ask myself, whether the 12 topics which I had more or less roughly detected in the book, and which, actually, do not clearly differ from each other, were secret allusions to the ten command-ments. At least there are parallels: The Father is coming first, secondly the ideas of obedience and submission, and as topic six I counted – the topic of women and adultery.

side (p. 174, 175) we see modern Prague, which is strongly
frequented by tourists and quite obviously Americanized. Prague is
beautified by advertises for the "metamorphosis beauty Salon", for
"Ghetto Pizza", for a "Kafkateria", and for "McKafka Hamburgers".
This transformation of ancient Prague into a faceless Americanized
place exemplifies the omnipresence of metamorphic changes again.
And we regard a scene that suits well to the globally comprehen-
sible language of the comic, as it is full of visual signs and structural
elements characteristic of the comic. The advertising poster for
McKafka hamburgers shows – as an image within the image – the
portrait of Franz Kafka, quoting in a balloon (!) his father's admoni-
tion not to talk during the meal (p. 175). And there is another
person drawing a picture, thus auto-reflexively indicating to the art
of drawing. This panel is obviously autoreflexive: first, in respect
to the characteristical forms of representation that are constitutive
of this Kafka comic-book; secondly, in respect to the conventio-
nal prejudice against comics as a medium of Americanization.
Mairovitz and Crumb take up the concept of "metamorphosis", that
is associatively linked with Kafka as the inventor of Gregor Samsa,
and they illustrate the transmutation not only of one person, but
of a whole city, if not even the world itself. Contemporary Prague
is on the one hand shaped by an architectonical and commercial
changing process that indicates the leading role of American culture
in a globalized world. But at the same time, the city of Prague is
structured analogously to a comic panel: Scriptures and images are
combined with each other; written letters actually form an
important part of reality itself. Reality has become a giant scripture,
scripture has become reality. By the different forms and strategies
of auto-reference, Crumb's comic indirectly reacts to the mental
reservations against comics as an inferior medium an obsolete form
of instruction: as self-reflexive examples of graphic storytelling, the
panels insist on their status as pieces of art.

The central idea of leveling the difference between images and
life, representations and represented objects actually corresponds
to Kafka's own ideas. In *Von den Gleichnissen*, for instance,
reality and simile are intermingled according to the structure of
a Möbius strip.

> Many complain that the words of the wise are always merely
> parables and of no use in daily life, which is the only life we have.

When the sage says: 'Go over,' he does not mean that we should cross to some actual place, which we could do anyhow if the labor were worth it; he means some fabulous yonder, something unknown to us, something that he cannot designate more precisely either, and therefore cannot help us here in the very least. All these parables really set out to say merely that the incomprehensible is incomprehensible, and we know that already. But the cares we have to struggle with every day: that is a different matter./ Concerning this a man once said: 'Why such reluctance? If you only followed the parables you yourselves would become parables and with that rid of your daily cares.'/ Another said: 'I bet that is also a parable.'/ The first said: 'You have won.'/ The second said: 'But unfortunately only in parable.' / The first said: 'No, in reality: in parable you have lost.'[16]

(B) The artist Peter Kuper dedicated to Kafka a volume entitled *Give it up! – Gibs auf!* (Kuper, 1995/1997). It is composed of visual interpretations of several texts written by Kafka, namely *Eine kleine Fabel, Die Brücke*, and *Gib's auf!, Ein Hungerkünstler, Ein Brudermord, Der Steuermann, Die Bäume, Der Kreisel, Der Geier*. Some of these texts are not narratives in a stricter sense, but rather aphoristic reflections. Differently from Crumb and Mairowitz, Kuper concentrates on selected texts by Kafka, which partially are shortened, but except for this are quoted correctly.[17] The single episodes form a sequence, but each of them is a clearly limited unit.

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[16] On Parables, <http://www.endeneu.com/kafka/onparables.html> – "Viele beklagen sich, daß die Worte der Weisen immer wieder nur Gleichnisse seien, aber unverwendbar im täglichen Leben, und nur dieses allein haben wir. Wenn der Weise sagt: 'Gehe hinüber', so meint er nicht nur, daß man auf die andere Seite hinübergehen solle, was man immerhin noch leisten könnte, wenn das Ergebnis des Weges wert wäre, sondern er meint irgendein sagenhaftes Drüben, etwas, das wir nicht kennen, das auch von ihm nicht näher zu bezeichnen ist und das uns also hier gar nichts helfen kann. Alle diese Gleichnisse wollen eigentlich nur sagen, daß das Unfaßliche unfaßbar ist, und das haben wir gewußt. Aber das, womit wir uns jeden Tag abmühen, sind andere Dinge. / Darauf sagte einer: 'Warum wehrt ihr euch? Würdet ihr den Gleichnissen folgen, dann wäret ihr selbst Gleichnisse geworden und damit schon der täglichen Mühe frei.' / Ein anderer sagte: 'Ich wette, daß auch das ein Gleichnis ist.' / Der erste sagte: 'Du hast gewonnen.' / Der zweite sagte: 'Aber leider nur im Gleichnis.' / Der erste sagte: 'Nein, in Wirklichkeit; im Gleichnis hast du verloren.'" (Kafka, 1970: 359)

[17] In the original edition Kuper uses translations; the German version quotes from Kafka's original texts again.

Some of these units scarcely can be characterized as a story. Like Crumb and Mairowitz, Kuper creates an independent aesthetic work. To indicate this and to point to the artistic independence of his composition on Kafka, he uses as well signs which can be identified as quotations – but not only quotations from Kafka, but from other sources, too. The part entitled *The Trees* (*Die Bäume*) is based on a kind of simile invented and at the same time deconstructed by Kafka himself:

> For we are like the trunks of trees in the snow. Apparently they rest smoothly in the surface and with a gentle push we should be able to shift them. No, that one cannot, for they are firmly attached to the ground. But see, that too is only apparent. (Kafka, 1992: 32)[18]

Kuper treats letters as three-dimensional, physical realities. The first drawing of *Die Bäume* (*The trees*) shows skyscrapers formed by giant letters ("THE TREES"), which suggest the idea of construction as well as a congruence of letters and pictures (p. 49). Lines of the text are placed across the pictures just like the tree trunks in the snow, which are mentioned in the text. Obviously, Kuper is intending more than just to illustrate Kafka. The verbal 'image' is transformed radically: instead of a forest we see a city scene. A man lying motionlessly on the ground is representing the tree-trunk; he is beaten and mistreated by the gigantic policeman who tries to move the man away. As he fails, because the man is 'linked to the ground', the policeman calls for an ambulance car, and the connection between the man and his ground reveals to be mere appearance: the ambulance men take him away.

Generally, Kuper uses Kafka's texts as a device or even as a pretext to set images into movement. In *Der Kreisel* (*The spinning top*) the central figure itself dissolves into spinning movements. Though the irritating effects of this experiment is concerning visual experience only, the irritation as such can be regarded as corresponding to Kafka's original text. Comparable to Crumb's

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[18] "Denn wir sind wie Baumstämme im Schnee. Scheinbar liegen sie glatt auf, und mit einem kleinen Anstoß sollte man sie wegschieben können. Nein, das kann man nicht, denn sie sind fest mit dem Boden verbunden. Aber sieh, sogar das ist noch scheinbar." (Kuper, 1997: 48-50)

technique of representation, though by other means, Kuper as a cartoonist gets closer to Kafka by exploring his own graphic medium. In his foreword to Kuper's book, Jules Feiffer compares Kuper's technique to Jazz improvisations – he characterizes them as improvisations about Kafka "themes".[19] Kuper's way to set his pictures into motion and to suggest movement and immobility at the same time reminds of Kafka's idea of history itself as a "stehender Sturmlauf" (standing attack, standing striker). According to Kafka, history and historical developments as such are only illusions. As Beda Allemann has shown in his analysis of Kafka's conceptions of time and history, Kafka even dismisses the notions of beginning and ending. History to him does not mean progress, but cyclic movement (Allemann 1962). Kafka discharges the idea of teleological developments in the history of mankind as well as in the history of the individuals. His characters are at the same time running and standing still – because there is no possible progression at all.

In Kafka's *Die Brücke* (*The Brigde*) the narrator reports that he once was a bridge over an abyss. Kuper's central picture itself is lying like a bridge over the page: the man is diagonally spread over the visual scenery (p. 13). Bodies and scripture elements are thus shown in analogous functions. The depictions of *Gib's auf!*, the story about a policeman who rejects to help the traveler, is crossed by textual beams, which are placed over the pictures as if they were meant to prevent the viewer to look at the background, to obstruct his look (p. 19). This arrangement can be regarded as a visual equivalent to the encouraging message of the text: give it up!

> It was very early in the morning, the streets clean and deserted, I was on my way to the railroad station. As I compared the tower clock with my watch I realized it was already much later than I had thought, I had to hurry, the shock of this discovery made me feel uncertain of the way, I was not very well acquainted with the town yet, fortunately there was a policeman nearby, I ran to him and breathlessly asked him the way. He smiled and said: 'from me you want to learn the way?' 'Yes,' I said, 'since I cannot find

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[19] "[...] Kuper [...] spielt Jazz. Dieses Buch ist eine Abfolge von Riffs, von visuellen Improvisationen über die Kurzen Stücke des großen Meisters [Kafka]." (Feiffer, in: Kuper, 1997: 3)

it myself.' 'Give it up, give it up,' said he, and turned away with
a great sweep, like someone who wants to be alone with his
laughter.[20]

If there is no goal, no aim to be reached, no progress to be
achieved, all movements remain circular. Not by chance Kuper
dedicates one of his Kafka improvisations to the structure of the
circle. The illustrations of *Der Kreisel* (*The spinning top*) imitate by
their structure the whirling and circular movement of the man who
tries to catch the spin, as well as of the text that talks about the
man. Our own view is set into a spinning movement (p. 56/57).

> A certain philosopher used to hang about wherever children
> were at play. And whenever he saw a boy with a top, he would lie
> in wait. As soon as the top began to spin the philosopher went in
> pursuit and tried to catch it. He was not perturbed when the
> children noisily protested and tried to keep him away from their
> toy; so long as he could catch the top while it was spinning, he
> was happy, but only for a moment; then he threw it to the ground
> and walked away. For he believed that the understanding of any
> detail, that of a spinning top, for instance, was sufficient for the
> understanding of all things. For this reason he did not busy
> himself with great problems, it seemed to him uneconomical.
> Once the smallest detail was understood, then everything was
> understood, which was why he busied himself only with the
> spinning top. And whenever preparations were being made for
> the spinning of the top, he hoped that this time it would succeed:
> as soon as the top began to spin and he was running breathlessly
> after it, the hope would turn to certainty, but when he held the
> silly piece of wood in his hand, he felt nauseated. The screaming
> of the children, which hitherto he had not heard, and which now

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[20] [<http://www.vr.net/~herzogbr/kafka/giveitup.htm>] – "Es war sehr früh am
Morgen, die Straßen rein und leer, ich ging zum Bahnhof. Als ich eine Turmuhr mit
meiner uhr verglich, sah ich, daß es schon viel später war, als ich geglaubt hatte, ich
mußte mich sehr beeilen, der schrecken über diese Entdeckung ließ mich im Weg
unsicher werden, ich kannte mich in dieser Stadt noch nicht sehr gut aus,
glücklicherweise war ein Schutzmann in der Nähe, ich lief zu ihm und fragte ihn
atemlos nach dem weg. Er lächelte und sagte: 'Von mir willst Du den Weg erfahren?'
'Ja', sagte ich, 'da ich ihn selbst nicht finden kann.' 'Gibs auf, gibs auf', sagte er und
wandte sich mit einem großen Schwunge ab, so wie Leute, die mit ihrem Lachen
allein sein wollen." (Kafka, 1970: 358)

> suddenly pierced his ears, chased him away, and he tottered like
> a top under a clumsy whip.[21]

Kuper draws pictures which are related to text with abstract
and general messages, to allegorical texts about nameless, anonymous
figures. Crumb mainly presents Kafka the author as an individual
character with an individual history and mental disposition.
Kuper's drawings present their subjects in a way that gets close to
formalism, if not to abstract art. Robert Crumb's drawings on the
contrary present their subjects in a manner that appears to be very
concrete and naturalistic. Both drawing styles could be compared
to stylistic characteristics of Kafka's writing. Kuper's nameless and
semi-abstract figures refer to those nameless characters invented by
Kafka who are rather types than individuals, as for instance the
man in *Before the Law* and the *Doorkeeper*; Kafka's stories use to
take place at 'any' time and 'anywhere', instead of being con-
cretely located in time and space. Crumb's style, on the contrary,
corresponds as well in some respect to Kafka's style, as it is very
detailed and precise.

(C) Will Eisner integrated a Kafka sequence in one of his
introductory and self-reflexive studies about sequential art. This
cartoon is an interpretation of Kafka's *Process* novel as well as a
continuation. He integrates a short version of the *Process* plot into
a larger thematic context, inventing as well another episode, which
follows the execution of Josef K. The parts, which are taken from
the novel itself, are inserted into the continuation as a view of the
past. At the end of Kafka's novel, Josef K., who had been charged
for a mysterious crime, is taken away from his home by two men.
He is transported to a deserted area outside the town and stabbed.
Immediately before his death, and in a state of complete exhaus-
tion, he sees a house in the distance, a window and the shape of
somebody standing at that window.

> (...) his glance fell on the top story of the house adjoining the
> quarry. With a flicker as of a light going up, the casements of a

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[21] The Top. Translated by Tania and James Stern [http://www.endeneu.com/
kafka/thetop.html>] – Cf. Kafka, 1970: 320: "Der Kreisel".

window there suddenly flew open; a human figure, faint and insubstantial at that distance and that height, leaned abruptly far forward and stretched both arms still farther. Who was it? A friend? A good man? Someone who sympathized? Someone who wanted to help? Was it one person only? Or was it mankind? Was help at hand? Were there arguments in his favour that had been overlooked? (...) Where was the Judge whom he had never seen? Where was the high Court, to which he had never penetrated? He raised his hands and spread out all his fingers. / But the hands of one of the partners were already at K.'s throat, while the other thrust the knife deep into his heart and turned it there twice. With failing eyes K. could still see the two of them immediately before him, cheek leaning against cheek, watching the final act. 'Like a dog!' he said; it was as if the shame of it must outlive him. (Eisner, 2001: 228 f.) [22]

Eisner's cartoon as such is entitled *The Appeal* and presented as a story invented by Eisner. Again, like Crumb, he imagines another trial that is the continuation of Kafka's trial. This basic idea of repetition as such conforms to a high degree with Kafka's imaginations and his concepts of history as a circular process. The comic strip narrator presents a scene to us that may be regarded as a modified repetition of a scene from *The Process*, and he stresses the idea of repetition as well on the level of contents. We watch an old man returning to his apartment. There he meets to his utmost surprise four men who are completely unknown to him. One of them greets him by addressing him having been accused of

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[22] Seine Blicke fielen auf das letzte Stockwerk des an den Steinbruch angrenzenden Hauses. Wie ein Licht aufzuckt, so fuhren die Fensterflügel eines Fensters dort auseinander, ein Mensch, schwach und dünn in der Ferne und Höhe, beugte sich mit einem Ruck weit vor und streckte die Arme noch weiter aus. Wer war es? Ein Freund? Ein guter Mensch? Einer, der helfen wollte? War es ein einzelner? Waren es alle? War noch Hilfe? Gab es Einwände, die man vergessen hatte? Gewiß gab es solche. Die Logik ist zwar unerschütterlich, aber einem Menschen, der leben will, widersteht sie nicht. Wo war der Richter, den er nie gesehen hatte? Wo war das hohe Gericht, bis zu dem er nie gekommen war? Er hob die Hände und spreizte alle Finger.

Aber an K.s Gurgel legten sich die Hände des einen Herrn, während der andere das Messer ihm tief ins Herz stieß und zweimal dort drehte. Mit brechenden Augen sah noch K., wie die Herren, nahe vor seinem Gesicht, Wange an Wange aneinandergelehnt, die Entscheidung beobachteten. 'Wie ein Hund!' sagte er, es war, als sollte die Scham ihn überleben. (Kafka, 1958: 165)

something, but he does not specify the charge. This situation – the sudden confrontation of an ordinary person with a mysterious charge, the appearance of anonymous visitors in his apartment – obviously resembles the initial episode in Kafka's novel. Here the first sentence is in a very laconic way informing us of the fact that one morning, all of a sudden, Josef K. was arrested. The apartment owner learns to his increasing surprise, that he is attending a session of an appellation court held in the tenth courtyard of Prague. The person who is said to have accused the man is identified as a certain Mr. K., who is present, sitting at the table, though completely naked. The protagonist even realizes that Mr. K. is dead: he has been stabbed. The trial is referring to this fact. Eisner's protagonist is confronted with the statement that in 1916 – the year in which the novel according to the incorrect introducing information was written – he had been member of a court charging Josef K. Now Josef K., the dead man, starts reporting his own story. And we see this story integrated into the framing events, as already mentioned. Finally K. gets right into the bed of the apartment owner and declares, that his host will have to accept his further presence. It would be childish to call the police, as he says, because then he would have to explain the presence of a dead man in his room. The protagonist is a prisoner, we watch him writing on a sheet of paper and throwing it out of the window. It is a call for help. "Hilfe! Ich bin ein Gefangener!" (p. 129) Eisner's cartoon has affinities to Kafka on the level of contents as well as on the level of structure. Again, different levels of reality are represented as linked to each other, and the case of Eisner's protagonist is similar to the fate of K. Once more, the corporeality of words is stressed. Words are treated as the protagonists, and their performative forces are recalled – an idea that corresponds precisely to the function of words at court trials.

In a quite recently published essay, the philosopher Kurt Röttgers has reflected on the possibility to translate texts into pictures and pictures into texts, and he explicitly says that such translation processes are beyond the question for 'understanding' or even some emphatic kind of 'deep understanding'. Neither the idea of an internal sense that is detected by empathy, nor the idea to reconstruct rational deep grammar structures can – according to Röttgers, guarantee the success of translation. On the contrary, misunderstandings can even be helpful and stimulating, and so

Röttgers argues in favour of a model of 'seduction' instead of 'translation' ('traduction') (Röttgers, 1999). As our examples illustrate, Kafka has seduced the cartoon artists to continue his works, to regard it as unfinished.

The post-modern critic David Wellbery has given an instructive outline of post-hermeneutic and post-modern attitude toward language, words, and scriptures that is useful to comment on Kafka's modeling of the writing process and of language as his primary material.[23] In his review of Friedrich Kittler's *Aufschreibesysteme*, Wellbery translates this title literally as "systems of writing down" or "notation systems", and explains it in a way that lightens up the idea of scripture, which is connected with it.

> It refers to a level of material deployment that is prior to questions of meaning. At stake here are the constraints that select an array of marks from the noisy reservoir of all possible written constellations, paths and media of transmission, or mechanisms of memory. A notation system or, as we have chosen to translate, a discourse network has the exterior character – the outsideness – of a technology.[24]

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[23] Cf. David Wellbery, in his review about Friedrich Kittler's "Aufschreibesysteme", about "the third premise of post-hermeneutic criticism, the premise that defines not its analytical perspective (exteriority), nor its domain of study (mediality), but rather its point of reference and focus of concern": "I call this premise the 'presupposition of corporeality.' / The reason that the concept of corporeality defines the point of reference for post-hermeneutic criticism is clear. The body is the site upon which the various technologies of our culture inscribe themselves, the connecting link to which and from which our medial means of processing, storage, and transmission run. Indeed, in its nervous system, the body itself is a medial apparatus and an elaborate technology. But it is also radically historical in the sense that it is shaped and reshaped by the networks to which it is conjoined. The forerunner of this thinking in terms of corporeality, of course, is Nietzsche, whose philosophy follows, as he put it, the body's guiding thread and whose aesthetics, as he often insisted, is a physiology." (Wellbery, 1989)

[24] "All media of transmission require a material channel, and the characteristic of every material channel is that, beyond and, as it were, against the information it carries, it produces noise and nonsense. What we call literature, in other words, stands in an essential (and again, historically variable) relation to a non-meaning, which it must exclude. It is defined not by what it means, but by the difference between meaning and nonmeaning, information and noise, that its medial possibilities set into place. This difference, obviously, is inaccessible to hermeneutics. It is the privileged locus, however, of post-hermeneutic thought". (Wellbery, 1989).

In sequential art script, whatever shape it may take, is always a "piece of material" – a visual 'piece' of the world represented, in the most cases (not always!) readable as far as a literal meaning is concerned, but beyond deciphering in respect to its concreteness. The transformation of language into a material substance exactly corresponds to a tendency in Kafka's work. As already mentioned, Kafka repeatedly recalls the idea of words as material pieces, as three-dimensional bodies. He imagines pieces of his stories running around like homeless men,[25] speaks about the letter "ä" which flies through the air like a ball.[26] The word "brandmarken" (brand, stigmatize) appears to him like a piece of raw meat in his mouth, which was cut off his own body.[27] The term David Wellbery uses to characterize Kittler's concept of writing – corporeality – appears to be useful to describe the link between Kafka's attitude towards words and language, as the way words and language are treated in comic strips. A comic strip by John Riddell entitled *H* might be regarded as the illustration of this link: It shows a writer sitting at his working place and getting threatened and overwhelmed by letters, especially by the letter "H". Here, letters become 'corporeal' in a way that reminds closely Kafka's remarks about his physical sensations about language particles.[28] Many examples might be quoted in order to illustrate the affinities between the media of Comic strip art and the concept of a 'material' language resisting to the reader's attempt to decipher it. Comic strip art by its visual representations of language points to the sensual dimension of

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[25] "If I were ever able to write something large and whole, well shaped from beginning to end, then in the end the story would never be able to detach itself from me and it would be possible for me calmly and with open eyes, as a blood relation of a healthy story, to hear it read, but as it is every little piece of the story runs around homeless and drives me away from it in the opposite direction" [<http://victorian.fortunecity.com/vermeer/287/diary1911pt2.htm>] – (Kafka, 1986: 90 [5. Nov. 1911]: "Würde ich einmal ein größeres ganzes schreiben können, wohlgebildet vom Anfang bis zum Ende, dann könnte sich auch die Geschichte niemals endgültig von mir loslösen, und ich dürfte ruhig und mit offenen Augen, als Blutsverwandter einer gesunden geschichte, ihrer verlesung zuhören, so aber läuft jedes Stückchen der Geschichte heimatlos herum und treibt mich in die entgegengesetzte Richtung.").

[26] Kafka, 1986: 9 (1910).

[27] Kafka, 1986: 50 (3. Okt. 1911).

[28] Riddell, 1998.

linguistic phenomena; graphically represented words are imagined as material objects, language itself as a 'material' that in spite of its significance for communication purposes is as well a possible impediment. Secondly, there are correspondences between graphic art and Kafka's language reflections, as Kafka himself imagines words and language as material objects, as strange bodies that incline to oppose themselves against their users.
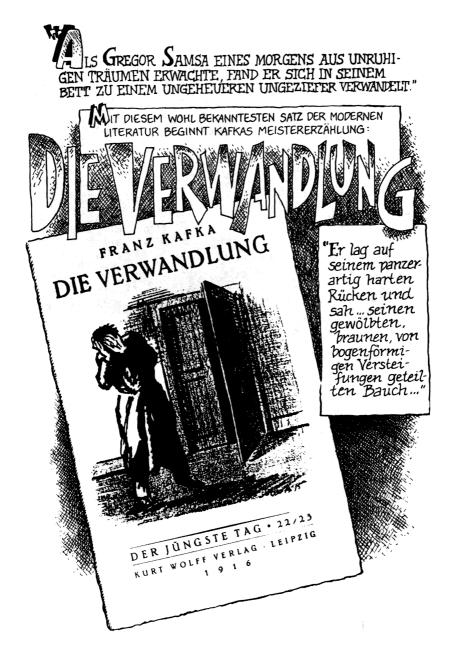
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Die Verwandlung, illustration by Robert Crumb.

From Peter Kuper (1995/1997), *Give it up! – Gibs auf!*

Le Voyage au bout de la nuit de L. F. Céline par J. Tardi : un blasphème ?

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C'est au cours d'entretiens avec Numa Sadoul, l'interviewer de référence de la bande dessinée, que Tardi évoque lui-même cette idée de blasphème, en citant le quotidien *Libération* à propos de son adaptation du *Voyage au bout de la nuit* de Céline publié dans son édition originale en 1988 [1].

Tardi dit : « *ça m'a quand même valu d'être montré du doigt pour avoir salopé le chef-d'œuvre avec mes vilains graffitis, d'avoir 'abâtardi' l'immense livre : 'Céline abâtardi', a-t-on pu lire sur une double page, dans Libération, à la sortie du bouquin. C'était déchirant de voir comme ils prenaient ça... Un blasphème!* » (Sadoul : 2000) [2].

Rappelons que le blasphème en question a été vendu à plus de 120 000 exemplaires, et qu'il a été proféré par un mythe vivant de la bande dessinée... Mais il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce que la critique se soit insurgée contre la démarche de Tardi : il est toujours difficile de naviguer entre les compartiments des genres, même à une époque postmoderne où la question des frontières semble ne pas avoir été définitivement résolue... encore moins quand il s'agit de « s'attaquer » aux chefs-d'œuvre de la littérature, et a fortiori quand on provient du 9ème art, la BD, un domaine très longtemps considéré comme un sous-genre, bâtard par excellence, puisque à la croisée entre le verbal et le visuel, « sous-genre » qui de son coté

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[1] Tardi, J., *Voyage au bout de la nuit de L. F.Céline*, Gallimard-Futuropolis, 1988.
[2] Sadoul, N., *Tardi, Entretiens avec Numa Sadoul*, Editions Niffle-Cohen, 2000.

cherche à s'affirmer comme indépendant et à s'affranchir d'une quelconque subordination au langage des autres arts.

En effet, l'enjeu de la critique en matière de bande dessinée est de trouver un champ d'analyse propre, fondé sur les modèles de lecture hérités de l'écriture et de la peinture, mais invitant *« les deux instances à se résoudre dans un état neuf de la matière »*. Bien que le *Voyage* de Tardi présente des analogies avec la bande dessinée (comment pourrait-il en être autrement), ce n'est pas une bande dessinée. Le texte de Céline *Voyage au bout de la nuit* apparaît intégralement aux cotés du récit en images de Tardi. Et même si nous sommes en présence d'un rapport indissociable entre texte et image, il ne s'agit pas d'un texte écrit pour le récit en images. En effet, Céline n'est pas le scénariste de Tardi. L'image n'existera qu'à posteriori : le *Voyage* de Tardi est publié en 1988 et la première édition du texte de Céline date de 1932. L'expression visuelle nourrit ici un rapport de dépendance nécessaire : c'est une interprétation d'un texte préexistant et autonome, qui passe par une transformation intégrant l'illustration comme partielle et partiale.

Quant à nous, c'est la question du blasphème qui va orienter notre voyage, question qui nous oblige à revenir sur les traces de la genèse du *Voyage* de Tardi. Autrement dit, avant de savoir si blasphème il y a, il nous faut essayer de lire le *Voyage* de Tardi sous différents éclairages : nous l'avons ainsi d'abord considéré comme *un discours* de Tardi sur le *Voyage au bout de la nuit* de Céline ; puis comme *un récit* de *Voyage au bout de la nuit* utilisant *deux codes* concomitants : la matière visuelle et la matière verbale ; et enfin nous avons tenté d'en tirer des conclusions au regard de la *réception* de cette *adaptation en images* par la critique. Pour ce faire, nous avons emprunté à la sémiotique et à la rhétorique, notamment au *Discours récit et image* de Kibédi Varga [3].

La première partie de cette communication cherchera donc à montrer que le texte de Tardi est un discours dont nous allons évoquer les lieux et l'argumentation.

Nous savons que *Voyage au bout de la nuit* fait partie d'un réseau de communication où il circule et transite de lecteur en lecteur, et que chacun de ces lecteurs en fait une lecture singulière.

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[3] Kibédi Varga, A. (1989), *Discours, récit et images*, Bruxelles, Pierre Mardaga éditeur.

Ce qui nous intéresse ici, c'est que l'un de ces lecteurs soit Tardi, et que sa lecture va infléchir la trajectoire de cette communication puisque Tardi devient à son tour un « passeur » de *Voyage* qu'il va transformer en un discours qui lui est propre.

Le nouveau destinateur s'adresse ainsi à d'autres destinataires, mais pour dire quoi de plus ? Autrement dit, l'intention de communication de Tardi ne peut se superposer à celle de Céline, pas plus qu'on ne peut confondre les moyens que chacun a utilisés pour le faire. La question du texte littéraire comme élément constitutif d'un réseau de communication apparaît clairement dans le cas du texte de Tardi, et elle est d'autant plus complexe qu'elle implique plusieurs instances communicatives : il y a le rapport dialogique entre Tardi et le texte de Céline, puis entre le texte de Tardi et ses lecteurs. Pour que la communication fonctionne, il faut que ce réseau de dialogismes se situe sur un terrain commun, un terrain d'entente entre le lieu de l'image et celui du texte. La lecture proposée par Tardi devra être légitimée par le destinataire. Ici s'immisce quelque chose de l'ordre de la rhétorique persuasive : Tardi doit convaincre… et pour convaincre il faut s'exercer à l'art de la rhétorique, pour ce faire « *…on pourrait dire que l'orateur ou l'écrivain se concentre en particulier sur trois points : d'abord il recueille les lieux appropriés, puis il étudie les moyens de susciter les passions et enfin il choisit les procédés stylistiques, c'est-à-dire les figures qui conviennent aux lieux et aux passions sélectionnés* » (Varga, *op. cit.* : 39).

Commençons par les lieux. Une analyse topique de l'œuvre de Céline et de son actualisation dans celle de Tardi serait fastidieuse. Nous nous contenterons donc de quelques exemples pour tâcher de montrer que les univers topiques de Céline et Tardi sont les mêmes, évidemment par le fait que Tardi intègre le texte de Céline dans le sien, mais aussi par ce qu'il convoque dans l'imaginaire et l'image de Tardi.

La guerre de 14-18 exerce une fascination particulière sur Tardi, comme on peut le voir dans son œuvre, par exemple les séries de bande dessinée dont Brindavoine et Adèle Blanc-Sec sont les personnages principaux et qui se passent à cette époque, ou encore dans *Trou d'obus (Casterman)* ou *La der des der (Casterman)*, emblématiques de la poétique de Tardi. Cette guerre lui a d'ailleurs été racontée par sa grand-mère « en seconde main » dit-il, ce qui n'est pas sans nous rappeler sa démarche avec *Voyage*. Comme pour

Céline, plus que la guerre en soi, c'est ce qu'elle implique pour les individus qui hante Tardi : « *Davantage que la guerre elle-même, c'est l'idée directrice et la manipulation des individus : comment les gens ont perdu complètement le contrôle de leur existence, comment ils se sont trouvés embarqués dans des trucs qu'ils n'avaient pas choisis et qui vont, à partir de ce moment-là décider à leur place* » (Sadoul, *op. cit.*). Comme nous le verrons plus tard, le récit de Tardi mettra surtout en valeur cette idée.

L'auteur ne fait pas non plus grand cas des personnages, sortes de anti-héros qu'il préfère « *mal à l'aise, pas à leur place* » plutôt que « *Là où ils ont choisi d'être, ce qui n'est quand même pas le cas de la majorité des gens* » (Sadoul, *op. cit.*). La guerre et son absurdité, ceux qui en profitent, le patriotisme exacerbé, la souffrance des « miteux », la mort, l'écroulement de l'existence…sont récurrents et presque obsessifs dans l'œuvre de Tardi dont le style graphique et cette unité de lieux resteront présents, aussi bien dans ses bandes dessinées que dans ses adaptations de roman, dont *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, *Casse pipe* et *Mort à crédit* de Céline mais aussi des romans de Léo Malet, l'un des auteurs de romans policiers les plus connus en France, et dernièrement des romans de Pennac. Tous présentent, de part le registre de langage dans lequel ils s'expriment ou leur vision du monde, des analogies avec Tardi.

Mais un seul inventaire des lieux ne dit rien de l'intention de communication de celui qui les utilise, c'est le choix et l'argumentation de ce choix qui élucident cette question, autrement dit, le « *déplacement* » de ces lieux, leur mise en scène, leur mise en contexte qui déterminent « *la nouveauté finale d'un texte* » (Varga, *op. cit.* : 50).

Les lieux révèlent une intention et parallèlement l'emploi de figures. Ils font d'ailleurs, à double titre, partie d'une stratégie communicative : d'une part, comme nous l'avons vu, ils montrent une vision du monde, l'idéologie de l'auteur, et d'autre part, ils fonctionnent « *à rebours* » (Varga, *op. cit.* : 48). « *C'est en raison des lieux utilisés, et qui sont à son gré, que le public choisit son destinateur* ».

La lecture de Tardi est une lecture au moins doublement « motivée » : celle de Tardi auteur ayant pour projet de transformer le texte en une matière première (seconde ?) pour le « recomposer » avec des images, mais aussi en vue de s'adresser à un public : celui de ses lecteurs, mais aussi et surtout celui de ceux de Céline. Nous

serions donc en présence d'une l'habilité d'adapter le discours au public, prônée par Aristote. Voyons maintenant comment.

La question du récit est particulière puisque le destinataire est impliqué dans plusieurs récits imbriqués qui fonctionnent à différents niveaux. Celui de Céline comme récit dans le récit, et celui de Tardi comme un récit du récit. De plus, ce dernier dépend surtout de la matière iconique puisque c'est en fonction de celle-ci que le récit de Tardi est perceptible. Les récits « gigognes » complexifient l'identification des instances narratives : autrement dit, sous le regard de Tardi, *Voyage* est *le narré*, Céline *le narrateur* et Tardi *le narrataire*. Pour nous, narrataires de Tardi narrateur, le narré n'est pas réductible au texte de Céline mais ne peut pas en faire l'économie. L'interchangeabilité n'est possible que si le narrateur accepte le narré et qu'il n'y a pas d'opposition, comme dans le discours, entre le récepteur et le producteur. La création n'est donc pas dans le récit (unique) mais dans sa transmission, sa narration, en somme son individualisation, là où l'auteur s'identifie. Et c'est ici qu'entre en jeu l'image.

Selon la distinction de la rhétorique (entre arguments affectifs et rationnels), l'image communique plutôt des arguments affectifs : « *de toutes les passions, celles qui entrent dans l'âme par les yeux sont les plus violentes* » disait Félibien, et à double titre : les émotions sont susceptibles d'être décrites et représentées mais aussi de susciter les passions dans « *l'âme du destinataire* ». Cette dichotomie renvoie aux situations épidictiques et judiciaires : dans le premier cas il s'agit de savoir si les images ont été créées dans le but d'éveiller l'admiration (ou le blâme) pour ce qui est représenté, dans le second les images auraient aussi une fonction persuasive affectant le destinataire. Tardi se doit, en plus de mettre en rapport le texte et l'image, de persuader le destinataire de la légitimité de sa démarche esthétique et sûrement de susciter l'admiration sur la réussite de son entreprise. On peut ainsi parler de « *dialogicité rhétorique* » : il y a prolongement et extension de l'effet de l'image sur le destinataire via le texte bien sûr, mais qui sous cet angle n'est plus un texte si on accepte de le considérer comme « *la réalité continue* » de laquelle part Tardi. L'image revêt ainsi une double fonction référentielle de l'ordre de la dénotation (le monde « réel » auquel les dessins renvoient) mais aussi de la connotation (l'univers de Tardi qui se constitue comme une réalité : avec la dénonciation de la guerre par exemple).

Si l'on considère que l'effet émotif est précédé par l'identi-
fication et la reconnaissance du sujet représenté, on peut conce-
voir que l'argumentation visuelle est aussi d'ordre rationnel.
L'identification se fait grâce à l'endroit où l'image se trouve. Ici,
le texte de Céline fonctionne comme un lieu argumentatif qui
permet l'identification des images : nous n'avons jamais vu
Bardamu, nous ne savons absolument pas à quoi il ressemble mais
nous le *reconnaissons* (nous l'identifions et l'acceptons comme tel)
par rapport à sa place dans le récit de Tardi et parce qu'il se situe
dans un livre ayant pour titre *Voyage au bout de la nuit…* Cette
reconnaissance est possible grâce aux « *attributs* », c'est-à-dire à des
objets ou des symboles toujours associés au même personnage qui,
en quelque sorte, prouvent son identité. Autrement dit les attributs
sont les synonymes picturaux des lieux de la rhétoriques verbale.

Prenons pour exemple les premières pages du *Voyage* de Tardi.
Vous vous souvenez sans doute que le narrateur en est Bardamu
(qu'on pourrait étrangement confondre avec Céline lui-même) et
qu'au début du roman Bardamu, après une vive discussion avec son
ami Arthur Ganate sur la patrie, décide de s'engager et se retrouve
sur le front. Après un premier contact avec la guerre dont il se rend
compte de l'absurdité, Bardamu décidera de déserter.

Nous pouvons voir que Bardamu (comme tous les personnages
de Tardi) est peu caractérisé physiquement, nous le reconnaissons
en tant que civil, ou comme soldat (Tardi, 1988 : 11 et 17). Nous
pouvons d'ailleurs observer que les traits de Bardamu / civil et ceux
de Bardamu / soldat n'ont presque rien en commun. Ce sont les
attributs qui permettent de diffé-rencier les deux représentations.
Il en sera de même un peu plus loin avec, la foule des « civils de
l'arrière » – qui parviennent à rester loin de la guerre – affublée
de chapeaux melon, de canotiers, de moustaches, de lunettes, de
cannes et de cravates… (attributs de la bourgeoisie) et avec les
« civils du front » – plus proches des zones de combat – représentés
de façon élémentaire et presque schématique (les yeux, la bouche)
sans aucune expressivité et comme fondus dans le paysage, plus
proches des « miteux », de la guerre.

Nous pouvons distinguer d'autres attributs présentés de façon
isolée qui semblent privilégier des détails (Tardi, *op. cit.* : 11).
En haut, sur cette image, on peut voir la reprise d'un détail
de l'image figurant en dessous (la table de bistrot, la bouteille

et le verre, mais affublés de deux drapeaux français). On peut comprendre ici (au-delà de la redondance avec la narration, que Bardamu et Ganate évoquent la race française au cours d'une conversation de comptoir) l'ironie du narrateur à propos du patriotisme, ce qu'il partage d'ailleurs avec Céline. Le changement de lieu (et de temps) est signalé par l'absence de bordure noire autour du dessin. La disparition de l'arrière plan apparaît comme une parenthèse au sein de la narration, qui en même temps en résume l'essentiel. Cet espace « hors fiction narrative » marque une intention de l'auteur.

Nous avons vu que le *Voyage au bout de la nuit* de Tardi était un discours dont les lieux de l'argumentation fonctionnent dans le récit de Tardi comme lieux d'argumentation visuelle. Voyons maintenant ce qui fait la singularité de l'écriture de Tardi, l'emploi des figures propres à son discours.

L'étude de l'agencement des images ne ferait aucun sens sans la prise en compte du texte comme partie intégrante du schéma narratif de Tardi. Celui-ci l'adapte à ses intentions graphiques selon un parcours dont la narration dépend en partie. Le texte est comme une image (à moins que ce ne soit l'image qui soit comme un texte). Il s'agit pour nous et sous cet angle de mesurer la distance entre le verbal et le visuel, certes intriqués, mais dont le mode de lecture se fait de manière prépondérante du texte vers l'image plutôt que de l'image vers le texte. Le type de cohabitation entretenue entre le texte et l'image fournit donc lui aussi des indices sur le type de narration. Contrairement à la bande dessinée, l'image est isolée du texte (il n'y a pas de ballons), elle se doit de reproduire la substance du texte de façon synthétique ou partielle, ce qui entraîne une théâtralisation. Nous sommes donc dans le domaine de la narration externe, le récitatif se plaçant en marge de l'image et non dans la bouche d'un éventuel héros. Nous n'aurons pas non plus à nous poser la question de l'ordre du récit, il n'y a pas de nécessité interne de gérer une intrigue ou une narration : l'ordre est imposé par le texte de Céline.

La question centrale en matière de narration en image fixe est celle du temps, comme nous le savons, l'image fixe, contrairement à la littérature et au cinéma, bloque le temps et le mouvement, elle les fixe dans un espace figé qu'est le cadre. Dans ce cadre, la fonction narrative pourra être portée de différentes façons, par exemple par la forme et la dimension du cadre comme nous le

verrons. L'organisation de l'image peut aussi prendre en charge la fonction narrative sous la forme de la symétrie, de la répartition des valeurs et des formes ou des lignes de fuite, des plans des angles de prises de vue ou de la couleur, ces techniques étant les mêmes que celles du cinéma mais appliquées à une esthétique ou le temps et l'espace sont immobiles.

Bien qu'en partie guidés par la spécificité de la matière et ses contraintes, les choix de Tardi n'y sont pas réductibles, nous nous intéresserons maintenant à ces choix pour tenter de définir si, comme le suggère Varga, ce que privilégie Tardi dans le récit de Céline est le récit lui même ou l'effet de ce récit.

Cette première image (Fig. 1 - Tardi, *op. cit.* : 10, 11) du texte de Tardi sert de scène de présentation : sur l'axe paradigmatique elle campe le lieu, l'époque avec la voiture et les costumes, sur l'axe syntagmatique, elle amorce l'intrigue en campant les personnages en action. Notons que Céline écrit « *Alors on remarque encore qu'il n'y avait personne dans les rues à cause de la chaleur ; pas de voiture, rien* », ce n'est pas ce que *raconte* Tardi. Il choisit de privilégier l'image et la contextualisation. D'ailleurs dans le texte, cette réflexion n'a pas de valeur pour elle-même : elle sert de point de départ à une sorte de syllogisme dont la conclusion sera que « *rien n'est changé en vérité … »*. Les rues vides sont un prétexte pour quelque chose que la matière visuelle ne dira pas de toute façon. Par contre, elle a besoin de remplir l'espace et de le faire simultanément signifier dans le temps (la voiture est aussi un symbole de la référence au *siècle de vitesse*) qui apparaît dans le texte. La différence de point de vue peut aussi expliquer cet écart : c'est Bardamu qui raconte, ainsi, il ne devrait pas figurer à l'image avec Ganate comme ici. La perspective est autre, dans le récit de Tardi, c'est lui-même qui voit et qui regarde ce qu'il veut voir. Du exte, on retrouve la place Clichy et les deux personnages (éventuellement le siècle de vitesse). L'indication temporelle « *après le déjeuner* » ainsi que l'action de renter au café et le début de la conversation ne sont pas représentés, cela reste dans le hors champ du texte. Comme dans la bande dessinée, c'est ce hors champ (que l'on appelle ellipse ou caniveau en BD) qui est le vecteur de la progression du temps et du mouvement. Mais ici, le lecteur doit reconstituer une continuité non pas à partir de l'espace vide et silencieux qu'il y a entre les cases, mais à partir du texte.

C'est dans ce cadre que commence l'action qui continuera dans les images suivantes concentrant l'intrigue diluée dans le texte. Comme dans la BD, les cadres seront des plans rapprochés, étirés en largeur pour obliger l'œil à un mouvement rapide de lecture « animée » de la dispute de Ganate et de Bardamu au sujet de la patrie. En parallèle et à l'insu des personnages pris dans l'action, une autre image montrera que « *la guerre approchait* » en catimini, et en focalisation externe. Cette intrusion dans le récit se fera à l'image par une brisure entre les cadres qui ouvrira une brèche par laquelle la guerre infiltrera le récit et annoncera l'engagement de Bardamu : « *je vais voir si c'est ainsi que je crie à Arthur, et me voici parti m'engager et au pas de course encore* ». « *Ça c'est fait exactement ainsi* ». Cette phrase marque la fin du découpage textuel de la page, et constitue une pause, comme une respiration avant la double page qui suit (Fig. 2 - Tardi, *op. cit.* : 12, 13). Le format maximal que prend l'image (qui chasse le texte bien que contenu en germe) lui donne une emphase particulière. Elle fait écho au début du roman « *Ça a débuté comme ça* » et condense toutes les informations données par le récit : la place Clichy, et le café où a eu lieu la dispute ; les deux actants Ganate et Bardamu, ce que Céline appelle la patrie n° 1 (la foule / l'arrière et les drapeaux) et ce qu'il appelle la patrie n° 2 (le régiment / le front) ; ainsi que les rapports qu'ils entretiennent. Cette image clôt la séquence et inaugure la suite du récit : le voyage commence.

Les images qui suivent marquent un relâchement de l'intrigue et montrent un Bardamu en marge d'un paysage hostile qui l'écrase, comme si son désengagement grandissant et sa prise de conscience de l'absurdité de la guerre le poussaient hors champ. Le psychologique gonfle le texte et l'image, et le Bardamu physique disparaît comme pour prendre une valeur universelle et s'enfoncer dans la guerre. Le récit de Céline se doit d'utiliser d'autres moyens pour un résultat similaire : il doit décrire « *deux millions de fous héroïques* » parmi lesquels Bardamu se sent isolé. Ce qui dans le texte se fait par excès, se voit à l'image par défaut.

Le retour à l'intrigue se fera par un retour à l'action avec un événement qui viendra interrompre l'introspection de Bardamu et le précipiter dans la guerre. L'image et Tardi narrateur semblent prendre en main le récit avec un dessin (Fig. 3 - Tardi, *op. cit.* : 22) positionné de façon à ce que la fin de l'action précédente soit d'abord visualisée : le questionnement de Bardamu sur la guerre et

les évènements du récit convergent vers cette première image de la guerre qui devient ici représentable, ordinaire. Ce parcours de lecture invite à une relecture de l'image que la trame narrative de Tardi avait presque « décollée » de celle du texte. On remarque que les viandes saignent moins, le sang ne mijote pas, ne glougloute pas… (on peut lire : « *Le cavalier n'avait plus sa tête, rien qu'une ouverture au-dessus du cou, avec du sang dedans qui mijotait en glouglous comme de la confiture dans la marmite… toutes ces viandes saignaient énormément* »). C'est presque un euphémisme du récit de Céline parce qu'il s'agit ici d'un récit différent, cette image marque le climax d'une action qui était diluée dans le texte.

A ce stade de notre analyse, il nous semble que cette image soit l'avènement de l'affirmation du récit de Tardi. Maintenant la guerre à une matérialité et ceci n'est possible que parce que le récit de Tardi suit son propre chemin à l'orée du texte. Avec l'analyse de cette progression, nous avons cherché à montrer que la conduite du récit de Tardi a ses propres enjeux (des intentions) qui passent par des stratégies propres au traitement de l'image, mais qui ne sauraient se passer d'un rapport étroit au texte. Comme au théâtre, on assiste à un déploiement du texte qui prend corps en images, selon les options de la mise en scène.

Comme nous l'avons évoqué, raconter à l'aide de l'image fixe relève de la contradiction : l'organisation de la langue s'effectue sur un axe temporel tandis que celle de l'image fixe se fait en fonction de l'espace qui se confond avec le temps : l'image délivre d'un seul coup des informations que le texte peut donner de façon plus progressive. C'est dans cette tension que va être géré le narratif, bien que dans le cas qui nous intéresse le texte soit omniprésent : l'image est d'abord lue en mots, c'est la mise en images d'un message conçu selon les catégories du langage. Ainsi, nous l'avons vu dans ces quelques exemples, Tardi se confronte au temps du récit verbal, qu'il lui faut restituer en espace selon la logique et la cohérence propre au récit visuel. C'est d'ailleurs parce que la langue à des propriétés qu'elle ne partage pas toujours avec l'image qu'il est impossible de visualiser tout le récit car certains éléments n'ont pas leur équivalent visuel. Le contraire est vrai aussi, l'image à des propriétés que l'écriture n'a pas et c'est dans la recherche d'équivalents que s'opère la « traduction » de Tardi (la guerre que Bardamu ne comprend et n'accepte pas est refoulée à l'image jusqu'à ce que celui-ci ne soit « *dépucelé* »).

Le sens de lecture du texte de Tardi et la position des images par rapport au texte conditionnent ses choix : on fixe le sens (le lien sens image / texte) en fixant l'ordre dans lequel les images doivent être lues. (Le lecteur devra suivre l'ordre pour comprendre l'enchaînement diégétique). Leur contenu diffère en fonction de leur position : avant ou après le texte elles seront plus ou moins narratives. La discontinuité de l'image fixe impose à la fois une nécessité et une interdiction de la redondance (Bardamu doit être sans cesse redessiné mais dans un renouvellement permanent).

Pour synthétiser, nous dirions qu'il y a contamination réciproque des instances du linguistique et de l'imagétique, écriture et dessins se sont transformés en contact comme sous l'effet de vases communicants où le temps appelle l'espace et le linguistique le graphique et vice versa. La lecture du récit de Tardi doit se faire sous un double mode : au sein du corpus que constitue le texte de Céline ; en temps que discours sur ce récit (Tardi appréhende le texte comme un critique, ces choix sont révélateurs de son analyse, de son interprétation du texte de Céline) et à partir de ce récit (les choix de Tardi sont révélateurs de ce qu'il veut dire lui, de son propre discours sur le monde). Cette appropriation d'un « topos » nous a permis une interrogation sur la conduite du récit selon deux modalités narratives, l'une horizontale et l'autre verticale, conférant sa spécificité au récit de Tardi.

Après ces quelques remarques, force est de constater que plus que le récit lui même Tardi cherche à communiquer « *l'effet et le sens du récit* », son « *message émotionnel* ». Il semble que les conclusions de Varga sur le récit visuel s'appliquent à notre analyse : « *le récit se perd, seul le message rhétorique reste* ». Ce qui nous renvoie à une autre question : le récit de Tardi trahit-il Céline, lui est-il fidèle, s'agit-il d'un blasphème ?

Du blasphème...

Nous l'avons dit, le *Voyage* de Tardi est une lecture de celui de Céline, une version basée sur la répétition, autrement dit un récit de celui-ci. Comme un aède, Tardi « *bien loin de le transmettre fidèlement* » modifie le récit source « *au gré de sa fantaisie et de son inspiration* ». Mais s'agissant d'un aède moderne, la fantaisie et l'inspiration de Tardi passeront d'avantage par une transcodification, participant ainsi d'un nouveau genre qui pourrait entrer dans

la catégorie de l'hétéromorphisme. En effet, la fidélité au texte littéraire semble ici compromise par une esthétique : il y a dialogisme interartistique entre littérature et récit visuel au moyen de l'image fixe. La transcodification est partielle « par nature » : l'image fixe opère dans le discontinu, mais elle porte en même temps le continuum du texte qu'elle recrée. Le texte est augmenté, il prend du volume et devient un texte avec d'autres caractéristiques qui peut être confronté avec l'original mais dont l'écart, l'épaisseur, l'excroissance est le constituant d'une esthétique qui rend le texte d'arrivée autonome. L'adaptation est une option de Tardi, la recréation quant à elle semble aller de soi. D'autre part, la lecture graphique de Tardi fait que *Voyage* s'inscrit de manière diachronique dans le temps. Quelle que soit la volonté de fidélité au texte de départ, le fait que l'œuvre littéraire soit instable et dynamique du point de vue de sa signification, crée une relation intersémiotique impossible à définir en terme d'identité ou d'exclusion.

Les choix de Tardi semblent trouver un équilibre dans l'interprétation de ce *vécu* et dans le plurivocalisme entre la bande dessinée comme la langue d'expression d'un groupe, et sa confrontation à la littérature (Céline l'a fait avec la langue populaire - langue d'expression d'un groupe et la littérature). Il ne réduit pas le texte narratif à l'intrigue (à ce que Labov et Waletszky appellent *passages inamovibles*) pour séduire les lecteurs de bande dessinée ; mais ne laisse pas s'affaiblir ce lien pour sombrer dans le contemplatif et l'engagement idéologique.

Alors, sommes nous ou non en présence d'un blasphème ?

Vous l'aurez compris, la question était purement rhétorique… Comment pourrait-on encore penser l'œuvre littéraire et l'art en général en ces termes ?

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Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Et puis non, le feu est parti, le bruit est resté long-
mps dans ma tête, et puis les bras et les jambes qui
emblaient comme si quelqu'un vous les secouait de
ιr-derrière. Ils avaient l'air de me quitter, et puis ils
e sont restés quand même mes membres. Dans la
mée qui piqua les yeux encore pendant longtemps,
ιdeur pointue de la poudre et du soufre nous restait
mme pour tuer les punaises et les puces de la terre
tière.
Tout de suite après ça, j'ai pensé au maréchal des
ζis Barousse qui venait d'éclater comme l'autre
ιus l'avait appris. C'était une bonne nouvelle. Tant
ieux! que je pensais tout de suite ainsi : « C'est une
ɔn grande charogne en moins dans le régiment! »
avait voulu me faire passer au Conseil pour une
îte de conserves. « Chacun sa guerre! » que je me dis.
ɔ ce côté-là, faut en convenir, de temps en temps, elle
ait l'air de servir à quelque chose la guerre! J'en
nnaissais bien encore trois ou quatre dans le régi-
ɔnt, de sacrées ordures que j'aurais aidé bien volon-
ɪrs à trouver un obus comme Barousse.
Quant au colonel, lui, je ne lui voulais pas de mal.
ιi pourtant aussi il était mort. Je ne le vis plus, tout
ιbord. C'est qu'il avait été déporté sur le talus,

allongé sur le flanc par l'explosion et projeté jusque
dans les bras du cavalier à pied, le messager, fini lui
aussi. Ils s'embrassaient tous les deux pour le moment
et pour toujours, mais le cavalier n'avait plus sa tête,
rien qu'une ouverture au-dessus du cou, avec du sang
dedans qui mijotait en glouglous comme de la confi-
ture dans la marmite. Le colonel avait son ventre
ouvert, il en faisait une sale grimace. Ça avait dû lui
faire du mal ce coup-là au moment où c'était arrivé.
Tant pis pour lui! S'il était parti dès les premières
balles, ça ne lui serait pas arrivé.
Toutes ces viandes saignaient énormément en-
semble.
Des obus éclataient encore à la droite et à la gauche
de la scène.
J'ai quitté ces lieux sans insister, joliment heureux
d'avoir un aussi beau prétexte pour foutre le camp.
J'en chantonnais même un brin, en titubant, comme
quand on a fini une bonne partie de canotage et qu'on
a les jambes un peu drôles. « Un seul obus! C'est vite
arrangé les affaires tout de même, avec un seul obus »,
que je me disais. « Ah! dis donc! que je me répétais tout
le temps. Ah! dis donc!... »
Il n'y avait plus personne au bout de la route. Les

Fig. 3

"Wandering into the labyrinth of theatre and gender": Cross-gender casting in *King Lear* and *Richard II*

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> Lear's language seduces me. Why should I,
> a woman, be denied access to such beautiful language?
> (Ruth Maleczech, 1990)[1]

Several years ago, I went to see a performance by some theatre students in Porto. They had been working on *Hamlet*, and for this final project, they had been instructed to take any character in the play and develop them in whatever direction they wished. Whereas the male members of the group had chosen a variety of different characters, from Claudius to a guard to Hamlet himself, all but one of the twenty or so women chose to work on Ophelia. On one level, it was disturbing that so many young women seemed so eager to play such a tragic figure. Yet beyond this, what concerned me more were the future employment prospects of these would-be actresses. I imagined a casting call for the play in five years time where all twenty actresses competed for the role of Ophelia. All were practising rolling their eyes convincingly, or looking beautiful when drowned, while the actors stood calmly in a corner distributing the male roles in the play between them.

So when I read at the end of the 1990's about the actresses Fiona Shaw and Kathryn Hunter taking on the Shakespearan roles of Richard II and Lear, I must admit my first thought was for those

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[1] Quoted by Susan Bennett in *Performing Nostalgia: Shifting Shakespeare and the Contemporary Past*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 76.

prospective actresses in Porto. Would they be courageous enough to take on similar challenges within their own theatrical repertoires and increase their chances of employment? My second thought was what might be new about these two more recent performances. After all, actresses playing major male Shakespearean roles is not a new phenomenon. Sarah Siddons in the 18th century and Sarah Bernhardt in the 19th century both performed Hamlet to great acclaim. The actress Frances de la Tour also played a twentieth-century Hamlet. What trends might Shaw and Hunter's more recent performances be both reflecting and contributing to?

My analysis of this question reflects the source material available. Yet it also aims to create a wider perspective on the issues raised by cross-gender casting. The section dealing with Fiona Shaw's performance looks at the experience of cross-gender casting *from the inside*, as the actress has written very articulately on her preparation for the role. Kathryn Hunter's performance, however, is viewed *from the outside*, in this case from the perspective of the newspaper theatre critics who wrote about it. This complementary focus is designed to raise questions about both the theatrical and social implications of such ventures.

Certainly, theatrical trends can be observed which go beyond exceptional actresses exceptionally playing male roles. The process of cross-gender casting or "regendering" gathered force in England in the 1980's and has become grudgingly accepted in the new millennium. [2] In its contemporary form, it does not just include well-known actresses playing major male roles, but also actresses playing non-major roles. Examples would include Imogen Stubbs as Cassius in *Julius Caesar* and an all-female set of Rude Mechanicals in Cheek by Jowl's 1985 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cross-gender casting as practised nowadays, then, is less about the isolated and the exceptional and more a regular feature of everyday theatre practice applicable, in principle, to all male Shakespearean roles. It has accompanied a similar move towards

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[2] The term 'regendering' was originally used to refer to the process by which women moved into areas of employment where they had traditionally been absent, such as engineering. It perhaps suggests a more far-reaching recasting of the text in performance than the term 'cross-gender casting'. In Portugal, there has recently been a Prospera in *The Tempest* (2004), played by Valerie Bradell, but I know of no other recent cases where actresses have played male Shakespearean roles.

casting men in Shakespearean women's roles. Examples here would include the all-male Henry V which opened the reconstructed Globe Theatre and the highly-acclaimed performances of Mark Rylance, its Artistic Director, as both Cleopatra and Olivia. Inevitably, there is an asymmetry in these two movements. Casting men in women's roles has all the authority of a Shakespearean convention behind it, while casting women in men's roles is still seen as something essentially non-Shakespearean. However, in these recent all-male productions, there has been an increased sensitivity to the sexual politics of the plays which enables both forms of cross-gender casting to claim some common ground. Moreover, cross-gender casting has accompanied a similar movement towards integrated or inter-ethnic casting, where actors from different ethnic backgrounds perform roles which have traditionally been played by white actors. Thus, as it appeared in the 1980's, cross-gender casting was part of a wider series of demands to raise the profile of marginalised groups within theatre.

The arguments around cross-gender casting appear to be straightforward. In an article by director and drama teacher Helen Alexander, she stresses the implications of "regendering" in terms of the employment of actresses:

> Approximately three quarters of theatre roles in Britain are reserved for male actors – thus depriving women actors and women theatre-goers of the equality they deserve.The key to change is in the casting of existing texts (*apud* Glaister, 1997).

Cheek by Jowl's Barbara Matthews has also commented that:

> When we did it with *The Tempest*, which included a Queen of Naples, it made no difference to the reading of the text so it made no difference if it was a woman. We used the most appropriate and best actor for the part (*Ibidem*).

Alexander ends her article challenging Artistic Directors to "take greater risks" with regendering, arguing that "(b)y changing the gender you can make a brilliant story a different brilliant story" (*Ibidem*). Yet Alexander's final argument points to differing conceptions of what cross-gender casting is and what it can be used for. For some, it simply represents a formal move towards equality for men and women. It functions according to the logic that casting a

woman in a man's role will make little or no difference to the performance of the play. For others, it is part of a process whereby a woman is cast in a man's role *precisely so it does* make a difference. The intention is to change the story, or tell a different story. Moreover, in some cases, regendering involves making the character a woman, as with Cheek by Jowl's Queen of Naples. This implies changing forms of address too, for example from Sir to Madam. In other cases, like the two I will analyse, the character remains gendered male, though whether this is smoothed over or drawn attention to by the performer constitutes yet another choice to be made. What seems at first to be one process, therefore, interweaves different, sometimes mutually exclusive, objectives.

Fiona Shaw in *Richard II*

In 1995, Fiona Shaw played Richard II in a National Theatre production directed by Deborah Warner. It had first been suggested that she play Hamlet, but Shaw rejected the idea as "I didn't think a woman could bring anything to this role of male consciousness" (Shaw, 1998, xxiii). The choice of Richard II was based on her view of him as "(a) creature *beyond gender*, Richard's language in the play is unhampered by sexual passion and his affections seem both cousinly and more often than not self-absorbed" (*Ibidem*, my emphasis). Yet other reasons apart from his asexuality may also have influenced the choice of the actress for the role. Although *Richard II* contains some of the most beautiful speeches written by Shakespeare, it is a play that is rarely been staged because little actually happens beyond one king abdicating in favour of his cousin. "Shakespeare's radio play",[3] as a friend of mine rather disparagingly calls it. Casting a woman as Richard might, then, form part of an artistic strategy to make the play more theatrically appealing to an audience. Moreover, there is also the delicious irony of having an Irish actress play an English king who made himself greatly unpopular to a large degree because of his disastrous wars against the Irish.

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[3] My thanks to Keith Harle for this comment.

Shaw has likened the experience of playing Richard to wandering into the "labyrinth of theatre and gender", unaware of the strength of reaction her performance would generate:

> I had no idea then how great the taboo was that I was breaking. Being female and Irish, I thought that there were no rules in the world of imagination. But of course there are other rules, the rules of history, the rules of expectation and the rules of timing *(Ibidem)*.

To be able to play Richard, she first had to "dis-identify" with the conventions of femininity in rehearsal:

> The rehearsals were nearly impossible. When I dressed as a man I seemed like a woman in disguise, and for a few weeks I found a kimono was the most gender-effacing garment. This highlighted the private erotic charge between Bolingbroke and Richard. *Often the costume was less about me and more about the effect on the other actors* (*Ibid*, xxiv, my emphasis).

As the end of rehearsals approached, Shaw felt the process of dis-identification was complete and she could render the character successfully onstage:

> I finally cut my hair, and wore a mummy-like bandaging which depressed my sex over which I wore a loose shirt and a white leather jacket. I found that I was more boyish when I didn't wear the crown, and discovered as the run went on that *the less I tried to play the boy, the more he appeared* (*Ibidem*, my emphasis).

The experience prompted Shaw to pass on advice to others thinking of undertaking such ventures themselves:

> I have not made any great conclusions about the event, but I would warn those who wish to try this kind of experiment to make sure they have a spiritual disposition towards the part, to tap the natural androgyne in themselves which will allow the poetic reality to be higher than the representative (*Ibidem*).

This notion of allowing the poetic reality to be higher than the representative is an important one. It suggests that after watching the production for some time, the fact that a woman is playing a

male role has to become less important than the theatrical effect created by the poetry of the text in performance. It also suggests that the visual impact of the performance becomes secondary to the aural. In the first few scenes of Shaw's performance, it was almost inevitable that the actress playing the role was uppermost in the minds of the audience because it was new and somewhat strange. However, this gradually faded as the individual theatrical traits of Richard's character became more prominent and the rhythmic, almost hypnotic effects of the verse took hold. For the rest of the performance, an awareness of gender seeped in and out of the spectator's consciousness, at times prominent, at others firmly in the background.

The success of the performance was primarily due to the ease with which Shaw made the verse supple and malleable, but other production features also contributed to it. As Shaw indicated, she had worked with the actor playing Bolingbroke during rehearsals to create a potent erotic charge between the two characters onstage. The closeness of their onstage relationship worked to displace attention away from their gender difference as actors, onto the characters' affinities and mutual affection. In turn, this portrayal of the relationship between the king and the future king placed the emphasis of the narrative differently. A narrative about the legitimacy of one king and the unlawful usurpation of another relies heavily on audience outrage at a challenge to the divine right of kings. Such views are not commonplace among contemporary audiences. In this production, however, it became a play about the circularity of the struggle for power, which is a world view that current events make contemporary audiences uncomfortably familiar with. Like two figures on a wheel of fortune, as Bolingbroke rises, Richard falls, but the drama was played without the suggestion that the former is inherently better suited by right to reign than the latter.

A second feature of the success of the performance was its appeal to the audience's imaginative powers, a strategy that is intimately connected with Shaw's belief that the poetic reality should be greater than the representative. An example of this occurred at the end of the play as Richard awaited his death in prison. His long final speech took place in darkness apart from some intermittent shadow play on the walls of the prison. For most of the speech, therefore, the audience only heard a voice speaking the text without

any visual reference. Only towards its close did the figure of Richard gradually emerge from the darkness as his murderers approached. This meant that until the very end, the audience was forced to listen and to create its own visual images of the kinetic presence of Richard without the actual presence of a body. When Richard did appear, real and created images intermingled for the last moments of the play.

Yet such creative demands on the audience can be tiring, especially in a culture which is so predicated on the visual and on immediacy. This brings me to a third element in the success of Shaw's performance, which were the little moments of extra-textual humour she introduced. These included speaking exaggeratedly simple French to Richard's bemused French wife or teasing Bolingbroke about his ambition through derogatory physical gestures. Such moments functioned as a hiatus for performer and audience in their mutual construction of the figure of Shaw as Richard. They intervened in the process of audience identification with the actress playing the male character to provide moments when *it was the actual theatrical process of constructing a role* that was highlighted. This also created moments of critical distance where the audience could focus upon the *separation* between the actress and the role.

Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, Shaw acknowledged moments of fear and self-doubt, but had a generally positive view of the experience:

> There were many moments during this experiment when I lost faith, wanted to run back to playing a Beatrice or a Viola. I received a lot of criticism and in those moments felt beleaguered and unworthy. I felt I had been foolish to over-reach myself (...).But two years on, the response to this event has made me glad of the endeavour. The image or the fact of this event seems to have chimed in some way with our times *(Ibid,* xiv-xiv).

Shaw ends her reflections on playing the role with a hope that the preoccupation with gender will gradually disappear. She claims that "gender (...) and performance are merely another metaphor for the unknown" and anticipates a future "where the inconclusion of gender is embraced and accepted, and the imagination can dance elsewhere" (*Ibid*, xiv).

Lizbeth Goodman calls this vision a "gender-balanced utopia", which suggests the *impossibility* of a world without gender (Goodman, 1998, 1). Yet Shaw puts her finger here on what might be seen as one of the necessary paradoxes of cross-gender casting in the present time. As Shaw herself recognises, a focus on gender difference remains absolutely fundamental whilst theatrical inequality continues to exist between men and women. However, gender difference also has, at least sometimes, to become irrelevant to the performance in order to ensure the artistic success of the venture. Unfortunately, for now, there are many impediments to such a utopia, as we shall also see in the next section, but it is certainly a useful beacon to keep alight.

Kathryn Hunter in *King Lear*

The actress Kathryn Hunter played Lear at the Young Vic, London, in 1997. The production was also directed by a woman, Helena Kaut-Howson, and set within a menacing, wartime environment. In interview, Kaut-Howson explained that she cast Hunter "because I believe the part is about old age and not about gender. It should be available to women and men. The issues that were of interest in the play were ones that the actress was capable of embracing" (*apud* Glaister, 1997).[4] Yet in a somewhat apocalyptic piece included in the production programme, Jacek Laskowski reinterprets the play from the perspective of Lear as an old woman looking back over her life. He suggests that this female Lear might be no less sane than the world around her:

> (h)er otherness, her seeming madness, is just as likely a reflection of her struggle to discover the mysteries of life, to make sense of her life and that of her generation, to come to terms with the irresistible life-giving forces in a world dominated by destruction, senselessness, and despair, to answer the fundamental, unanswerable question: why live, and why give life? (Laskowski, 1997).

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[4] Kaut-Howson had previously been Artistic Director of Theatr Clwyd in Wales.

This hints at a more fundamental reworking of the Shakespearean play than Kaut-Howson's justification for casting Kathryn Hunter implies. Crucially, by the time of the London performances, the prequel to the play which presented Hunter as a hospitalised old woman, for whom the play itself is a fantasy, had been reduced to a single scene at the beginning of the play where she was brought onto the stage silently in a wheelchair.

Predictably, the production attracted much press coverage, both positive and negative. The *Times*, in an article entitled "Queen Lear", affirmed "Kathryn Hunter makes gender irrelevant in a superb portrayal of the tragic monarch" (*The Times*, 1997). Nicholas de Jongh, however, in "A King who's not every inch a man" disagreed. He characterised the production as "an experiment high on daring and inventiveness, which left me brooding about the sheer perversity of the production" (de Jongh, 1997). He concluded adamantly that "these cross-gender acting forays just do not work". For De Jongh, discarding the conceit of the play as Hunter's fantasy creation was a mistake "since a woman can make a believable King Lear only if it's her *fantasy projection* of being a male monarch" (*Ibidem*, my emphasis). He argued that a more viable alternative would be to present a play called *Queen Lear*:

> Miss Hunter's Lear would be more convincing if she had not aspired to masculinity. Her bass, throaty voice, *which lacks the Shakespearean range*, may sound like a man's, but she comes over as thoroughly female (*Ibidem*, my emphasis).

De Jongh concludes:

> This King Lear is a *domestic old girl*, with a walking stick, not given to rage or implacability – two essential character components. It's a *courageous, touching* performance, with Hunter sharply conveying the sense of Lear's dazed confusion, but *missing the epic anger and anguish* (*Ibidem*, my emphasis).

De Jongh also criticises the production generally for "an insufficient pitch of cruelty, extremism or horror" (*Ibidem*). It is worth drawing attention to two features of this review. The first is its patronising tone throughout, conveyed in phrases like "domestic old girl" and in the suggestion that the only way an actress can make sense of a major male role is as a "fantasy projection". The

second is the way in which de Jongh sets up the straw figure of a correct way to play Lear which is implicitly linked to masculinity. He then measures Hunter's deviation from it in terms of her femaleness. For de Jongh, Hunter's performance is "courageous" and "touching" yet the "true" Lear, the Lear of epic anger and anguish remains tantalisingly out of her reach. Although he does not make this explicit, the "norm" he invokes is that of key previous performances of the role by Laurence Olivier and other male actors. What this means is that he fundamentally misjudges Hunter's performance, which used a much wider variety of emotional registers than de Jongh implies. It ranged from visible anger to bafflement to impatience to genuine concern and even wonder.

In *The Times* review, entitled "Mother of All Fathers", Jeremy Kingston takes a different view from de Jongh. From a traditional perspective, he acknowledges that Hunter's performance might be seen as lacking as, "(h)er voice does not beat against the roof in the storm scenes, and I suspect it may not be up to doing so" (Kingston, 1997). But, as he adds, "such suspicions are irrelevant because she builds the performance on a different structure, and the rewards come plentifully in the closing scenes, when the king flickers in and out of madness. Here Hunter finds for him a kind of divine grace" (*Ibidem*). Kingston also notes:

> (...) a puckish amusement in this elderly baby's face; fingers twitch excitedly as Hunter hobbles towards Cordelia, fondly confident of even more love and cherishment. "Nothing will come of nothing" is spoken as a caring parent might say it, explaining an error, not stamping on an offender (*Ibidem*).

Kingston's final paragraph celebrates a new kind of universality in Hunter's performance where "(t)he sex of the actor is immaterial before such capacity to reach the core of an experience" (*Ibidem*). This supportive review of Hunter's performance starts from the premise that the production should be judged on its own terms, rather than in relation to a theatrical tradition of male actors playing the role. It also attempts to convey something of the physical presence of the cross-gendered performance onstage. Words like "puckish", and descriptions such as that of the "gravelly, wavering voice" hint at how the actress and the male character might momentarily interact onstage.

Conclusion

Analysis of these two performances suggests that there is a struggle currently going on within the world of Shakespearean theatre. Following Alan Sinfield, we might position this struggle along a gender "faultline" in contemporary culture, where the cracks or fissures in a dominant ideology open up to become sites of contestation. One of the areas in which such contestation can be seen is in the language used to demand gender equality. For instance, when Cheek by Jowl's Barbara Matthews talks about "choosing the most appropriate and best actor for the part", she is invoking a phrase which was traditionally used by within the theatre world as a reason for *excluding* women. Here, however, it is recast by a woman precisely to *justify* the choice of an actress. There is also evidence of struggle in de Jongh's dismissive review of Hunter's Lear. The very vehemence of his reaction against cross-gender casting suggests something of the depth of theatrical opposition to it, although paradoxically, it also suggests something of its success and more widespread use. Finally, we get a sense in Jeremy Kingston's more sympathetic review of Hunter's performance that cross-gender casting is prompting changes in the language of theatrical reviewing. Often, the language of gender assumptions has substituted for aesthetic assessments of performance in such reviews, especially with performances by women. Yet Kingston's careful attempt to describe Hunter's cross-gendered presence indicates that a new domain of critical language is growing up around cross-gendered performances which will benefit theatrical reviewing generally.

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of cross-gendered performances such as Hunter's and Shaw's is that they bring out something in the text which is not necessarily directly connected with gender, but is prompted by such gender changes. Shaw used the distance between actress and male character to prompt questions about the relationship between the visual, the verbal and the aural in contemporary performance. In Hunter's performance, there was a strong sense that authority resided in a series of symbols or objects rather than in some natural, inherited characteristic of the King. This gave extra significance to comments like Kent's that authority seemed to emanate from Lear's countenance, for it showed, in a very theatrical way, how authority

was constructed through symbols and only retrospectively seen to be an attribute of a certain person. The contrast between the power of these symbols and the fragility of the human Lear was especially visible in the storm scene. Hunter wheeled herself frantically around the stage as she raged, opening up a gaping chasm between the grandiloquence of Lear's speech or the immensity of the storm and Lear's evident physical weakness.

As can be seen from reviews of Hunter's performance, another major advantage of casting a woman in roles like Lear or Richard is to point out precisely just how much current thinking about major Shakespearean roles continues to rely on sexist stereotypes. Kathryn Hunter's Lear obviously annoyed de Jongh sufficiently to respond in the way he did and such a response clarified the premises upon which his reviewing operates. Shaw was also made aware of the extent to which an Irish actress was not expected to consider Shakespearean male roles as part of her potential theatrical repertoire.

However, while both made a strong case for casting women in male roles so that such simple theatrical prejudice can be challenged, the performances were less effective in highlighting the limitations of the texts themselves. This is because arguments in favour of cross-gender casting are often based on demands for access to the "great" and "universal" Shakespearean roles. As such, they do not acknowledge that the same patriarchal assumptions that have historically prevented actresses from playing these roles in the theatre also traverse the dramatic texts used for performance. Therefore, with regard to how effective regendering is as a tool against mechanisms of exclusion of women or even misogyny in the Shakespearean text, questions remain. Lear's hostility and contempt for women, for instance, still formed part of the performance text for Hunter's production. Did having an actress rather than an actor give these speeches make a difference? How much difference could one isolated example of cross-gender casting make when all the other roles were performed conventionally?[5] Like with

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[5] This was particularly noticeable in the Gloucester-Lear relationship, where the male actor playing the role seemed to be giving exactly the type of Shakespearean performance Hunter sought to act against. This is not to say the whole cast need be regendered in order for cross-gender casting to work. Hunter's acting associate from

Richard and Bolingbroke in Shaw's production, the complex scheme of parallels and differences within texts needs to be rethought in order to give vital onstage support to the cross-gendered performance of the central characters. Shaw did receive such onstage support from the other actors and this substantially affected the success of her performance. Yet, it is also the case that *Richard II* has only two minor roles for women characters and that all of the other many roles in the play were performed by actors in her production.

To end, a more positive Portuguese tale based on current theatrical trends. I returned to Porto a couple of years after my former visit to see some scenes from Shakespeare being performed. As in other years, the number of women students outnumbered that of men, so several of the actresses had to play male parts. Not all were successful, but I do remember a particularly sweet Romeo and Juliet played with two women. It was amazing to see perhaps the most powerful heterosexual love story within the Shakespearean canon reworked into a beautifully gentle and inventive love story with a variety of points of identification and desire. It certainly proved that if women refuse to be confined within the roles that gender supposedly determines for them, they certainly have a lot to gain.

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Théâtre de Complicité, Marcello Magni, picked up on and echoed Hunter's nervous physical energy in his performance as the Fool. As the Magni-Hunter parallel indicates, support for cross-gender casting may not involve a drive towards homogeneity within the cast, but rather towards holding in creative tension different performance techniques within the ensemble.

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"Kathryn Hunter as Lear and Marcello Magni as the Fool in the 1997 Young Vic King Lear. Photographer: Tristram Kenton. Thanks to Cliona Roberts, Young Vic Theatre."

Between Text and Stage:
Inter-Arts and Intra-Ethics

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Virginia Woolf once had to write a theatre review out of friendship for Geoffrey Maynard Keynes and his wife, Lydia Lopokova, a famous ballet dancer who had turned to acting, then playing the role of Olivia in a production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, directed by Tyrone Guthrie at the Old Vic Theatre, London. Written in 1933 (and published the 30 September in *The New Statesman*) this text ended up being – no doubt partly due to the embarrassment caused by the novelist's opinion on Lopokova's acting – a stimulating essay on the way someone, in the first half of the 20th century, could regard the difference between reading and seeing plays. Woolf begins her text on a somehow humorous note stating that "Shakespeareans are divided, it is well known, into three classes: those who prefer to read Shakespeare in the book; those who prefer to see him acted on the stage; and those who run perpetually from book to stage gathering plunder" (Woolf, 2000: 207). Although she herself stresses some advantages for "reading *Twelfth Night* in the book", especially those associated with time to wonder and time to make notes and time to consider the musical quality of the writing, the writer strategically ends up asking "why should we imprison them [the characters] within the bodies of real men and women? Why exchange this garden for the theatre? The answer is that Shakespeare wrote for the stage and presumably with reason" (*Idem*: 207-208). And then she proceeds to *"compare the two versions"*, namely the one that Shakespeare wrote and the one then being presented at the Old Vic. The most interesting part of Woolf's considerations comes precisely during this exercise

such is the sensitivity with which she mentions the transforma-
tions Shakespeare's text underwent in the context of that particular
production:

> The actual persons of Malvolio, Sir Toby, Olivia and the rest
> *expand our visionary characters* out of all recognition. At first we
> are *inclined to resent it*. You are not Malvolio; or Sir Toby either,
> we want to tell them; but merely impostors. We sit gapping *at
> the ruins of the play, at the travesty of the play*. And then by
> degrees this same body or rather all *these bodies together*, take
> our play and *remodel it* between then. The play gains immensely
> in robustness, in solidity. *The printed word is changed out of all
> recognition when it is heard by other people*. We watch it strike
> upon this man or woman; we see them laugh or shrug their
> shoulders, or turn aside to hide their faces. *The word is given a
> body as well as a soul*. Then again as the actors pause, or topple
> over a barrel, or stretch their hands out, the flatness of the print
> is broken up as by crevasses or precipices; all the proportions
> are changed. Perhaps the most impressive effect in the play is
> achieved by the long pause which Sebastian and Viola make as
> they stand looking at each other in a silent ecstasy of recognition.
> The reader's eye may have slipped over that moment entirely.
> Here we are made to pause and think about it; and are reminded
> that *Shakespeare wrote for the body and for the mind simultaneously*.
> (*Idem*: 208, my emphasis).

Many different things could be said of this passage, namely the
important reference to the collective experience of attending a play
and listening to a text in a playhouse and the recognition of the way
it affects both the verbal material and the way we *read* it. But what
seems to be particularly interesting here is the quiet understanding
that she is speaking about a totally different kind of aesthetic
experience, no less rewarding for that matter. And even if she ends
her review thanking the director for having made it necessary to her
to read *Twelfth Night* again, she adds a note of negative criticism
that could still be very easily found today in many contemporary
theatre reviews: "We left the theatre possessed of many brilliant
fragments but without the sense of all things conspiring and
combining together which may be the less satisfying culmination
of a less brilliant performance" (*Idem*: 209-10). Moreover, she
explicitly credits Tyrone Guthrie, the director, as responsible for
the reading of the play proposed in that particular production.

Born in 1882, we might correctly say that Virginia Woolf was contemporary to extraordinary and historical changes in theatre practice, namely the gradual disappearance of the actor-manager and the emergence of the theatre director. In England, she was contemporary not only to Henry Irving, the first actor to be knighted and the best representative of that lasting tradition of actors-managers, but also to Edward Gordon Craig – ten years her junior – the son of the actress Ellen Terry and E. W. Goodwin, architect and designer. Craig started his theatre experience in Henry Irving's company before devoting himself to directing and designing and finally to the composition of one of the most influential body of writings on theatre which proved decisive for the future paths tread by 20th century theatre. The theatrical work of others of his contemporaries like Stanislavsky, Nemirovich-Dantchenko and Meyerhold, in Russia, André Antoine and Jacques Copeau, in France, Otto Brahm, in Germany, and Harley Granville-Barker and Tyrone Guthrie, in England, may have had more practical and immediate effects on the theatre practice of their time, but the long-lasting effect of Craig's visionary perceptions, statements and design sketches only find a possible equivalent in the writings and sketches of another visionary, Adolphe Appia.

Published in 1905 and republished in 1911, Craig's eloquently titled *The Art of the Theatre* is the most perfect demonstration of the "Copernician revolution" with which the French theorist and historian Bernard Dort some decades later described the epistemological cut operated at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, the consequence of the "emancipation" of theatre from the dramatic text and the emergence of theatre directing. Craig's major concerns and ambitions were that a director should keep absolute control over all aspects of a production in rehearsal and in performance, including the acting style.

At this point it would be important to remember that the figure of the "producer" or "stage manager" ("metteur en scène", in France, and "Regisseur", in Germany) had emerged as a response to a complex set of needs and developments, some more sociological, others more technical and others still more intrinsically artistic: the loss of a common set of theatrical conventions shared by the audience and of cultural assumptions regarding style demanded a new kind of mediator; the increasing technical complexity of theatre artifices led to new specializations and to the need of both

a leader to the creative and technical team and final authority capable of assuring artistic unity; and the experiences of both naturalism and symbolism in theatre led to more subtle and more subjective and self-aware creative interventions.

In the First Dialogue of Craig's *The Art of the Theatre*, we find not only a claim for the absolute autonomy and independence of the "stage director", but also penetrating insights into what would subsequently become the criteria to define the position of any theatre director or even theatrical movement or style: precisely the place assigned to the text in the theatrical event and the measure in which we can regard (some types of) theatre as an interpretative or derivative art. Although Craig still speaks of the stage manager as a "faithful" "interpreter of the play of the dramatist", he already refuses the idea that this artist has to obey to stage directions, descriptions of the scenes, etc, "for if he is master of his craft he can learn nothing from them" (Craig, 1983: 57). Having under his care the tasks of scenery, costume, lighting, and acting, it comes as no surprise that Craig's stage director foresees that "the theatre must not forever rely upon having a play to perform, but must perform pieces of its own art" (*idem*: 55). More in accordance with this last vision than with the interpretative task mentioned before, Craig has his spokesperson say:

> You will remember that at the commencement of our conversation I told you my belief in the Renaissance of the Art of the Theatre was based in my belief in the Renaissance of the stage director, and that when he had understood the right use of actors, scene, costume, lighting, and dance, and by means of these has mastered the crafts of interpretation, he would then gradually acquire the mastery of action, line, colour, rhythm, and words, this last strength developing out of all the rest... Then I said the Art of the Theatre would have won back its rights, and its work would stand self-reliant *as a creative art*, and *no longer as an interpretative craft*. (*Idem*: 70, my emphasis).

Regardless of further discussions on the degree of aesthetic control of the theatre director, rarely an "unfettered dictatorial power" (Kennedy, 2003: 376), the most important aspect to stress in Craig's statement is the way it runs so clearly against that most ingrained Aristotelian insistence that the dramatic text was the essence of theatre and his correlative objection to performance as

a dispensable reality, condemning theatre activity to at best a – necessarily imperfect – interpretation of the text:

> Pity and fear arise from the spectacle and also from the very structure of the plot, which is the superior way and shows the better poet. The poet should construct the plot so that even if the action is not performed before spectators, one who merely hears the incidents that have occurred both shudders and feels pity from the way they turn out. That is what anyone who hears the plot of the *Oedipus* would experience. The achievement of this effect through the spectacle does not have much to do with poetic art and really belongs to the business of producing the play. Those who use the spectacle to create not the fearful but only the monstrous have no share in the creation of tragedy; for we should not seek pleasure from tragedy but only the one proper to it. (Aristotle, 1981: 23).

In spite of the extraordinary and very influential scenic and acting developments during the history of western theatre, the fact remains that this notion that drama is literature and theatre merely a mediating form was – and probably still is – a very pervasive conviction. Be it as it may, the characterization of the task – or *art* – of directing and *mise en scène* is still very frequently characterized by the way the director or *metteur en scène* deals with the dramatic text. Let me briefly add three examples of this and of the way some prejudices remain quite alive, particularly in some areas of the Anglo-North American theatre world.

In a very popular training book published in 1996, *Directing Plays*, its author, Don Taylor, a British playwright and director, suggests three categories to characterize the work of theatre directors: the text director, the transformational director and the auteur director. What distinguishes them is precisely the type of relation they establish with the dramatic text and the place they accord to that same text within the many different languages of performance: "a deep love and abiding respect for *playwrights, as the true authors of theatre*" (Taylor, 1996: 27), for the text director; for a transformational director, the text is material, frequently subjected to radical changes; while the auteur director would be the one with the ambition to take responsibility for the entire creative process and thus tending to downgrade the playwright.

A more recent book published in 2001 and authored by Terry McCabe, a theatre director and teacher from Chicago, eloquently titled *Mis-Directing the Play: An Argument against Contemporary Theatre*, has a very simple premise: "directing that seeks to control the text, instead of subordinating itself to the text, is bad directing. I believe the director's job is to tell the playwright's story as clearly and as interestingly as possible. Period" (McCabe, 2001: 16). So that no doubts remain about the author's purpose and convictions I should add a perhaps more clarifying pronouncement:

> Stage directors who attempt to be *auteurs* of the theatre are denying the nature of their art form. And so they give us such productions that depend heavily upon "nonlive" elements such as videotape, recorded music, and elaborate technical effects." (17); "*Creative* is a word that gets bandied about casually, as an approximate synonym for *artistic*. Strictly speaking, there is only one creative artist in the theatre. It is the playwright, the only one who makes something out of nothing. The rest of us – directors, designers, actors – are interpretative artists. We take what the playwright has created and demonstrate to an audience what we think the playwright's creation looks and sounds like. (*Idem*: 21).

More surprising is a text quite recently published – the book was launched just last month – in the new *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. In a publication that presents itself as "grounded in contemporary theatre and performance studies", the entry for "Text", written by a prestigious North-American professor, makes extensive use of the metaphor of recipes to describe the relation of plays to performance:

> From the perspective of theatre as a performing art, given their inevitable indeterminacy, playtexts are recipes. They are sets of instructions to be filled in and executed by actors, directors, and so on. Playtexts specify the ingredients of the performance – such as lines of dialogues and props – as well as the range of global emotional tones or flavours appropriate to the work. (...) This does not allow the executors of the playtext to do anything they wish with the text (...). (Carroll, 2003: 1345).

After suggesting that only the playwright is a *creator* while those dealing with performance are *executors*, the author, Noël Carroll comes dangerously close to critical and theoretical abuse when

he compares the art of composition and the art of performance on the basis of the first being "fixed by her intentions" and the second being "variable".

It seemed important to illustrate this complex mixture of prejudices and obscure notions concerning the relation of text and stage as a way to confirm that out of more sophisticated rationales and theoretical proposals the confusion is still abiding, notwithstanding the wealth of more or less radical experiences that constitute the history of 20th century theatre practice and creation. Sometimes it is as if, for instance, the Artaudian reactions against logocentric practices and views had never taken place, or as if the many modernist and post-modernist experiments with images and words and their different possibilities of interaction were all swiftly swept way under a re-emergent normative and prescriptive tendency to reinstall apparently overcome primacies. If it is true that one of the greatest ironies of Western 20th century history is the fact that some of its most important visionaries left a legacy in written form, it is also true that together with Appia, Craig and Artaud, we have also had the work of Meyerhold or Robert Wilson. The fact remains that opposite to say, literature, traditional visual arts or cinema, theatre because of its ephemeral nature suffers from a lack of visibility, what necessarily conditions some of its developments.

A renewed theatre history and semiotics have undoubtedly been important contributions to the field of theatre and performance studies, but especially the high ambitions of the linguistic-framed semiotics were somehow stopped by the recognition that even if everything on stage might be a sign, not everything is so directly subject to codification. In theatre, particularly due to the collective nature of contributions and to the very unstable and sometimes unpredictable sequence of events, there's such a large degree of indeterminacy and of sensuous materiality that other mechanisms have to be found to deal more correctly with such an experience, in the case you are a spectator, or an object, when you become a researcher. Theatre studies as such are a very recent discipline and its "endemic structural difficulties" and "epistemological chaos" are quite well known. Paradoxically, a larger concept of performance has been attracting the interest of several disciplines, and I would agree with Ronald W. Vince's suggestion that with the slowly "replacement of the dramatic text with performance at the centre of theatre studies, [together with] the recognition of theatrical texts

and practice in terms of a wider culture that is itself performative, (...) theatre studies may finally take its place as a central humane discipline" (Vince, 2003: 1352).

The same Bernard Dort I mentioned earlier left us an important reflection that he wrote in 1984 as a supplement for *Encyclopedia Universalis*, on the excoriating subject of "Le texte et la scène: Pour une nouvelle alliance", in which he adds the very provocative suggestion that if at the turning of the beginning of the 20th century theatre experienced a "Copernician revolution", the second half of the 20th century brought about an "Einsteinian revolution":

> La révolution copernicienne du début du siècle s'est muée en une révolution einstenienne. Le renversement de la primauté entre le texte et la scène s'est transformé en une relativisátion généralisée des facteurs de la réprésentation thèâtrale les uns par rapport aux autres. On en vient à renouer à l'idée d'une unité organique, fixée a priori, voire d'une essence du fait théâtral (la mystérieuse théâtralité), et à concevoir plutôt celui-ci sous les espèces d'une polyphonie signifiante, tournée vers le spectateur.
>
> Dans cette diversification du champ et des modes d'exercise du théâtre, le couple texte/scène perd sa position centrale et s'ouvre à bien des variations. (...) En definitive, c'est à une emancipation des diverses facteurs de la représentantion théâtrale que nous assistons aujourd'hui. Une conception du théâtre, qu'elle soit fondée sur le texte ou sur la scène, est en train de s'éffacer. Elle laisse progressivement place à l'iddée d'une polyphonie, voire d'une competition des arts frères qui contribuent au fait théâtral.
>
> Le long débat entre le texte et la scène s'en trouve déjà déplacée: bientôt, il ne sera plus loin d'être sans object. C'est la representation théâtrale en tant que *jeu* entre des pratiques irréductibles l'une à l'autre et néanmoins conjugués, en tant que *moment* oú celles-ci s'affrontent et s'interrogent, en tant que *combat* mutuel don't le spectateur est, en fin de compte, le juge et l'enjeu, qu'il faut maintenant essayer de penser. Le texte, tous les texts y ont place. Ni la prémière, ni la dernière: la place de l'écrit et du permanent dans un événement concret et ephémère. (Dort, 1995: 270, 273-4).

More recently, Hans-Thies Lehman suggested an even more radical diagnosis in a book published previously in German, in 1999, and later translated into French, under the suggestive title

Le théâtre postdramatique. His objects are the more radical experiments of *mise en scène* in the last decades, especially all those that in different ways and using different strategies depart from more traditional concepts of drama and the dramatic, this being the reason why the author prefers the term "post-dramatic" to the more trendy, but certainly more fuzzy, post-modern. One of his most suggestive remarks, characterizing many of the theatrical experiments from the sixties onwards, concerns, again, the relations between text and stage, in a clear echo of Bernard Dort's diagnosis stated above:

> Les rapports constitutifs du théâtre dramatique ont plutôt tendance à s'inverser: la question de savoir si et comment le théâtre 'correspond' de façon adequate au texte n'est plus primordiale. On demande bien plutôt aux textes si et en quelle mesure ils peuvent constituer um matériau adequate pour la réalisation d'un projet théâtral. On ne recherche plus la totalité d'une composition esthétique constitué de parole, de sens, de sons, de geste, etc, et qui se présente comme construction cohérente à la perception. Le théâtre prône plutôt son caractère fragmentaire. Il se démarque du critère de l'unité et de la synthése demeuré si longtemps incontesté, et s'expose à la chance et au danger de se fier à des impulsions partielles, à des bribes et microstructures de texte pour devenir une nouvelle pratique théâtrale. Il découvre dans cette voie un nouveau continent de la performance, une présence nouvelle des "performers" (en lesquels mutent les "acteurs") et il établit le paysage théâtral multiforme au-delá des formes centrés sur le drame. (Lehmann, 2002: 84).

Much less radical are the contributions of the French theorist, Patrice Pavis, author among other works of a conceptual *Dictionnaire de Théâtre* (1996) and of a book on *L'Analyse des spectales* (1996). One of the very few French theorists and researchers on drama and theatre translated into English, Routledge published in 1992 a collection of some of his essays, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, including "From Page to Stage: A Difficult Birth". Together with the pages he dedicates to this issue in the other two books mentioned, this essay is one of the most definitive and clarifying introductions to the relation between text and stage, together with a brief theory of *mise en scène* understood as the enactment of a pre-existing dramatic text. Perhaps the most challenging part of

this essay is the list in which Pavis tries to oppose many of the misconceptions regarding the notion of *mise en scène*:

> 1. Mise en scène is not the staging of a supposed textual "potential". (..) 2. Mise en scène does not have to be faithful to a dramatic text. (...) 3. (...) mise en scène does not annihilate or dissolve the dramatic text (...) 4. Different mises en scène of a common text (...) do not provide readings of the same text. (...) 5. Mise en scène is not the stage representation of the textual referent. (...) 6. Mise en scène is not the fusion of two referents (textual and stage), nor does it strive to find their common denominator. (...) 7. Mise en scene is not the performative realization of the text. (Pavis, 1992: 27-8).

This is an extremely valid change in perspective, theoretically renewing an opposition to the longstanding "logocentric vision of theatre, with the text as the central element and mise en scène an incidental transcription, representation or explanation of the text". Pavis adds:

> There's an undeniable relationship between text and performance, but it does not take the form of a translation or a reduplication of the former by the latter, but rather of a transfer or a *confrontation* of the *fictional universe* structured by the text and the fictional universe produced by the stage. (*Idem*: 28).

Besides this notion of "confrontation", the idea that the text is put under dramatic and stage tension, he further introduces the notions of textual and scenic fictionalization, thus concentrating future work on the modalities of this confrontation.

This presentation could perhaps have gained more by the application of its concerns to a specific theatre production instead of insisting on the mere articulation of some theoretical contributions to reflect upon this crucial problem to theatre studies. The *interarts* umbrella provocatively transfers our attention to the dialogue between two semiotic systems, drama and theatre, two domains that interarts studies seem to be seldom interested in, preferring to study the relations between music and literature or literature and the visual arts. If on the one hand it is clear that this object of study already has its own complex discipline, theatre studies, on the other hand it is no less true that this lack of attention

might be regarded as the result of an unquestioning association between drama and theatre, as if the latter was the inevitable consequence of the former, regardless of its artistic invention and mechanisms. The suggestion of an "intra-ethics" intends to be more than a simple wordplay, somehow stressing the existence of not only two autonomous fields of experience, but also, and consequently, of different sets of ethical imperatives. I'm sure that this suggestion, demanding a deeper and more mature development, was linked with the evaluative end of this question, with which I would like to conclude, particularly because it is perhaps more present in the way we respond to a major theatre production than the calmer and more reflexive exercise of analysis. The fact is that I'm still deeply convinced that *our* common tendency whenever we attend to a production based on a dramatic text – particularly if we know it, but even if we don't, for we always have the chance of getting in touch with the text during the performance – is to assess the way that particular production *interpreted* the play, the kind of *reading* it offered, imposing our own literary or dramaturgical analysis, thus simultaneously subscribing to the confirmation of the derivative nature of theatre and refraining from a more complete theatre experience, forgetting to activate other perceptive and sensorial mechanisms to read and feel the workings of a particular production. A totally different situation might happen when the production ostensibly appropriates the text, submitting it to major changes, cuts or interpolations. The situation I was describing applies particularly to those cases in which the theatre production includes among its materials, and usually uses as its title, a given dramatic text. Another item I would like to leave here is the eventual difference between classical and contemporary texts, both in the way they are dealt with by the theatre creators and received by the audience.
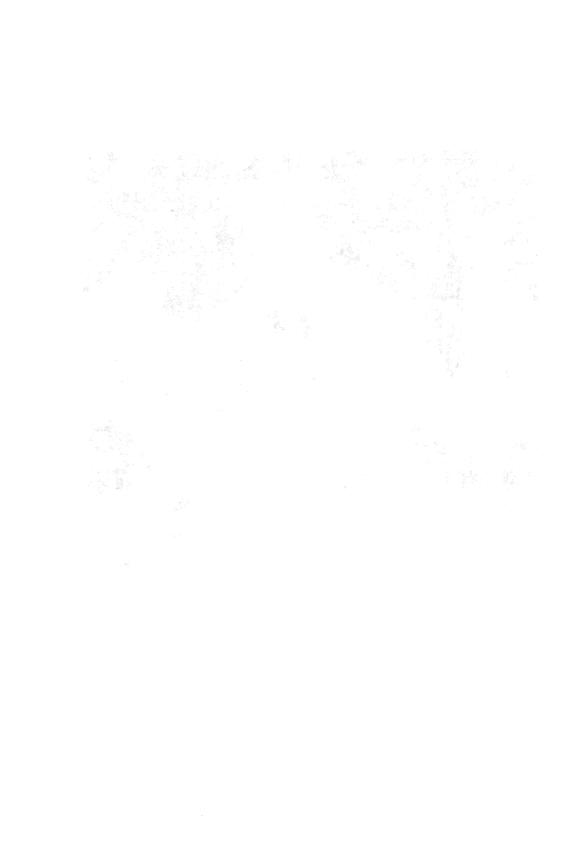
The quite *selfish* purpose of this presentation resulted from a very personal need to deal with my own misgivings and hesitations simultaneously as a spectator, as a researcher and as a theatre practitioner. A growing awareness that my basic personal training is essentially linguistic and literary has been leading me to question some of the parameters with which I more spontaneously work in the theatre, both as a dramaturg and a translator, and attend a performance or study the work of a theatre artist and creator.

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Two Texts on Dance

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The physiognomy of solitude

The subject of representation in the arts is as old as art itself. Is the acknowledgement of what an artistic object is supposed to represent – if anything – an intrinsic part of aesthetic experience? The suitability of either a negative or a positive answer to this tricky question differs widely across the arts and makes it very difficult to achieve a satisfactory all-inclusive reply. A way to deal with the problem has been to adapt the very notion of "representation" in order to make it adjustable to all arts in a kind of "variable geometry" of the concept. Philosophers have thus come to agree on the persistence of four kinds of aesthetic representation, i.e., four ways by which an artistic x stands for an object y: unconditional, lexical, conditional specific and conditional generic representation. Unconditional representation obtains by triggering the spectator's innate recognitional capacities and is best represented by the natural generativity associated to the most common systems of depiction: in order to understand that a horse is being depicted we only have to use our visual capacity for recognizing a real horse. Lexical representation involves the mediation of a conventionalized code. In Romantic Ballet, for instance, if a character draws a circle around her head that means "I'm pretty". Conditional specific representation means that sometimes the spectator is only able to recognize what is being represented – or indeed, that something is being represented *at all* – if he knows what is being represented. Conditional generic representation implies that in order to recognize an artistic signal as representational the spectator has

to be aware that something is being represented (e.g. *Pictionary*). Some arts seem to rely almost exclusively on one of these representational strategies (e.g. literature is far more dependent on lexicographic representation than, say, theatre or music). But most arts – and particularly, performative arts – tend to involve more than just one kind of representation. One may then distinguish the arts according to the representational strategy each one tends to prefer. Dance, for instance, relies far more heavily on conditional representation than theatre or film. However, it employs unconditional representation far more frequently than music does.

Consequently, any art form that disengages itself from the strict or classic distinction between artistic genres – new media art forms or hybrid arts – may still be characterized according to their specific balanced use of representational strategies.

Pina Bausch's notion of dance-theatre – a suitable heir to the German expressionist tradition – sets her shows quite apart when it comes to this sort of characterization. Half-sister both to theatre and to dance, Bausch's choreography would probably confuse both Mr Noverre's project of a *ballet d'action* and André Levinson's desire for a choreographic "pure function". As is the general case with dance, conditional representation is pervasive throughout her pieces. But this is not to say that other modes of representation, particularly those more common to theatre, and namely unconditional representation, are not extensively used. *Café Müller* is clearly a piece where conditional specific representation constitutes the dominant type of representation. The piece is the staging of Bausch's memories from the days when, as a child, she used to observe the behaviour of lonely men and women wandering through the labyrinth of chairs of a German café. There is even a jumping elegant lady who seems to remind us of all those moments when we came to a café looking for someone we know (the question here is: what would happen if we'd never cease looking?). We are aware, then, that loneliness is the theme of this work. The scenario of empty chairs and an empty revolving door is quite effective in the way it reminds us how cafés constitute the most accurate environment for a representation of solitude as the absence of someone. Both chairs and door are clear spatial *slots* that are now devoid of their occupants, public places open to non-existent clients.

The first entrance of a moving character – Pina Bausch herself – repeats the scenario's *availability*: her arms are open and willing. She adds to this, though, a sense of unbalance and lack of support. This is to be understood in a straightforward *gravitational* sense: Pina's *spectre* – a distinct character that never interacts with anyone – is evidently lacking physical support. She denotes it by the way her arms are kept open outwards and leaning forward forcing her body to advance in small steps as if performing a village dance, a clumsy convulsion that stops when she gets to the stage's wall. This movement is to become the recurrent *leit-motiv* that unifies the entire piece. It is entirely representational if we bear in mind the conditional representation strategy followed by the artist: it is the very physiognomy of solitude: unbalance, incompleteness, an anxious openness, the search for a physical support that is momentarily provided by the sidewall. She also initiates a pattern of gestures that is going to be followed and developed by the other dancers throughout the remaining performance. There is a permanent use of angles, particularly in the moving and ostensive presentation of the elbows, interrupted movements of the arms that intertwine or converge in a spiral turning of the body, and gestures that are usually interrupted, closing the arms over the head or the body. Sudden changes of rhythm are also common as if the dancer's solos follow a private and evidently non-interactive program. Interestingly, the only moments when the spectre seems to "open up" her secluded behaviour is when, again, she resumes her unstable dance towards the sidewall.

(However, if the viewer tries to perform this very gesture something of a generative nature occurs. Imagine you're standing in this position; imagine you're facing the same unbalance and compulsion forward, the same kinaesthetic need for physical support. The kinaesthetic identification with the character, this sort of muscular mimesis, is comparable to the generative triggering of our innate recognitional visual capabilities[1]. There is no mediation

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[1] Our understanding of systems of depiction is normally generative, i.e., with classical depictions we recognize that a picture is the picture of a boat if we can recognize a boat. (Cf. G. Currie, *Image and Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 88).

there, just an automatic empathy. Most aesthetic experience of dance – and indeed, much of the representational power of dance – relies on this kind of unconditional representation of bodily behaviour. The comparison between *this* unbalanced feeling and the concept of "loneliness" is, to a great extent, built on it. Thus, it is obviously a matter of conditional representation. But I am proposing here that the very feeling of loneliness is triggered by this kind of behaviour in a sort of generative representation: if we recognize loneliness – either by experiencing *it* or by witnessing the experience of *it* – then we'll naturally recognize Pina's spectre as the representation of the physiognomy of solitude. We don't act like this because we're lonely; we are lonely because we act like this. Specific conditions for the identification of representation are irrelevant here.)

The spectral demonstration of loneliness is then multiplied and, in a way, developed by the succession of characters and/or gestures that follows. The female character is frequently used conveying perhaps how the cafés' loneliness is fundamentally a feminine mode. Her appearance shows us one of the most exciting characteristics of Pina Bausch's work: the way music is used not as a complement or supplement of the dancer's movements but as something of which the dancer is clearly aware. Pina's dancers don't just move to the music. They listen to it. Even more interestingly, they demonstrate how they literally react to it. Music is never just a rhythmic or melodic support; it is an *occasion* within the piece. This is why, in most Pina Bausch's shows, dancers tend to *oppose* themselves against the music. Bob Wilson tried for years to show to opera audiences how choirs should move in opposition to the music. Bausch's dancers have learned this lesson and perform this in the most non-redundant and effective way. Both the female and male characters are significant tokens of this effort: at a given moment, she almost starts to dance to Purcell's music but the gesture is quickly interrupted and refused; at another moment, a series of convulsions, extremely rapid and mechanized chains of gestures that take the dancer to an overpowering exhaustion and even the ostensive presentation of this exhaustion (the dancer's heavy breathing, for instance, becomes a salient element of what is being described) are developed counter-current to the soothing pace of *Dido and Aeneas'* aria. Even the anxious way with which the

waiter tries to move the chairs away from the affected female or male dancing bodies impresses the viewer with its increasing opposition to the music's mood. In *Café Müller*, this feature becomes particularly meaningful and, indeed, *representational* for the sepa-ration of the moving body from the musical framework also represents another sign of loneliness. When a body moves abruptly while a slow tune is being played or when the same body engages in extremely slow movements while listening to a fast-paced march, there is always some degree of discomfort – or fascination – that affects the viewer. The disarticulation or non-compatibility between series of events that *should* or *could* be kept in harmony is always disturbing and it is this kind of disturbance or incompatibility that – I think – Pina Bausch tries to represent: the presence of a lonely person within a public – often crowded - space.

(This, again, is a matter of conditional representation since we know that the play deals with the feeling of loneliness. But a less learned viewer may also have full access to the most impressive aesthetic qualities of the piece without having been told what the play is about. He may, for instance, recognize the representation of some kind of feeling of disarticulation and of tension between overlapped and conflicting rhythms, bodily postures, gestures and music. Is it that important that this mismatch should be given the label of "loneliness"? "Solitude" becomes important on a con-ceptual level of appreciation. This is the realm of critics, casual viewers or connoisseurs. But to those that engage on the gestures' repetition or insist on the kinaesthetic empathy with the charac-ters, the bodily gesture is meaningful *per se*. It represents uncon-ditionally.)

There are other signs of the characters' scenic isolation. Synchronized movements are sometimes held between two dancers – e.g., between the "spectre" and the woman – but they are never pursued. The brief *pas de deux* between the female and the male characters is utterly dismantled when they reach the side wall, which constitutes one of the most striking examples of the way Pina Bausch tends to disarticulate any sign of tenderness or even empathy between her dancers. The characters' inter-relationship soon becomes the representation of an irredeemable falling apart and we end up recognizing simply two bodies with different *moving strategies*. Particularly significant in this respect is the "embrace scene" where the spontaneous embrace of both characters – notice

that it is, first of all, a gesture of mutual physical support – is substituted by the *ritualization* of the apparently more significant gesture of carrying one's lover. In pure physical terms, one is trying to substitute the gravity/weight of the female dancer by the "staging" of its portability or lightness. But, unlike classic ballet, this won't do here. Since the unsupported body keeps falling down, the ritualization becomes a *mechanization* – the paradoxical mechanization of tenderness – and the increased pace of the movements achieves, again, that characteristic of Pina Bausch's pieces in which repetition is often used to transform an intended gesture into its opposite. (Notice also how the male dancer's arms, whenever the woman falls to ground, assume the same position as the spectre's arms, with the palms facing forward, unbalanced, in expectation, "lonesome".)

The kind of contrast that we perceive between music and movement is also noticeable in the way Pina Bausch's eliminates any trace of lyricism. The woman's and the man's solos with sudden bursts of open gestures and virtuosic demonstrations of corporal articulation and harmony are always accompanied by the waiter's anxious zeal in trying to keep the chairs out of the dancer's range of action. This tension is an essential feature of the work and, indeed, after a while, the viewer does not know whether to admire the dancer's expression or the waiter's physical effort. Their equivalence in terms of choreographic importance amplifies the effect of each one.

The waiter's tenacity leads us to the unconditional and more "theatrical" component of Pina Bausch's piece. In this respect the piece appeals even more clearly to unconditional representation. The waiter is the waiter, chairs are chairs, a revolving door is a revolving door and, above all, men are men and women are women. The difficult order of inter-sexual relationship – "Geschlechterkampf" – is one of Pina Bausch's main themes. The embraced couple is, at first, just that: an embraced couple. The tiptoeing woman, eagerly looking for something or someone and sometimes observing what is going on with the other actors is just that: the minimal portrait of a lonely and fragile coquette. That her lonely quest is itself the work's theme is clearly revealed in the end when she dresses the unbalanced spectre with her own wig and raincoat.

This intertwining of the two modes of representation is also an essential part of Pina Bausch's work. The embrace between the

male and female characters is at first a perfect example of uncon-
ditional representation. The second man's intervention and the
subsequent *accelerando* of precise gestures transform this scene
into a case of conditional specific representation. Because we know
that loneliness is the work's *motto* we understand how the trans-
formation of the couple's self-support (again, physically) into an
image of tenderness forced from the outside in tends to become
a sign of unrest and unbalance that leaves the actors exhausted
and out of breath. Then, the final and tired embrace is again an
unconditional representation: the fatigued bodies of a man and a
woman.

II

Dancing emotions

Many choreographers and dance theorists agree that dance is
the spontaneous expression of emotion or feeling. Its spontaneous
character means that conceptualisation is somehow absent from it.
John Martin, for instance, proposes that each emotional state tends
to express itself in a spontaneously created movement and that the
spectator feels *sympathetically* this very state in her own muscu-
lature (Martin, 1946: 22). In this manner, intuitive perceptions
and elusive truths, that "inexpressible residue of emotion" (Gilbert
Murray) are directly transmitted from the dancer's moving *soma*
to the viewer's still *soma*. In Martha Graham's paradigmatic
definition, dance, as art in general, "is not to be understood, but
to be experienced" (Graham, 1941: 45). And Fokine longed for a
completely new kind of dance, detached from the mimetism of
the exhausted rules of classic ballet and capable of expressing
"everything that is in the human soul" (Fokine: 1916: 23). But it is
Selma Cohen who most clearly draws this separation between the
realms of conceptual language and of dance as reproduction of
pure percepts.

In this text, I'll try to question this idea of a pure, i.e.,
a-conceptual, expression of emotion and feeling. Two issues are
to be pursued: a) the relationship between verbal language and
movement which again some authors seem to regard as a much
more powerful, flexible and ductile communication medium than

language itself; and b) the extremely hard problem regarding the connection between the art's *code*, its pre-established *grammar*, so to speak, and the spontaneity that expression theories of dance commonly attribute to dance *qua* expression of emotion.

1.   Gravitations

> "I would only believe in a god who knows how to dance."
> Nietzsche.

"In the beginning was the act". Goethe's famous dictum was warmly acknowledged by some of the most prominent philosophers of the twentieth century. Wittgenstein, for instance, took Goethe's sentence as a kind of *motto* for his investigation on the conditions of possibility of our language games[2]. We learn our concepts, and namely the concepts that reflect our emotions, just like we are initiated in all other sorts of activities: just like we learn how to play games, for instance. We learn the game – any game, that is – by playing it. Prior to our mastering of words and expressions, there is a "drill", i.e., a complex series of exercises framed and oriented through the aid of examples, rewards and punishments. None of our concepts has, thus, a single root but a complex history that involves gestures, voice tones and rhythm. Wittgenstein exemplified this conceptual *archaeology* by noticing how the genesis of such an abstract mathematical concept as "infinity" could be traced back to a double pedagogical strategy. In the *Brown Book*'s tribe (Wittgenstein, 1958: 93ss.), children learned how to master the mathematical function "x=x+1" a) by learning how to count from 1 to 20, b) through the successively amplification of that series using "in a first stage" "a gesture that means "go on!", and c) abandoning then this gesture which allows them to count up to extremely high numerals. The *internalisation* of that previous gesture would ultimately mean that no number, however high, could ever play the role of the last number:

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[2]   Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty / Über Gewissheit*, §402.

"In other words, our use of the word 'infinite' is just as
straightforward as that of 'open', and our idea that its meaning
is 'transcendent' rests on a misunderstanding."
(Wittgenstein 1958: 95).

Following this conceptual *demystification*, other authors have
shown us how many of our most prominent words are based upon
and derived from gesture or movement. Lakoff and Johnson [3], for
instance, investigated the way in which essential concepts derive
from metaphorical spatial orientation. In some cultures the future
is "in front of us", in others it is "in the back". Our physical, bodily
experience attributes to some of our most fundamental concepts
an up-down *spatialization* that is significantly connected to our
own posture: happiness is up, sadness is down; consciousness is
upright, unconsciousness is down; health, life and similar concepts
are usually connected with the movement of "uplifting" whereas
sickness and death take us "down"; power is up, servitude is
down; and the good, virtue and rationality are "up" keeping their
counterparts down: evil, depravity and the emotional. This is why
we say things like "You're in high spirits", "I'm depressed", "I wake
up", "He sank into a coma", "He's at the peak of his health", "She's
doing a high-quality work", "He is an upstanding man" or "That
would be beneath you".

We find a similar connection between body and concepts in
the writings of Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer. The body is our
first and most prominent symbol and our "natural geometry" soon
becomes an important interface between it and human conceptual
articulation. Langer points out that "most of our descriptive lan-
guage is based on the symbolism of head and foot, leg and arm,
mouth, neck, back, etc.". Man is constantly engaged in the trans-
lation or passage from *symptoms* to *symbols*, from "feelings shown"
to "feelings represented". It could be argued that this is precisely
what goes on in Lakoff's examples of "orientational metaphors".

We wouldn't have the perception of *up* and *down* without
gravity. That a force like gravity is powerful enough to ignite an
enormous range of connotations apart from its own literal signi-
ficance, and that these connotations assume such a tremendous

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[3] Lakoff / Johnson, 1980: chapter 4.

importance in our language should help to explain why Langer speaks of impulse-like "powers". A physical "power" like the force of gravity has sufficient *stamina* as to inspire – and somehow determine – the articulation of concepts that shape, for instance, our moral existence: good and bad, virtue and depravity, heaven and hell. What does this mean? That the basic force that determines our physical life in this planet has also been *imported* into our own language and modulated in a plethora of other "powers". The forces with which our body relates, reacts and opposes gravity are properly reflected in the way the *subject* manipulates the conceptual paraphernalia. This is where, I think, the *magical* character of these "powers" lies:

> "(...) human minds thinking with words have built up their whole world out of 'powers', which are modeled on subjective feelings of potency. Religion, history, politics, and even the traditional abstractions of philosophy reflect this fundamental *Weltanschauung* which is incorporated in language."
> (Langer, 1953: 189).

Associated to the fundamental concepts of "up" and "down", which are directly linked to the way our body is affected by gravity, we should also find other meaningful binomials such as light (from above) and darkness (from beneath). And we all know how important this latter duality becomes as yet another kind of *metaphorical support* for many of our epistemological and moral notions. In science as in ethics, as in politics, we tend to look for enlightenment, for truth, for the good and virtuous, for what is somehow conceptually perceived to be *above* our current position, whatever that may be. In the same way, we try to get away from the obscure, from evil and from corruption. In a word, we strive to *ascend*. As Susanne Langer puts it in relation to dance, most of our conceptual investigations are also engaged in a sort of "illusion of a conquest of gravity" (Langer, 1953: 194). Just like the dancer's "main tendency is to surmount the bonds of massive weight and lightness of movement is (...) the cardinal demand one has to make on a dancer", so too the up-down polarity that lies in the core of some of our essential concepts allows us to imagine the theorist fighting against gravity in a purely conceptual way. If accepted, this common quest for *ascension* authorizes us to perceive dance and

conceptual activity as two parallel *investigations* regarding two distinct kinds of powers: a) "the actual forces that are normally known and felt to control the dancer's body" (Langer, 1953: 194) or the theorist's arguments and b) the *counter-forces* summoned and developed by both of them. In a way, then, like Nietzsche's god, the dancer is the originary thinker and the thinker is the ultimate dancer. Immediately or mediately conditioned by gravity, they both know how to move, how to jump, and how to sustain, but they don't know how to fly.

Eventually, this could be used against Selma Cohen's defence that

> "the area of dance is not that of concepts, which are grasped by the mind by way of words, but of percepts, which are grasped by the eye by way of movement". (Cohen, 1962: 20).

In fact, it is possible to derive from Wittgenstein, Lakoff and, to some extent – as I interpret her –, Langer, that the frontier between concepts and percepts is a very elusive one. Notice, for instance, how Cohen describes dance as "a movement framed to be seen for its own sake and interest even above its interest of meaning" (Cohen, 1962: 19). Look how the sentence is already saturated with situational metaphors: the *framing* of movement, its interest being *above* that of meaning. Cohen is thinking through polarities and dualities that have at least part of their origin in the perception of our conditions of existence as bodies shaped by a gravitational space. It seems fair to conclude, in a symmetrical way, that when we dance, i.e., when we return to a closer encounter with our own physical condition, we are unable to completely obliterate the conceptual *burden* associated to each gesture, i.e., to each reaction *against* gravity. If *space* – and more than just mere space, *vectorized space* – is such a pervasive part of our language, and if dance is the most persistent exploration of our relationship with space, then, in an indirect way, its "area" is also that of concepts. Cohen quotes Martha Graham's definition of the aim of dance as "making visible the interior landscape". The use of the landscape metaphor is, again, significant. We can re-interpret this aim as, literally, a making visible of the way emotions and concepts that constitute our "inner world" are *topographically* distributed.

In a way, physical and conceptual spaces are isomorphic and overlapped. It is difficult, then, to understand how dance could be described as a movement completely devoid of meaning, if by meaning we understand a conceptually oriented activity. When a dancer moves his/her arms up and above his/her head instead of leaving them down, how could we not notice the *difference*? In the moment we notice it we are already summoning concepts. And to notice the difference is what makes dance expressive, what distinguishes a gesture from another and detaches it from the rest. This is only possible because *dancers dance with concepts*. When they move up instead of leaning down, when they leap instead of walking, their movements are saturated with concepts that constitute their conditions of possibility for communication. This is how I interpret Langer's notion that in dance we have "actual movement", but *only* "virtual self-expression":

> "It is *imagined feeling* that governs dance, not real emotional conditions…" (Langer, 1953: 177).
> "The conception of a feeling disposes the dancer's body to symbolize it." Langer, 1953: 181).

Dancers inevitably carry around with them the polarities that reflect in language the bodily reaction to space. And even if they manage to produce a completely new body-feeling "as something kinesthetically new, peculiar to the dance" (Langer, 1953: 204) this has to be translated in "visual and audible elements" transmittable to the passive spectator who is bound to recreate these elements in a conceptual framework. If he couldn't do at least this, he wouldn't be able to grasp the simple fact that he was observing an artwork.

Throughout history, language's metaphorical genesis was replaced by literal statement and mythical syncretism between *world* and *language,* or *body* and *concept* was replaced by science. But there are ways to revisit it. When understood as a vehicle for the dancer's or the choreographer's emotions – and if indeed we accept that our own body plays an essential role in the assembling of our language –, dance could be analysed as a way to, so to speak, *revert* the usual vector that connects language and movement. If dance is the expression of our emotions and if many of these emotions were already somewhat *determined* by bodily and orientational metaphors, by portraying them the dancer is, in a way, *going back*

in the path that has taken us – both individually and as a social-cultural community – to the assemblage of our concepts. If the dancer wants to portray a feeling of a sudden happiness, her feeling uplifted will eventually originate upward and open gestures that will "boost" the viewers' spirits. But if she decides to express that same happiness in a totally different way, she'll need the intervention of another, maybe more sophisticated, *code*. (If her aim is, in fact, the expression and communication of an emotion or inner feeling. It may not be that at all...).

2.   Code, emotion, effect

It is true, however, that Susanne Langer acknowledges the basic difference between *language* and *gesture*. Language has become "primarily symbolic and incidentally symptomatic" (Langer, 1953: 180) with relatively rare outbursts of exclamation. Gesture, on the other hand, is "far more important as an avenue of self-expression than as 'word'". But gestures in dance are said to "create a semblance of self-expression" and the illusion that they spring from feeling, "as indeed they do not". The assumption of a *spontaneous* expression of feelings and emotions through danced movements, or Cohen's notion that the instrument of dance is "a person who not only moves but feels" (Cohen, 1962: 25) seem to be challenged. Dance presents a kind of reflection on feelings and emotions and the search for "the final articulation of *imagined* feeling" and an "appropriate physical form". In the place of "spontaneity" we find instead a succession of mediations:

a) from feeling to "imagined feeling", which involves the possibility of the feeling's re-creation, or, in Langer's paradoxical formula, a spontaneity "capable of repetition upon request" (Langer, 1953: 178);

b) the ability to express and communicate this imagined feeling under a physical form, which involves the intervention of a "code" or what Cohen mentions as "stylization".

Now, it seems that an imagined and coded *feeling* is no longer a *feeling*; it is rather its re-presentation. We could proceed by following two distinct paths. Either accepting the existence of that

hidden *feeling* ultimately responsible for our artistic content as a sort of "thing-in-itself", or dismissing it altogether and realizing that feelings are not expressed but *produced* through dance and that the *mentioning* of feelings is only part of the rationalization process common both to the creation and the reception of works of art. We could find here another possible connection between dance and language: just like concepts such as "good" or "bad" could be regarded as "rationalizations" of man's condition as a physical being submitted to the up-down polarity ("up" is where we would like to be, in part because it is unattainable, and "down" is where we could be, a permanent possibility) so too many of the so-called emotions or feelings that we tend to attribute as *a priori* sources of gesture could be seen as *by-products* or indeed "rationalizations" of the dancer's actual endeavours.

This question opens up to the extremely hard problem of the connection between the art's *code*, the pre-established *grammar* that permits the reproduction, repetition, or re-enactment of an artwork, and the spontaneity that expression theories of dance commonly attribute to dance *qua* expression of emotion. This constitutes what Langer calls "the peculiar contradiction [that] haunts the theory of balletic art" (Langer, 1953: 178). Is the "code" the ultimate enemy of feeling-expression, and is pure expression *uncodifiable*? If to *ex-press* is, literally, to press something out, how can the code become one of its conditions of possibility without, at the same time, depriving what is being expressed of its *spontaneity* and *uniqueness*? How can we ex-press without *squeezing*?

There are numerous examples that reflect the way dancers and choreographers acknowledge this problem. It was, after all, the decay of the old classic ballet and its inability to serve as a vehicle of "inner emotion" that led Fokine to search for a more transparent notion of dance. Mary Wigman stressed the tension that she felt between the emotional and "the self-imposed law of composition" (Wigman, 1970:304) and Diaghileff tried endlessly to bring together technique and expression. John Martin sums everything up when he writes that

> "to a certain extent we have limited the integrity of the emotion to conform to an arbitrary code, and at the same time we have deviated from the arbitrary code in order to conform to emotional integrity." (Martin, 1933: 25).

It is in part this *riddle* that explains for a significant part of the evolution not only of modern dance but also of modern art. Given the alternative between more or less arbitrary rules of form (the "code") and the need to express authentic emotional experience, modern dance seems to have chosen the latter. Expression theories in dance were developed, then, under the assumption that emotions and feelings "can express [themselves] through movement *directly*" (*Idem*: 26). Terms like "authenticity" and "utmost simplicity" emerged as well as the idea that "the technique of composition (...) is of no use until it is learned and forgotten" (*Idem*: 28).

But in fact other artists chose the other alternative and saw in the preeminence of the code a way to "remove themselves in important ways from the compositional process" (Carroll, 1999: 73) [4] and to annul or at least mitigate the role of the subject in art making. This subject, however, is to be pursued elsewhere.

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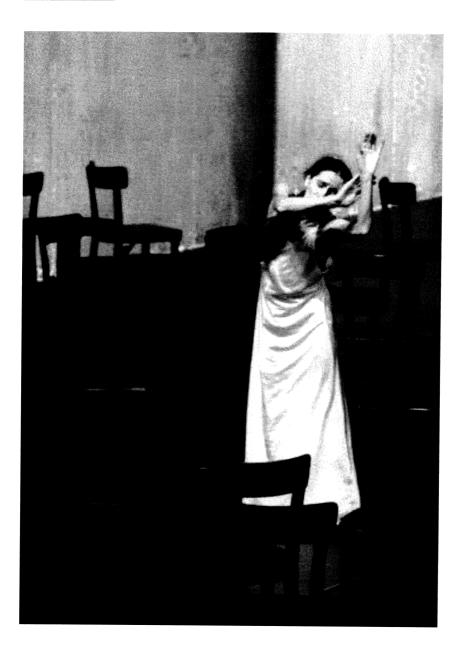
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Café Müller, Photo Jochen Vichoff
(First performed May 20, 1978)

23 – *nothing is as it seems*.
Remixing fact and fiction in the movie and in «the making of the movie»

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The boom of conspiracy theories after the 11th of September, which spread mainly over the Internet,[1] and the success of Dan Brown's novel *Angels & Demons* [2] are recent phenomena which invite us to revisit a masterpiece of German cinematography: *23 – Die Geschichte des Hackers Karl Koch*, directed by Hans-Christian Schmid. Considering the fact that German cinema has difficulty finding a place in a market dominated by Anglo-American productions, this movie was quite a success with audiences when distributed in January 1999. Shown previously at festivals, it received nominations and won prizes.[3] Thanks to this, *23* also

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[1] For example in a ramification of the site *The 7th Fire* that links the *Illuminati* and the new world order with the 11th of September as traumatic event (a new Pearl Harbour) planned by co-conspirators Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, Jeb Bush and others within the *Project for the New American Century* (PNAC), according to their programme "Rebuilding America's Defenses" (1997): an event that would usher into their agenda of total world domination through military and financial supremacy. [http://www.the7thfire.com/9-11/co-conspirator_of_9-11_stand_down.htm]. See also the series "The WTC Conspiracy" on the site *Telepolis*, and Daniel Kulla's (2004) critique of Mathias Bröckers' essays.

[2] *Angels & Demons* is a mystery novel by Dan Brown, published in 2000. It introduces the character Robert Langdon, who is also the principal character of Brown's subsequent, better-known novel *The Da Vinci Code*. The «Docu-Fiction» involves a 'real' conflict between the *Illuminati* and the Catholic Church. The German translation has *Illuminati* as book title.

[3] Première at the Munich Film Festival on 1st of July 1998. Silver medal from the German Film Industry, prize for Best Script (Festival of Gijón).

entered the media pool of *InterNationes* that promotes German language and culture abroad. In its programme, the story is summed up as follows:

> The passion of an abused idealist: Karl Koch, high school student in Hanover, is obsessed by the theories of a world-wide conspiracy propagated by the American Robert Wilson in his bestseller *The Illuminates* [sic]. Karl begins to work for the KGB as a hacker; increasingly addicted to drugs, he becomes lost (...) in the world's data networks.

The *InterNationes* text ends by saying that this "extremely sensitive and exciting portrait (...) of a highly talented" German youngster is based on a real life story, pointing out that Karl Koch's death "was never really cleared up". Obviously, the mysterious death of the young hero invites speculation and a cinematographic recreation that operates as «Docu-Fiction» on the borderline between fact and fiction.[4] Michael Gutmann, who wrote the script together with the director, declared afterwards [5] that the reception of *23* as a «thriller of world conspiracy» resulted primarily from the publicity campaign of the *Buenavista* distribution company, which misled the public by announcing "a mystical thriller based on a true story" (Buenavista, 1999: 8). According to Gutmann, the film owes more to the genre of «Bio-Pic» than to that of a thriller, because it is "a biographical drama – and a reflection about a young man whose hyper-sensibility makes him perish in our Era of Information." [6]

When carrying out initial research on Karl Koch (1965-1989) in 1996, Gutmann conceived of him as a (post-)modern successor

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[4] Critics praised the "network between facts, fiction and fascinating ideas" (*TV Spielfilm* 02/1999); only a few disapproved, for example: "to make the history seem more authentic, Schmid uses documentary footage about events of the Eighties. But this stylistic device means Karl's story often seems cut up into pieces." (*TV Movie* 02/1999) [quotations from www.cyberkino.de].

[5] Statements delivered in the course of his presentation of the movie at the University of Minho and the Videoteca Municipal of Braga, in April 2000. I want to thank Michael Gutmann for all his interest in this study. I am also very grateful to my colleague Prof. Francesca Rayner who had the patience to read the different versions of this paper and revise the text stylistically.

[6] "(...) also ein biographisches Drama – und eine Reflexion über einen jungen Mann, dessen Hypersensibilität ihn in unserem Informationszeitalter untergehen lässt." (Gutmann, 2000).

to Goethe's Werther, as an idealist, a dreamer, a melancholic or neurotic narcissist. Instead of Werther's absolute and desperate love for Lotte, Karl develops a passion for hacking. In both cases, addictive reading (Ossian's chants on the one hand and Robert A. Wilson's novels on the other) contributes to alienation from consensual social and political reality and heightened sensitivity to underlying power structures. This leads to more or less overt rebellion against bourgeois rationality as an instrument of power. Both young men are actively working towards their fate but, at the same time, they consider themselves victims of a hostile environment. The restless wandering and suffering hero attains the aura of the genius who must die young, literally burnt out by his own excess of will and emotion, but who pretends simultaneously to be the 'author' of his life/death. This biographical profile was for Gutmann the most important stimulus in the creative process, but it was almost totally eclipsed by the theme of world conspiracy and hacking which caught the attention of audiences.

Like the epistolary novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774) the movie *23 – Die Geschichte des Karl Koch* (1998) presents itself as «Docu-Fiction» based on facts. But, as Gutmann points out, the significant difference is that in Karl's case the young hero is himself tangled up in a sort of «Docu-Fiction», precisely by reading pseudo-scientific novels and essays.[7] Karl's fascination for the mixture of researchable facts and elements of 'what may happen' contrasts curiously with his permanent distrust of the media as manipulators of social and political reality (an issue intensified by the conflict with his father, director of the domestic politics department in the editorial office of the Hanoverian newspaper). This predisposition makes him gradually slip into conspiracy paranoia, bolstered up by his increasing consumption of drugs. By saying this, we are slipping into a mixture between (1) the 'real' Karl fascinated by the crossover of fact and fiction in the context of hermetic knowledge and global computer networks and (2) the «Docu-Fiction» of 'Karl' as a biographical narrative or drama of a life. When speaking about «Docu-Fiction», we have to distinguish between the media reports published in Karl's lifetime and immediately after his mysterious

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[7] "Der Film ist Doku-Fiction. Und die darin beschriebene Figur hat sich selbst in Doku-Fiction verheddert (nämlich in der Lektüre pseudowissenschaftlicher Romane und Essays)." (Gutmann, 2000).

death (*vd.* Backhaus / Hülsmann, 2000) and the «Bio Pic» created
by Hans-Christian Schmid and Michael Gutmann eight years later
(shooting lasted from the 5th of August to the 21st of October 1997)
within an already historical interpretation of the political and social
context of the Eighties. Their sensitive (re-)investigation of Karl's
life and death was triggered off by media reports, mainly in *Stern*
and *Der Spiegel*, which had a keen interest in creating and selling
the myth of the young 'internet pirate' able to undermine the
world's power structures [8], and could also rely on Karl's own
well-paid collaboration.

Hence, the movie *23* could easily be considered a posthumous
continuation of media narrative and dramaturgy. But such a point
of view would neglect the reflexivity on the manipulation and
even creation of 'facts' by the media industry which underlies the
Schmid & Gutmann project. This suggests a critical concept of
«Docu-Fiction» within a project of cinematographic narrative as
ongoing decision-making in the more or less spectacular construc-
tion of a 'real story'. This story is not only based on the strategy
of presenting 'facts' (documents about his life and testimonies;
historical context) and giving them coherence (by selection, arrange-
ment, comment, ...) but is also narrated in patterns of fiction. This
self-conscious positioning comes out very clearly in Gutmann's
critical view of the prevailing reception of *23*:

> Until now, the most important question for the audience has
> been: What is real about the number 23 and the *Illuminati*?
> What have you found out? But the fact that this movie is
> interested in saying something about our relationship with the
> media (newspaper, book, television, news, the Internet) is often
> ignored.[9]

In my opinion, this misleading (according to Gutmann) reception
is only to a small extent due to the promotion by *Buenavista*

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[8] Following the profile of the hacker as the hero of the computer revolution
(Levy, 1984 and others).

[9] "Bis heute ist die wichtigste Frage für Zuschauer des Filmes: «Was ist
dran an der Zahl 23 und den Illuinaten? Was habt ihr herausgefunden?» Dass
der Film sich bemüht, etwas über unseren Umgang mit den Medien (Zeitung,
Buch, Fernsehen, Nachrichten, Internet) zu erzählen, wird oft übersehen."
(Gutmann, 2000).

mentioned previously. More decisive is the discursive structure of the movie itself which follows the perceptive rules of the medium and the genres established by the artistic use of this medium in cinematography. In this sense, the transition from the research into Karl's life to the story making is considered by film director Schmid to have been the most difficult phase of script writing. In a collective interview led by the film critic Daniel Kothenschulte (1998), which also included the author Gutmann and the producer Jakob Claussen, Schmid said:

> In the beginning we treated the facts with a lot of respect until we realized that in a movie, first of all there is an emotion or a certain feeling that has to match perfectly. Therefore, maybe we might need to write a new scene that had never actually happened as such. This sounds like a contradiction, but it is not. As we became more or less acquainted with the persons of our story, we dared to invent more and more scenes. The facts began to stay in the background, giving birth step by step to an autonomous story. (Schmid *in* Kothenschulte, 172).

This script writing leads to the elimination and fusion (reinvention) of persons or parts of the facts. For example, in the movie, Urmel does not appear, although in reality he is a protagonist in the collective hacks into industrial and military institutions (especially the Pentagon). Also, Karl's emotional relationship with Maja (started through internet chat) in the last eight months before his death is totally excluded from the script. These observations prove the well-known impossibility of communicating perceived or experienced 'reality'.[10] This communication is never totally free from selection and structures which – on the other hand – can be used as explicit strategies to create coherence (temporal series) and that obey narrative or dramatic patterns.[11] This determines

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[10] Because perception and communication belongs to different "operating systems" (Luhmann, 82).

[11] Obviously we are using the term 'narrativity' (as well as 'dramaturgy') as capable of being manifested in any semiotic system, following the position of structuralist narratology. Moreover, since the Seventies, pictures and narrativity tend to dominate over verbal discursivity (*vd.* Postman, 1983), because much of Western culture is played out on television which is related to a culture of face-to-face interaction, in which narrative has a strong integrative function.

the range of poetics between documentary fiction and different concepts of realism. In opposition to 'narrativehood', understood as the mere presence of a narrative link, 'narrativity' is defined as strategic use of criteria that account for our sense of a 'good story' (Coste, 1989; Ryan, 1991): more improbable connections produce more dramatic narrative, as well as more crucial changes. According to Coste (1989) and Ryan (1991), visual narrativity is mainly based on transactiveness (actions as opposed to happenings), transitiveness (events involving agent and patient), external events rather than internal ones, and on the presence of disnarrated elements, i.e. virtuality (what could have happened but did not – an alternative course of action). In the case of Karl's life as «Bio-Pic», the script can operate with melodramatic plotting, focussed on the 'victim' (and on his friends, including the ingredient of betrayal instead of a love story), or with the narrative of an enigma solution, focussed on the 'detective'.

In fact, an early script project existed about the young American Clifford Stoll and his discovery of the German hacker Markus Hess (hacker name Urmel), and who managed to gain celebrity from this 'hacker hunt' by writing the bestseller *The Cuckoo's Egg* (1989), which in turn gave rise to the movie *The KGB, the Computer, and Me* (1990). Clifford Stoll's self-promotion as an expert in computer networks was one of the reasons for Schmid & Gutmann dropping this possible story in favour of restarting the project focussed on Karl's life and death. In this restart, the thread of the detective story did not disappear, but was totally redefined in another direction: instead of telling the story of Clifford Stoll's hunt for the hacker, Schmid & Gutmann tell their own story about the research and the making of the movie in a book which has the same title as the movie *23 – Die Geschichte des Hackers Karl Koch* and which was published in January 1999 to coincide with the movie being shown for the first time in the cinemas. Within four months, the paperback had been through three editions.

Before discussing the relationship between movie and book in this specific case, I want to reflect on the partly narrative genre called the 'the making of the movie'.[12] As a printed product,

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[12] In this article I will always use simple quotation marks when referring to this genre in order to distinguish it from the process of movie creation itself.

it differs totally from a book (particularly the novel) which is not
intended to be transformed immediately into a script for a cinema
movie or TV film[13], but in most cases is reedited simultaneously.
Instead of migration from print to audiovisual medium, 'the making
of the movie' represents an interesting remigration in the opposite
direction. As far as I am aware, the history of this genre still
remains unwritten. In its genesis, it can be considered a primarily
narrative amplification of the film press release, as printed ana-
logue to the trailer that announces a movie in its own medium.
Digitalization favours a mixture which is normally used with
commercial DVDs: the classic trailer is replaced by a narrative of
the making of the movie including face-to-face interaction with
actors and the director, mingled with takes and false takes of the
film. The near future will show if the press information booklet and
its amplifying transformation into an autonomous book can survive
in a context dominated by hybrid media products in digital form.
Even *23 – Die Geschichte des Hackers Karl Koch* itself was produced
as a DVD in 2004.

Already in 1999/2000, students of the University of Münster
wrote a collective (virtual) paper about the movie *23* within a site
(= seminar) dedicated to theories of conspiracy in mass culture.[14]
The on-line document refers to the historical and biographical
components of the story and the making and the reception of the
movie. In spite of a considerable quantity of common material,
this presentation differs absolutely from the narrative profile of
the book *23*, which is not mentioned.

There is no doubt that the competition between media and the
concentration of media products and agents has accelerated more
and more since the end of the traditional order of the mass media
(newspapers, radio, TV) that was provoked by the rapid hypermedia
evolution based on wide-spread internet and mobile phone use in
the last decade of the 20th century. In the same way as media history
is not linear but cumulative, because new media do not replace old
ones but become embedded in them, a similar process charac-

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[13] An important difference that we have to neglect because of the limitations
of this article.

[14] *Government Denies Knowledge. Verschwörungstheorien in der Massenkultur*
(1999/2000). http://www.uni-muenster.de/PeaCon/conspiracy/conspiracy.htm.

terizes the history of narrative forms. But these two histories are far from being synchronic, as Paul A. Harris observes:

> New media have been put to relatively conventional literary use simply because the rate of technological innovation outstrips the pace of literary history – new tools appear much faster than new narrative conventions and habits are formed. (Harris, 1999: 34).

With this in mind, it becomes interesting to define the hybrid genre of 'the making of the movie,' which as a print version is already doomed to disappearance, but will possibly continue on the screen. Its survival as a book can only be conceived within a strong traditional reading culture, such as the one that still persists in German bourgeois society. The main question is: why should one pass from digital script writing and cinematography to 'the making of the movie' as book instead of creating directly onto a DVD that includes the movie and 'the making of the movie'? Due to lifestyle habits, people in Western bourgeois societies give preference to reading and rereading a book (with text and photographs) after having seen the movie. Hence 'the making of the movie' as book fulfils other needs than those of trailer variants or DVD files. The migration to book gives the opportunity for media 'distance' and dignifies the audiovisual product.

   In the book market, there exists a general tendency to blur the fundamental difference between the re-edition of a book (mostly the novel) that has been adapted cinematographically and 'the making of the movie' in book form. Normally, they have the same cover and the same main title, that is: the poster and the name of the movie. In this sense, the German term 'das Buch zum Film' becomes highly ambiguous. In fact, (on-line) book catalogues do not distinguish clearly between 'book into movie' and 'movie into book', because in both cases the printed product accompanies the movie as the German term indicates through the preposition 'zu'. This can lead to a sort of double marriage when the book (novel) that inspired the movie and 'the making of the movie' coexist.

   This happens not only in famous cases like *The Lord of the Rings* (book: J. R. R.Tolkien; movie: Peter Jackson; 'the making of the movie': Brian Sibley[15]) but also in the Schmid & Gutmann

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[15] Brian Sibley (2002) gives fans the opportunity to visit the movie set and see firsthand how a movie phenomenon of the twenty-first century was built on the

project realized immediately after *23*: the cinematographic adapta-
tion of the novel *Crazy* (1999) written by the seventeen-year-old
Benjamin Lebert is accompanied by the creation of *Crazy. Das Buch
zum Film* (1999/2000). A comparison with the book *23* proves that
Schmid & Gutmann have a clear notion about the genre of 'the
making of the movie', choosing always the more interesting narra-
tive: *Crazy. Das Buch zum Film* narrates the experiences of non-
professional teenage actors and their life contexts in dialogue with
life in a Bavarian boarding school as represented in the auto-
biographical novel *Crazy*. The main theme of the book *23* is the
research carried out by the script authors.

In both cases the original paratextual nature of the genre is
marginalized in favour of autonomous narratives that can even
be read without having seen the movies. At the same time, the
metadiscursive dimension is reinforced, mainly through collective
interviews with the director, script author and producer that reflect
on the passage from researched facts to movie (in the case of *23*) or
on the difference between the teenage sensation of life transmitted
in the novel and in the movie (in the case of *Crazy*). 'The making
of the movie', planned and realized as an intrinsic part of a
cinematographic project, has to be considered a special case of the
genre. It is an interesting *intermedia creation* which is able (1) to
communicate (narrate) experienced 'reality', using different media,
and (2) to reflect upon the (realist, aesthetic, ethic) efficiency of this
communication (narration) and the use of media.

Obviously, within this intermedia creation there are other
relevant components which can be autonomous: the soundtrack or
even the poster. In the case of *23*, the movie poster / book cover [see
figure] already emphasizes the main media evolution that is both
the context of the story and of its narration: the erosion of "solid

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landmark fantasy work of the twentieth century: J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the
Rings*. Reading *The Lord of the Rings: The Making of the Movie Trilogy* is like being
part of this filmmaking phenomenon. Sibley interviewed more than 150 people
associated with every aspect of the production, including director Peter Jackson.
These conversations reveal exactly how the magic of Middle-earth was brought to
cinematic life – from the direction, scripting, and acting, to the creation of sets and
landscapes, to makeup, wardrobe, miniatures, music, and special effects (illustrated
with over 300 colour photographs).

letters" into luminous screen fluid[16], especially those of newspapers and news magazines as a medium that was supposed to communicate a true world reality, but since the 19th century has also been accused of manipulation. On the poster/cover, newspaper headlines are projected onto a screen wall in luminous red letters that overlap densely with each other, allowing people to decipher only some words and numbers (dates). The reappearance of the number 23 in these mutilated 'true' narratives of world reality seems to reveal a secret network of messages. According to the mystifying reinterpretation in the novels of Robert Shea & Robert A. Wilson[17], this network (metonymically concentrated in the number 23) is constructed by a global conspiracy involving the CIA that has its roots in the *Illuminati*, a masonry derivation founded by Adam Weisshaupt in 1776. In the poster, this mystification is stressed by the luminous projection of a huge "23" all over the overlapping newspaper letters and numbers on the screen wall, thus completing a pictorial composition that is well known in the biblical tradition as 'graffiti in flames' (*menetekel*) and announces the fall of the (Babylonian) empire. In a first version of this poster the screen wall was not combined with the half-cut portrait of the actor August Diehl (ghost-like in the same luminous red) who plays Karl Koch, identifying thus the mystification of reality as a subjective one. Instead, the first version adds a *subscriptio*, as in baroque emblems: "Nichts ist so wie es scheint" / "Nothing is as it seems". The Buenavista press information booklet has this poster as cover. The sentence can be linked not only to Karl's mystifying interpretation of 'reality' as an invitation to the audience to sympathize with the protagonist's perception and feelings but also – in a metadiscursive

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[16] For an analysis of this context of media history and its implications see Hörisch (1999).

[17] The office of a minor left-wing political magazine has been blown up. People are missing. The rest of the world is on the brink of nuclear annihilation. Are the events connected? Are events what they seem? So begins *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*, comprised of three stories: *The Eye in the Pyramid*, *The Golden Apple*, and *Leviathan*. The institutions we have come to depend on, from the government and the military to the churches and even the terrorist factions, are not what they seem, and neither are the events of history. There is a greater power at work, one which has continued to shape the landscape of time and society – one which is called the *Illuminati*.

understanding – to the complex dialogue that the whole intermedia creation named *23* undertakes with the poetics of «Docu-Fiction».

Instead of entering into the problematic inherent in the definition of possible worlds of fiction in relation to a plural concept of reality [18], I will concentrate on the codification of the 'world status' established by the text or media product: should the world represented be seen as fiction or fact? As intermedia creation *23* provides various answers. In the initial sequence of the movie, which I will analyse further on in detail, the laconic sentence "This film is based on true events" [19] appears after the list of credits. This contrasts with the usual (legal) indication of the distance existing between fact and fiction. The press information booklet is more eloquent, introducing the nuance of dramaturgy:

> This film is based on the true events which led to Karl Koch's death in the year of 1989. All names, except that of Karl Koch, as well as some sequences of action, have been changed for dramaturgical reasons.[20]

Finally, the foreword of the book *23* defines clearly the difference between movie and book: "Unlike the movie *23* whose plot has to obey dramaturgical demands this book sticks closely to the real events." [21] But this apparently clear distinction is blurred and has to be considered a simulacrum: both, the book and the movie are discursive constructions of fiction filled with selected and constructed elements of factual reality. A dichotomised separation can only operate through explicit codifications of media products as obeying dramaturgy (the movie) or as sticking close to the facts (the book). Obviously, the latter hides its narrative nature, which would diminish the much vaunted closeness to the facts in

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[18] Fiction is always incomplete between the strategies of minimizing (recurrence to stable vision of the world) and maximizing (unstable, tensions and conflict), gaps and implicitness or density. See Thomas G. Pavel (1986) and others.

[19] "Dieser Film basiert auf wahren Begebenheiten."

[20] "Dieser Film beruht auf wahren Begebenheiten, die zum Tod von Karl Koch im Jahr 1989 führten. Alle Namen, bis auf den von Karl Koch, sowie einzelne Handlungsabläufe wurden aus dramaturgischen Gründen geändert." (Buenavista, 7).

[21] "Anders als der Spielfilm *23*, dessen Handlung dramaturgischen Erfordernissen folgt, bleibt das vorliegende Buch sehr nah an den realen Begebenheiten." (Schmid / Gutmann, 9).

contrast to the visual narration. These different codifications are not common in book-movie-relations. In the case of «Docu-Fiction», the greater ability to communicate perceived reality is normally attributed to the audiovisual medium. The partly inverse codification of *23* (book/movie) enhances the potential of cinematography to transform «Docu-Fiction» into a work of art in the sense of Niklas Luhmann who emphasizes the operative separation of perception and communication:

> Art makes perception available for communication, and this beyond the standardised forms of (also perceivable) language. (...) It can integrate perception and communication without leading to a melting or confusion of these operations.[22]

The nature of *23* becomes more complex because the book and the movie that work different transgressions between fact and fiction are focussed on the biography of a person who made similar transgressions. On both levels, which are linked by the historical and biographical representation, the same basic types of action appear: (a) to search for facts and (b) to construct fictions that seem to be facts. The difference between both is blurred. Applied to the two levels, there is (1) *the story of the book*: Hans-Christian Schmid and Michael Gutmann investigate the 'real case' of Karl Koch and create an artistic version of this case as movie story; (2) *the story of the movie*: Karl Koch wants to find out the real (power) structures behind the illusory media representations of world reality and creates his own 'world' based on readings (Robert A. Wilson) that, thanks to hacking, give him a sense of intervention as an internet pirate (hacker name: hagbard celine, according to the protagonist of *Illuminatus!*) in the real power structures of the world.

In the following section, I will analyse mainly the initial sequences of the book and the movie, emphasizing their parallel structure but different or even opposite functions. These may be complementary within an overall poetics of this intermedia creation.

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[22] "Kunst macht Wahrnehmung für Kommunikation verfügbar, un dies ausserhalb der standardisierten Formen der (ihrerseits wahrnehmbaren) Sprache. (...) Sie kann Wahrnehmung und Kommunikation integrieren, ohne zu einer Verschmelzung oder Konfusion der Operationen zu führen." (Luhmann, 82).

(1) *The story of the book*: after the preface and a black-and-white epitaph-photograph of Karl Koch, the traditional biographical narrative[23] does not begin immediately. On the three pages in between the reader finds a short report on the sparse evidence concerning the mysterious death at the end of May 1989 (exact date unknown) as well as an autodiegetic narrative of the most 'dramatic' episode from the research: Schmid & Gutmann follow the car-route that Karl probably drove immediately before his death (murder or suicide?), hoping to find "some signs that could resolve the enigma of Karl's death", but at the same time being aware of the process of "selective perception" that colours their research as well as the construction of reality by Karl Koch.[24]

This search for signs is not identical with the rational investigation of facts but becomes increasingly 'infected' with Karl's mystifying vision of the world as he is searching for hidden messages. Instead of finding signs, Schmid & Gutmann are even unable to determine the exact place where the corpse was found.[25] This kind of episode exemplifies the main narrative strategy: the expectation of coming across some decisive revelation about Karl's life and death is always disappointed and the possible dramatic narrative becomes de-dramatized or banal. Hence, in contrast to the movie, the biographical narration, with its necrological-like starting point, eschews melodramatic dramaturgy.

The main structure is that of pieces of a puzzle which only in part match each other: small textual fragments, stylistically close to magazine writing, that resemble the files of an investigation, are accompanied by black-and-white photographs. They contain mostly the narrative of meeting and interviewing witnesses, each one presenting similar or totally different experiences from Karl's. The pieces do not match to construct a single story. Therefore, this research includes many elements that were suppressed in the

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[23] "Karl Koch was born in Hanover, on the 22nd of July 1965." / "Karl Koch wird am 22.Juli 1965 in Hannover geboren." (Schmid / Gutmann, 11).

[24] "(...) Zeichen, die das Rätsel um Karls Tod entschlüsseln könnten: ein rot-gelber Drache auf einem Schild, das darauf hinweist, dass hier der Landkreis Gifhorn beginnt: Grabsteine im Vorgarten eines Hauses, in dem ein Steinmetz lebt. So arbeitet selektive Wahrnehmung." (Schmid / Gutmann, 11).

[25] The black-and-white photograph that appeared in newspapers (reproduced in Schmid/Gutmann, 131) does not allow to make any localization.

course of the making of the movie; for instance, the moving narration of the several meetings since December of 1997 with the apparently fragile Maja, who was totally unaware of Karl's major involvement in hacking and drugs: "she helped us to know the other side of Karl beyond the commonplaces of the drugged hacker." In spite of being characterized as "one of the most important dialogue partners" [26] in the making of the movie, she does not appear as the protagonist of a 'love story' that could have saved Karl. Instead of stressing sentimental melodrama by introducing a female character, the movie gives preference to another dramaturgy (of friendship and betrayal) and reflects this decision in 'the making of the movie', in the final part containing the collective interview with Hans-Christian Schmid, Michael Gutmann and Jakob Claussen, carried out by the film critic Daniel Kothenschulte.[27] This part, accompanied by photographs of the movie (in colour) and of the shooting (in black-and-white) is the most characteristic one for the genre of 'the making of the movie'.

On the contrary, Gutmann's statement in this interview that "the phase of research is still ongoing today", referring to a period after the end of shooting, is totally uncommon. This research is considered relevant for the book but naturally unable to have influenced the movie.[28] This declaration of the autonomy of 'the making of the movie' in relation to the movie is the most remarkable detail of genre-consciousness, inverting the usual rules

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[26] "Auch wenn Maja in dem Film 23 nicht vorkommt, war sie einer unserer wichtigsten Gesprächs-partner. Sie half uns, die andere Seite Karls kennenzulernen, jenseits des Klischees vom drogensüchtigen Hacker." (Schmid / Gutmann, 110).

[27] I have already quoted from this interview above when referring to the difficult passage from research of facts to cinematographic fiction. Concerning Maja, Schmid and Gutmann relate their great reluctance to discard this love story, that was even filmed in different versions and only definitely cut close to the end (Schmid / Gutmann, 182-184). Remarkably, the 'making of the movie' does not contain photographs of this 'false take'. Also interesting is the fact that this interview is included in the press information booklet, but in a mutilated way (as a single interview with Hans-Christian Schmid), without indicating this (Buenavista, 19-24). For example, the passage about Maja is missing. Hence, this booklet must be seen more as an undeclared excerpt than an embryo of the 'making of the movie'.

[28] "Eigentlich hat die Recherchephase bis heute gedauert. Hans-Christian war noch vor ein paar Tagen in Hamburg und hat ein Interview geführt, das natürlich nicht mehr in den Film einfliesst, aber für das Buch wichtig ist." (Schmid / Gutmann, 170).

of the relationship. This kind of operation is only possible through an intermedia creation that attributes different functions to media products that complement each other. Meanwhile, the movie is enhanced as a cinematographic «Docu-Fiction» that makes use of its audiovisual autonomy towards the 'facts' in order to produce a work of art. The book (with text and photographs) reclaims discursive autonomy from the script writing and shooting: it follows a different poetics to that of the movie and reflects upon the difference.

Schmid & Gutmann as narrators of their project abandon more and more the initial idea of investigating Karl's real life and death (a coherence desirable for the movie), admitting the plurality of imaginable life stories within "plural worlds"[29], not only concerning Karl, but all the other persons who crossed his path and were willing to be interviewed. In this context, Karl's autobiographical writings and his later project to write a book about himself as a hacker assume a key position, indicating the will to communicate (narrate) his life from a position close to death in a self-idealizing way. Therefore, he is seduced into collaboration with the media, who are interested in constructing a young hero and martyr of the hacker scene. This collaboration and his role as chief witness are possible reasons for his hypothetical assassination. But as the discourse admits plural life stories, it also allows the "final story" to be plural.[30]

The narrative of research reveals how the media construct the case of Karl Koch, contrasting this with his factually minor importance for the hack into the Pentagon and the data-sale to the KGB where others played a more central role (Urmel and DOB). Karl only achieved a degree of prominence through his wilful yielding to press interest and his mysterious death. As opposed to the cinematographic melodrama focussed on Karl, 'the making of the movie' de-individualizes and de-dramatizes the hack into the Pentagon and the data-sale to the KGB. The book *23* reveals the media-made 'mystifications' of these actions as a dangerous subversion of Western society that fit in perfectly with the Cold War

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[29] Title of a chapter that deals with the thesis that Karl was homosexual (Schmid / Gutmann, 54-56).

[30] "Die letzte Story" is precisely the title of the respective chapter (Schmid / Gutmann, 130 f).

ideology of the older generation and their phobias of technological vulnerability. These are exploited by the sensationalist media, blowing the story up into the "biggest case of espionage since Guillaume"[31]. The narration of the trial after Karl's death that is completely absent in the movie, ends up by quoting Pedro, one of the accused hackers, saying to the public prosecutor: "If you think you have caught a big fish, I feel really pity for you."[32]

This quotation exemplifies how the discourse of *23* subtly mocks media-manipulated bourgeois society. On the other hand, there is sympathy for the juvenile naïve deconstruction of 'facts' and even the mystification of world conspiracy: a whole chapter is dedicated to the "Mythos 23". According to the concept of plural worlds and contrary to the manipulation of 'facts' by the media, the discourse of *23* accepts the conspiracy mystification of perceived reality as a valid option that 'infects' even the making of the movie, insinuated by (eventually) mysterious episodes which occurred during the shooting (for instance, the choice of the song "Child in time" by *Deep Purple* as leitmotif is mystified in this way).[33] But the auto-reflexive dimension of this 'infection' also remains present. This ambiguity constitutes a discursive dilemma for the movie, that has to choose *one* story in visual narrative (permitting only short sequences of disnarration).

(2) *The story of the movie* is clearly defined by the initial sequence: After the main title, we hear Richard von Weizsäcker's voice as he accepts his re-election as President of the Federal Republic of Germany (while the picture on a TV-screen appears); as the applause fades out, a female TV-news journalist comments that "it is no coincidence that Weizsäcker is beginning his second term today: the Constitution of the German Federal Republic was ratified 40 years ago, on May 23rd, 1949." Then the news speaker's

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[31] Quoting Pengo (one of Karl's friends) about the TV-programme *Im Brennpunkt* (Schmid / Gutmann, 119).

[32] "Pedro sagt zu Staatsanwalt Kohlhaas: «Ich kann nichts dafür, dass wir so naiv waren. Es war eben so. Und wenn Sie glauben, dass Sie mit uns einen grossen Fisch an Land gezogen haben, dann tut mir das eben leid." (Schmid / Gutmann, 141).

[33] See Schmid / Gutmann, 161 and Claussen, Gutmann and Schmid in the interview with Kothenschulte (205 and 194 f): "During the shooting there occurred a lot of strange coincidences with the number 23 and the sum of its digits 5." / "Während der Dreharbeiten gab es eine Reihe merkwürdiger Zufälle mit der Zahl 23 und mit ihrer Quersumme fünf."

voice fades out and the camera switches to reverse angle. In front of the TV-set sits the protagonist, who is not watching but jotting down the sum of the digits $1+9+4+9 = 23$, as the spectator can see after the camera has moved to the actor's back, adopting Karl's point of view (zooming).

He hides the numbers from the curious glances of the two secretaries who enter in the room asking him to join them in their champagne celebration. The simultaneous switching to slow motion, hyper-real luminosity and the beginnings of *Requiem* music suggest clearly subjective focalisation (through the point of view shot) and flashback, beginning with the sequence closest to the death, as announced by the protagonist as narrator (through voice off) while leaving the office and going to the car (still in slow motion): "I don't know how often I've read the novel *Illuminatus! –* 50 or 60 times. In any case, one passage has always fascinated me most: «All great anarchists died on the 23rd of some month. The 23rd is a good day for dying»." [34]

The topic of media reality is present from the beginning of *23*, especially when Karl as the apparently insignificant employee is surrounded by press photographers and has to pass through a series of flashlights before stepping into his car (still in slow motion). The luminosity of the flashes suggests a semantic connection to Karl Koch's imminent death which is not visualized in the film: significantly this gap is filled with a luminous bright fade out of Karl driving the car. Due to the point of view shot and the I-narrator-voice, this frame can be called the *auto-necrographical* starting point of the film narrative, as it is the closest imaginable moment to witnessing one's own death, corresponding to Karl's pre-tension to be the 'author' not only of his life but also of his death.[35]

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[34] Well-known quotation from the first chapter of Robert Shea & Robert A. Wilson's *The Eye in the Pyramid*, the first volume of the *Illuminatus! Trilogy* (1975), completed by *The Golden Apple* and *Leviathan*. On Karl's melodramatic misunderstanding of the *Iluminatus! Trilogy*, which could also be read as a satire of world conspiracy: see Daniel Kulla Kulla (2004).

[35] For more on this discursive strategy and its tradition in Art and Literature since Romanticism see Grossegesse (1999).

In order to define the auto-necrographical narrative of *23* through contrast, a comparison with the *hetero-necrographical* narrative of the «Bio-Pic» *Amadeus* (1984), directed by Miles Forman, is helpful. Peter Shaffer's script, based on his own theatre play, introduces Mozart's rival, Antonio Salieri, as witness-narrator in

The white screen dissolves then into a slow and close tracking (alternated with overlapping zoom) of notes, newspaper cuttings, black-and-white photographs, pages torn from newsmagazines (especially from *Der Spiegel*) and books that are clipped on a line. Meanwhile the credits of the movie fade discreetly in and out. The random sequence of filmed documents are pieces that offer a dense net of information and allusion: the mystification of the *Illuminati*, shown by photographs from the Pyramids to the Pentagon, the similar portraits of Adam Weisshaupt and George Washington (insinuating their overlapping identity), are mixed up with reports of crucial events in the Eighties (for instance, the Libya crisis and the Chernobyl accident in 1986). The extreme amplification of Karl Koch's signature, in particular, amidst these documents, suggests an epitaph and a posthumous glance at these documents left behind by the deceased. This initial discursive strategy is characteristic of the (fictional) editor's frame in auto-necrographical narrative in the tradition of *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774). As a subtle intertextual allusion, one of the first documents in the filmed sequence shows the name of Goethe as member (named Abaris) of the "Illuminatus Orden" founded by Weisshaupt.

But, on the other hand, the contents of these documents evoke the collective memory of the Eighties. Retrospectively, this decade has come to signify the Age of Innocence of globalization, but also the Age of imminent global apocalypse as "a personal reality" based on media reports of a 'world reality'. Like many other film critics, Christiane Peitz confirms the empathetic effect of this initial sequence, filled with threatening *pathos* (in slow motion, with ongoing Requiem music), that pretends a partial identification of the audience with Karl's thoughts, feelings and actions:

> The cases of Libya and Chernobyl only confirmed our certainty that nothing is as it seems. The world was a system of craziness that only could be coped with through theories of conspiracy or by means of the internet guerrilla. (Peitz, 1999).

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flashback who narrates Mozart's life from a position close to insanity and death and confesses his role as indirect murderer of the composer (by denying help). The hetero-necrographical structure culminates in the fact that Mozart composes his own Requiem, ordered by a masked client who is no other than Antonio Salieri himself who declares afterwards this composition his own work. The mixing of fact and fiction is remarkable.

As the tracking stops at a newspaper photograph of the anti-nuclear movement at Brokdorf in 1985, the zooming (and the Requiem music) dissolve into a documentary film sequence (original sound) of the clashes between the police and protesters. By using this device, the 'factual' necrology transforms slowly into dramatized film story told in flashback. It is exactly at this moment that the list of credits ends and the crucial title "This film is based on true events" appears. The next shot belongs to the full-blown movie action: a group of friends around Karl that participates in these historical clashes, are filmed realistically (full shots), switching immediately to a point of view shot focussed on Karl.[36] This is reinforced by the restart of slow motion and the echoing sound. The sequence of the nineteen-year-old Karl Koch falling in the mud after having climbed the protective fence of the Brokdorf nuclear plant alone, watched by the crowd of protesters, can be seen as an emblematic initial episode. It shows his absolute will to become a protagonist in the fight against the structures of world power, alluding also to his failure. With this sequence, the auto-necrographical narrative really begins, inaugurating Karl's subjective perspective as the prevailing one in almost the whole movie. This is characterized by the use of the hand-held camera instead of cinematographic machinery (pivot; track).

As the statements of Schmid & Gutmann prove (Kothenschulte, 184), the main challenge of the movie *23* consists in making the audience symapathize with Karl. The authors even discussed the possibility of choosing his close friend David as the protagonist, because he was a much more 'normal' character, and therefore much easier to identify with. The final decision to retain Karl and an auto-necrographical narrative (instead of a hetero-necrographical one), not only illustrates a confidence in the immediate credibility of world reality perceived in an extreme way, but also strengthens emotional involvement with the melodramatic plot (friendship and betrayal), considered as the first level of communication with the audience (Gutmann, 2000). This is aided by the 'overwhelming' presence of audiovisual realism concerning the

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[36] See the storyboard of this sequence, reproduced in the 'making of the movie' (Schmid/Gutmann, 181).

sensible recreation of the Eighties (including the soundtrack [37])
that is inaugurated by this epic initial sequence as an editorial
frame to the narrative. Using this discursive strategy, the auto-
necrographical narrative can be *felt* by a certain audience as a
'collective necrography' of their generation. But the second level,
identified by Michael Gutmann as a reflection "on the perception
of reality in our time: What is true? What is manipulated?" [38],
becomes totally marginalized by the empathetic involvement and
the audiovisual power of the story presented as «Docu-Fiction».
This situation leads to a similar discourse dilemma as that present
in *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* between the editor's frame / final
narration of death and Werther's epistolary discourse.

As an autonomous counterpart, the book *23* enables reflection
on plural reality, life and death, including an auto-reflection on the
making of the movie. In this way, the book can be understood as
a printed amplification of the editorial frame, in which the auto-
necrographical narrative is embedded. Reading the book and seeing
the movie fulfil different functions that complement each other.
'The making of the movie' thus enhances the movie *23* as a cine-
matographic work of art that chooses the 'best story', aesthetically
and ethically, within the possibilities of «Docu-Fiction»: it makes
a perfectly organized manipulation of fact and fiction in the name
of Art, which is able to move the audience to a reflection on the
structures of power that manipulate reality. But only the book (the
reading process) gives a frame for this reflection that concerns our
relationship with the media.

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[37] "Child in Time" by *Deep Purple*, "Eighties" by *Killing Joke*, "The Passenger"
by Iggy Pop, "Rauchhaus Song" by *Ton Steine Scherben*, "Halt Dich an Deiner Liebe
fest" by *Freundeskreis*, "DNS" by *39 Clocks*, "Money" by *Flying Lizards*, "Mathar" by
Volker Kriegel and "Love is a drug" by *Roxy Music* (Original Soundtrack: Virgin).
It is important to note that the soundtrack does not obey to historical accuracy
(for instance, the leitmotif song "Child in Time" by *Deep Purple*) but to the emotional
recreation of feelings (*pathos*) identified as belonging to a certain generation. See
Gutmann in Kothenschulte (1998, 205).

[38] "Der Film funktioniert auf zwei Ebenen. Auf der 'melodramatischen'
Gefühlsebene ist es eine Geschichte über Freundschaft und Verrat. Auf der reflexi-
ven Gedankenebene ist es eine Geschichte darüber, wie ein bestimmter junger Mann
in unserer Zeit die Wirklichkeit wahrnimmt. – Was ist wahr? Was ist Schwindel?"
(Gutmann, 2000).

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