Inventive Linguistics

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Sommaire

Introduction

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   This selection of papers is the fruit of an interdisciplinary conference which took place in Montpellier March 12-14 2009, gathering linguists, literary critics and language historians all trying to make sense of what seemed the recondite notion of *Inventive Linguistics*.

   The Call for Papers discussed the idea of linguistic invention as compared to scientific invention, asking whether the term "invention" in regards to linguistic matters was valid, as the language we have inherited has *de facto* always preceded us. The spoken word must conform to the phono- and morphotactics of the language constraining the speaker. Chomsky would even push this constraining aspect further in his claim that each speaker is biologically equipped with a homogenized language and a set of unchanging rules that have been internalised, thus enabling her/him to produce a great number of novel sentences from a predictable productive system. What Chomsky's theory does not study is the subject's capacity to break the rules and create nonce expressions. Yet individual creations will only be admitted into the language if accepted by other individuals taking up, repeating and finally adopting the new expression. This would tend to show that language is not merely in the mind of the speaker but is the object of interactive negotiations between speakers: linguistic invention can only be collective. This might be the reason why, as historians will show in this volume, the deliberate and authoritative attempts at reforming some aspects of language have always been limited. Breaking the rules can then only be the preserve of poets or writers taking the liberty to "distort" language into invented shapes. But this assertion also needs qualifying. Indeed as some linguists show here, *ex nihilo* creations in fiction are rather rare, creativity being more often than not rule-governed and serving a particular purpose which is fairly easily identifiable by the reader. What literary writers do manage to do however, is a reshuffling of existing elements which throw new and surpris-

ing light on familiar phenomena or expressions, thus elaborating novel linguistic "mappings" on reality as we know it.

Does all this mean that invention must be considered in its etymological sense *inventio* (to find)? Inventing would thus be to dis-cover or un-cover what is there but hidden. Would an inventive linguistics then reveal what a "scientific" linguistics would tend to put aside? In this case it would come close to the concept of *linguistique fantastique* that can be found in the book of the same name composed of articles stemming from the conference organized by the École Normale Supérieure of Fontenay-aux-Roses and the Society for the History and the Epistemology of Language Sciences in September 1983 aiming at revisiting "all the discourse and practices that the progressive contribution of an official discipline has marginalized and has sometimes even excluded from its scientific field."[1] Our work is following the path opened by that conference: an inventive linguistics would aim at being more encompassing and not simply opposed to an "official" linguistics, so as to avoid maintaining a dichotomy that is, to my mind, bound to be inoperative, as both indeed do (or should) draw on each other. An inventive linguistics would at least take into consideration the tension inherent to the activity of the linguist who must both describe language as a system and take into account its "defeasibility": "centripetal" linguistic forces (embodied by the system) are indeed resisted by "centrifugal" forces in which, as Simon Bouquet recalls, "the virtuality of diachronic change lies."[2] As the system keeps on evolving, synchronic linguistics is bound to be always already too late, rendering any attempt at fixing a description of language an impossible enterprise, as Sylvain Auroux makes clear: "My purpose is not to deny that it could be rational for a 'linguist' to *invent* the most economical system of rules possible to describe the maximum of different uses. I simply want to try to make people realise that a unique system that would account for all the potential uses is improbable"[3] (my emphasis). The verb "invent" here used by S. Auroux shows that this kind of linguistics too must be part of an "inventive" linguistics, a linguistics which would have to re-invent itself permanently though (the -ive suffix attesting to

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1. Sylvain Auroux, Jean-Claude Chevalier, Nicole Jacques-Chaquin and Christiane Marchello-Nizia (eds.), *La Linguistique fantastique*, Paris, Joseph Clims, 1985, p. 11, my translation.

2. Simon Bouquet, *Introduction à la lecture de Saussure*, Paris, Payot, 1997, p. 365-366, my translation.

3. Sylvain Auroux, "L'Hypothèse de la langue et la sous-détermination grammaticale", in Jean-Jacques Courtine (ed.), "Mémoire, histoire, langage", *Langages* 114, Paris, Larousse, juin 1994, p. 30, my translation.

the dynamic process), if it wants to go as fast as the language it is describing.

Literature is particularly attentive to linguistic changes, as it often anticipates on them in its capacity, in Deleuzian terms, to make our own language appear like a foreign one.[1] Working at the linguistic frontiers of the system, shaking them a bit, literature extols the poetic potentialities of language, bringing up what Jean-Jacques Lecercle calls "the remainder," that is to say what cannot be reduced to the system. These apparent linguistic "mistakes" are prone to open up new ways of grasping the world, affecting the reader, if only to make her/him laugh. Indeed this mirthful effect is here underlined by contributors interested in children's literature or TV cartoons. Linguistic inventiveness thus seems to take us back to a time when language was pure enjoyment. Unlike what Chomsky asserts, creativity is not to be confined to the speaker's activity, it is directed to an audience supposed to react to it in ways that need to be analysed and interpreted.

Thus, linguistically speaking (through the study of lexical, morphological and syntactical inventions) or meta-linguistically speaking (through a re-consideration of linguistics as a discipline), this volume hopes to throw a new, oblique light on what reunites all the contributors regardless of their respective fields of research, that is to say a certain love of language. As language does not strictly belong to linguists, linguistics cannot be restricted to itself. The inventive linguistics we are calling for will have to be open to what other "disciplines" have to say about language. In this, it has nothing original; it embodies no epistemological rupture since there was a time when the different disciplines were not so hermetically separated: it is a re-invention.

This volume will fall into four chapters before a general conclusion establishing further links between all the papers and examining how they each contribute to the general theme. Chapter I entitled *Alienation, Renunciation, Imagination* will deal with the inescapable condition of linguistic alienation we are in. If we can but remain a stranger to our own language and therefore to others in our inability to say exactly what we mean or mean what we say, Jean-Jacques Lecercle tells us this is no matter to despair, providing us with three different strategies as a remedy. The first way of overcoming linguistic alienation would be through a process of "weirding" language, as can be found in postcolonial literature trying to find an optimistic way to come to terms with the oppressing power of the English major language—Sandhya Patel gives us an illus-

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1. Gilles DELEUZE, *Critique et clinique*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1993, p. 138.

tration of this phenomenon here. A second strategy would be to entirely give in to it, as exemplified in the work of Beckett for example, but it may well be, as Andy Arleo shows us, through the setting to music of a meaningless invented language (Dogorian) to be interpreted by singers experiencing some intercomprehension beyond words. The third is a total embracing of the contradiction inherent to language as both a source of freedom and a sum of constraints. A fourth solution that J-J. Lecercle does not consider, since it seems the most pessimistic, is the one chosen by poetess Laura (Riding) Jackson who renounced poetry for linguistics, as she felt poetry was taking her not closer to but further away from truth. She does not turn to "scientific" linguistics though, thinking that this too, just like poetic ambiguity and uncertainty, is a symptom of a modernity that has failed humanity. She aspired instead to some rationalised version of language where meaning would not wander (Anett Jessop).

The three papers of Chapter II (*Re-Reading, Re-defining, Re-inventing*) focus on linguistics as a discipline and on its epistemological presuppositions. In a historical perspective, Gérard Mélis shows that it is through a re-reading or re-organisation of a theory that linguistic notions are re-invented. Saussure, Benveniste and Culioli have each elaborated their theory on what they perceived as lacunae in the work of their predecessors, thus opening new paths of exploration. Sandrine Sorlin questions the possibility of an entirely engineered linguistics that would not alienate language from itself. She ponders over the place of the linguist in front of her/his corpus, making a distinction between inventiveness and what she calls "inventedness" that a "postmodern" linguistics should consider together. John E. Joseph argues that, historically speaking, "an inventive linguistics" is an oxymoron, as linguists (and literary critics as well) have counted many hermeneiaphobics in their ranks, expecting their interpretation to be "true" or "correct," and therefore unique, it being what the author intended. According to J. Joseph we are still suffering from a "hangover" from this heritage. The theme of the conference has also, in his own words, brought him to "revisit" the Whorfian "hypothesis" and the way it has been wrongly re-invented.

Chapter III (*Reform, Usage and Identity*) will provide some answers as to our capacity to deliberately transform the language we use. Laure Gardelle exposes the reasons for a collective resistance to a change in pronouns, taking two case studies—the traditional "she" pronoun in reference to ships and the search for an epicene pronoun that would not favour only men any more, the latter example having proved to be the site for numerous fruitless inventions and reinventions over the centuries. Gilles Siouffi brings us back to 17th century France when there was

no strong distinction between "serious" linguistics and "folk" linguistics and, more generally, when knowledge had not yet been partitioned into hermetic specialised disciplines. He retraces the opposition between two attitudes towards usage, the rationalist tradition of Port Royal for which usage was considered as a "tyranny" on the one hand and the acceptance of usage as a "force" that cannot be repressed on the other, bringing G. Siouffi to ask if the true inventive linguist might not be language itself. In his study of Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*, Gilles Chamerois highlights the close link there is between linguistic invention and identity. Through linguistic anachronisms, mock-antique coinages, back-formations or fancy-suffixing, Pynchon reinvents an origin to the English language, thus reconstructing America's mythical beginnings.

The last chapter treats the question of *Creativity and Inventiveness*. Judith Munat brings up new elements regarding lexical creativity (making a distinction between strong creativity and weak or rule-governed creativity), analysing the pragmatic and social reasons for such creations and the functions they are meant to serve in different contexts (science fiction, children's literature but also in family contexts or within a community sharing the same dialect). Focussing on BBC programmes for young children (CBeebies), Jim Walker re-analyses the concept of creativity equating it with productivity and opposing both terms to inventiveness (a word that neither Chomsky nor Bauer ever use). The author ventures that what is specific to inventiveness is the positive response it gets from the listeners (or readers), which brings J. Walker to argue that the affect of pleasure brought about by the "ear-catchiness" of such linguistic structures should not be dismissed from the analysis. Inventiveness might also be a way to cope with a more morbid reality: drawing his examples from the American TV series *Six Feet Under*, Denis Jamet explores our linguistic resourcefulness in the face of death, an abstract and terrifying notion which we try to tame linguistically. Resorting to the theorists of cognitive metaphor he shows how language is euphemised to invent a new "deodorized" reality. It is not with death but with madness that we will close this book: Jocelyn Dupont focuses on the way Edgar Allan Poe craftily stages madness through stylistic and linguistic means in his famous fantastic tales. Indeed not only is Poe considered to have anticipated Freud's insights into the psyche but he is, according to Baudelaire, the first American to have used style as a "tool."

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Alienation, Renunciation, Imagination

Linguistic alienation, linguistic imagination and literary solipsism

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1 Adorno on literary solipsism

In a radio discussion on the work of Beckett with Martin Esslin, the specialist of the theatre of the absurd and Ernst Fischer, the Austrian Marxist, Adorno makes a distinction between philosophical solipsism, which he ascribes to Max Stirner, and literary solipsism (Adorno 144-146). The first position is notoriously untenable: it allows no communication between subjects, i.e. no intersubjectivity; its linguistic equivalent is the idea of a private language, an outright impossibility according to Wittgenstein. Literary solipsism, on the other hand, is not only possible but exemplified in the work of Beckett. What literary solipsism expresses, with its suggestion that only the individual really exists, that no communication is possible between individuals, etc., is *radical alienation*. If the traditional account of art is that it overcomes alienation by providing direct contact with the world, in Beckett it expresses alienation not by seeking to overcome it, but by presenting it as such, in its extreme and unadulterated state. This, Adorno adds, is a Hegelian posture: if you want to counteract alienation, you must experience it to the full, you must make it yours. So, in talking about his experience in solipsistic terms, the writer becomes, in spite of himself, perhaps even unwittingly, the historian of his time, of a situation of which he has no grasp because nobody has any grasp. Such solitary voice is everybody's unconscious voice, since we are all prey to the same radical alienation, a characteristic, according to Adorno, of our modernity, and this, in the midst of total lack of communication, establishes a form of link between the writer and everybody else, notably with us, who see or read the plays of Samuel Beckett. In a note for a projected essay on *End Game* (Adorno 28), Adorno adds that, in watching

a Beckett play, the audience are estranged from their own language by Beckett's language (a remark which, in anticipation, has Deleuzian overtones: we are estranged from our own language, even if it is the same as the writer's, because he writes his own language as if it were a foreign tongue). So, literary solipsism involves linguistic alienation in a literal sense. This is the topic of this essay: what exactly can we mean by linguistic alienation? How can we overcome it? And is there such a thing as linguistic imagination (as in cases of writers that create imaginary languages), which might help us in this attempt?

2 A dialogue on great systems

The contemporary Italian writer, Tommaso Landolfi, has a short story entitled "Dialogo dei massimi sistemi" (Landolfi 179-186). The story has two parts: an anecdote and a dialogue. In the anecdote, the narrator is visited by a friend, who is obviously in the grip of depression and soon tells his tale of woe. He is a poet, and it is his firm belief that in order to write good poetry you must not possess a thorough knowledge of the language in which you are writing, so as to avoid all *cliché*, technical jargon and literal meaning: ignorance induces the use of periphrasis, that is of poetic image. Our poet has met a retired Scottish sea-captain, who offered to teach him Persian. After the captain has returned home, the poet uses his newly acquired knowledge to write three poems in Persian, which he considers to be by far his best work. He then wishes to see what a Persian poem looks like by borrowing a collection of such poems from his local library: alas, they are not written in the same language, and no amount of frantic research can unearth a text in the language he has used, which apparently does not exist. The poet sends his poems to the man he now calls a "monster", the Scottish captain, to ask for an explanation. The answer adds insult to injury: the captain denies any knowledge of this language, maintains that what he taught the poet was straightforward Persian, perhaps, he adds, a little garbled by his failing memory, and he congratulates the poet on his brilliant linguistic imagination. The poet is reduced to despair: he has written his masterpiece in a language that does not exist.

We may draw a few provisional conclusions from the anecdote. First, the poet's position is the inverse of Deleuze's: as a writer, he does not wish to write his own language as if it were a foreign tongue, he wishes to write in a foreign tongue in order to avoid the traps that his own language has set for him, the innumerable betrayals of expression that the use of a maternal idiom involves. If linguistic alienation there is—as

indeed there seems to be—it is caused by one's own language. Secondly, the less one knows the language in which one writes, the better: the poet is not he who is best aware of the subtlest nuances of his language, he is the poetic equivalent of Rancière's "maître ignorant" (1987), the teacher who is successful in his teaching because he knows nothing of the subject he teaches. Thirdly, the sting in the tale of the captain's reply, but also the possibility of a favourable outcome, lie in this reference to linguistic imagination: so there is such a thing as linguistic imagination, and it may even be a criterion for art.

The second part of the story takes the poet, and the narrator his friend, to the house of a "great critic", whose opinion they want to ask. A lively discussion ensues, in which the critic pontificates, and the narrator contradicts him. The great critic first maintains that the three poems in an inexistent tongue belong to a sort of dead language, and it is enough for two people to read that language for a work written in it to be a work of art. The narrator answers that the remaining inscriptions of a dead language are rich with the totality of a dead culture and are of value only as such. The great critic retreats by maintaining first that a work of art is its own measure, and does not need the background of a culture, secondly that as long as a text can be translated, it can be shared and constitutes a true work of art (and he duly asks the poet to translate one of his poems, reproduced in the text of the story—it looks like a banal piece of sound or lettrist poetry). He is badgered by the narrator's objections into stating that the true criterion of a work of art is the author's decision that it is one, and that it is the privilege of an author to ascribe whichever meaning he wishes to his own text. The drift of the discussion is clear: the great critic is cornered into defending a form of literary solipsism in the literal sense. From the statement that a language need not be in use for a text written in it to be a work of art, he moves to the idea that a work of art does not need any cultural background—that it is independent of its culture. The consequence of this is that as long as someone understands the text, namely its author, the judgement that it is a work of art is not arbitrary, since he can at least translate it for us. The problem is that the translation of his poem duly provided by the poet is declared by him to be inadequate, and to fail to do justice to the excellence of the text. So the great critic has to fall back on the judgement of the author as a sufficient criterion for art, even if the text has no meaning. The *chute* of the story is an ironic comment on the great critic's stupidity: the poet takes the critic to his words, he pesters the editors of various journals by offering unintelligible texts written in gibberish, demands that they should be published and that he should be paid for them. Eventually, he has to be kicked out

of all newspaper offices, and out of the office of the great critic himself.

The interest of the story is that it gives us the description of a form of literary solipsism, which can be summarised by the following propositions.

Proposition one: a work of art is independent of the historical conjuncture in which it emerges and of the culture in which it is written: it is not representative of any form of group or situation.

Proposition two: a work of art is independent of the system of the language in which it is written: it need not conform to grammatical rules, rhetorical, stylistic and generic conventions. It is written in a free floating form of language.

Proposition three: a work of art is independent of whatever meaning is recoverable from a translation. A translation is always a betrayal, it recovers that which in a work of art is not what makes it art.

Proposition four: finally, a work of art need not be dependent on any form of meaning. The only criterion is the decision made by its author. Literary solipsism is a mixture of *decisionism* (it is the literary equivalent of Carl Schmitt's political decisionism: the ruler is he who decides on the state of exception) and *intentionalism* (the artistic nature of the work of art is to be found in the author's intention to create a work of art— we remember that this was Searle's argument in his essay on the logical status of the work of fiction: fiction is not in the eye of the beholder but in the mind of the author [Searle 101-120]).

That the drift of the great critic's argument leads to a dead end is stressed by the *chute*, which ironically ruins it. But the story does establish a link between literary solipsism, linguistic imagination (remember the poet has been congratulated by the Scottish captain for his "brilliant imagination") and linguistic alienation (the poet, at the end of the story, is raving mad). I would like to explore that link further.

3   Linguistic alienation

It would appear that alienation, far from being an accident of language, is a constitutive characteristic. What is *langue* in the sense of Saussure, after all, if not a human creation, hypostatised or objectified as a system, which escapes human control and constrains, or even oppresses, its speakers: the human individual, in order to become a speaking subject and no longer an *infans*, must accept her interpellation by a system anterior and exterior to herself. And this, of course is not a criticism, or an expression of regret: linguistic alienation enables as much as it constrains; it is a structural necessity, as is the State for the young Marx, or

even religion—the ambiguity of the famous pronouncement on religion as the opium of the people is well documented (Renault 63). This tension, we might even call it a contradiction, which is at the heart of linguistic alienation, may be expressed in the not entirely original but striking words of the Italian philosopher Umberto Galimberti, "Language does not reproduce, but on the contrary distorts truth; yet truth can only be formulated through the distortion of language" (Quoted in Marazzi 37). Let us briefly develop the aspects of this contradiction.

On the one hand, the system of language constrains and limits the speaker's attempts at representing truth or expressing her inner truth, in so far, precisely, as it is a *system*, a collective entity independent of the will or power of its speakers. As a result of which, all attempts at linguistic creativity on the part of the individual speaker are framed by the system (Chomsky captures this under the phrase "rule-governed creativity"): linguistic coinages not only must conform to the phonotactics of the language and to its rules of derivation and composition, like Socrates' chimera, the goat-deer, but their adoption depends on the a-subjective vagaries of the system, and not on individual decisions. This does not concern the lexicon only, but also the grammar of the language, its syntax. We all remember Barthes' provocative pronouncement that language is fascist: what he meant by this was that the syntactic organisation of language heavily constrains the speaker's attempts at individual expression. Language, as I have already hinted, like ideology in Althusser (of which it is the main vector), interpellates the would-be speaker into a subject, at a place determined for her by the syntactic constraints of grammar as much as by the pragmatic system that governs interlocution: language is a system of places as much as a system of rules. This situation has been variously expressed by philosophers, in pregnant, and sometimes cryptic, formulas, from Heidegger's "die Sprache spricht" to Wittgenstein's "the limits of my language are the limits of my world".

And yet, every single one of those levels of constraint can be ignored or defeated. Thus we can contrast Heidegger's "Language speaks" with the "I speak language" of the poet, as I tried to demonstrate in one of my books (Lecercle 1991). Rhetorical tropes, or, if we are willing to speak the language of Gilles Deleuze, style, the stuttering of language, its rolling and pitching, allow the speaker to make creative use of agrammaticalities, to produce stylistic singularities, through rule-breaking creativity, far from the generalisation that rules of grammar enforce and the ordinary communication of good sense and common sense needs. In other words, the philosophical idiom of Deleuze enables us to construct a stylistics in which the genuine creativity of poetic language can

be accounted for (Lecercle 2008a and 2008b). But what obtains at the stylistic level also obtains at the pragmatic level, as the speaker counter-interpellates the language that interpellates her: in the terms of Judith Butler, the constraints of language are *enabling constraints*; they do not merely oppress or alienate the speaker, they also empower her (Butler 1997). And even syntax, that fascist aspect of language, can be either dismissed, if we abandon a poetics of the sentence for a poetics of the word (the single word escapes the law of syntax), or circumvented, through what Barthes, in his late seminars at the *Collège de France* calls *l'écriture du neutre* (Barthes 1977-78, Comment 1991). In turn, we may even liberate linguistic coinages from the rules of derivation and composition, as we realize that language develops through anomaly as much as through analogy. I have tried to subsume the various phenomena that I have just evoked under one concept, the remainder, as opposed to the system of Saussurian *langue*, as what refuses to be captured by the rules of the system (Lecercle 1991).

I am not, of course, the only critic, or even the first, to have become aware of this contradiction, which is what makes language alive. A contemporary version of it, in an entirely different field, can be found in the work of Christian Marazzi, an Italian Swiss economist, who works in the tradition of Italian *operaismo*, of cognitive capitalism and the concept of multitude, put forward by Negri and Hardt (Marazzi 1997 and 2008). His central thesis is that the organisation of labour under capitalism has moved in the last thirty years from Fordism to post-Fordism, and that this passage is characterised by a linguistic turn: in the contemporary capitalist organisation of the work process, communication is an integral part of production, the worker is no longer a cog or tool in a complex organisation centrally controlled, he must communicate, with machines, with management, with fellow workers. The language required for this is an alienated form of language: it must be swift and efficient, reduce misunderstanding to a minimum, in short it is the logico-formal language of symbols and abstract codes. But such linguistic alienation is always already counteracted by the fact that the worker's *prise de parole*, which is demanded by the new organisation of labour, occurs in the worker's maternal or native tongue, in other words in a language of communal being, which is also the language of politics, where everyone speaks with and against the imposed official language of work. This is Galimberti's paradox: language, as the language of the post-Fordist organisation of labour, betrays lived experience, *le vécu*, and it also allows individual expression. A form of linguistic freedom emerges, in the midst of the capitalist alienation of language, because every worker must become an

individual speaker in order for the economic system to function: the post-Fordist worker no longer looks like Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*. Language it is that creates the political community Negri and Hardt call the multitude (Hardt & Negri 2004).

I have used this detour to show that the contradiction of linguistic alienation emerges in more than one theoretical field. My main interest, of course, is how literature negotiates this contradiction. The "linguistic resourcefulness" that, according to the Call for Papers for this conference, "is the prerogative of literature" takes, it seems to me, three forms: there are three strategies through which literature treats linguistic alienation. The first is an attempt at literary disalienation: literature, through a linguistic strategy that has been called "weirding language", liberates the speaker and the reader from their linguistic alienation. The second is the literary solipsism that we have already evoked: by going through the utmost form of linguistic alienation, by letting alienation do its worst, literature recovers a form of intersubjectivity, by testifying to our common plight. The third will seek to maintain the contradiction rather than overcoming it or giving in to it. It will exert a form of linguistic imagination, involving the use of invented or corrupted languages, in order to embody the contradiction that is constitutive of human language.

4 Disalienation

Disalienation is never a purely linguistic strategy: it always has a political aspect, but both aspects take a literary form.

Linguistic disalienation through literature may take the form of the canon of texts on which Deleuze has constructed his concept of style. I have already alluded to the conceptual metaphors he uses, which can be subsumed under the general term of minorisation. They are used to account for what is very much a high modernist canon, from Proust to Gherasim Luca, taking in Kafka, Artaud and Beckett. The limits of the exercise (to my mind, the best form of stylistics available in the present conjuncture) can be formulated through the following objections: such disalienation relies on the construction of an elitist canon; that canon is not only elitist, it entirely belongs to Western high culture; and the disalienation, being limited to language, ignores the broader political perspective. These objections can of course be answered, and have been: our canon is not only the site of the fetishisation of literary texts, but also the political site of their de-fetishisation (literature is the best protection against the fetishisation of identity [Lecercle 2006, 20-22]). They are evoked here merely to introduce the next attempt at disalienation

through literature, which is overtly political, and is associated with post-colonial literature and the postcolonial critique of Western high culture. That critique, based on concepts of diaspora and linguistic and cultural hybridity, involves an attitude to language which Evelyn Ch'ien calls "weirding English". Her book, *Weird English* (2004), analyses the literary productions of a number of polyglottal novelists writing in English: Nabokov, Maxine Hong Kingston, Arundathi Roy, Junot Diaz, a Dominican writer writing in a mixture of English, Spanglish and Spanish (the foreign language is present in the English text without italics of warning or protection) and a score of others, more briefly mentioned. Evelyn Ch'ien ascribes the following four characteristics to weird English:

1. Weirding deprives English of its dominance and allows other languages to enjoy the same status;

2. Weird English expresses linguistic adventurousness at the price of sacrificing rules;

3. Weird English is derived from nonnative English;

4. The rhythms and structure of orthodox English alone are not enough to express the diasporic cultures that speak it. (Ch'ien 11)

This amounts to a poetics of diasporic literature which is based, if not strictly on imaginary language, at least on an imaginative use of linguistic hybridity, where the rules of composition of coinages as chimeras are extended to the whole idiom. There is more than a modicum of optimism in both forms of literary disalienation: a confidence in the writer's ability to escape what Jameson once called "the prison house of language". Welcome as it is, such optimism is one of the limitations of this strategy.

One of the examples quoted by Ch'ien is Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*. If we look at the first page of the novel, four characteristics soon become apparent. First, the postcolonial critique of language does not concern only what used to be called the British colonies: the Scottish dialect (as also the Welsh, for instance in Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*) minorises standard English as much as the Chinglish or Spanglish that provide Ch'ien with her main corpus: minorisation, like charity, begins at home, and we could find texts written in the dialects of the South-West (like the poetry of William Barnes, the Dorset poet that inspired Hardy [Barnes 1984]) or of Yorkshire that would subvert standard English in the same way. Secondly, the text is written in a form of English. It is truly weird, not only in pronunciation (as transcribed by the writer) and lexicon, but also in grammar and rhythm (there is a poetic quality to this kind of text which will only appear if the text, or any text by James

Kelman, is read with a genuine working class Edinburgh or Glasgow accent). But it is undoubtedly written in a form of English: the weirding is not caused by linguistic hybridity. Thirdly, the weirding does not merely consist in the production of what linguists now call a New English (like the English of Singapore, etc.), but also in a play on register: it is not so much a question of ethnic or national weirding or minorisation as of *social* weirding. So that, fourthly, the weirding is inseparable from a form of jargon, the jargon of a *lumpen proletariat* of drug addicts and dealers, the function of which—which made the success of the book—is, at least in part, the old literary game of *choquer le bourgeois*.

Here we find another limitation of the strategy of disalienation through weirding. Ch'ien quotes an observation of Junot Diaz, the Dominican novelist who writes in a mixture of languages. He was taking part in a round table of writers of weird English like himself, who all claimed to express the experience of the street dealer in forbidden substances. The problem was, he claims, that none of these was, or had ever been, a drug dealer, or even a genuine proletarian: they were all products of creative writing courses in elite universities. So that the disalienation that weirding brings is, in most cases, entirely a fake one, which makes it the acme of alienation: the writer who claims to speak for a marginalised or dominated group only sends back to the dominant culture the image of the dominated group they entertain. The problem is not so much that the diasporic writer is a bourgeois or petty bourgeois (after all, neither Marx nor Lenin were proletarians) as that they tend to adopt the bourgeois values of individualism. To put it bluntly, the urgent task is not to express the linguistic and cultural anxieties of a second generation middle class Bengali living in the United States (as in Jumpa Lahiri), but to give a voice to the cohort of voiceless immigrants who die in the attempt to reach Europe—in the words of Gayatri Spivak, the problem is to enable the subaltern to speak.

In spite of the optimistic attempts of poetic and postcolonial disalienation through style or the weirding of the standard language, this strategy seems to fail: it would appear that linguistic alienation is structural, and cannot be escaped.

5 Literary solipsism

The literary solipsist, as we saw, accepts this structural constraint. He is a natural dialectician (Beckett, Adorno, *même combat*). But Beckett's literary solipsism is different from Landolfi's great critic's, which was the outcome of the critic's stupidity and his argumentative defeat at the hand

of the narrator. There is no decisionism in Beckett, nor is there any intentionalism. His solipsism is both desperate and ironic (there is such a thing as Beckett's laughter, on which Badiou has erected his idiosyncratic account of him [Badiou 1995]), and best expressed in the very last words of *The Unnameable*: "you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on" (Beckett 1979, 382). We note of course the change in personal pronoun, and the ambiguity of the "you" which refers both to the speaker addressing himself in the second person and to the interpellated reader. We also note the ambivalence or neutrality in the modal auxiliary, which will not choose between a decision imposed on the speaker ("I shall go on") and a decision made by him ("I will go on"). Lastly, we note the irony of a last sentence, followed only by silence, which expresses the imperative to go on, and therefore to go on speaking, as in Lyotard's *Le différend*, where he states what he calls "the paradox of the last sentence", which carries the conviction that speaking (*phraser*) is endless (Lyotard 27).

I can suggest two more incarnations of this ironic solipsism in Beckett. The first is the *incipit* to *Murphy*: "The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new" (Beckett 1977, 5). This *incipit* is a gem, the best of all its tribe; but it is also a signal failure, as it does not fulfil any of the usual functions of an *incipit*. It is entirely self-sufficient, cut off from any context: it has all the qualities of a self-quotation. It is not the first link in a narrative chain, it does not announce a narrative programme, which the rest of the novel will achieve, it is a fragment, an aphorism, what the French language calls "une sentence", a maxim. It stands alone on the threshold of the text, but not actually as a threshold, not even an outpost, rather as a statue, independent of the rest of the edifice. It seems to start with the optimism of the narrative *incipit*, through a confident statement, "the sun shone", but it immediately takes it back, through the immemorial trick of negation, and the paradoxes it implies. And it ends on an imaginative use of syntax, as the phrase "the nothing new" quotes the most trite of *clichés*, "there is nothing new under the sun", and deconstructs it. Indeed, the phrase is liable to several, albeit slightly dubious, syntactic reinterpretations: "the new that is nothing", "the in no way new", "the nothing that is new". The last interpretation, which hypostatises "nothing" turns the *cliché* into a comment on the void which is the origin of all being (to speak like Badiou), whereas the first two seem to preclude any search for meaning. In its stammering of language, the *incipit* is a brilliant formulation of literary solipsism: it expresses the alienation that language imposes on the speaker, it unfolds it in its details and it shares it with the reader through the exercise of what I shall call linguistic imagination.

The second incarnation of Beckett's ironic literary solipsism occurs in *Comment c'est*. Here are the first two paragraphs of the text:

> comment c'était je cite avant Pim avec Pim après Pim comment c'est trois parties je le dis comme je l'entends
> voix d'abord dehors quaqua de toutes parts puis en moi quand ça cesse de haleter raconte-moi encore finis de le raconter invocation (Beckett 1961, 9)

What interests me here, and what must, among other things, puzzle the reader is this sudden quacking, "quaqua", a non-existent "word" (I don't even know whether the term is appropriate), which occurs every time the voice is mentioned in the text. The word is perhaps a materialisation of a funny voice (as one says in English "he spoke in a funny voice"), or a scandalous interruption of the grammatical logic of the sentence (if sentence there is: the text has no punctuation), what the French language would call "un couac", perhaps even an interjection, that type of quasi-sentence grammar finds it difficult to accommodate: interrogative "Quoi? Quoi?", or exclamatory "What! What!". This imaginative use of language interrupts the flow of "normal speech" and establishes an ironic distance from it: it mocks and apes it, it lets in the direct expression of affect, the animal cry that disrupts the order of articulate language, which it denounces as *bavardage*, the very embodiment of linguistic alienation. By going one step further into such alienation, since the new "word" has no meaning and is no longer really a word, it frees the speaker from the alienation of *cliché* and *bavardage*, by letting bodily affect speak directly. Here, in a nutshell, we have the philosophical history of the concept of *bavardage*, from Heidegerrian *Gerede*, the very embodiment of inauthenticity (Heidegger 211-214), to Paolo Virno's *chiacchiere*, in which the speaker exerts her new powers as linguistic *virtuoso* (Virno 104). Beckett's deliberate barbarism is what completes linguistic alienation and relieves it in the sense of Hegel.

6 Linguistic imagination

The best illustration of linguistic imagination should be the imaginary languages that make up the corpus of Sandrine Sorlin's work (Sorlin 2010). Let us take for instance Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*, which purports to be written in the corrupt English spoken a thousand years after our civilisation has been destroyed by a nuclear holocaust. On the face of it, such language is a fine example of linguistic alienation: the meaning of the words, our meanings, are corrupted, systematically distorted, since

the corrupted words are subjected to constant re-analysis through popular etymology, and the result gives the impression of an inarticulate *patois* spoken by linguistic morons. Yet, as we read the book and learn what is in fact a new language, we discover its richness and poetic potential and we remember the linguist's motto that each language expresses the totality of experience in its own way, so that there are no richer or poorer languages. The so-called corruption of our English is in fact a process of poetic, that is of imaginative, minorisation in which new expressive possibilities appear, so that the apparently alienated language of *Riddley Walker* turns out to be the acme of style. What the corruption does is introduce into syntax and lexicon the subversion of what the musical theorist Victor Grauer calls "antax", a negative syntax that forces the reader to abandon the certainties of the positive syntactic field to perceive beneath it a negative field, another subversive *Gestalt* (Grauer cited in Citton 132-136). Thus, the utmost alienation (in the society depicted by the novel, a caste of priests are the masters of etymology and therefore of meaning) is transformed into the instrument of complete dis-alienation, as the language of corruption becomes a utopia of language: the contradiction that constitutes language, the paradox of a series of constraints both enabling and oppressive is gone through and relieved in a social dystopia which is also a linguistic utopia.

There is an entire tradition for such linguistic imagination, beyond Sandrine Sorlin's corpus of British novels: poets that get carried away in their playing with language, like Morgenstern, extreme modernist novelists like Gertrude Stein or the last Joyce, practitioners of sound poetry from Aristophanes to members of Oulipo, glossolalists and false prophets, from Swedenborg to Helen Smith, madmen whose delirium is linguistic, from Judge Schreber to Christopher Smart, serious jokers who extract meaning from the text by tampering with it, as in Tom Phillips's *Humument*, a "treated Victorian novel" (1987), not to forget assorted mystics and language reformers. I am in fact giving you the table of contents of Rasula and Mc Caffery's *Imagining Language* (1999), the definitive anthology of this tradition of texts.

As an example of this tradition, and of the strategy of imagining language, I would like to look briefly at the work of a young American poet, Alex Dickow, who writes not only bilingual poetry, but poetry that deliberately, in both languages, subverts the rules of syntax. Here is an example of his work (Dickow 32-33):

You are worn a raincoat	C'est l'imperméable
who I was giving you away	je porte dont tu m'as laissé
to keep you out and escape	pour m'échapper la pluie
you from the rain when it's	de tomber sur moi et
onto you, or when you're	pour éviter les nuages
spotting clouds after you	à l'horizon me menacer
from nearby	the horizon

That this poem belongs to what is sometimes called parapoetics, in other words the deliberate flouting of elementary rules of syntax, which, were this a student's prose, would make us cover the text with petulant red, is only too obvious. That such flouting of the rules produces effects of meaning and corresponds to Victor Grauer's antax or negative syntax, is equally obvious: a new linguistic *Gestalt* reaches our awareness, we notice a new rhythm of language, new potentialities of meaning actualised by the weird syntax. But the most interesting, to my mind, is the mirror effect created by the subversion of two languages on opposite pages, with symmetrical pronouns (you wear the raincoat but *je porte l'imperméable*, even as the orange Alice holds in her right hand is held by her mirror image in her left hand). This is what true linguistic imagination consists of: not the solipsistic creation of invented languages (which, in Landolfi's story, leads the poet to madness), not the weirding of the dominant language through hybridity, but the parallel subversion, through an appearance of translation which is not a translation (as the pronouns are symmetrically used, and the texts don't even have the same number of lines) of regular syntax and the co-occurring appearance of an antax, another syntax. It is the function of imagination to jog our thought, to allow us to leave our routines, even if only temporarily: it is the function of linguistic imagination to allow, within our language or languages, other languages to appear. The best argument used by the narrator of Landolfi's story against the great critic is that, if it is enough for the three texts to exist, without reference to a linguistic system or a culture, they may be considered as written not in one, but in many languages (one can reconstruct, from the scant information provided by those three short texts, not one but a number of linguistic systems of which they would be actualisations): what Alex Dickow is doing, through the poetic use of linguistic imagination is to let other Englishes (and, if I may coin the word, other Frenches) emerge from the common and garden variety we think is the only one. The linguistic alienation of childish syntax, riddled with "mistakes", and leading to linguistic solipsism, is relieved into a poetics of literary and linguistic imagination.

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Inventive Linguistics:
Albert Wendt's Pacific Sites of Creation

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Albert Wendt, artist and author of prose, poetry and plays was born in Samoa in 1937. He has become over the years one of the Pacific's most well-known writers and has published extensively since the 1970s. Much of his fiction focuses on pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial histories of the Pacific. His critique of the effects of previous colonial and present neo-colonial structures is ongoing and expresses itself in diverse and interesting ways.

Albert Wendt dedicates his novel *The Mango's Kiss* published in 2003 to all his "Aiga and for their alofa and support." This line (preceding the story proper) sets in motion the story of the Tuifolau family who at the end of the 19th century struggle to come to terms with the complex colonial, cultural and religious influences in their everyday lives in Satoa, a village on the island of Savai in Samoa. Wendt's inventive linguistic approach to the telling of this Samoan tale already seems apparent here if invention is defined as contriving or devising and inventive as describing the same practice undertaken with imaginative skill. Conversely, linguistic study may be understood as the rather more scientific scrutiny of a language which in Bakhtin's words is an ideologically saturated system purveying a world view where there is only "one language of truth" (Bakhtin 271). Wendt's blend of Samoan and English in a grammatically or linguistically sound sentence opening the novel may be considered in this context as an instance of inventive linguistics.

This technique of indigenising the English language has been a persistent, recognised and politicised feature of so-called new literatures in English. In postcolonial critique, inventive linguistics of this type may be understood as operating for example in the creation of mongrel English in an instance of "exuberant exoticism" as Glage puts it (Glage 9). These

techniques are deployed in the construction of loaded sites of hybridity in the form of a resourceful combination of literary devices and voices and the expression of in-between identities as theorised by Homi Bhabha (18). Crawford in her consideration of Shklovskij's concept of this defamiliarisation of language underlines how the latter "induces perception of the 'word' and immediately beyond it, of the 'world' and its things." (Crawford 209-210). The process of defamiliarisation in question in *The Mango's Kiss* is one which adjusts diction. The mix of Samoan and English within Wendt's fiction does indeed draw attention to the word which in turn provides entry into the world and things of turn of the century Samoa which for non Polynesian readers "gives the sensation of things as seen and not known" (Crawford 209-210).

Primarily in Book 1 (Books 2 and 3 recount Satoa's socio-economic transformation), the longest section of the novel, Wendt's inventiveness springs from the unselfconscious blend of languages characterising the narrative. There is very little divide between the two languages and at first sight this queries partition politics which, from a postcolonial perspective, is symptomatic of the differences between worldviews, peoples, histories conceived of as violently divisive or disruptive. Wendt adopts these latter positions in other works like *The Songmaker's Chair* (Wendt 2004). The approach in *The Mango's Kiss* though differs and in addition to this grounding blend of languages supplementary ostranenic effects are constituted by the production of phonetic defamiliarisation despite the aphonic written form. In Genette's words " . . . we do not fail to appreciate the sounds of a poem when we read it silently" (Genette 1969, 4). Thus, to refer to Shklovskij's "seen and not known" paradigm resulting from defamiliarisation of what he calls practical language (Crawford 210), the systematic use of Samoan words within sentences in English with their sounding of all syllables and glottal stops, may allow for a further "heard and not known" dimension in the hybrid language of the novel.

These ostranenic initiatives also induce a deceleration in the course of reading. In *The Mango's Kiss* (for other than Polynesian readers of English) this slowing down is generated by the blend of languages mentioned above and the related attempts at inference of the meanings of the Samoan within the English. The ruptures in the rhythm of English due to phonic ostranenie also work towards accentuating this same deceleration. Such protractile strategies remove the automatism of perception in Schklovskij's words and generate aesthetic experience. The author's purpose is to create a vision directly resulting from that deautomatized perception where " . . . the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself"

(Bogdanov 49-51). Shklovskij develops this approach within a framework of an economics of perception where the "cost" of true aesthetic literary effect is the " . . . difficulty defamiliarisation creates for a reader on a plane textually delimited by spaces of meaning and by the time required to assimilate and recognise an object deformed/defamiliarised in its poetic sound structure or description." (Crawford 210-211). Thus, in this construal of Shklovskij's concepts language acquires aesthetic value if it creates difficulties for the reader in terms of delaying or impeding understanding. This in turn posits that unmixed language, perhaps even literary English, generates a lesser aesthetic experience.

I will argue then that Wendt's inventive linguistics and the defamiliarisation of language in the novel not only work towards establishing difference in the interests of postcolonial identity-making but also make a significant contribution towards the creation of a literary aesthetic object. From this perspective, Wendt undoubtedly critiques colonial and neo-colonial structures in powerful ways by adapting well-recognised production processes and by employing innovative literary means.

Wendt's adaptation of established postcolonial literary practice[1] is apparent in the fact that the mixedness in the two languages in Book 1 of the novel is effected visually and linguistically in Sharrad's words (Sharrad 126). The merger is thus seamless in that no italics or diacritics distinguish one language from the other (Wendt 2003, 45):

> In the neighbouring fale and circling the malae in the shade were those who'd come with the guests—hundreds of them. The hungry air was thick with the smell of umu-cooked pork, chicken, fish, palusami, faiai, taro, ota, faiai fe'e, povi masima, pisupo and other dishes. Throughout the previous night nearly all the aiga in Malelua had made umu for the feast.

Samoan words occur frequently and are even closely linked to the English (umu-cooked) and their unknown meanings defamiliarise and defer understanding of the text. Semantic defamiliarisation engenders difficulties for the reader and works towards both consolidating the specifics of Samoan experience and producing aesthetic effects. These latter acquire yet more significance through phonic mixedness as the Samoan words persistently disrupt the rhythm of English as with the three stressed syllables of the words malae or faiai for example. Samoan words also occur consecutively accentuating this effect of phonic patterns foreign to English.

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1. Writing strategies and techniques identified by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in the ground-breaking *The Empire Writes Back* first published in 1989.

Wendt reworks familiar postcolonial writing strategies further as he rarely has recourse to glossing or neologisms in *The Mango's Kiss*. Neither does he adjust spelling or adapt standard syntax to vernacular patterns to render Samoan language forms as he does elsewhere for example in one of his earlier short stories *Captain Full—the Strongest Man Alive who got Allthing Strong Men got* (Wendt 1974). The title in itself is an example of postcolonial abrogative writing strategies at work. This short story opens with: "Mine neighbourhood I to you must tell about" and is written entirely in this syntactic style as well as in the present tense.

The Mango's Kiss then questions the conventional abrogative or appropriative categories of postcolonial linguistic discourse though of course the story itself is a complex articulation of now characteristic postcolonial concerns. These relate for example to the various powerplays of language in colonial contexts which become particularly apparent when Barker (an Englishman who has lived on the island for years and married a Samoan woman) teaches Mautu Tuifolau how to speak, read and write English. Mautu then goes onto introduce his children to the language:

> Opening the English Bible, Mautu said "'In the Beginning . . .' Repeat!"
> "In the Beginning . . . " chorused his children, led by Peleiupu.
> "was the Word . . . "
> "was the Word . . . "
> "and the Word . . . "
> "and the Word . . . "
> "was with God . . . "
> "was with God . . . "
> "Once again!" he instructed them.

As their lesson continued and their tongues struggled to fit the new language it was as if the whole fale and the light were being named by another system of shaping and inventing. (36)

Here the word does indeed provide incantatory entry into the colonial world of things which will definitively leave the Samoans in the dark. The ritual effect produced by the repetitions is here strongly evocative of the oral chants characteristic of pre-Christian Samoa, linguistically and thematically representing the implications of the espousal of the English language and the inevitable merger between colonial and Polynesian world views. Postcolonial concerns are thus carefully considered throughout the novel. But language *use* in the novel seems to advocate trouble-free means of integration. English and Samoan used together seem to elude a sense of hierarchism by allotting significant emphases to both languages (though arguably to a limited extent).

Thus single words in Samoan, most often nouns, representative of Shklovskij's world and its things, are introduced and the immediate context allows/disallows their explication. To take just one example, the meaning of the word aiga which appears in Wendt's dedicatory sentence is not immediately apparent but is inferred in small steps as the novel progresses. Hence Aiga could refer to relatives or family. It appears for the second time in Chapter 1 in the sentence: "Satoa then was an orderly collection of about thirty aiga in fale spread along the shore under palms." (11) To the initial definition of family, another vital layer of meaning is added as the social structure of island life is understood as being based on aiga or extended families living together in fale or houses. With the next occurrence of the word, the value of lineage and the importance of genealogy associated with the concept of aiga become apparent as the prophecy that the village of Satoa would produce an aiga of prodigies is evoked, immediately followed by a description of the Tuifolau family: "A year after . . . Peleiupu's brother Arona was born, a year later Ruta, then another sister Naomi and finally Iakopo, another brother." (12) The fourth and fifth uses of the word highlight the tight-knit structure of the community of aiga when Peleiupu's brother Iakopo falls ill as "Each aiga sent people to help in the cooking and caring for the elders." (15) When Barker the Englishman needs help clearing a piece of land, his wife's aiga sends strong and fit young men to help with the task. The aiga as being a social unit grouping a series of interrelated families is illustrated in the next usage as Barker is careful not to drink in public to avoid bringing "the wrath of the fono upon his aiga" (21). The next new usage outlines property relations in such trivial incidences as when Barker's wife Poto gives Peleiupu sugar and flour to take home for their aiga and lollies for herself (25). The following occurrence defines power structures within this extended family configuration (37). Thus aiga, one of the most frequently used Samoan words in the novel, acquires its various connotations as the story progresses. It is neither italicised nor glossed but its frequent use in different contexts elucidates the workings, but only gradually, of one of the most important social structures governing Samoan life.

Similarly in terms of other protractile strategies, proper names are rarely glossed and the only explanation we have of what Peleiupu's name means is when on a trip to Apia, their white host Stenson asks for clarification:

> "I'm sorry but I can't pronounce your name properly. You must help me."
> "My name is Peleiupu" she said. She glanced at Arona.

"My name is Arona."

"They have a beautiful sound. You must spell them for me. Will you do that for me?" They nodded. He pulled a small notebook out of his shirt pocket Peleiupu spelled her name while he wrote it down. Then he sounded each letter. "Now spell it in Samoan." (94)

Barker tells him that Peleiupu means Beloved in Words which Stenson goes onto describe as very appropriately "a melodious and apt name" (94).[1] Otherwise, no other Polynesian name or place name is overtly defined. This postpones understanding as Mautu, Sao, Poto, Lalaga, Filavai remain mute, to be fathomed or not as no outright access to such repositories of memory is made available within the text. In this context, a technique of repetition comes into effect with the frequent listing of Polynesian names. This strategy corresponds to the "heard and not known" dimension of the aesthetic process which accentuates the defamiliarising semantic effects already operating as the following example shows. Lefatu (Mautu's sister) represents the magic and mystery of pre-Christian tradition. Thanks to traditional medicine and methods, she manages to nurse Peleiupu back to health when all else fails. Lefatu is here on a rare visit to Satoa:

When they were seated in the main fale the matai of Satoa, Sao, arrived to welcome them. Though Satoa's tulafale never referred directly to Lefatu, and her tulafale spoke as they were the leaders of their party, everyone knew Lefatu was the centre of the Aiga Sa-Tuifolau and the village of Fagaloto, and respected her more because she was le tama'ita'i o valoaga, the woman of prophecies, daughter of the Tuifolau, taulaaitu of the atua, with a mana and powers they needed. (169)

The pronounced phonic (as well as semantic) mixedness of the narrative, comprising the unknown melodies of place names as well as people's names, here transcribes Lefatu's visit to Mautu's aiga and points to the two-fold difficulties (semantic and phonic) in understanding the complexity of the Samoan world and things.

This type of repetition also secures the phonic mixedness of Wendt's text as far as other lexical categories are concerned. In the chapter entitled quite appropriately "The Magician of Words" (85), the noun fautasi (like many others) occurs in the iterative mode in several sections

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1. Paul Sharrad points out much white writing about the Pacific—fiction included—was "scientific" in that it treated these cultures as objects to be studied, discovered, analysed, extracted (Sharrad 121). In effect, Stenson's reaction is representative of the scientific or ethnographic approach to Pacific islander cultures which Sharrad outlines and which the American anthropologist embodies later on in the novel.

of the text: "The hissing sucking sound of the fautasi gliding through the water slipped like an endless lullaby into her head. 'Manono! Manono! Manono!' whispered the sail of the fautasi." (88) This strategy disrupts the phonic organization of English and is at the heart of Barthes's argument where two systems, one standard, the other not, meet in a situation of compromise. The aesthetics of this aspect of inventive linguistics may be understood as being represented in Genette's terms in the "silent" melodies (Genette 1969, 125) of stress patterns and rhythms that the mélange of Samoan and English produce in *The Mango's Kiss*. The "consumption" (Genette 1969, 124) of Wendt's novel may then be construed as aural as opposed to oral as diction, silent by definition, nevertheless produces sound effects. The following example, one amongst many, may be read but may also be heard:

> Twice during the previous two days, Mautu had attended the fono of matai at Sao's faletele and tried to save the alia. At their first meeting he'd argued that though Barker had sinned against God by taking his own life, the alia was free of that. He thought he'd convinced the fono but, that night friends had informed him that most of the matai favoured burying the alia at sea, well away from Satoa. (158)

This process then of building up layers of meaning where full knowledge is constantly deferred or even indefinitely postponed, exemplifies the breaking down of the automatisation process specific to texts in non-poetic language comparable in this case to standard unmixed English. In terms of Shklovskij's economics of perception, language which is not defamiliarised is "practical, ruined by automatisation", it is deflated currency (Crawford 211). Language which is not thus ruined is "poetic" and considered hard currency. Thus Wendt's inventive linguistics eliding obvious divides may perhaps nevertheless be understood as representative of a poetics with postcolonial repercussions where the English language on its own, as in Books 2 and 3, is little but small change, as it were.[1] From this perspective, in Book 1 of *The Mango's Kiss*, Wendt's

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1. Certain sections of the novel do indeed divest themselves of the mélange of languages and deserve particular attention in this economics of literary perception. For example, in Book 1, Barker, an Englishman who has lived on Savai'i for years and married into one of the local families, Peleiupu, Arona and their parents, Mautu and Lalaga Tuifolau, set off on a trip to Apia, the "centre of government". They leave their island Savai for the very first time on a fautasi (longboat canoe) and as they approach Apia after a two day trip, the integration of Samoan words into the text becomes rare and almost peters out. Barker takes the children to stay with an author friend of his Leonard Roland Stenson. In this other Samoan context, entirely foreign to the Satoan island children, the language of the narrative changes. The Samoan words which have systematically defamiliarised the

inventive linguistics do indeed challenge "dominant constructions of literariness" (Sharrad 126).

Sharrad argues that a sole resurrection of a local vernacular oral tradition, common in Pacific literatures cannot effectively displace these enduring constructions. The use of this narrative means does not necessarily produce specifically Pacific texts whereas Wendt's approach in this novel may be working towards this goal. By introducing innovative forms of island literature, Wendt avoids the pitfall of orality as Samoan world vision is rarely rendered in "simple text" or oral style (Sharrad, 126). Sharrad defines the transcription of the oral style in island literatures as being characterised by quaint phrasing which is both biblical and "redolent of translation from vernacular utterance" (Sharrad 129). In everyday situations in *he Mango's Kiss*, this vernacular utterance disappears. The language does not stand on ceremony as Lalaga and Peleiupu have a heated argument about the trip to Apia:

> " . . . Arona may come with us," Lalaga was saying, "but you'll have to stay and run our classes . . . "
> "I won't! No!" The choking cry broke out of her mouth. She slapped at her knees and was sobbing.
> "Don't you talk to me like that!" ordered Lalaga. "No child talks to her mother like that!"
> [. . .] "I won't have any child of mine talk to me like that! Hear me?" Lalaga rehitched her ie lavalava. "If you don't watch out, I'll beat you!" (78)

Even on solemn occasions which may require a more formal means of expression, the language is rarely a written expression of orality (in Sharrad's terms). A prime example of this is the quiet confrontation between Lalaga and Lefatu, the latter being the last of the Tuifolau taulaaitu embodying Samoan myth, tradition and method. Lalaga is duty bound to give up one of her daughters to Lefatu who has nursed Peleiupu back to health. Lefatu breaks the news to Lalaga:

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text from Shklovskij's poetics' perspective, and this in an extremely regular, repetitive pattern, almost disappear. Amongst the few Samoan words used in these pages, "paplagi" meaning the white men is significantly the most frequent. The defamiliarising effect is thus weakened in these pages.

It may be argued that the language used is to be understood as having lost its aesthetic value and its ability to provide poetic access to a world of things and thoughts. The lack of mixedness has produced immediately accessible "practical" language, immediately accessible culture. In this alternative geographical colonial context then, the English language (on its own) is somewhat deprived of its "artfulness" (Crawford 212) and may be considered as enjoying lesser aesthetic status in terms of the poetics of Pacific writing.

"Our aiga has always had a taulasea. I am that now, and I've tried to find a child within our aiga to continue after me." Lefatu spoke quietly as if to the sea. "Within our aiga at Fagaloto there is no one." Lalaga heard the buzzing of a fly; wondered why she was listening to it. "You guessed early why I came back with Pele?" The fly was gone; the silence ticked like a pulse. "Your children are our most gifted of all." Lalaga looked at Lefatu. "But I won't ask for her. She is destined for other things for our aiga. I mustn't alter that." Lalaga sighed. "I'm asking that Ruta become my child, the heir to our healing." She paused. "I'm asking that of you." (170)

The contractions (I've, won't, mustn't, Pele) undermine the biblical stylistics specific to transcriptions of orality. The mix of registers (guessed and destined in this example) also precludes any strict reproduction of oral structures. Short simple sentence construction further weakens the formal style associated with Polynesian creation chants translated into English for example.

English and Samoan words together seem to be *able* to transmit the Polynesian experience without recourse to conventional devices in spite of the fact that some translators argue that only local languages and attendant expressions of orality can veritably relay islander experience (Sharrad 132). This latter is a separatist approach in Pacific literature from Sharrad's viewpoint and contributes to the production of texts speaking to nobody (Sharrad 124) or only to a chosen few. Edouard Glissant may call the taking up of this option as a scrambling of codes which excludes and carries a potential of resistance whose goal is not to communicate but to disrupt (Praeger 43).

Wendt's approach in the novel seems to avoid this collapse in communication. For example, Peleiupu sings the song that her Aunt Lefatu, the traditional non Christian taulasea, used to sing to her while she was ill. The English and the Samoan merge underlining the untranslateability of Va the meaning of which can be construed only by inference, as for other words throughout the novel:

All things live in the Va
which links them together
in harmony, in unity.
We must nurture the relationships,
The Va, for that's what makes us who and what we are. . . . (184)

Appropriately Va signifies the void, the gap that separates but nevertheless connects. The separatist drive is thus disengaged though the rupture

is maintained. The options that Wendt takes up in *The Mango's Kiss* may then be interpreted as defying the separatist end and proposing a model of Samoan literariness.

Conclusion

In *The Mango's Kiss*, Wendt seems to be experimenting with Glissant's linguistic tools which allow for the production of an "opaque literature with as its goal the deconstruction of the complex mechanisms of frustration and the infinite varieties of oppression" (Praeger 46). This literature must be a very "different literature than the one consumed by Occidentals for whom the work has to offer itself in its Sartrian transparency and universality" (Praeger 46).

Do the inventive linguistics in *The Mango's Kiss* deploy in Glissant's words?:

> . . . a language of compromise, not of aggression towards a "dominant" language such as epitomized by "pidgins." This language does not intimate a form of diglossia (a situation where one language is considered "superior") but is an effort to make two languages opaque to each other as only "individual opacities" can counter the effect of the universalism and obligatory transparency of occidental humanism. (Praeger 47)

By tracing the growing *lack* of mutual opacity through Books 1, 2 and 3 as mixedness gives way to Bakhtin's one language of truth, Wendt does indeed seem to be examining the automatising transparency of such universalism which not only gradually eradicates Samoan world views but also puts paid to Pacific sites of literary creation.

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What Happens When an Invented Language Is Set To Music? A Linguistic Study of Dogorian

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Dogora, suite populaire dogorienne de Proszeshny orientale, composed by Etienne Perruchon for adult and children's choirs, soloists, a symphony orchestra and a band, is made up of twenty short movements.[1] Using *le dogorien* (Dogorian), a language invented by the composer, the piece evokes a fictional nomadic people, the Dogorians. E. Perruchon has stated that Dogorian is an imaginary language "that brings together all the European vocal influences [. . .] It is a *trompe-oreille* in which the melody of the words allow the listener to find both personal and universal meaning."[2] Initially composed in 2000, the piece was expanded from 28 to 70 minutes in 2004 for an eponymous film shot by Patrice Leconte in Cambodia. An extract from *Dogora* has also been used as the background music for a TV commercial for the Vinci building and civil engineering company.

This study first describes the soundscape of Dogorian and discusses its status as a language. Using the results of a survey carried out in Saint-Nazaire (France) in May 2008, I examine the perception of Dogorian in the second section. The third section analyzes the interplay between language and music in two movements. This paper also aims to explore several general issues: What happens when a composer creates lyrics in an invented language? To what degree do natural languages shape invented languages? Do the structural constraints of natural languages disappear? Is it possible to create a universal invented language that is devoid of meaning? What kinds of associations are created when an invented language is set to music and to what extent do they vary? What parameters

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1. I wish to thank Florence Cousin, director of *A travers chants*; Yann Le Néchet, director of *Croque-notes*; Etienne Perruchon and the respondents to the survey for their help.
2. My translation.

might be used to categorize invented languages and compare them with natural languages?

1 Basic Dogorian

1.1 The Dogorian soundscape[1]

Dogorian has a relatively simple vowel system resembling that of Standard Italian, with three front vowels (close, close-mid, open-mid), three back vowels (close, close-mid, open-mid) and one open vowel. Unlike French, there are no nasal vowels or front rounded vowels and unlike English or German, there are no diphthongs. As shown in Table 1, the consonant system is more complex, with several sounds not found in Standard French, the composer's native language, in particular the velar fricative, which is quite frequent in the lyrics; the glottal fricative /h/, which is rare; and the trilled /r/.

	Bilabial	Lab. Dent.	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alv.	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d				k g	
Nasal	m		n					
Trill			r					
Fricative		f v		s z	ʃ ʒ		x	h
Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
Approximant	w					j		
Lateral approx.				l				

Dogorian consonants

1.1.1 Dogorian syllable structure and phonotactics[2]

Dogorian words are mostly polysyllabic. With only one exception (*antz*), consonant clusters are located in the syllable onset and most syllables end with a vowel. With its open syllables, Dogorian is very singable and sounds quite different from Germanic languages like English, which allow complex final consonant clusters (e.g., *sixths*). Phonotactically, Dogorian evokes Slavic languages, with consonant clusters that are illicit in many Indo-European languages, such as French or English. This is especially true of fricatives followed by plosive or nasal consonants (e.g.,

1. As it is impossible to carry out commutation tests based on meaning, the term phoneme cannot be applied to Dogorian. Pronunciation may vary in performance according to the singers' native languages.

2. For this analysis I used the vocal score, which aligns syllables and notes, a usually one-to-one relationship as there are few instances of melisma. The score delimits Dogorian graphic "words", which are surrounded by spaces, and indicates syllable division, marked by hyphens.

zdiès-ka-nou, *die-tcha-zka*, *shka-mi-tros*, *tou-shni*). Plosives are often fol-
lowed by /j/ (e.g., *dies-ka*). This widespread palatalization recalls Russian,
which has an "almost completely systematic opposition of palatalised
and non-palatalised consonants" (Comrie 1990, 67).

1.1.2   *Dogorian's flexible prosody*

Ira Gershwin once compared lyric-writing to the art of creating
mosaics, for he had to carefully choose "the precise verbal shard to fit
into each jagged musical space" provided by his brother George.[1] Any-
one who has tried to translate or adapt a song from one language to
another is familiar with prosodic constraints, especially when dealing
with different stress systems (e.g., English and French). An invented lan-
guage, on the other hand, is malleable, allowing the composer to meld
text and music much more freely. As we have no record of Dogorian out-
side the musical score, the listener cannot determine whether the melody
and rhythm of the lyrics are close to, or at odds with, the "ordinary" spo-
ken variety. Dogorian stress and intonation are perceived through the
lenses of traditional Western notation, which is precise about the pitch
and duration of notes, but vague about other acoustic parameters such
as timbre and intensity. The Dogorian stress system can nevertheless be
reconstructed by observing how syllables align with strong and weak
metrical positions in the score. In the first movement, for example, we
find polysyllabic words whose first syllable is sung on the downbeat
(e.g., *Tchun*-ga), but there are also examples where the last syllable is
in a strong metrical position (e.g., ra-to-*shnié*) and notated with a musi-
cal accent (e.g., mou-shti-*nia*, whose last syllable is also held for eight
beats). We can conclude that Dogorian has variable stress, which is quite
convenient for the lyricist.

1.2   Is Dogorian a language?

As it does not have a productive grammar, Dogorian cannot be con-
sidered a language in the usual sense. Although some word endings
evoke the morphology of existing languages, they are not linked system-
atically to specific meanings. Using musical cues, such as rests or held
notes, one can segment the lyrics into phrases that might be compared
to sentences or utterances in natural languages, but there are no identifi-
able grammatical categories. On the other hand, listeners may associate
Dogorian words with grammatical categories based on their form, their
position in the verbal/musical phrase or their resemblance to words in

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1. Cited by Arleo (2002, 73).

known languages (e.g., *tristou*, which may be perceived as an adjective). Punctuation occasionally signals grammatical status (e.g., the exclamation *Tchunga ya*!).

Although most respondents in our survey found overall meaning in Dogorian (see below), it lacks the broad range of systematic and specific lexical and propositional meanings found in existing languages or in invented languages like Esperanto. Listening to *Dogora* is somewhat like discovering the fragments of a lost Indo-European epic poem, with occasional flashes of possible meaning.

2   The perception of Dogorian

As part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Classes à Horaires Aménagées Musiques (CHAM), a music program at Collège Jean Moulin, a middle school in Saint-Nazaire, a project was launched to perform *Dogora* with two adult choirs (*À travers chants* and *Croquenotes*), the CHAM pupils, a youth orchestra and pupils from partner institutions in Ukrania, Italy, Germany and Britain. The work was performed three times in May 2008 for more than 5 000 listeners. *Dogora* was chosen in part for its universal message; furthermore, since Dogorian is not linked to any existing culture, no one had the advantage of singing in their native language. As a member of *À travers chants*, I was able to observe the initially negative reactions of some adults, who complained about singing in an apparently meaningless imaginary language.[1] As rehearsals proceeded, some of them conducted by the composer, these objections abated. Nevertheless, this provided an opportunity to study attitudes towards a sung invented language, and in particular to determine whether there were any significant differences between adults and teenagers, my working hypothesis being that the pupils would be more open to this novel experience. I designed a short questionnaire and conducted a survey in May and June 2008, in the weeks following the performances. 171 questionnaires were returned, including 70 from the adult choirs and 101 from the pupils (see Appendix 1).

The results for Question 1 show a striking difference between adults and pupils: 91.1% of the pupils were attracted to singing in an imaginary language (compared to 60% of adults) and no pupils were bothered by this (compared to 22.9% of adults). Among the possible explanations for this divergence is that adolescence is a period of linguistic experimentation, innovation and play, as has often been noted in relation to teenage slang and secret languages.

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1. My status in this study is therefore that of participant observer.

The answers to Question 2, which involved whether or not Dogorian evoked images, show little difference between the two age groups. Many respondents had seen the film by Patrice Leconte, but this did not appear to have a strong influence since few of the terms cited relate to Cambodia or Asia. Among the many images cited were frequent references to Slavic culture, Eastern or Central Europe and Russia (occasionally Central Asia and Mongolia) as well as open landscapes, steppes, hills and mountains. Dogorian also evoked traditional rural folklife (fête de village, customs, folklore, nomads, folk dance, epics, circuses), childhood and a mythological past (the Middle Ages, magic, fantasy). There were also references to abstract ideas, including fraternity, liberty, hope and joy. Some pupils underlined the paradox and ambiguity of the piece, stating that *Dogora* dealt with both happiness and misfortune (including poverty, cited by five pupils and no adults). Overall, the terms suggest the hardships of a poor peasant population from Eastern Europe, who nevertheless preserve hope in the future ("un peuple en marche") through group cohesion and solidarity ("les dogoriens s'entraident"). Several respondents suggested a parallel between Dogorian solidarity and the fraternal spirit of singing together with people of different ages and cultures, as embodied in the project. This sense of involvement and personal identification was expressed by one pupil, who wrote: "je suis un dogorien."

With regard to question 3, 83% of the respondents indicated that Dogorian evoked emotions, and the figure was even higher for the pupils (86.1%). The perceived emotion was no doubt also linked to the music and not only the lyrics.[1] The emotions cited are categorized below:

– Positive valence (> 5 citations): *joie/joyeux* (57), *plaisir* (6), *bonheur* (6)
– Negative valence (> 5 citations): *triste/tristesse* (41), *colère* (9), *mélancolie* (6)

In the light of recent neural studies on chills induced by music (Patel 2008, 318), it is interesting that three pupils also stated that *Dogora* provoked *frissons*.

Concerning question 4, Dogorian evoked existing languages for 97.1% of adults and 65.3% of pupils. The most frequent languages cited were Slavic languages (53 citations, but only 6 pupils), and Russian (45 citations including 30 pupils). The pupils appeared to have used a basic level hyponym, Russian, to refer to an unknown hypernym, Slavic languages. Some struggled to find a more general term, such as *les langues*

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1. The connections between music and emotions have been a recurrent subject of speculation since Plato's *Republic*, but are now being studied empirically: see Mithen 2006, Patel 2008 and Sacks 2007 for recent discussion.

sirilliques (sic). Other Slavic languages cited included Ukrainian,[1] Slovakian, Czech, Polish and Bulgarian. The second most frequently cited language category involved the Romance languages, especially Spanish with 16 citations, including 12 pupils. This may reflect the status of Spanish as the second most studied foreign language after English in French secondary schools. Italian, Corsican, Portuguese or Brazilian, Provençale, Latin, French (1 citation), Rumanian, and Latin were also cited. Germanic languages were cited by only a handful of respondents: German (7) and English (1). Other categories cited included African languages or dialects, and Asian languages, possibly influenced by the film. The pupils, generally less linguistically aware than the well-educated adults, also identified Dogorian as "la langue de la musique," "la langue du cœur," "un mélange de toutes les langues," an "espéranto," or "la langue du monde."

When asked to provide Dogorian words that evoked words in existing languages, the adults often attributed words to specific languages, while the pupils gave fewer explicit examples. The word *tristou* evoked the French *triste* or *tristesse* for both adults and pupils, and was also associated with Spanish or Provençal by several adults. Ten adults and one pupil associated *mira* with the Spanish verb *mirar*. Among the words that adults associated with Slavic languages, many contain affricates (e.g., *dorniatcha*) or consonant sequences perceived as Slavic (e.g., *zdieskanou*) Adults also associated Dogorian lexical items with Romance languages, especially Spanish (e.g. *festo* evoking *fiesta*). The pupils showed imagination in inventing meanings for Dogorian words: *lavidjiamé* evoked positive notions such as "la vie," "la joie ou l'envie," and "la victoire peut-être." *Souchänishka* was idealistically and oxymorically defined as "une guerre sans mort ni blessé."

With regard to question 6, 69% of the respondents indicated that *Dogora* was personally meaningful, with little difference between adults and pupils, and some overlap with questions 2 and 3 related to images and emotions. The meanings cited by the adults often involved positive concepts such as friendship, solidarity, fraternity, union, cohesion between generations, peace, joy, hope, the desire for freedom, optimism (*mouvement vers l'avant*), humanism and universality. A number of phrases convey enthusiasm for the piece: "hymne à la vie," "souffle de la vie," "vouloir c'est pouvoir," and "une gamme variée d'émotions esthétiques correspondant à divers moments de la vie."[2] The pupils cited

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1. Cited by 13 respondents including 11 pupils. This was probably due to the fact that Ukranian pupils were part of the project.

2. A wide spectrum of aesthetic emotions corresponding to different moments in life.

similar themes, especially unity and solidarity among people in spite of their differences. Several saw Dogorian as a universal language, or even, as one put it, the language of angels. Darker themes were also evoked, such as suffering and poverty, and one pupil commented that "we must stop hunting down and killing certain peoples." A 13-year old girl wrote poignantly that *Dogora* made her think of the many people in her family who had died. Finally, both adults and pupils referred to the meaningful experience of singing together, and their satisfaction in overcoming the technical difficulties of the piece ("être capable de se surpasser"). This appeared to reflect the imagined Dogorian values, such as perseverence and social cohesion.

Concerning question 7, 98.2 % of the respondents thought that Dogorian and the music went together well, a tribute to composer's successful shaping of the soundscape to fit the music. When asked to cite a passage in which Dogorian and the music went well together, the adults placed *La vidjiamé* (see section 3) in first position (16 citations) while the pupils put the final movement *Souchänishka* first (45 citations), far ahead of *La vidjiamé* (17 citations). *Souchänishka*, only cited by one adult, is a rather fast and dynamic movement based on an asymmetrical rhythmic figure.[1] The articulation of the Slavic-sounding consonant clusters over this less familiar rhythm proved particularly challenging for the choir.

Finally, regarding the last question, 44% of the adults and 31% of the pupils believed that Dogorian might help in learning a foreign language, especially in regards to pronunciation.

3 The interplay of language and music in *Soutrinka* and *La vidjiamé*

Soutrinka is a slow[2] movement in 4/4 meter, in the key of F minor, and marked *legato doloroso*. According to the program notes, *Soutrinka* is dedicated to those Dogorians who, like many nomads, were victims of intolerance and massacres. The lyrics include a number of words that evoked words in known Romance languages (e.g., *tristou*, *festo*, *mira*). The beginning of the movement, which is analyzed here, has a repeated 12-bar AAB structure, followed by a 5-bar C section or coda. The lyrics, shown below, can be analyzed as four couplets, where each line (except the last) corresponds to two bars:

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1. Consisting of a series of eight 8th notes with accents on the first, fourth and seventh notes, creating a 3 + 3 + 2 pattern).
2. The tempo marking is 56 beats per minute.

A (4)   Soutrinka nové no tcha tou kania
        Kiéshta si festo coménia

A (4)   Soutrinka ni vonia soul ni tshiota
        Kiéshta si festo moustinia

B (4)   Tristou qual mira tiniatcha
        Tristou qual donia véspecha
        (repeat AAB)

C (5)   Vonia shtôpinia soutarni
        Vonia sourti tcha novia.

The clear musical-poetic structure is reinforced by end-of-line assonance, while the repeated words or sequences (e.g., *soutrinka*, *kiéshta si festo*) suggest a possible emerging syntax and underlying indeterminate meanings open to individual interpretation. At the same time, the minor key and slow tempo convey sadness, at least for listeners brought up in the Western musical cultures. Recent studies suggest that the association between slow tempo and sadness may be valid cross-culturally.[1] Likewise, psychologists Hella Oelman and Bruno Loeng have conducted experiments indicating that there may be universal associations between particular emotions and particular musical intervals.[2] In addition to these musical factors, the word *tristou* is associated with sadness. At the beginning of the B section, just as the chord changes to a Bb minor, the first syllable of *tristou* is sung on a Db thereby forming a minor third in relation to the root of the chord. While the chord progression clearly references Eastern European musical traditions, the use of this note over the IV chord in measure 5 also recalls a minor blues (although this is not a standard blues progression). The lyrics display linguistic hybridity, where the frequent palatalization and consonant clusters (e.g., *shtôpinia*) evoke Slavic soundscapes and the Romance lexical bases allow listeners to retrieve fragments of meaning. Listeners of *Soutrinka* therefore benefit from multiple cues evoking the tragic plight of an imaginary Eastern European nomadic people.

Although it is also in a minor key (Em), *La Vidjiamé* is quite different in spirit; beginning slowly at 52 beats per minute, it gradually accelerates

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1. Discussed by Patel (2008, 314) and Levitin (2006, 58).
2. Cited by Mithen 2006, 91.

and ends *prestissimo*. Both adults and pupils found this movement particularily effective in wedding lyrics and music. The 16-bar structure is divided into four four-bar segments labelled AAB_1B_2:

A	Tashkibikou
	Tashkibikou midjia
	Doskamo
	Shkamitros
	(repeat A)
B_1	La Vidjiamé
	Da kavi méniros
	Dianoura,
	Dianou, dianoura
B_2	La Vidjiamé
	Da kavi méniros kié.

The sound patterning, symmetrical structure and simple repetitive melody recall children's oral tradition (Arleo 2006). In addition to the Slavic soundshapes (e.g., *shkamitros*), there are basic widespread phonetic contrasts. *Tashkibikou*, for example, contains the three nearly universal vowels that emerge early in first language acquisition. The three plosives /t k b/ in the syllable onsets are sequenced /t k b k/ so the coronal consonants (/t/ and /b/) alternate with the velar /k/, providing dynamic articulatory contrast.[1]

Conclusion

Although Dogorian uses speech sounds to evoke general meanings for the listener, it cannot be considered as an invented language in the fullest sense. Unlike Esperanto, for example, it lacks a productive grammar and a rich set of well-defined lexical and propositional meanings. To categorize invented languages the concept of a gradient or continuum is particularly useful.[2] On a scale of intelligibility, Dogorian, like glossolalia, children's nonsense and experimental writing (e.g. *Finnegan's Wake* and

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1. Scat singing appears to exploit similar contrasts (Arleo 1999).
2. I wish to thank Jean-Jacques Lecercle for drawing my attention to the usefulness of gradients in classifying invented languages and for suggesting similarities between Dogorian and glossolalia.

Futurist poetry), is far lower than Esperanto, designed for universal communication. The use of only one scale is, however, inadequate in order to compare invented languages among themselves, and with natural languages. Other dimensions are needed, such as learnability and artificiality. Although Dogorian is also low in learnability, it is, like Esperanto, relatively high in artificiality when compared to natural languages. For typological purposes, a multi-dimensional model of this type is considerably richer than simplistic binary oppositions.[1]

In addition to describing Dogorian, this paper has examined the perception of this "extinct" imaginary language. Despite the initial claim of some adults that Dogorian is meaningless, most respondents *did* construct their own subjective and occasionally idiosyncratic meanings, and there was often agreement on overall themes (e.g., fraternity). Some comments displayed remarkable identification with this imaginary oppressed nomadic people, with one pupil even humorously claiming to be a Dogorian! This study therefore supports the idea that it is virtually impossible to construct a meaningless invented language using the building blocks of speech sounds, just as it is hard to construct a random string of digits. Humans are pattern-spotting organisms and from patterns meanings are built. Speech sound patterns inevitably carry with them associations linked to previous linguistic experience. Furthermore, the composer shaped the Dogorian soundscape to fit his aesthetic and musical agenda. Songwriting usually involves considerable tinkering and numerous trade-offs between two semiotic systems, language and music. Not being tied to the multiple constraints of a natural language, E. Perruchon was far freer to soundpaint the Dogorians by using Slavic-like consonant clusters and widespread palatalization. Harnessing Dogorian to music deepened emotion and reinforced associations with Eastern European oral traditions, although some of the melodies might also evoke other musical cultures. At the same time, the vowel system and certain words (e.g., *tristou*) referenced the Romance languages, providing lexical landmarks for the listener.

To these internal factors, determined by the score, we must add several external factors that contributed to the array of meanings cited by the respondents: the program notes, a well-attended oral presentation by Etienne Perruchon, interviews and articles published in the local press, the interactions between composer and performers during the rehearsals, and the context in which the work was performed. The story

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1. It is difficult to visualize space in more than three dimensions, but statistical methods, such as Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), can analyze data in N-dimensional space.

of the Dogorians, an oppressed people struggling against hardship, but united through fraternal values, resonated for young and old. Among the adults there may have been nostalgia for a society based on sharing and solidarity. The local historical context may have also contributed to the enthusiastic reception of the Dogorian fraternal message. Although its sociological make-up has diversified considerably in recent decades, Saint-Nazaire has a rich working-class history, linked to the shipbuilding industry, trade unionism, anarcho-syndicalism and socialism; today, the town has a broad network of non-profit associations. Furthermore, the architecture of the town, 80% of which was destroyed during World War II, is a tangible reminder of the horror of war, and memories of the suffering during this period have been passed on to the younger generations.[1] The universal message of the piece, performed with young people from other cultures, appeared to appeal to the idealism of different generations: *Dogora* and Dogorian evoked old and new dreams of world peace and harmony, and of universal understanding despite cultural and linguistic differences.

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1. Étienne Perruchon has pointed out that performances of *Dogora* in other French towns whose social context is very different from that of Saint-Nazaire inspire similar sensations and feelings (e-mail, April 13, 2009).

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4 Appendix 1: Questionnaire and quantitative results for closed questions (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9)

NB: Percentages are shown between parentheses. NA indicates either no answer or another answer.

1. Chanter dans une langue "imaginaire":
   a. m'a plutôt attiré(e)
   b. m'a plutôt dérangé(e)
   c. m'a laissé indifférent(e)

	ATC	CN	Tot. Adultes	Total CHAM	Total
A. Attiré(e)	20	22	42 (60.0)	92 (91.1)	134 (78.4)
B.Dérangé(e)	10	6	16 (22.9)	0 (0)	16 (9.4)
C. Indiff.	4	4	8 (11.4)	9 (8.9)	17 (9.9)
NA	1	3	4 (5.7)	0 (0)	4 (2.3)

2. Pour moi, le dogorien:
   a. évoque des images
   Lesquelles:
   b. n'évoque pas d'image particulière
   c. m'a laissé indifférent(e)

	ATC	CN	Tot. Adultes	Total CHAM	Total
A. Oui	26	30	56 (80.0)	71 (70.3)	127 (74.3)
B. Non	6	3	9 (12.9)	28 (27.7)	37 (21.6)
NA	3	2	5 (7.1)	2 (2.0)	7 (4.1)

3. Pour moi, le dogorien:
   a. évoque des émotions
   Lesquelles:
   b. n'évoque pas d'émotion particulière

	ATC	CN	Tot. adultes	CHAM	Total
a. Oui	26	29	55 (78.6)	87 (86.1)	142 (83.0)
b. Non	6	3	9 (12.9)	11 (10.9)	20 (11.9)
NA	3	3	6 (8.6)	3 (3.0)	9 (5.3)

4. Pour moi, le dogorien:
   a. évoque des langues existantes

Lesquelles?
b. n'évoque pas de langue particulière

	ATC	CN	Tot. adultes	CHAM	Total
a. Oui	33	35	68 (97.1)	66 (65.3)	134 (78.4)
b. Non	2	0	2 (2.9)	34 (33.7)	36 (21.1)
NA	0	0	0	1 (1.0)	1 (0.6)

5. Pourriez-vous citer un ou plusieurs mots dogoriens qui évoquent pour vous des mots dans des langues existantes?

6. Cette œuvre a-t-elle une signification pour vous?
a. Oui
Laquelle?
b. Non

	ATC	CN	Tot. adultes	CHAM	Total
a. Oui	21	29	50 (71.4)	68 (67.3)	118 (69.0)
b. Non	9	5	14 (20.0)	28 (27.7)	42 (24.6)
NA	5	1	6 (8.6)	5 (5.0)	11 (6.4)

7. Je dirais qu'en général:
a. le dogorien et la musique vont bien ensemble
b. le dogorien et la musique ne vont pas particulièrement bien ensemble

	ATC	CN	Tot. adultes	CHAM	Total
a. Oui	33	35	68 (97.1)	100 (99.0)	168 (98.2)
b. Non	0	0	0	0	0
NA	2	0	0 (2.9)	1 (1.0)	3 (1.8)

8. Pourriez-vous citer un passage où le dogorien et la musique vont bien ensemble (préciser le mouvement et si possible les mesures)?

9. Pour moi, chanter en dogorien peut aider à apprendre des langues étrangères:
a. Oui
Comment?
b. le dogorien et la musique ne vont pas particulièrement bien ensemble

	ATC	CN	Tot. adultes	CHAM	Total
a. Oui	13	18	31 (44.3)	31 (30.7)	62 (36.3)
b. Non	18	9	27 (38.6)	67 66.3)	94 (55.0)
NA	4	8	12 (17.1)	3 (3.0)	15 (8.8)

Modernisms, Pure English, and Poetry:
Laura (Riding) Jackson's "Linguistic Ultimate"

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Upon every republication of a Laura Riding poem, her Board of Literary Management requires the following statement to accompany the reprint: "that, in 1941, Laura (Riding) Jackson renounced, on grounds of linguistic principle, the writing of poetry: she had come to hold that 'poetry obstructs general attainment to something better in our *linguistic way-of-life* than we have.'" Riding's poetry (all written between the early 1920s and 1938) is forever yoked to her renunciation, and hence to her disappointment with poetry and her challenge to use language to think and to mean *truth*. Riding's withdrawal from the literary world has been variously interpreted as a retreat or an eccentric repudiation, and her explanation of her reasons was not published until 1962.[1] Unlike Rimbaud, whose renunciation was a retirement, Riding continued (despite her sustained quarrel with poetry) in her life-long, fierce engagement with the power of language to reveal and tell.

A twentieth century original, Laura (Riding) Jackson (1901-1991) was an influential contributor to literary Modernism during the 1920s and 30s before disappearing from cultural history due in part to her refusal to allow her early poems to be anthologized. Riding reemerged some thirty years later with a prescription for lexical truth-telling that would radically revitalize human communications. Born Laura Reichenthal to an immigrant Austro-Hungarian, Jewish father and Jewish mother of German descent, she was raised in New York City, and then entered Cornell University on academic scholarships. After two years, she married her history instructor, Louis Gottschalk, and the couple relocated to Illinois where he had secured a teaching position. Using a revised autho-

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1. "Introduction to a Broadcast," *Chelsea* magazine, 1962.

rial name, Laura Riding Gottschalk began writing poems and submitting them for publication. Her work attracted the interest of the editors of *The Fugitive* magazine and Riding Gottschalk forged her first literary alliances with the poets and critics, based out of Vanderbilt University, who would become the legislators of New Criticism in the United States: John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Alan Tate, and Robert Penn Warren. She also began a determining correspondence with a British poet whose work appeared in *The Fugitive*, Robert Graves. By 1925, the Gottschalks' marriage had soured and the couple divorced in June. Riding returned to New York City's Greenwich Village where she associated with the coming generation of American literary lights, including poets Hart Crane, e. e. cummings, and Mark Van Doren; critics Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley and Kenneth Burke; and playwright Eugene O'Neill. At year's end, she set sail across the Atlantic to join Robert Graves at his invitation to collaborate on a book about contemporary poetry. Auspicious, indeed, the Riding-Graves book initiative developed into a fourteen-year partnership and a period of enormous artistic and critical productivity for both writers. Together, they authored two books of literary opinion (the influential *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, 1927, and *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies*, 1928), founded Seizin Press, and edited an intellectual journal, *Epilogue*, 1935-1937. In her own name, Riding published two critical collections of essays: *Anarchism Is Not Enough* and *Contemporaries and Snobs*; plus eleven volumes of poetry; four works of fiction, four more collaborative works, a book for children; and two translations (one with Robert Graves) during this time. In 1938, at the height of her literary career and after almost twenty years of sustained writing, Riding released her *Collected Poems*, her personally culled opus of the poetry that best exemplified her achievement. Within two years' time, she would stop writing poetry altogether, return to the United States, marry *Time* magazine poetry reviewer Schuyler B. Jackson, and work in collaboration with him over the subsequent decades on an inquiry into the nature of language.

What, then, is Riding's promise of "something better in our linguistic way-of-life" that broke her literary life in two? Her turn is a radical departure for a poet who once asserted, in her preface to her *Collected Poems* (1938), that "[a] poem is an uncovering of truth of so fundamental and general a kind that no other word besides poetry is adequate except truth." In the 1980 reissue of the collection, Riding explained: "I did not know when I put the final touches to *Collected Poems* for the 1938 edition that I had reached a limit in the possibility of holding these commitments within one frame of endeavor. . . . The universal linguistic solution hangs

suspended in poetry, and, so long as it does, human beings cannot know what kind of beings they are, cannot speak themselves with whole consciousness of their being speaking beings, and what this lays upon them to require of themselves" (*The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* xxxix). What is the "universal linguistic solution" that requires we eschew the artifice and ambiguities of poetry in order to see ourselves and our world through language unqualified? It is for such paradoxical statements that Riding has been avoided or attacked—over the last forty years—for being contrary, difficult and opaque.

Since her death, at age ninety, there have been five posthumous publications of Riding's writings on language and literature, most notably the massive lexicological study, *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words* (1997). Ultimately, Riding claims a fundamental linkage of responsible language-use to the prospect of a utopian state of linguistic being-together, that is, an elevated way to human Being. Despite her championing by poets as diverse as W.H. Auden, Kenneth Rexroth, John Ashbery, Sylvia Plath, and Charles Bernstein, she remains understudied and underrepresented in surveys of twentieth century literature, and a full acknowledgment of her influence on Modernist poetry, New Criticism, and contemporary poetics generally unacknowledged. More unfamiliar, still, is Riding's closeted forty-year study of language and its truth-telling dimension. Laura Riding's long and productive career offers an extraordinary twentieth century chronicle of the evolution of a consciousness in language.

1 Modernisms, Pure English, and Poetry

> "An interest in language would seem to define the modern." —Shari Benstock (*Women of the Left Bank* 25)
> "Is there anything more exciting and more dangerous for the poet than his relation to words?" —Martin Heidegger (*On the Way to Language* 141)

In a recent article, "Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of *Modern/Modernity/ Modernism*," Susan Stanford Friedman offers a series of paratactic quotations that probe the multivalent, often contradictory ambitions of Modernism (Friedman 493-513). In this case, she juxtaposes competing definitions from David Harvey's study, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Social Change*:

> Modernity, therefore, not only entails a ruthless break with any or all pre-ceding historical conditions but is characterized by a never-ending process of internal ruptures and fragmentations within itself. (Harvey 10-12) The belief "in linear progress, absolute truths, and rational planning of ideal social orders" under standardized conditions of knowledge and production was particularly strong. The modernism that resulted was, as a result, "positivist, technocratic and rationalistic" at the same time as it was imposed as the work of an elite avant-garde of planners, artists, architects, critics, and other guardians of high taste. (Harvey 35)

Rather than fixing on a master narrative encompassing Modernism, Stanford Friedman embraces the necessary and generative symbiosis of political, cultural and philosophical contradictions. Such an allowance for *modernisms* is productive when navigating what might at first seem to be the inconsistencies and countercurrents of a poet's long career.

Anglo-American literary modernists experimented with fragmentation of generic form and grammatical syntax, simultaneity, and polyglotism—often in epic-length works—in an effort to *create* the "modern." From Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, literary Modernism was committed to an inquiry into language, and its signified. In poems like "The World and I" (*The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* 198), Laura Riding struggled to be accurate:

> This is not exactly what I mean
> Any more than the sun is the sun.
> But how to mean more closely
> If the sun shines but approximately?
> What a world of awkwardness!
> What hostile implements of sense!
> Perhaps this is as close a meaning
> As perhaps becomes such knowing.
> Else I think the world and I
> Must live together as strangers and die—
> A sour love, each doubtful whether
> Was ever a thing to love the other.
> No, better for both to be nearly sure
> Each of each—exactly where
> Exactly I and exactly the world
> Fail to meet by a moment, and a word.

So, too, did other Modernists (and their personae) echo: "I cannot say just what I mean!" (T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock") Initially,

Riding believed in the special property of *poetic* language to access truth but she later rejected poetry as a fully capable vehicle. In the *Collected Poems* reprint, Riding elaborated on poetry's inherent failure:

> Poetry bears in itself the message that it is the destiny of human beings to speak the meaning of being, but it nurses it in itself as in a sacred apartness, not to be translated into the language of common meanings in its delivery . . . [T]he constraints that the poetic techniques of difference impose on word-use limit the speaking-range and the meaning-effectuality of language to a miniature human and linguistic universalness. My kind of seriousness, in my looking to poetry for the rescue of human life from the indignities it was capable of visiting upon itself, led me to an eventual turning away from it as failing my kind of seriousness. (*The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* xxxix-xl)

Like so many of her contemporaries, Riding responded critically across her career to Modernism's pull between anarchy and order. For example, in her 1928 publication, *Anarchism Is Not Enough*, Riding makes provocative statements, like "poetry is perhaps the only human pursuit left still capable of developing antisocially" and "[l]anguage is a form of laziness," only to posit, years later, language "as the ground of human intelligence" (*Rational Meaning* x). In a recent essay, "'To purify the dialect of the tribe': Modernism and Language Reform," critic Morag Shiach traces a linguistic "purification" movement to a strain of British modernism bent on reforming spoken and written forms of English (Shiach 21-34). She alludes to both the culturally conservative faction of the movement, which espoused the preservation of the "Englishness" of English—supported by Europeanized Americans like T. S. Eliot, Edith Wharton, and Laura Riding,[1] and the revolutionary, supported by Socialists interested in universal and egalitarian communication. Shiach highlights cultural groups, like the Society for Pure English (founded in 1913) which claimed a membership of literary notables, like Thomas Hardy and Robert Bridges, and practical rhetorics, like I. A. Richards' and C. K. Ogden's "Basic English" initiative of the 1920s, which offered a reduced vocabulary that could function as an international language. The turn of the century saw the outbreak of utopian language experiments that aspired to create an artificial language of international citizenship and understanding: first, with Esperanto (cobbled from a broadly

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1. "The English—those who *really* speak the English language—are the only people who can be taken seriously. I do not consider that there exists an English people in any nationalistic sense; there exists an English language, and it is the only language." (Quoted from Kunitz 565)

Indo-European base), then to increasingly Eurocentric hybrids, like Ido (Idiomo di Omni, "language for all"), Occidental (designed in 1922 by Balto-German naval officer Edgar de Wahl), Novial (devised, 1928, by Danish linguist Otto Jespersen), and even up to the midcentury, 1951, with Interlingua (International auxiliary language), which adopted commonly used words from control languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese and, secondarily, German and Russian— representatively post-war). Riding's initial response to the call to purify was to elevate language for poetry, toward what she saw as its ultimate service, truth. Like I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden, and principally as expressed in the semiotic theories of their seminal *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (1923), Riding was keenly interested in words and meaning. During the latter 1930s, in response to the growing tensions in Europe, Riding instigated a number of letter-writing campaigns aimed at employing language in the service of political ends, with many of the replies published in her 1938 release, *The World and Ourselves*. By the end of this decade, the aims of direct and unequivocal communications pressured Riding to acknowledge the potential for misinterpretation inherent in poetry and to eventually make writing it untenable. Morag Shiach's link of modernist vanguard poetics to language reform initiatives, corroborating Susan Stanford Friedman's binary model, offers a useful framework within which to elucidate an outwardly paradoxical career.

2 Laura Riding's Way to Language

> Come, words, away from mouths,
> Away from tongues in mouths
> And reckless hearts in tongues
> And mouths in cautious heads—
>
> Come, words, away to where
> The meaning is not thickened
> With the voice's fretting substance,
> Nor look of words is curious
> As letters in books staring out
> All that man ever thought strange
> And laid to sleep on white Like the archaic manuscript
> Of dreams at morning blacked on wonder.
>
> Come, words, away to miracle More natural than written art.

[…]

But never shall truth circle so
Till words prove language is
How words come from far sound away
Through stages of immensity's small
Centering the utter telling
In truth's first soundlessness.

Come, words, away:
I am a conscience of you

[…]

Then come, words, away,
Before lies claim the precedence of sin
And mouldered mouths writhe to outspeak us.

("Come, Words, Away," 1-15, 69-76, 84-86, *The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* 137-139)

In 1938, W. H. Auden claimed that Riding was the twentieth century's "only living philosophical poet" and, indeed, across the span of her career she was deeply invested in the questions of contemporary philosophy, and particularly questions of poetry and language. While many twentieth century thinkers across a spectrum of theoretical schools and movements advanced that poetry has a unique ability to surface the nature of language itself (both its materiality and its ways of meaning), Riding stands in singular position for complicating the notion that poetry opens up the truth of language; rather, she held, poetic artifice inhibits language's ability to mean accurately. Riding also contributed to philosophical inquiry by moving beyond the aesthetics of language in her praxis to linguistics. In her many post-1940 writings, Riding addressed major twentieth century philosophical preoccupations: she wrote broadly on language and meaning, literature, mind and being, sexuality and self, truth and ethics, responsibility and the survival of humanity on the earth.

First published in her 1933 poetry collection, *Poet: a Lying Word*, "Come, Words, Away" exhibits the tensions Riding struggled to understand between poetry's inherent promise and its practical failings. In its titular call, the poem ushers language to a purer realm, beyond the orality of mouths, tongues, and voice, and the reactivity of emotions (whether vociferous or restrained). In the new dimension, words' meanings are

accurately and unambiguously revealed. Riding's growing disenfranchisement and disappointment with poetry is figured in the "curious" reversal of words scrutinizing "man" from the page, for a reading that becomes uncanny. Riding holds out another way, a natural "miracle," that renders what she once held to be poetry's potential: Words, she claims, are the foundational units of language, each implanted with a singular meaning, its "truth." Rising to her own ethical challenge, Riding claims: "I am a conscience of you," as she assumes the task of rigorous attention to definition in "telling." An early harbinger of Riding's future commitments, "Come, Words, Away" ends with darkening urgency: no longer merely "reckless," mouths are now imagined miming the living in a postmortem limbo of lies' legitimacy. Riding hastens us to recall for ourselves language's truth-telling function and our responsibility to be vigilant.

Laura Riding's "Way to Language" (to echo Martin Heidegger's famous essay) surfaced in linguistic projects concurrent with her practice of poetry and literary criticism. Her interest in lexicography manifested in her many dictionary and thesaurus initiatives across the decade of the 1930s. Always collaborative, Riding enlisted others in her investigations into words: their origins, meanings, and implicit values. In the early part of the decade, she worked with her artistic partner, Robert Graves, on a children's dictionary, conceived to offer explanations of words that might be perplexing to children. This project expanded into plans for a "child's university series," to be entitled *Subjects of Knowledge*, consisting of multiple volumes devoted to the history of various topics of human achievement. Riding's *The Critical Vulgate* (carrying the inscription, "An instrument of knowledge in the understanding of words") was an ambitious venture, enlisting the labors of many (including noted mathematician and later author of the BBC Ascent of Man series, Jacob Bronowski, and Eirlys Roberts, one of the founders of Britain's consumer education movement), to reflect on the history and contemporary values of a range of keyword subjects, canvassing philosophy, religion, culture, and economics, with the aim to determine their benefit to humankind. Collaborators also contributed to *The Dictionary of Exact Meanings* and *The Dictionary of Related Meanings*, projects aspiring to eliminate ambiguity in word definitions and usage. One of her contributors, Schuyler B. Jackson (*Time* magazine poetry reviewer during the 1930s and early '40s), would become her husband and final exclusive research partner. From the 1940s until Jackson's death in 1968, the couple continued the lexical work in a number of permutations: *The True Word: A Dictionary and Thesaurus of Coherent Language* (1942), promising more than the common dic-

tionary could, "a sense of linguistic discovery"; *A Dictionary of Analogous Words* (1943); and one published essay, "The Latest in Synonymy," in a library journal.[1] Overwhelmed with the labor of defining and classifying words, the Jacksons reevaluated and challenged themselves to address "the root-problem which gave rise to the idea of the dictionary," which would become the prospectus for *Rational Meaning* (Friedmann 382). As Riding explains in the "First Preface": "Eventually, after trial on trial of definitional procedures, we put in first place the examination of the general actuality of language, the definition of linguistic principles, the formulation of linguistic values, the exploration of the nature of meaning itself" (*Rational Meaning* 17).

3 Rational Meaning

As a poet, Riding could pen: " . . . For in peculiar earth alone can I / Construe the word and let the meaning lie / That rarely may be found." ("As Well as Any Other")[2]; however, her growing concerns about language that lead to her renunciation required a turn from private expression to the literal, and what she came to believe to be the responsibilities of language-users to their language. At core, her linguistic magnum opus, *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words* (1997), is concerned with meaning, truth, knowledge, responsibility, and ultimately human survival. Riding's "general actuality of language" sits squarely on the premise that the nature of language and human nature are intrinsically bound, and bridged by mind: "We see people and language as inseparable, in the relationship—see language as organically necessary to human nature, coming into existence as a possession of human beings following from their nature." (*Rational Meaning* 20) Language is the "human mind's organ of rationality" with a "function of ordering thought into the express forms we call truth." (39) As such, language rationally orders thinking, emotion, and communications in the linguistic articulation of truth, in the sense of "true" meaning.

To know language, fundamentally, is to distinguish the definitions of words and to use words in a deliberate and mindful way. Words are a language's "internal content" and its "apparatus of meaning." (15) Conjoined in *Rational Meaning* as "meaning-entities," words and their meanings are inextricable and self-completing. Knowing language is more than vocabularistic fluency; it is an ontological rapport with words as thought entities. Riding explains:

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1. "The Latest in Synonymy," in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* 17 (November 1942; 219, 225).
2. *The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* 43.

> The English language is, indeed, still a *spoken* language. But it has been becoming less and less of a *thought* language. In employing it, its speakers employ mainly the physical portion of it: the words are to them little more than physical entities evocative of experience—"associations"— the reality of words as intellectual entities has become so pale in people's consciousness that, instead of knowing the meanings of their words, they know, rather, their habitual association-responses to the stimuli that the words in the physical actuality constitute. Instead of linguistic knowledge of words, knowledge of their rational function, there prevails (what might well be called) psychological knowledge of them, knowledge, necessarily varying from person to person, of the consciousness-sensations that words in their physical impact produce. Thus, people cease to think of meaning as something inhering in words, residing in the language: they think of it as something in themselves. And, of course, when it is that, it is something different in each of them. When such an inversion of the linguistic nature of things happens, people are left with only the empty husks of words in their minds' grasp. This is what we mean by forgetting a language. (49)

Language is never meant to be ambiguous (a symptom of intellectual confusion). Words, Riding says, are fully definable, fixed, and function so as to "tell thought well." While she sees language as a human system with an historic formation, she does not subscribe to the notion of language as a structure in continual flux: "Today's English language is the same language as yesterday's, and yesterday's, as far back as the term 'modern' applies—a matter of centuries; its modernity is integrally characteristic of it." (49) Indeed, words serve as anchors of stability in a world commonly believed to be relativistic. To know language is as much a requirement for conscious life as self-knowledge; in fact, they are coequivalent in as much as "language is the human mind's organizer of knowledge, the knowledge of *it* is the prerequisite of intellectually responsible existence." (14) The drive behind *Rational Meaning* is ethical and educative, for "good" usage always generates truth and will occasion "the reinvigoration of the intellectual processes of modern consciousness." (41) In *Rational Meaning*, Riding gives flesh to her earlier claim in the poem above: "I am a conscience of you."

While ponderous in explanations and explications, the book's pressing objective is a conviction of modernity's failure, or, more precisely, modernity failing humanity. During the modern period, Riding claims, there has been a weakening of "linguistic consciousness" and an erosion of knowledge as "definitive," into "the experimental, the qualified, the relative." (13) She separates her linguistic investigations from Lin-

guistics conventionally conceived ("looking in on language from a sci-entific observation-platform") as an inquiry "from the inside"—viewing language "as of one substance with human identity, possessed in a state of natural familiarity with it." (17) The problems of language are prob-lems in the decline in modern intellectual life and a loss of faith in rea-son. The world is in disorder because we cannot think in an orderly way and do not hold human nature up as "not senseless" (43), that is, believe nihilistically that human life has no meaning. With increasing urgency (and often biting criticism)—expressed across the three prefaces and one forward (1973, 1976, 1985, 1986) written as the author awaited publication—Riding sees this "book of hope" as "the only medicine" for a failing age: "the immurement of contemporary human life in a pro-grammatic disestablishment of the will-to-think—and intellectuality of mechanistic, self-performing, theory preempting the role of mind." (34-35) Collapse of intellectual responsibility, she insists, has resulted in a privileging of scientific method (as inquiry from the outside, usurp-ing a human-centered search for knowledge), the atomization of knowl-edge into specificity camps, tolerance for ambiguity and indeterminacy, a model of contemporary mind as "ancillary cybernetics to the opera-tions of the 'unconscious,'" (35) and collective alienation that is "not meeting of minds, but scattering of minds." (42) The New Foundation proclaimed in the book's title is a reconstitution of language, a program for a "humanly new, and humanly remedial, reapproach to language." (20) This is a utopian project that goes beyond standardizing, to reimag-ining. No linguistic community, she states, has ever achieved "rational identity with the common language," in effect, the union of reason and speech as an ontological state.[1] At once radical and recuperative, Riding proposes *Rational Meaning* as "a charter of human rights to the dignity of a speech of unlimited truth, and a declaration of linguistic independence from ideas of language that enslave the mind to other laws than those of its natural relation with its words." (8) This is more than the "dream of a common language"; it is an ultimate prescription for a literate society.

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Re-Reading, Re-Defining, Re-Inventing

Parole - Discourse - Enunciative Processes: Return, Renewal and Invention

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When J-C Milner says that structuralist principles may stem from, but are not present in, Saussure's Course (Milner 18), the opposition he makes between "stemming from" and "being present in" a theoretical text shows that a text can provide what it does not contain, through a process of re-reading, re-organising and displacing notions, which leads to a change of paradigms, i.e. an invention.

Milner's remark is reminiscent of Foucault's notion of discursivity. According to Foucault, the founders of discursivity are not only the authors of their own books but they also produce the possibility and the rules of formation of other texts; they open the possibility of analogies with their own productions, but also of a number of differences (Foucault 804-805). Our topic is to discuss this interplay between inter-textual analogies and differences through the study of a chain of discursivity linking Saussure's, Benveniste's and Culioli's texts. It may seem a paradox to insert these authors in a theoretical continuity. Benveniste may be seen as a continuator of Saussurean conceptions while Culioli focuses on "parole" in his theory of enunciative processes *a priori* distant from Saussure's "langue". But, if Benveniste is explicitly one of Saussure's followers, he also goes beyond the limitations of the Saussurean conception of the linguistic sign and develops the theoretical framework of "parole"; on the other hand, Culioli reconsiders "langue" by re-organizing and breaking down the cleavage semantics/semiotics elaborated by Benveniste and by replacing it with the notion of language as activity.

Returning to a previous conception means returning to a text in itself but also to what is left unsaid or what is altogether absent in it: its lacunae (Foucault 808). Theoretical dead ends, lacunae, aporias, contradictions

or problematic categorizations, are opportunities for reformulations and displacements, which are conditions of possibility for inventions.

Our title, "*Parole* - Discourse - Enunciative Processes: Return, Renewal and Invention", reflects the way these notions are articulated in a progressive re-organisation of conceptualizations. The major concept is the idea of language as activity (part 1). This notion is linked with two phenomena: the emergence of the concept of utterer ("énonciateur") at the expense of the notion of speaker ("locuteur") (part 2), the formation of the category of the enunciative through the subordination of the semiotic level to the semantic level in the Benvenistean sense (part 3).

1 "Langue"/language: language as activity

In his dichotomy "langue"/"parole", Saussure excludes "parole" from the field of linguistic studies. According to Saussure, language as a whole cannot be analysed, because it is not homogeneous: "langue" is the only one true object of linguistic studies (Saussure 1982, 38-39). For Benveniste, "parole" is construed as an object of study because it is inscribed in a "functional apparatus" (Benveniste 1974, 84) inside the linguistic system and is no longer simply seen as a singular act. "Parole" is a mode of signification, the semantic mode as opposed to the semiotic mode. The semantic mode is "langue" as an activity marked by specific linguistic terms while the semiotic mode is the system of signs (Benveniste 1966, 257).

The move from the opposition "langue"/"parole" to the opposition semantics/semiotics is made possible thanks to a lacuna in Saussure's text: with the assertion that language cannot be fathomed due to its heterogeneity, "parole" is a linguistic feature that cannot be integrated in the linguistic field, but "langue" can, whereas it is formed by "parole" as an activity. Only the system of signs can be analysed and studied, but it is formed through the activity of "parole". To find a way out of this contradiction, it is necessary to create two distinct modes of signification, as Benveniste did: "langue" and "parole" coexist as linguistic objects because, even though they work differently, they are both modes of signification that can be analysed because they are both based on the functional apparatus of the "langue" level.

In Saussure, "langue" was homogeneous (it is made of signs and their systems of combinations), but it is now heterogeneous in that it is constituted of two distinct modes of signification. Benveniste wished to elaborate a "second generation semiotic science" that would go beyond the Saussurean conception of the sign as the unique principle of investiga-

tion, thanks to the notion of discourse (Benveniste 1974, 66), by adding a new mode of signification: the semantic mode, expressed in discourse through the sentence, as opposed to the semiotic mode, based on the linguistic sign and its formal properties. But in this move, Benveniste formed another lacuna: he left undefined the principle of homogeneity of "langue". If the linguistics of the semantic mode and the linguistics of the semiotic mode are both of equal value (which they were not in the Saussurean conception which put "langue" to the fore at the expense of "parole"), then, what is the object they have in common?

This object is "language", which is eliminated as a theoretical object if linguistics is based on dichotomies such as "langue"/"parole" or semantics/semiotics, but which can be recovered if these levels are articulated in a global whole (Culioli 2003, 138). Still, how is it possible to analyse "language" as a unified object, while it was construed as dichotomous in Saussure's and Benveniste's texts? Culioli conceives "language" as an unconscious activity (both as a mental activity and an action) regulated by inter-subjective relationships, and producing texts, utterances, signs, that are traces of this activity (Culioli 2003, 139). It is unconscious in the extent that the principles regulating this activity are not directly accessible to observation: only what is produced by this activity is.

This notion of discursive activity is present in Benveniste's framework but it is limited to the semantic mode. Defining language as activity (including pragmatic acts and symbolizations) means that this notion is extended to both modes, which, as a consequence, may be seen as one global phenomenon and not as constitutive of an unbridgeable dichotomy. Benveniste's text is therefore present in Culioli's elaborations but it is reformulated in a more radical perspective: the semiotic mode too, that is, the system of signs itself (and not only the semantic mode), is a result of linguistic activity.

In that respect, the movement from Saussure to Culioli through Benveniste (and back) reveals a lot about the process of invention. The notion of linguistic activity, which is explicit but is restricted to only one mode of signification in Benveniste's theory, is totally implicit in Saussure's text. Saussure concentrates on the way signs are organised in systems once they are formed, without fully considering the process of their formation. Paradoxically enough, this theoretical lacuna makes it possible to disregard this question and also to consider it as a crucial theoretical issue. On the one hand, the question of the formation of the signs may be left aside as irrelevant, but, on the other hand, this question is subjacent in Saussure's theory, which, paradoxically, can be used as a frame to formulate it (as will be seen more thoroughly in part 3). It is all the more so as

Saussure himself devotes quite a few pages to the issue of how phenomena of "parole" can alter the system of "langue" through the activity of speech in a diachronic perspective. But these phenomena do not connect (yet) with the notion of semiotic system, and are dismissed as "parole", while their crucial significance is only indirectly envisaged. The Culiolian conception of language as activity turns Saussure's text upside down, reveals its lacunae and reformulates it. What is left aside and dismissed as a set of phenomena situated outside the linguistic field in Saussure's *Course* is put to the fore in Culioli's theory and placed at the heart of linguistic investigation. While the unconscious processes of formation of the linguistic system are not probed into in Saussure's text, they become central in the analysis of language as activity.

Within the opposition "langue"/"parole", "parole" is placed outside the linguistic field, but it is extremely significant as far as the formation of the linguistic system is concerned. That constitutes a lacuna in Saussure's text. The question is: how could such a significant phenomenon be left aside? In Benveniste's opposition, the semantic mode of signification is connected with the notion of discourse in the Benvenistean sense, but a large part of language (the semiotic mode) is apparently not concerned with this discursive activity. What is the coherence of language then?

Language reappears as activity in Culioli's hypotheses and articulates different levels under one theoretical entity: language (and not "langue" as opposed to "parole", or the semantic mode as different from the semiotic mode). In that respect, both the semantic and semiotic modes are seen as activities, which is implicit in Saussure's text.

2 The speaker ("locuteur") vs. the utterer ("énonciateur")

Culioli identifies something ambivalent in Benveniste as far as the theoretical elaboration of the subject of utterance ("sujet d'énonciation") is concerned. In Benveniste's texts, it is named "subject" with or without quotation marks, or "ego" with or without quotation marks, sometimes in capital letters, sometimes not. This hesitation reflects the fact that something is lacking in Benveniste's framework: the notion of utterer (Culioli 1984, 83), not as an actual speaker but as a set of abstract coordinates that regulate inter-subjective relationships as they are marked within the linguistic system (Culioli 1990, 101-102).

It is important to note that Culioli elaborates his theory of the utterer on the basis of what he perceives as a lacuna in Benveniste's text. This lacuna is revealed through ambiguities and hesitations: Benveniste's text

points to it but is still unable to formulate it, though it makes it conceivable.

Benveniste's "Ego" is of a mixed nature. It is simultaneously a real subject and a linguistic construction. On the one hand, "Ego" is an ontological reality that exists as such: it is defined as a conscience and as a psychological entity outside language. But, on the other hand, it is also the product of language because Benveniste's person is a linguistic construction. "Ego" is defined as the emergence of a fundamental property of language which founds subjectivity (Benveniste 1966, 259-260).

The subject in Benveniste's text is a contradictory construction and leads to a theoretical aporia. It is simultaneously the product of the discursive apparatus inscribed in the linguistic system and exists as a representation, and it is identified as a person who uses that system from the outside. The notion of "intenté" (meaning defined as an intention to mean) developed by Benveniste (Benveniste 1974, 224-5) collides with the conception of language as "a machine that produces meaning through its very structure" (Benveniste 1974, 97). "Ego" is a person endowed with psychological properties (Benveniste refers to such notions as "psyche", "conscience", "intention", "intenté") and responsible for the production of meaning, but discourse is also seen as a machine producing meaning and interpretation by itself, outside any particular subjective intention. Benveniste's "Ego" can therefore be seen both as Saussure's speaking subject (the actual speaker) and a purely linguistic sort of subjectivity that is produced by the linguistic apparatus.

The notion of utterer, not as an actual person, but as a set of linguistic coordinates, makes it possible to eradicate this contradiction. The utterance can be interpreted thanks to the system of enunciative localizations ("repérages énonciatifs") inscribed in the linguistic apparatus. For instance, a deictic marker such as "yesterday" builds up a past moment as opposed to a present moment ("today") and a subjective position in time, but these textual localizations cannot systematically be identified with the actual coordinates in the extra-linguistic world: deictic localizations intrinsically belong to the text, and may (and may not) coincide with the here-and-now of the speaker or the listener. Similarly, the linguistic person "I" is not to be mechanically identified as the actual person talking: the actual speaker varies but the linguistic person is a stable locating point as far as the reference of the utterance is concerned. The linguistic "Ego" emerges as a reality quite independent from the actual person actually producing or interpreting a text. That presupposes two distinct levels: the level of the speaker (the actual speaking person) and the level of the utterer (defined as the centre of subjective and deictic

localizations). Benveniste's inability to make this distinction is a lacuna, which works as a condition of possibility for the invention of the notion of utterer.

3   The semiotic mode and enunciation

Within the semiotics/semantics dichotomy that defines "langue" in Benveniste's perspective, the semiotic mode is the system of signs and the classification of lexical units while the semantic mode is seen as an activity of communication described by Benveniste as "communication vivante" (Benveniste 1966, 130). This is a clear-cut distinction: on the one hand, the system is a strictly organized formal structure, and, on the other hand, meaning is seen as an active process.

However, this distinction is not always that clearly delineated. The boundary between these two modes of signification is somewhat blurred. The semantic mode is inscribed in the "formal apparatus of enunciation", which is a contradiction. Enunciative processes, visible in discourse as opposed to the historical mode, depend on variable and discontinuous situations of speech, but the formal apparatus is an integrated and stable system with specific signs that belong to the "langue" level. To use Saussure's categories, "parole" appears as a particular case or as a subsystem within "langue", while it is also presented as radically distinct from it. This contradiction constitutes an aporia in Benveniste's theoretical framework.

Through the distinction between the two modes of signification within the "langue" level, Benveniste attempts to go beyond Saussure's aporia concerning the "langue"/"parole" relationship. When Saussure says that "langue" and "parole" are closely intertwined and that "parole" always comes first as a necessary condition for "langue" to exist (Saussure 1982, 37), he leaves in abeyance the question of how the two levels can connect. This question is essential for Saussure. In his *Writings in General Linguistics*, he ponders this question and wonders how varied concepts present in "langue" can be converted into discourse (Saussure 2002, 277), without giving it any definite answer. According to Benveniste, discourse can be formed from "certain classes of signs" (Benveniste 1974, 84) specialized as markers of the semantic mode.

However, this answer too leaves the question unanswered in so far as it introduces heterogeneity in the analysis of language. On the one hand, the linguistic sign is a stable entity that exists by itself in a system of oppositions and is not modified by circumstances of speech (Benveniste 1974, 223), but, on the other hand, enunciation is seen as generating certain

classes of signs whose signifieds depend on the situation of discourse (Benveniste 1974, 84). The semiotic mode is first presented as clearly differentiated from the semantic mode, but the linguistic sign is also perceived as an entity pertaining to both modes.

Defining language activity as the object of linguistics makes it possible to go beyond the "parole"/"langue" and the semiotics/semantics dichotomies: it covers both aspects of language (the system that exists as such and discourse phenomena). What is given as stable basis (namely, the sign) in Saussure's analysis is represented in terms of process in Culioli's framework. Language as an activity generates prototypes that may refer to state of things or semantic contents (abstract, symbolic representations). Such types are subjected to processes of stabilization within inter-subjective relationships, and they seem to be stable while as a matter of fact they are always regulated by inter-subjective activity in linguistic inter-personal intercourse (Culioli 1985, 27).

A type, which is an abstract representation that is produced by this activity of typification, may refer to a state of things as a sign can, but it can always be altered or re-defined in the process of inter-subjective regulations. Culioli, in his article on Saussure, explicitly bases his conception of this operation on Saussure's Course. In Chapter IV of the Course entitled "Linguistic Value", Saussure defines thought and phonic matter as constantly flowing fluxes; he focuses on the plasticity of the semiotic system that divides itself into distinct parts so as to provide speakers with the signifiers thought needs to express itself (Saussure 1982, 156).

The notions of process, language activity, or typification, are not directly named and conceptualized by Saussure, but his text points to such notions. In the fluxes of thoughts and signs, the relationship signifier-signified is not given but is a construct. The sign itself is a process that tends to stabilize our individual and/or collective representations of the world, but it is not a stable state, or a pre-established unit in a fixed nomenclature. In that respect, "parole" or Benveniste's semantic mode may cover the whole range of linguistic phenomena, instead of being only one aspect of language. Through the notion of language as unconscious activity, Saussure's dilemma ("parole" is a distinct unanalysable phenomenon but it is essential as far as "langue" is concerned) is finally solved. If the sign is stabilized, it works as an element of a system. If it is not, it is a unit that pertains to the semantic, discursive mode. The difference between such notions as "parole" vs "langue" or semantic mode vs. semiotic mode, is only a matter of degree of stabilization in the same enunciative processes.

Conclusion

Such dichotomies proved to be theoretical aporias. The elaboration of the enunciative level of analysis (based on the notion of language as activity and of the utterer as a set of coordinates integrated in the linguistic system itself) constitutes a way out of such dead ends. The dichotomies present in Benveniste's and Saussure's texts reveal the complexity of language but also evacuate the notion of language itself, as it is subdivided into categories that are perceived simultaneously as distinct and intertwined. Such lacunae work as theoretical driving forces because they constitute conditions of possibility to formulate what a previous text leaves unsaid.

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"Inventedness" and Inventiveness:
for a Postmodern Linguistics

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If you ask the man on the street about the quality of young people's language and spelling, they will tell you that it was better before; what with shorthand in text messages or on internet chats, the young are supposedly making the language change for the worse. However this seems to be a permanent feature in linguistic assessment: throughout the centuries, people have recurrently complained about the deterioration of language. As opposed to scientific invention which is usually considered as synonymous with some form of progress, linguistic change has rarely been perceived as positive.[1] At best linguistic invention is viewed positively when it is in the hands of literary writers taking some liberty with the language substance. Literary linguistic "creation" has indeed been conceived in terms of fictional deviation from the standard linguistic path considered as the "right" one.[2] The purpose of this talk is to illustrate that this traditional assertion can and should be qualified and rethought. In this respect the repeated attempts at arresting language evolution and fixing usage to stop it from so-called degradation belong to what I shall call "inventedness" (with the "ed" suffix signifying the codification of language once and for all). We will see that what we call fictional invention might not be where we think it is.

We shall thus first focus on cases of "inventedness" all characterised by the same refusal of collective linguistic transformation, and see to what

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1. "There is a curious myth widespread in the world: many people believe that their language can somehow be 'pure' […] and that anything which interferes with this imagined purity (especially words borrowed from other languages) is a corrupting influence, altering the language's 'true character'" (David Crystal 57).

2. Drawing on Lévi-Strauss's *Introduction à l'oeuvre de M. Mauss*, Barthes points out that literature is the site of verbal anomalies "as society fixes, recognizes and assumes it in the honour it grants its writers" (Roland Barthes 151, "Le Style et son image", my translation).

extent the politically correct phenomenon can be included in that category before asking ourselves if linguistic inventiveness in literature is to be set radically apart from normal linguistic activity. Finally we will show that in trying to theorize the place of the linguist, what a "postmodern" linguistics is calling for is a more encompassing interpretative linguistics.

1   Cases of "inventedness"

History is full of attempts at abstracting language from contingency and transformation. The aim of the universal language projectors of the 17th century for instance was to subject language to an unprecedented rationalization so as to render mistakes and misunderstanding impossible: language would at last be disinfected from any contamination emanating from popular usage. Prescriptive grammars are another instance of the same desire to control language and guard it from its users. If grammarians relied on the Latin structure to fix the English language, it seems because, as a dead language, it had the particular advantage of no longer being spoken (Canto 709). We can find here the greatest examples of linguistic inventions which came to be established as the "correct" forms from which every deviation would be from then on considered as "incorrect" or "bad" English. We have been told to say "it is I" in "very correct" English (where everybody naturally says "it is me") as if it was a principle inherent to the language itself. It was in fact built to conform to the Latin expression where the verb "to be" takes a nominative pronoun as in "sum ego" (McWhorter 67).

But sometimes standardized forms are the result of individual creation from inventors endowing themselves with the authority to take language out of history and contingency. Prescriptive rules have sometimes had a lot to do with the whimsical attitude of these self-established linguistic referees. For instance the idea that "shall" is used with the first person and "will" with the second and third persons to indicate simple future while "will" in the first person and "shall" in the second and third express "determination, promise, obligation" etc., appears for the first time in 1653 in John Wallis's *Grammaticae Linguae Anglicanae* that English grammars have reproduced ever since (McWhorter 77).[1] Likewise, a century later in 1762 Robert Lowth suggested that it would be more elegant to place the preposition before a relative and not at the end of the propo-

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1. It needs to be added though that John Wallis was one of the first grammarians who attempted to provide an English grammar doing away with the traditional Latin classifications of speech (Auroux 344).

sition. This mere personal preference, on which Lowth was not adamant at all, was turned into "an immutable rule" by nineteenth-century academics (Bryson 141).

What could also fall under the category of linguistic "inventedness" would be the more contemporary politically correct phenomenon. When it is imposed from above,[1] that is to say not chosen or naturally invented by people, it similarly advocates that there is such a thing as a correct way of speaking which one should follow if one aspires to social peace. Like all universal language creations looking for a neutral means of communication that would favour no country and bring about universal peace, political correctness supposedly aims at protecting minorities from taking offence. It reinvents language so as to freeze it into a unique, polite and consensual version above linguistic, social and historical diversity. It shares with the other cases of "inventedness" the desire to repress both language's historical thickness and ongoingness. Jean-Jacques Courtine showed how American school books have been rewritten, improper words having been replaced by the only authorized politically correct versions. The censure that has been imposed on some novels has deprived many a schoolchild of at least part of the rich lessons which go into the making of a classic. For instance Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been evicted from the American school syllabus because of its persistent mention of the word "Negro" (Courtine 24).

This purification or "pasteurisation" of language condemns words as historical and cultural sediments. In erasing all signs of social, political and cultural dissension, political correctness demands that we forget the past. Knowing the existence of the word "Negro" is to keep in mind a historical and linguistic reality, and be remembered that "Afro-Americans" have not always been referred to in this way. What Political Correctness and Standard English have in common is a similar denial of historical consciousness and relativism, as they both tend to make us forget they are mainly instances of "inventedness" and that other versions are or could have been possible. McWhorter recalls that Standard English, often considered as the only neutral, hence legitimate or superior model of English, was chosen as the reference simply

> because it happened to be the dialect spoken in the area that happened to become the centre of British government and education starting in the 1300s (the dialect was mostly a mixture of the Middlesex and Essex dialects). If the cultural centre had happened to have settled in Nottin-

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1. Although often adopted by politicians, political correctness is also advocated by groups of people claiming for a fair and respectful identity.

gham, then the English of the gamekeeper in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* would sound as smooth and elegant to us, and the language of Margaret Thatcher coarse and unrefined. (McWhorter 27-28)

Likewise, in refusing the survival of old linguistic references besides new ones, political correctness aims at freezing time and erasing all signs of cultural and social diversity, erecting itself as the new "correct" model to follow.

Perceived as such, "inventedness" could be said to convey a certain hegemonic totalitarian aspiration. Indeed, as Patrick Seriot aptly puts it, totalitarianism precisely consists in wiping out the signs of social division.[1] Forbidding human intervention or any form of subjectivity, it imposes a homogeneous language from above, which is the same for everybody in all particular situations. Totalitarian language is a language without subjects, erasing people in the variety of their social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It decides for you what you can or should say/think and in that respect political correctness can be said to be dangerously similar. At the heart of all cases of "inventedness" lies this notion of a "correct model," inevitably implying the existence of an incorrect, impolite or illegitimate version. As literature creation rejects this notion of a homogenised invariable system of linguistic rules, no wonder then that literature is the first thing totalitarian regimes endeavour to destroy.

2 The Linguistic Inventor as *Bricoleur*

It is due to the persistence of this idea of a correct linguistic model that linguistic creations in literary texts have often been relegated to the rank of eccentricities or exceptions to the rules. Yet, literature cannot be merely conceived as some transgression as regards some pre-existing linguistic models but as making the most of a system of a language-still-in-formation. In the corpus I have been interested in—gathering contemporary English novels written in a distorted, disfigured English to the point of being almost unreadable, a far cry from neat Standard English—the writers seem to have found inspiration in the change already at play in oral language (Sorlin 2010). In their post-apocalyptic or science fiction writings, Anthony Burgess, Russell Hoban, Will Self or David Mitchell try to anticipate on linguistic change, and as such they are most faithful to language as an evolving system. Just as one can learn a lot about

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1. "Si la démocratie est la défaite de l'identification de la société à un corps, on définira dans notre perspective le totalitarisme comme le fait d'effacer les signes de la division sociale, de bannir toute indétermination" (Seriot 253).

language among those who are deprived of "normal" language, as in aphasic cases for instance, by distorting language, in reinventing it, the novelists paradoxically get us fairly close to the essence of language. Charles Bally said it a long time ago, "creativeness is what makes us understand the mechanism of language" (Bally 28, my translation). Only when playing with linguistic frontiers, in making them stutter (to use Deleuze's term), can one make them apparent. By defamiliarizing language, in making it foreign, one can paradoxically see the outline of our language better.

Linguistic inventiveness (literary or not) is "invention" in the etymological meaning of the word, "inventio" ("to find"), implying that inventing consists in finding what is always already there. Making do with what is at hand, with what is always already collective, the inventor in that sense is more of a "bricoleur" of language, using old words to new purposes, renewing dusty expressions, in short, reinventing or reimagining language. What motivates linguistic inventiveness is indeed the need to keep language alive and forceful. It is because it gets worn out very quickly and words lose their colour and strength by passing from mouth to mouth that language constantly needs to be renewed.[1] The linguistic bricoleur defamiliarises us from something we have always been familiar with, to have us look at language from a different angle. Just as the "bricoleur" diverts elements from what they were *a priori* made for, the linguistic inventor upsets traditional categories. A lot of words were indeed created by a simple change in syntactic categories. Shakespeare for instance was daring in that way, using nouns as verbs, adverbs, or adjectives. Bill Bryson gives the examples "that could not grammatically have existed previously—such as 'breathing one's last' and 'backing a horse'" (Bryson 64). So we could say that linguistic "deviation" does not transgress the rules, it puts them to the test, subjecting them to an endless process of variations.

As the Italian philosopher Giorgo Agamben puts it, language seems to be the site of tension between two antinomical forces, torn between innovation or transformation (what he calls "anomy") and conservation or invariance as embodied by the grammatical norms (Agamben 173-174), or to use Judith Butler's phrase, linguistic invention is subjected to some constraints that are "enabling" (Butler 59). The tension inherent to linguistic activity disappears when language alienates itself from its natural dynamic process of variation and inventiveness, thus resulting in an arti-

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1. Bally gives the example of the verb "ennuyer" ("annoy") saying that "embêter" has lost a lot of its force, hence the necessity to create successively "assommer, scier, canuler, raser, barber, tenir la jambe" and other verbs that he says cannot be printed (Bally 38).

ficial creation. We have thus come to a complete reversal in perspectives: fiction/literature turns out to reveal the mechanism of language while standardized, homogenised English proves to be a mere fiction. We can almost go as far as saying that what we call "literary eccentrics" might be, linguistically speaking, the most conservative, while the centralised standard national language turns out to be, as Jean-Jacques Lecercle underlines, a political construct, existing nowhere (Lecercle 2004, 173).

Taking up Lévi-Strauss's dichotomy,[1] we have spoken of linguistic bricolage but does it preclude any engineering of language?

3   Linguistics as Pragmatic Interpretation

Structural linguistics, in its aspiration to become more scientific, had no other choice but to tend towards generalisations that could only be achieved through the separation of language from its genesis and its history. As Godel points out, a science of language inescapably requires some abstraction from what comes before and what links different periods together.[2] Would it mean that the linguistic engineer is bound to be tilting to the side of inventedness? Is she bound to alienate language from itself by isolating it from people and change in her scientific lab where she is designing tools perfectly adapted to her object of study? To be sure, what makes an engineering of linguistics difficult, is the fact that language is here both the substance/the subject-matter and the tool, as the linguist must use language as a tool to explain language itself.

But the problem with linguistics at its beginnings at least was not that it wanted to be more scientific but that it was not scientific enough. Roland Barthes deplored the fact that linguistics was still stuck "at its Newtonian stage: it has not yet gone through its Einsteinian revolution; it has not yet theorized the place of the linguist (of the one who observes) in the field of observation" (Barthes 127, my translation). Postmodern[3] science has indeed managed to do away with science's fascination with rationality as something closed/self-contained, and opened itself to the

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1. As opposed to the "bricoleur," the engineer "[subordinates each task] to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project" (Lévi-Strauss 17).

2. "*Il n'y a de 'langue' et de science de la langue* qu'à la condition initiale de faire abstraction de ce qui a précédé, de ce qui relie entre elles les périodes. Toute *généralisation* est impossible tant qu'on n'a pas séparé l'état de sa genèse" (quoted in Chiss 37).

3. The adjective "postmodern" is here to be construed in terms of temporality: Newtonian science being conceived as "modern," postmodern science would be post-Newtonian science. But the reference to "postmodernism" in its aesthetical aspect is also implicit if one defines it as "a more general questioning of any totalizing or homogenizing system," with what was regarded as marginal or eccentric taking new significance (Hutcheon 11-12).

notion of unpredictability and subjectivity.[1] Thermodynamics shed light on the unstable and chaotic behaviour of physical phenomena that Newton's classic mechanic laws and their determinist character did not take into account. What launched science into post-modernity was the irruption of temporality in physics and along with it the idea that energetic transformations were irreversible and thus unpredictable. What then needed to be rethought was the notion that from an initial instant serving as reference point one could both predict the evolution of the system and retrace the different states it had gone through. In other words, according to Prigogine, thermodynamics has brought science to acknowledge the complexity of the phenomena and the impossibility of a perfect and total grasp of their dynamic processes (Prigogine & Stengers 360-361).

Linguistics science is faced with the similar impossibility to isolate the system at a particular instant and predict its evolution or reconstruct its past from there. Predicting the evolution of language is as difficult as trying to explain why some invented words catch on and others do not. As David Crystal makes clear, "as always when we consider lexical innovation, the bigger puzzle is to explain why so many apparently vivid or useful items did *not* appeal" (Crystal 278).[2] This may owe much to the fact that linguistic activity is a social democratic enterprise, negotiated at the level of intersubjectivity. Enunciation linguistics has attempted to re-inscribe the subject (of enunciation) in the study of language. However placing her at the centre of the explanation reveals the desire to perceive the subject as dominating her utterance and to refuse to realize that an utterance is always the fruit of non-assignable collective linguistic influences of which the speaking subject is but an effect. As Deleuze and Guattari claim, "there is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation" (Deleuze & Guattari 88).

To recap all that has been said, I will draw on Jean-Jacques Lecercle's pragmatic ALTER structure ([A ← [L → T ← E] → R]) which has two advantages. First, it gives the central position not to the speaking subject but to the Text (T) as informed by the Language actant (L) and the Enclyclopaedia (E) corresponding to Jakobson's context. Secondly, it shifts the focus from the author as origin of his text to the reader as receptor, as both Author and Reader are construed as effects of the

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1. Quantum physics reintroduces the so-far banned subjectivity into science. The observation of an object relies on the subjective intervention on the part of the observer. You can for instance "prefer" to look at reality from the perspective of the particle or that of the wave (see Ricœur 1227).

2. Such words as "acception, aftercoming, againcoming and aloneness" stemming from Wycliff's Bible were not kept while "absent, adoption, adulteress and allegory" have been (Crystal 241).

structure (hence the outward-pointing arrows). In the figure below, I am simply putting a different emphasis on the L actant to illustrate the split between what I have called "inventedness" (the actants Author [A] / Reader [R] are interpellated by Language [L] from above, hence the one-way pointing arrows) and "inventiveness" (the interpellating Language from below offers a possibility for A and R to counterinterpellate, as it both constrains and enables, hence the reversible arrows), or as Deleuze would say, two possible treatments of the same language: either you look for uniformising and universal constants above variables establishing differences between "standard" and "non-standard" forms, or you perceive language as an unstable, unpredictable and heterogeneous system in continuous variation. Jean-Jacques Lecercle's structure leaves some place for the linguist *as* Reader, as an utterance can indeed be analysed differently depending on who receives it. Thus reinventing Lecercle's 1999 book title (*Interpretation as Pragmatics*) and adapting it to my topic, I would advocate a "Linguistics as Pragmatic Interpretation." There might be (and there are) as many different interpretations as they are linguists or schools of linguistics. None is "true" or "correct," some are more just than others but what is sure is that one interpretation does not close the debate;[1] it is on the opposite a new argument giving others the right to dissent. The outward-pointing arrows at the centre of the figure are indeed reversible leaving space for "counter-interpellation" for the actants A and R, for a new meaning of the text to be "invented,"[2] in its etymological sense:

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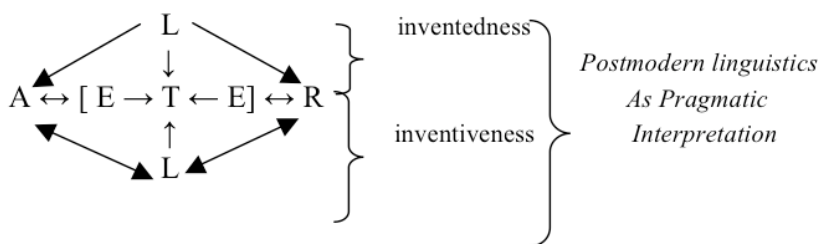
1. "A just interpretation is one that confirms to the constraints of the pragmatic structure that governs the interpretation of the text, and that does not seek to close the interminable process of reinterpretation" (Lecercle 1999, 33).

2. "We must invent a meaning for the text in the hope that this invention will be archaeological rather than merely imaginative" (Lecercle 1999, 5).

To avoid finding in itself its own justification, a "postmodern" linguistics aspires to be more encompassing, leaving out no historical, cultural, social but also power-political aspects from which language cannot be disconnected. This makes literary linguistics a good candidate for the role, as it is apt to humbly transform the linguist into an interpreter rather than a possessor of language.

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Hermeneiaphobia: Why an "Inventive" Linguistics Must First Embrace Interpretation

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1 The origin of language study in the controlling of interpretation

In a historical perspective, "inventive linguistics" is an oxymoron. Invention is about creating something new. But the traditions from which modern linguistics descend have in common that they were initially about accounting for, not how new utterances are generated, but how texts are to be rightly interpreted. "Rightly" means excluding, shutting down any new or inventive interpretations. These must have abounded for such powerful institutions to be put in place to control them. The institutions included grammar, logic and rhetoric—the trivium of medieval education—plus poetics, law and theology when it came to diverge from law.

They are the manifestation of a felt need for authority to limit the freedom of hearers and readers to invent meanings for texts. The word *authority* itself embodies belief in a single true meaning that corresponds to what the author of the text intended—and here is the bridge to linguistics as the analysis of the language systems. Such systems, by this view, make it possible for a thought or intention to be codified in sound and transmitted. Grammar was taught in part to control the "decoding" of the message, but even more to ensure that it was "coded" properly in the first place, to minimise interpretative leeway. Even rhetoric, which *was* aimed at the generating of texts, was geared to achieving the persuasive effect the author intended, eliminating any alternative, "inventive" interpretations by the audience.

Of course, the hope of controlling interpretation is forlorn, or utopian, which is the same thing. In Joseph (2004) I have explained why, in my

view, interpretation not only preceded language historically but is the activity onto which language itself was grafted. If we take an evolutionary perspective on language, we will seek out the analogues of linguistic behaviour in other species, particularly those most closely related to us. None of them has developed articulated vocal speech. But there is an ability shared broadly across mammalian species and indeed not even limited to them. We can term it *semiotic receptivity*, which is simply a way of saying that animals not only respond directly to things in their environment, as plants do, but "read" things in their environment, and respond to their interpretation. What is universal is *the ability to interpret*, to "read" features of the world of our sensory experience as signs of something not immediately available to our senses. Forest-dwelling animals have highly developed abilities to interpret sounds in their environment as indicating approaching predators or prey. Household pets can develop an exquisite ability to read the actions and attitudes of the humans around them (and vice versa). Signs of sexual receptivity have to be read, and here much misinterpretation occurs, even among human beings with our highly developed communicational systems.

These are the aspects of our interpretative behaviour which are evolutionarily deepest. They have to do not with what we say, the signs we produce, but with what we receive through our senses and interpret. What makes man *not* unique is his status as a "reading," interpreting animal. In this perspective, languages are cultural traditions built upon foundations common to many animal species, namely cerebral structures and physical dispositions for perception, cognition, reading and interpretation, all of which interact with each other. The learning of a specific cultural tradition begins while the young individual's perceptual, cognitive and interpretative capacities are still being formed, and it shapes those capacities. The interactions are so complex as never to produce exactly the same outcome in any two individuals. And yet, patterns emerge among people who interact and share the experience of learning the cultural tradition. These patterns include the regional, social class, generational, sexual and other identifiable features within a language that linguists attend to.

2 "Creativity" vs. inventiveness

How far has present-day linguistics moved away from this original work of controlling interpretation? On the surface, very far, even if it has been mainly through suppressing consideration of interpretation, while simultaneously erasing or at least containing variability in descriptions of how utterances are made and interpreted. Saussurean linguistics is

quite overt about this, when it excludes the possibility that *langue* can change; only *parole* admits any possibility of inventive alteration. The neo-Bloomfieldians, whose paradigm of linguistics was dominant in the USA from the mid-1940s to the early 1970s, tried to eradicate not only interpretation but meaning itself. Their principal manual states that "a language is a set of *habits*" (Hockett 141) and defines meanings as "associative ties between [...] morphemes [...] and things and situations", which "are more or less the same for all the speakers of a language" (139). Hockett maintains that this is the case even though the "antecedents and consequences of a specific act of speech can be quite different for a speaker and for his hearers" (140). Yet this is not deemed worthy of further consideration by Hockett. Interpretation is not a topic in his *Course*. It admits that one can "mishear" something, but otherwise transmission of a message is simply not an issue.

Within a few years Chomsky would revolt against the neo-Bloomfieldian methodological stricture against speaking of unobservables such as mind and meaning, restoring them to a central place in his model of language. And yet, the assumption of perfect transmission is left undisturbed. Chomskyan interpretative semantics is firmly in the business of rejecting any interpretation that is not generated by the text itself—that places it very squarely in the ancient tradition of controlling interpretation. This is nowhere more evident, ironically enough, than in the passage in which he famously proclaimed the "infinite linguistic creativity" of every speaker:

> The central fact to which any significant linguistic theory must address itself is this: a mature speaker can produce a new sentence of his language on the appropriate occasion, and other speakers can understand it immediately, though it is equally new to them. Most of our linguistic experience, both as speakers and hearers, is with new sentences; once we have mastered a language, the class of sentences with which we can operate fluently and without difficulty or hesitation is so vast that for all practical purposes . . . we may regard it as infinite. (Chomsky 7)

This passage appears to place production by speakers and understanding by hearers on an equal footing. Both have infinite creativity in the sense that speakers can produce an infinite number of sentences, and every one of these sentences can be understood by the hearers, provided that they share the same language. But a subtle and interesting trick is at work within the word "creativity" as Chomsky uses it, such that it does not mean the same thing as applied to speakers and hearers. Speakers have the freedom to "create" new sentences at will, in something

recognisable as the general meaning of the word "create". But when it comes to the hearers, they do nothing more than passively register what the speakers have created. This becomes apparent when Chomsky points out that mastery of a language also involves "the ability to identify deviant sentences" (7), such as *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*, and "on occasion, to impose an interpretation on them", "if a context can be constructed in which an interpretation can be imposed". The poet John Hollander famously constructed such a context in "Coiled Alizarine (for Noam Chomsky)" (from *The Night Mirror*, 1971):

> Curiously deep, the slumber of crimson thoughts:
> While breathless, in stodgy viridian,
> Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

This is a clear case of "imposing" an interpretation as Chomsky defines it. But no interpretation needs to be imposed on a sentence like *Revolutionary new ideas appear infrequently* (Chomsky 7-8, n. 2). The speaker's mental grammar assigns it a structural description which indicates that it is perfectly "well-formed". Interpretation then proceeds automatically out of the mental grammar.

We thus have two completely different mechanisms of interpretation, one for well-formed and the other for deviant sentences. The first is automatic and straightforward. The second is much more complex: the grammar assigns a structural description that indicates the manner of its deviation from perfect well-formedness, after which, "an interpretation can often be imposed by virtue of formal relations to sentences of the generated language" (Chomsky 9). But the interpretation does not follow directly or automatically out of those "formal relations"—if they did, the word *imposed* would not be applicable to them. The interpretation of the well-formed sentence is *generated* by the grammar, but that of the deviant sentence has to be imposed *by someone*, John Hollander for instance.

Now, of these two processes, which might one characterise as "creative" in the ordinary sense of that word? Obviously the interpretation of the deviant sentence, the "imposed" interpretation, is the creative one. And it is precisely on account of its creativity—the active role of a linguistic agent, namely the hearer—that it is marginalised as something in direct opposition to the "central fact to which any significant linguistic theory must address itself", namely that "linguistic creativity" as defined by Chomsky in which the hearer's "creative" role is to sit back and let his or her mental grammar assign an interpretation.

It was a rebellion over just this point by the most talented members of Chomsky's first cohort of PhD students, the "generative semanticists," that opened the door to most of the "pragmatic semantics" practised in the English-speaking world. A separate French tradition, of which M. Lecercle is one of the leading lights, has come out of structural semiotics; it has rarely but fruitfully interacted with its English-language counterpart. On either side, few would deny being part of a minority within linguistics, indeed quite a small (though proud) minority. Aside from them, translation theory is the one area interested in interpretation as a creative or inventive activity. Semantic pragmatics can be described as neutral when it comes to inventiveness, seeking to describe and explain but neither to promote nor to limit.

3 How linguistics was inventive within control: etymology

Still, inventiveness is what being human is all about. We cannot help ourselves. Even the attempts at control created opportunities for rich invention. Etymology was taught by the Sophists as a science of the original, hence true meanings of words, and still today we have recourse to etymology as a means of shutting down interpretation. And yet, etymologies themselves became a fertile ground for linguistic invention. Endless examples are possible; here is one from the *Golden Legend* (1260) of Fra Jacobus de Voragine, on the origin of the name of St Cecilia:

> "Cecilia" is as though [quasi] "lily of heaven" [celi lilia] or "way of the blind" [cecis via] or from "heaven" [celo] and "leos," that is "people." For she was a "lily of heaven" because of her virginal chastity. Or she is called "lily" because she had the white of purity, the green of conscience, the odor of good fame. She was "way of the blind" because of her teaching by example, "heaven" for her devoted contemplation, "Leah" for her constant busyness. . . . She also was "free of blindness" because of the brilliant light of her wisdom. She was also "heaven of people" [celum + leos] because in her, as in a heaven, people wanting a role model might in a spiritual way gaze upon her sun, moon, and stars, that is the far-sightedness of her wisdom, the greatness of her faith, and the variety of her virtues.

Carruthers has argued that these etymologies address an "inventional memory" (1992, 111), in which "Voragine's etymologies resolve themselves into a series of homophonies, puns on the syllables of the saint's name, and images derived from those puns that serve as mnemonics for some of her virtues" (2000, 158). She is trying to rescue Voragine from the modern perception that he is irrational—that piling up etymologies

rather than determining the right one cannot be rational, unless all his etymologies "resolve themselves" into something real. That something, she believes, is the functional need to memorise, which she is of course right to identify as crucial to medieval education. But it does not follow that these etymologies need to "resolve themselves" in any way; only the modern mind finds contradiction in this accumulation of explanations. For the medieval mind they *layer* themselves, and each inventive layer adds to the richness and veracity of the interpretation.

This was appreciated by Chaucer when he adapted Voragine's passage into the Second Nun's Prologue of the *Canterbury Tales*. No mnemonic imperative is at work here. The poet revels in the inventive excess, with an enjoyment not unlike that which his monastic predecessor felt, not as luxurious revelry, but as an ecstasy of sanctity. As in Bernini's Ecstasy of Saint Teresa, the two are hard to distinguish from the other. So here we have a form of inventive linguistics at work—but now it is the modern literary critic, Carruthers, who will not abide it. She must "rationalise" this inventiveness, tame it, by subduing it to a controlled functional purpose. Yet she has forgotten a crucial fact about this purpose. It would make sense for "images derived from those puns" to "serve as mnemonics for some of her virtues" if Voragine had started from some independent list of St Cecilia's virtues that included the odour of good fame, being a heaven for the people, etc. He did not. The virtues were invented in tandem with the puns, they did not determine them.

Carruthers has ignored any possibility that different readers might use Voragine's etymologies for different purposes. Indeed, who knows but that some of Chaucer's readers did not use his text mnemonically. Now, we can hardly claim to be "inventive linguists" unless we turn over the capacity for invention to listeners, readers, interpreters, ending the monopolies enjoyed on the production end by speakers and writers and on the analytical and interpretative end by linguists, etymologists and literary critics. Let a hundred flowers blossom, as Chairman Mao said. He then, of course, proceeded to exterminate every blossom other than his own, qualifying him as the patron saint of hermeneiaphobia.

The point of the St Cecilia example has been to show how, historically, linguistics has sometimes been inventive even when engaged in pinning down "right" meaning; and how such inventiveness has been resisted when interpretative excess is read as irrational. The resistance has not been among linguists only. Even literary scholars, who by and large are more open to the "inventive" aspects of language, count more than a few hermeneiaphobes within their ranks.

4 How Whorf may have been an inventive linguist (but was received otherwise)

Finally, the case of someone whose work the theme of this conference has led me to revisit. I myself have perhaps participated in a general failure to appreciate his attempt at an inventive linguistics, and instead read him as yet another controller and limiter. Whorf died young, some ten years before linguists, anthropologists and philosophers started taking a serious interest in what he had written. Being dead left him wholly exposed to interpretation; no one had to fear that whatever they said about him might be shot down with blazing icicles by the man himself. They constructed him in a particular way, as someone with a "hypothesis," which Whorf the man certainly never had. That "hypothesis" was about, not invention, but limitation—the idea that the structure of one's language limits, or even determines, or at least directs and channels how one thinks. Whorf never says this; his mentor Sapir came closer, under the influence of Ogden & Richards and their exposure of "word magic" (see Joseph 2002). Whorf was however *received* by linguists and hermeneiaphobes in adjacent fields in an interpretation-limiting reading. It is though quite plausible to read him differently, as aiming to open up new interpretative possibilities.

Consider the section from Whorf (139) in which he compares how plurality and numeration are treated in the American Indian language Hopi and in SAE (Standard Average European), Whorf's term for the basic grammatical structure shared by the Romance and Germanic languages, and possibly the Baltic and Slavic as well. In SAE, he writes, "plurality and cardinal numbers are applied in two ways: to real plurals and imaginary plurals". An example of a real plural is "ten men," whereas "ten days" is an imaginary plural. He explains:

> Ten men either are or could be objectively perceived as ten, ten in one group perception—ten men on a street corner, for instance. But "ten days" cannot be objectively experienced. We experience only one day, today; the other nine (or even all ten) are something conjured up from memory or imagination. If "ten days" be regarded as a group it must be as an "imaginary," mentally constructed group. Whence comes this mental pattern? [...] From the fact that our language confuses the two different situations, has but one pattern for both. [...] A likeness of cyclicity to aggregates is not unmistakably given by experience prior to language, or it would be found in all languages, and it is not.
>
> In Hopi there is a different linguistic situation. Plurals and cardinals are used only for entities that form or can form an objective group. There are no imaginary plurals, but instead ordinals used with singulars. Such an

expression as "ten days" is not used. […] "They stayed ten days" becomes "they stayed until the eleventh day" or "they left after the tenth day." "Ten days is greater than nine days" becomes "the tenth day is later than the ninth". […] Instead of our linguistically promoted objectification of that datum of consciousness we call "time," the Hopi language has not laid down any pattern that would cloak the subjective "becoming later" that is the essence of time. (Whorf 139-140)

Note carefully what Whorf says. There is an "essence" of time, which is "becoming later," and which is expressed by the Hopi structure and by the SAE structure seen in English "they stayed until the eleventh day". SAE also has other commonly-used structures such as "they stayed ten days", which Whorf analyses as an imaginary plural, quantifying time as something objective, whereas the "essential" structure treats it subjectively. And this SAE structure becomes a "cloak" that leads SAE speakers to lose sight of the essential nature of time and to *think* that it is really quantifiable, not just metaphorically.

His point is that linguistics, by revealing such metaphorical cloaks, can show speakers of a given language that their usual way of talking about things is not the only possible way, and that other expressions might show us more and better ways of thinking about them. He is, in other words, trying to *open up* interpretation—not to shut it down by saying that our language limits how we can think. The latter interpretation is often supported by extracts such as this one, which includes the word *impossible*:

> Certain ideas born of our own time-concept, such as that of absolute simultaneity, would be either very difficult to express or impossible and devoid of meaning under the Hopi conception, and would be replaced by operational concepts. (Whorf 158)

Yet he is certainly not denying that a Hopi speaker could learn an SAE language. His first informant, a Hopi living in New York, was bilingual in Hopi and English, and understood perfectly well the difference in time expressions between the two languages, which he taught to Whorf—thus opening Whorf's mind to that world of new interpretative possibilities which his late articles attempted to share with a wide audience.

He was, again, a victim of limiting interpretation, in various cycles. Besides the reading of him as a neo-Romantic believer in linguistic determinism, his writings gave rise in the popular imagination to an understanding that he had shown Hopi to be a "timeless" language. The extracts above are sufficient to show that he never claimed anything of

the sort. But later linguists who had grown up with that belief had little difficulty in demonstrating that it was false. Malotki starts with a long complaint about the many misreadings of Whorf on Hopi time, yet himself manages to allude to "Whorf's conclusions concerning Hopi timelessness" (Malotki 6). The reviewer of Malotki's book in *Language* says flat out that "In Hopi, Whorf found a timeless language" (Shaul 482), and credits Malotki with disproving this through the wealth of temporal expressions which his two Hopi informants in the 1970s supplied him with. While in the main they bore out what Whorf had written, many of them are shown to "quantify" time in just the way Whorf claimed that Hopi cannot.

Yet subsequent close examination of Malotki's work has raised questions. Whether or not those expressions "quantify" time is a matter of interpretation. By translating them all with quantitative expressions such as "for eight days," and suppressing the fact the single inflected Hopi word might just as easily be translated as "on the eighth day," Malotki makes it impossible to rule out the possibility that he is "SAE"-ising his texts. Another reviewer has complained that Malotki "makes the error of attributing temporality to any Hopi sentence that translates into English with a temporal term" (Hinton 363).

I myself am not qualified to declare that Malotki's conclusions are wrong. I do though see enough doubt to make me confident in declaring subsequent uses of Malotki to "close down" further consideration of Whorf to be another epidemic of hermeneiaphobia. For what we see here is a vibrant skein of competing interpretations that need to be drawn out further. One thing that, surprisingly, goes unmentioned in the discussion is the forty years that elapsed between Whorf's field-work and Malotki's, years in which the Hopi community was becoming ever more bilingual and potentially SAE-ised. Recent commentators have implicitly treated Hopi as a "timeless" language, not in the sense attributed to Whorf, but as though it existed in some ideal form impervious to influence from the dominant language with which it co-exists.

Even if the facts about Hopi potentially cast doubt on a "shutting-down" reading of Whorf, they do not ultimately affect an "opening-up" one. Even if Whorf had *invented* what he reported about Hopi out of whole cloth, which no one has ever claimed, the ways of perceiving time which he described would still be hugely important mid-century innovations in conceiving how, using language, we can expand and re-invent our way of thinking about even the most common aspects of our experience.

Conclusion

Through most of history, enquiry into language was not about the "trivial" matter of how ordinary people get across their desires and opinions to one another. It was instead about knowledge—something divine that is transmitted into the minds of human beings, with varying degrees of understanding when it comes to those aspects of knowledge with which we are not innately endowed, but must learn from others. The desire for a *true* understanding links up with the search for an authoritative way of determining right and wrong interpretation of texts.

It is a hangover of this heritage that, still today, linguistics so fears having language destabilised by individual interpretation that it goes to extraordinary lengths to exclude or mechanise interpretation—typically, as in Chomsky's case, by rhetorical fiat rather than legitimate explanation. Any project for an "inventive" linguistics must outgrow this primordial hermeneiaphobia and embrace the *human* dimensions of language, which are all about how we interpret texts and utterances, always individually, sometimes inventively; and how we interpret each other linguistically. We do this on the basis of our deep evolutionary capacity for reading signs, texts, some of which are projected intentionally, others unintentionally, others still entirely the invention of the interpreter. We turn one another into texts. We even read one another on the basis of how we see one another interpreting the signs that constantly surround us. Anything more linguistically inventive than that is beyond imagining.

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Reform, Usage and Identity

Language Reforms in English:
Gender in Third-Person Pronouns

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One area of English where inventiveness is regularly at play is that of language reform, or at least of attempts at reforming the language. Unlike cases of individual creativity, where a single speaker toys with the language, with reform, the aim is from the start for the suggested innovation to spread, usually so that it might become part of the standard language.

In order to understand better what might be at work in such alterations of the language, the present study focuses on one area: that of pronominal gender. It is a case of grammatical change, as opposed to purely lexical innovation. The history of modern English shows regular attempts to alter pronoun use in the third person singular. One case concerns generic references to human beings, as some have tried to compensate for the lack of an epicene pronoun; the other concerns references to ships.

A closer look at those innovations shows an apparent paradox. Most of them have failed, whereas change *is* possible in the area of gendered third-person pronouns, as evidenced by natural change in the history of English: genitive *his*, which had been common to the masculine and neuter genders, became specialised in the former—while *its* was coined for the latter; gender came to be marked in subject *wh-* relative pronouns;[1] further back, in Middle English, *she* replaced Old English *heo*. The paradox has been noted in other areas as well: as Ayto writes, "the most striking aspect of the various movements for the reform of the English language is how seldom and to how small an extent they have succeeded" (quoted in Fodor & Hagège 85). In other words, while

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1. *Wh-* relative pronouns only show a twofold opposition; *gender* still seems an appropriate label, though, as use of *who* and *which* follows the distinction between the so-called animate genders (masculine and feminine) and neuter.

reformers invariably seek to improve the language, while they base their wish for innovation on what they think are convincing arguments, and although they are sometimes backed by institutions of authority, the suggested improvements are rarely successful.

So what does it take for language reform to succeed, more particularly in the area of gendered third-person pronouns? The debate on how to refer to ships, which provoked numerous reactions, gives a first insight into the problem.

1 Reforming gender use: *Lloyd's List* and references to ships

The impulse for reform came from *Lloyd's List*, the authoritative newspaper of the shipping industry, which has been in existence since 1734; the reform only concerned gender use in the paper, and never aimed at changing the overall language. Twice the editors have tried to shift pronoun use in references to ships from the traditional *she* to *it*: once in 1998—so much protest ensued that the then editor, Leigh Smith, decided to restore *she*; then in 2002—this time the new editor, Julian Bray, went through with the reform despite the wave of protest, although columnists are still allowed to go on using *she*.

Why reform?

Three arguments were given to support the reform.

For Leigh Smith, the driving force was to adapt gender use to modern journalistic practice: *it* had to be used in *Lloyd's List* because this was the pronoun used on television and on the radio. Bray also had this argument: "it may be a tradition to call ships 'she,' but in standard journalistic practice ships should be referred to as 'it.'" (Hamilton & Brown). Adapting to those standards is thus equated with modernity: "The shipping industry does need to move forward if it is not to risk becoming a backwater of international business. I decided that it was time to catch up with the rest of the world, and most other news organizations refer to ships as neuter." (Bray, in Hibberd & Woodcock).

This reference to journalistic practice is to be related to the codes of practice for journalists, which seek to remove discrimination against all minority groups, including women. The issue of gender-fair language (which opponents term "political correctness") is a sensitive one in all public institutions, including, for example, universities, which advise against the use of *she* for inanimates, whether they be ships, cars or countries. Bray himself alludes to this motive: "I can see why 'she' would

suit a magnificent cruise liner but to a rusting old hulk it could be rather offensive." (Hibberd & Woodcock).

The two arguments given so far—modernity and gender-fair language—were oriented towards the receiving end of the communication process: gender use is altered to adapt to its reception by the addressee. A final argument is speaker-oriented: reform is advocated to adapt to today's representations of ships: "we see [the shift to *it*] as a reflection of the modern business of shipping. Ultimately they are commodities, they are commercial assets. They are not things that have character." (Bray, in Wilson). In other words, the reform aims at making the gender system more strictly semantic, and is therefore based on the basic tenet that language should be a direct transcription of the extralinguistic world. This view of language is shared, among others, by a number of journalists, whose articles on the topic equate gender, a grammatical phenomenon, and sex, a biological datum: "*Lloyd's List* takes sex out of shipping" (*Independent*), "Move to take the sex out of ships sparks a mutiny" (*Times Online*), "Ships to lose their femininity" (CNN). This view is also reflected in many grammars of English over the centuries, where *he* is often said to be used for males, *she* for females, and *it* for things.[1]

For the two reformers, therefore, a need for change occurs when the language does not coincide with the culture, whether this is understood as cultural representations or conventions. A look at the reactions, however, shows that this is not sufficient for innovation to be accepted by the community at large.

Reactions

On both occasions, the suggested reforms met with a torrent of protest. According to BBC News, in 1998 only one correspondent came close to supporting the reform. People who did not see any objection to the reform probably would not have written; but the sheer amount of protest suggests that opposition was indeed widespread, all the more so as the press was often negative: "*Lloyd's List* sinks the tradition of calling ships 'she'" (*Telegraph*), "Ships are to be stripped of centuries of tradition and gender by being referred to as 'it' in the future" (*Sunderland Echo*), "This controversial decision to 'wipe out history' was greeted with disdain by the Royal Navy" (*Times Online*).

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1. The idea of a strict correspondence between gender and sex is inherited from the analysis of Greek gender introduced by Protagoras in the 5th century BC. It made its way into the grammars of English through Latin, and is the only theory given by grammars until the 20th century. Even today, it can still be found, especially in non specialist grammars (see Gardelle 72 for further reference).

Several reasons are given to reject the reform. First, the neuter gender would not be in keeping with the representation of ships, as a spokesman for the ferry company Cunard Line writes: "Ships have personalities and souls; we use 'she' instinctively." (Hamilton & Brown). This argument, however, was only given in a small minority of replies. Another argument, advocated again in a few reactions, is a mistrust of gender-fair language. Hamilton & Brown, for instance, dismiss the reform as "an example of a creeping and unwelcome political correctness".

But most of the time, *she* is advocated for a third reason: as usage, or more explicitly as a legacy from the past. Reform is then rejected on the grounds that traditions should be maintained. Even the Royal Navy, which is a body of professionals, uses this argument rather than one based on vivid representations: "The Royal Navy will continue to call its ships 'she' as we have always done. It's historic and traditional." (Hibberd & Woodcock). Such a reaction shows a view of language that is different from that of the reformers: for opponents, language does not necessarily transcribe *present-day* representations of life. There is a historical dimension, which is felt to be paramount; language has a collective dimension, which makes it wrong for one individual to interfere. Improvement does not consist of adapting language to culture, but in letting it evolve naturally. Research on language reform shows that this organic approach to language, as though English had a life of its own, is common among laypeople (Keller 8). What it shares with the reformers' approach is the conviction that language is semantically motivated: opponents remain convinced that if *she* is used today, there must be a reason, although it is lost to present-day speakers. Why is this approach to language so common? It might be related at least partly to the language acquisition process: according to schema theories, a child, through exposure to utterances, constructs a synthesis of the notion, which governs meaning and use (Cordier & François 125). A possible hypothesis is that for the category SHIP and other related categories, the child, through exposure to *it* and possibly *she*, is led to create associations between the noun and gender potentialities—neuter and/or the feminine: when referring to a ship, an individual does not choose among the three genders each time. The use of *she* would then be felt to be natural, hence semantically motivated, while no rational motivation could actually be given.

Whatever the reason, what the reformers view as a need for language change is not viewed as a need by opponents. So what does it take to create a need for language change? A closer look at generic references to human beings provides elements of response.

2   Generic *he* and the idea of a common-gender pronoun

The lack of an epicene pronoun in the third-person singular has been denounced by the feminists since the 1970s. The issue of the epicene pronoun, however, did not originate with the feminists: it has been a concern to grammarians and word coiners since the 18th century.

Why reform?

Before the 20th century, the argument given by would-be reformers was of a grammatical kind: they wished to improve linguistic efficiency and grammatical correctness. The movement started when some 18th century grammarians campaigned against the use of *they* in generic references to males and females,[1] regarding it as a violation of the rule of agreement in number between the pronoun and its antecedent (Baron 191). Language was therefore viewed as an end, not just as a tool, and language improvement concerned only the system itself, independently of the extralinguistic world. Prescriptive grammars tried to impose *he* in generic references, but the need for a truly epicene pronoun was still felt by some.

For the feminists, the motivation for reform is very different: English is thought to reflect the prejudices of the male-centred society in which it has been shaped and used (Cameron, Romaine). By changing generic *he* (along with generic *man* for nouns), feminists hope to help put an end to the discrimination against women. As in the case of ships, language is regarded here as a direct transcription of the extralinguistic world and world views. It can therefore become a tool for the promotion of a cultural idea; for this reason, the feminist enterprise can be classified as linguistic activism (Aitchison 258).

The path towards reform followed two trends. One was the reassignment of an existing pronoun. *One* was advocated in generic references by at least four different people between 1770 and 1979, as in the following sentence: "Neither could take <u>one's</u> eyes from the other." (Baron 193). *It* was made into an epicene pronoun by the *Woman's New World Dictionary* (1973) and by at least two other writers, who recommended sentences such as "The applicant signed <u>its</u> name", following actual use of the pronoun for babies, as in "The baby was happy with <u>its</u> rattle" (*ibid.*). Finally, some abandoned the idea of an epicene pronoun altogether, and advo-

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1. As in: "you are just as mean as you can be, to sneak up on a person and look at what they are looking at" (Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. 1876. Introd. Lee Clark Mitchell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993: 146).

cated the use of *she* in generic references, so that the typical human being should not systematically be a man.

The other trend to make up for the lack of an epicene pronoun was to coin a new one. At least seventy forms have been coined since the end of the 18th century (Baron 191ff.). Most of them are blends of the existing masculine and feminine forms, sometimes of the plural form as well; for instance *heshe* (acc. *hem*, gen. *hes*); *hizer*; *shey* (acc. *shem*, gen. *sheir*).

Reactions

Coined pronouns have never spread to the point of becoming part of the standard language. Most of them have been individual initiatives, but one of them, which did receive official backing, also failed: *thon* (acc. *thon*, gen. *thons*), coined in 1884 by Charles Crozat Converse, an American lawyer, to make communication more efficient in an era when time was money. *Thon* is a blend of *that* + *one*, and was designed specifically, thanks to this pattern and to its use of common sounds of English, to be appreciated by the public and hence adopted. *Thon* received the backing of two dictionaries: Funk & Wagnall's *Standard Dictionary* (1898), where it was listed until 1964, and Webster's *Second New International Dictionary* (1934; it was not listed in the third edition). Yet it failed. Opponents of coined pronouns advance two arguments: if English had needed a pronoun, it would have created one naturally; secondly, *he* is deemed valid by some in generic references because the masculine has always been the default gender (Baron 202).

As for the reassignment of existing pronouns, while *it* and *one* never proved successful, the more recent so-called *generic she* is more widely used. It can be the only pronoun used in generic references, or it can alternate, within the same document, with generic *he*; Croft, for instance, uses *she* for the generic speaker and for a generic child, and *he* for the generic hearer: "There is a problem here: the hearer cannot read the speaker's mind, but she can't read his." (95). However, *she* seems to be restricted to academic circles, where it is increasingly common, and to documents dealing with babies and small children and aimed at parents (Gardelle 509, Wales 123). Besides, even in the fields where *she* is used, it has to compete with existing linguistic means to avoid generic *he*. In academic circles, *she* is not even explicitly recommended by universities in their guidelines for non-discriminatory language. They opt for *he or she* (or *she or he*), which is labelled as cumbersome, or simply for means of rephrasing the sentence that avoid third-person singular pronouns.[1] Similarly,

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1. Only one website among those visited recommends *they* (University of Tasmania).

some parent-oriented websites use *they* rather than *she*. The prevalent trend, therefore, seems to be to resort to existing means rather than to adopt innovations.[1]

3 Can language inventiveness lead to language change in gendered pronouns?

One major point the present study has made is that individual innovation alone is not sufficient to trigger language change. Institutions (whether they be dictionaries or any form of authority) are necessary for propagation; and even they are not sufficient to trigger language change, because this implies a third stage, that of acceptance by a majority. This is confirmed by the history of English: while prescriptive grammars (another form of institution) tried to eradicate so-called singular *they*, and while they condemned the use of relative *whose* for inanimates, both have survived over the centuries.

The study has also shown that acceptance (at least partial acceptance) of an innovation occurs only when the existing linguistic tool is felt to go *against* the representation wished for. That is why generic *he* is now viewed as problematic by many, whereas the use of *she* for ships is not. Appeal to a grammatical ideal is not sufficient to make a need for change felt; neither is appeal to writing standards or even to strict semantic motivation. Furthermore, the idea of stasis in language is an illusion, but what is correct in the layman's view is that language is not a direct transcription of the contemporary extralinguistic world. Such direct reading can lead to oversimplifications. For example, in references to ships, the use of *she* for a rusty tanker does not necessarily mean that the speaker is being derogatory to women, contrary to what Bray implied: despite jokes equating the maintenance costs or amount of paint needed for ships with those needed for women, a study of the representations of ships among sailors (where the use of *she* is most likely to be motivated, although it is not necessarily so) shows that the most fundamental representation is that of security, maybe of a ship like a mother's womb (Gardelle 609). The use of *she* in a given utterance, therefore, should not be read as semantically motivated strictly by the immediate cotext.

Finally, even in cases where a need for change is accepted by most, the study has shown that there seems to be a preference for a reassignment

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1. It is hard to assess to what extent generic *he* is still used today. Conversations, fictional works and essays make little use of generic references, except for *everybody*, where *they* is usually used—but then the representation is potentially plural. As for the British National Corpus, it only records utterances produced in the 1990s.

of existing tools rather than for innovation. This is confirmed by natural language evolution: when relative *wh-* pronouns came to mark gender, *who* was simply borrowed from the interrogative pronouns; similarly, in Middle English, the subject-form *she* was merely borrowed from one of the dialects of English. Moreover, a diachronic study shows that natural change is never sudden: *who* came to mark gender in relative pronouns over three centuries (15th-17th centuries), *its* after nearly four centuries (14th to the end of the 17th century[1]). It seems therefore that language, at least in the area of pronominal gender, cannot anticipate on cultural change—hence the failure of the feminist enterprise so far.

As a result, the conditions for the success of proposed language reforms in the area of pronominal gender have never been met in English, even though for generic references to people, there is now some acceptance of a need for change. This is not just because pronouns are mainly grammatical words; similar resistance to innovation can occur in the lexicon, as shown by some *-man* compounds (Baron 179). In other world languages, there are apparently only two countries in which a gender reform has been successfully imposed: in Norway and China; but they involved only written standards. In Norway, a third gender was introduced in one of the two written languages, Bokmål, in order to make it more similar to Norwegian dialects; but when writing Bokmål, Norwegians still have a choice of using three genders or just two (Elizabeth Lanza, personal correspondence, 2008). As for Chinese, gender was introduced in the third-person singular pronoun as part of the language reforms of the 1950s. One ideogram is now used for human males, one for human females, and one for all objects and animals (Alleton et al.). But all are pronounced similarly, like the original pronoun, so that it might constitute a merely conventional written addition rather than a change in the structure of the category itself.[2]

These findings relate more generally to the issue of the meaning of "language improvement"; Aitchison (252), for instance, wonders whether the desired endpoint of evolution is a language that makes the most use of the economy principle—but then objects that pidgins, which would be the best candidates, are not thought of as the most advanced languages. The question is a complex one (Breivik & Jahr, Bright, Brinton & Traugott, Hurford et al.), but the study of gender suggests that one factor at work

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1. The differentiation process between masculine and neuter genitive forms began in the 14th century, with various neuter forms in competition: *it*, *of it*, *thereof*, although the form *its* apparently only appeared in Modern English—in written documents at least. (Gardelle 270).

2. The answers given by five informants proved inconclusive.

is, ultimately, a sense that the language used is "right"—not necessarily in the sense that it conforms to grammatical rules, but in the sense that it advertises that the speaker belongs with a given group. For example, William Morris, who started a dyeing business, felt that his use of *it* in references to vats was inadequate among dyers; he therefore started using *she* in his diary, although such uses were initially conscious and overgeneralized (Gardelle 161). This sociolinguistic dimension is confirmed by a study by Milroy, who notes that individuals with strong ties in their social network maintain the linguistic conventions of that network, and that individuals with both weak ties to the network and ties to another network are those who introduce novel variants.[1]

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How Inventive could French 17th century Linguistics be?

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Modern linguistics heavily depends on the idea that it is possible to draw a line between the proper, serious, scientific, institutional linguistics and various forms of illegitimate activities: folk linguistics, ideological linguistics, mythological linguistics and inventive linguistics. This partition is in theory to be questioned, but was all the more so in the 17th century, a century when legitimate linguistics occupied a position which was still relatively marginal compared with all the fields that dealt with language (philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, physics . . .). At that time, language itself was above all a philosophical object, as it was thought to be doomed, one day, to be "reduced" to principles that relied on philosophy.

At the very beginning of the 17th century (1620), the English philosopher Francis Bacon thought that language was one of the reasons why philosophy made so little progress. In his *Novum Organum*, he thought that words could be the idols of the public place (*idola fori*). Hence, he opened the path to a form of "inventive linguistics," so to speak, that sees in languages in use patterns that have to be reformed before they can convey proper philosophical ideas. Hence a direction towards what can be called "language therapy." By the end of the century, John Locke gathered a whole philosophical momentum around the idea of the "abuse of words," an idea that had a strong impact on the political decisions made towards language during the French Revolution. To the modern eye, these statements can be seen as decisive points in the development of a new version of philosophy, and have been widely used from the 18th century on to analytical philosophy.

The 17th century can also be seen as a century when extensive work was accomplished in the field of philology, so as to fix the canons of gram-

matical description, concerning especially modern languages. Such is the undertaking of Du Cange on Latin, of Nicod and Ménage on French, and of Duret and Leibniz on European and non-European languages.

Furthermore, it is a century when linguistic utopias have been very seriously examined. Let us think of Mersenne's, Wilkins's and Leibniz's dreams of a universal philosophical language.

The 17th century appears therefore as a particularly rich time for the exploration of the various aspects of "inventive linguistics."

And yet a question immediately arises. Isn't there something of a contrast between the expansive speculations that have been applied to language and the results that can be historically evaluated?

In France, when comparing the achievement of the 17th century with what was so decisively proposed during the Revolution, one can be legitimately disappointed. High ideals were attached to language, but minor changes were put to the actual way the idiom looked.

This paper will provide an attempt:

– to show that there was a constant interconnection between the various forms of inventive linguistics at the time, and serious speculation, both on the actual languages and on the identity of this somehow new object that is language in itself.
– to show that the different aspects of "inventive linguistics" were so diversely interpreted in the 17th century that all form of action was ultimately neutralized for the sake of "usage," a final deity for French linguists of the time. This fact probably contrasts the French context with the English context, hence two different ways of viewing natural languages. In France "linguistics" appears as a possible place for the imaginary.

1 From the inventive to the fantastic

As a start, attention needs to be drawn to the inevitable ambivalence of the expression *Inventive Linguistics*, a stimulating and rather rare phrase. Indeed, *inventive* can be considered as a synonym for "creative" or "innovative". In that respect, *inventiveness* can be regarded as a quality in scientific method, or as Sandrine Sorlin proposed, a proof of open-mindedness towards interpretation.

But *inventive* can also mean that a linguistic discourse or theory is not rooted in empirical data or is deprived of practical usefulness. In that respect, *inventive linguistics* can be considered as a form of linguistics where theory and myth are preferred to facts.

A first aspect of what could be called inventive linguistics could thus be *Fantasy*, meaning the creation of purely imaginary languages, consequently subject to a type of *ad hoc* linguistics. In that respect, 17ᵗʰ century France is undoubtedly rich in fantasy. Imaginary idioms and codes abound in novels as well as in philosophical enquiries. In Cyrano de Bergerac's *Les États et empires de la lune* (1659), the narrator designs a self-powered machine that enables him to land on the moon. There, despite slight incoherence—he seems to communicate rather well with a creature that speaks a completely different language, to the point of discussing complex philosophical issues. He discovers that society there is organised in two different spheres, each using its own language. Here is the well-known excerpt in which these two languages are described:

> Vous aurez que deux idiomes sont usités dans ce pays: l'un sert aux Grands, l'autre est particulier pour le peuple.
> Celui des grands n'est autres chose qu'une différence de tons non articulés, à peu près semblable à notre musique, quand on n'a pas ajouté les paroles; Et certes c'est une invention tout ensemble bien utile et bien agréable; car quand ils sont las de parler, ou quand ils dédaignent de prostituer leur gorge à cet usage, ils prennent tantôt un luth, tantôt un instrument, dont ils se servent aussi bien que de la voix à se communiquer leurs pensées; de sorte que quelquefois ils se rencontreront jusqu'à quinze ou vingt de compagnie, qui agiteront un point de théologie ou les difficultés d'un procès, par un concert le plus harmonieux dont on puisse chatouiller l'oreille.
> Le second, qui est en usage chez le peuple, s'exécute par les trémoussements des membres, mais non pas peut-être comme on se le figure, car certaines parties du corps signifient un discours tout entier. L'agitation, par exemple, d'un doigt, d'une main, d'une oreille, d'une lèvre, d'un bras, d'une joue, feront chacun en particulier une oraison ou une période avec tous ses membres. D'autres ne servent qu'à désigner des mots, comme un pli sur le front, les divers frissonnements des muscles, les renversements des mains, les battements de pied, les contorsions de bras. (Cyrano de Bergerac 65-66).

As can be seen, Cyrano's plot is very rich in interpretations.

1. In a sociolinguistic fashion: significantly, music is reserved to the high class, as "harmony" is regarded as a positive value in languages as well as in communication, whereas gestures have often been interpreted, since the Middle Ages, as a distinctive sign of low class (the villains). Cyrano's plot conveys the idea that there is no "common" language in society, but rather a language for each class. Here, Cyrano draws his inspiration from Charles Sorel who

had shown in the picaresque adventures of his *Francion* (1626) how large the scope of linguistic varieties could be in society.

2. In a linguistic fashion: a parallel can be drawn between Cyrano's description of a musical language and the contemporary interest in Chinese, a tone-modulated language. Likewise, Cyrano's description of gestures can be seen as close to the contemporary research on hieroglyphs and ideograms.

3. In a semiotic fashion: Cyrano's conclusion is that there can be language in music as well as in gesture. The wish to understand music and gesture as languages is part of the semiotic program of the 17th century. The idea is to extend what is regarded as language beyond its traditional limits. As was already the case in Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moon* (1638), which was a model for Cyrano: places such as rivers, are named in music notes transcribed in small scores by Cyrano (127).

4. In a philosophical or anthropological fashion: for many philosophers, considering speech as the only language seems an unsatisfying limitation. Some of them put forward the advantages of gesture over speech. Music and gestures appear as the two "common languages of humanity," and they seem to bear an expressive capacity that is absent from speech. Hence the idea that the necessity of thought may have deprived us of a part of our nature and the dream that the original language of visual and vocal signs could be recovered through the creation of an artificial language. Later, Diderot and Rousseau thought that gesture and intonation were the most powerful means of expression for human beings. Verbal language was regarded as too profuse.

At the end of the 17th century, such reunion of scientific and philosophical interests inside the particular shape of a linguistic fantasy is common. There seems to be a kind of fashion in such general social fictions that can easily be more thought-provoking than scholastic treatises. In Foigny's *Les Aventures de Jacques Sadeur dans la découverte et le Voyage de la Terre Australe* (1676), gestures are the ordinary language, whereas words are used for reasoning and abstract discourse. In Vairasse d'Allais's *Histoire des Sevarambes* (1677 and 1678), the idiom of the Sevarambes is only composed of what is necessary for a language (1702, II, 250-251). Every unnecessary element is withdrawn, and what is deemed missing is added. All that is accomplished by a single person who is none other than King Sevarias. He is writing a Dictionary which consists in a new graphic system, based on sounds, and is supposed to follow "nature."

Its study reveals a serious analysis of morphemes. A special attention is given to simplicity in the paradigms of verbs, harmony in sounds (a regular preoccupation at the time). In Sevarias's system, intonation reflects the speaker's feelings. Vairasse was perfectly aware of the scientific literature on language of his time; he later wrote a full and perfectly scholastic French Grammar himself (1682).

What is striking in these attempts for modern readers is that in all these cases, the imaginary languages thus created bear something of the ideal. But also, the languages are exposed to the conditions of political life. They are languages in use. Some important questions concerning natural languages are thus addressed through fiction:

- Are languages related to nature, or to some kind of institution?
- Are languages governed by reason or by usage?
- Is there a possible reason behind usage?
- Who has authority over language?

2 The problem of usage

Indeed, in the 17th century, inventive linguistics largely relies on a philosophical wish to create a new usage. Hence a utopian flavour to the attempts then made to define the characteristics necessary for a perfect language. What can be the conditions of a new usage? What are the features of a language that would have chances to become of universal use?

These questions are addressed by Descartes in his famous letter to Father Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) on the contemporary project submitted by Des Vallées, where he examines the sheer possibility of a universal language. Here is a large excerpt from that famous letter.

> Au reste, je trouve qu'on pourrait ajouter à ceci une invention, tant pour composer les mots primitifs de cette langue, que pour leurs caractères; en sorte qu'elle pourrait être enseignée en fort peu de temps, et ce par le moyen de l'ordre, c'est-à-dire, établissant un ordre entre toutes les pensées qui peuvent entrer en l'esprit humain, de même qu'il y en a un naturellement établi entre les nombres; et comme on peut apprendre en un jour à nommer tous les nombres jusques à l'infini, et à les écrire en une langue inconnue, qui sont toutefois une infinité de mots différents, qu'on pût faire le même de tous les autres mots nécessaires pour exprimer toutes les autres choses qui tombent en l'esprit des hommes. Si cela était trouvé, je ne doute point que cette langue n'eût bientôt cours parmi le monde; car il y a force gens qui emploieraient volontiers cinq ou six jours de temps pour se pouvoir faire entendre par tous les hommes. Mais je ne crois pas que votre auteur ait pensé à cela, tant parce qu'il n'y a rien en toutes ses

propositions qui le témoigne, que parce que de cette langue dépend la vraie philosophie. [...] Or je tiens que cette langue est possible, et qu'on peut trouver la science de qui elle dépend, par le moyen de laquelle les paysans pourraient mieux juger de la vérité des choses, que ne font maintenant les philosophes. Mais n'espérez pas de la voir jamais en usage; cela présuppose de grands changements en l'ordre des choses, et il faudrait que tout le monde ne fût qu'un paradis terrestre, ce qui n'est bon à proposer que dans le pays des romans (Descartes 76).

The philosophical aspects of this letter have often been commented upon in relation with the establishment of an alphabet of thoughts, as will later be examined by Leibniz as well. Here, the point will rather be the confrontation of the ideal look on language with the more realistic evaluation of the functioning of language in real life. Descartes agrees that any ideal language would have to rely on properly established philosophical ideas. But all his reasoning seems to be eventually swept away when he raises the point of usage. Here, Descartes's viewpoint seems to be that in any language already in use, there is some kind of *force* that cannot be achieved through artificial means.

In a famous statement, the Latin author Quitilian said: "Sermo constat ratione, uetustate, auctoritate, consuetudine" (Inst. Orat., I, 6, 3), which means that "language is based on reason, antiquity, authority and usage". Should Quintilian be trusted, two parameters, *vetustas* and *consuetudo*, are derived from the condition of natural languages, whereas the other two, *ratio* and *auctoritas*, can pretty well apply to a fictional or an artificial language. The question will thus be: is it possible to isolate them? It must be said that *consuetudo* has gradually gained momentum in law as well as in language.

This new ideology of habit will be exemplified by Vaugelas, who considered "l'Usage" as "maistre des langues viuantes" (Vaugelas 470). Here is a text where Vaugelas elaborates on this new, more powerful, understanding of *consuetudo*:

De tout ce discours il s'ensuit que notre langue n'est fondée que sur l'usage ou sur l'analogie, laquelle encore n'est distinguée de l'usage, que comme la copie ou l'image l'est de l'original, ou du patron sur lequel elle est formée, tellement qu'on peut trancher le mot, et dire que notre langue n'est fondée que sur le seul usage ou déjà reconnu, ou que l'on peut reconnaître par les choses qui sont connues, ce qu'on appelle analogie. D'où il s'ensuit encore que ceux-là se trompent lourdement, et pêchent contre le premier principe des langues, qui veulent raisonner sur la nôtre, et qui condamnent beaucoup de façons de parler généralement reçues, parce

qu'elles sont contre la raison; car la raison n'y est point du tout considérée: il n'y a que l'usage et l'analogie. Ce n'est pas que l'usage pour l'ordinaire n'agisse avec raison, et s'il est permis de mêler les choses saintes avec les profanes, qu'on ne puisse dire ce que j'ai appris d'un grand homme, qu'en cela il est de l'usage comme de la foi, qui nous oblige simplement et aveuglément, sans que notre raison y apporte sa lumière universelle; mais que néanmoins nous ne laissons pas de raisonner sur cette même foi, et de trouver de la raison aux choses qui sont par dessus la raison. Ainsi l'usage est celui auquel il se faut entièrement soumettre en notre langue, mais pourtant il n'en exclut pas la raison ni le raisonnement, quoiqu'ils n'aient nulle autorité. Ce qui se voit clairement en ce que ce même usage fait aussi beaucoup de choses contre la raison, qui non seulement ne laissent pas d'être aussi bonnes que celles où la raison se rencontre, que même bien souvent elles sont plus élégantes et meilleures que celles qui sont dans la raison, et dans la règle ordinaire, jusque là qu'elles sont une partie de l'ornement et de la beauté du langage. (Vaugelas, préface)

Vaugelas's theory of *usage* is, as many commentators have put it (see Ayres-Bennett 13-40 for a summary of the discussion), derived from Quintilian, with a strong influence of the Latin grammarian Varro, especially on the question of "neology" and grammatical norms, but also introduces a new pragmatic vision of usage (derived from *usus*) that appears superimposed onto *consuetudo*. Indeed, the pragmatic conditions of speech (who, when, where, to whom, in what circumstances, with what purpose, etc., a discourse is enacted) are added, in Vaugelas's reasoning, to any treatment of *consuetudo*.

Indisputably, the primary aim of Vaugelas was to record usage. He wrote his observations on language in bits and pieces and decided to publish them in random order, so as to make clear that his book would be in no way a "Dictionary" or a formal "Grammar." Furthermore, in a famous statement, he considers that what he gives to the public is bound to last a maximum of 30 years. In his opinion, language renovates itself every 20 or 30 years.

His work has been interpreted in very different ways. His attitude has been opposed by some commentators to the "rationalist" approach of Port-Royal. On the contrary, some have seen in Vaugelas a grammarian looking for order, who did not hesitate to correct good usage to make a more regular construction. In fact, throughout his *remarques* Vaugelas is more than often forced to accept changes in usage. This position is sustained by a fundamental belief in the regularity of usage. Thus, usage and reason can be reconciled.

Another important ambiguity in Vaugelas's work resides in the fact that, whereas his book can be seen as a vast empirical enquiry on *consuetudo*, the questions of *auctoritas* and *ratio* are always within reach. Vaugelas was a member of the first Academy. He played an active part in writing the Dictionary. As a matter of fact, his *Remarques* are full of observations on who first used a word. He continually assesses the chances of survival of a word. Some authorities were in his mind better than others in the process of maintaining "le bon usage" in use.

After his *Remarques* were published, two different types of reactions were expressed. Some like La Mothe Le Vayer or Dupleix thought that Vaugelas's attitude was too prescriptive, and contradicting what Dupleix called the "liberté" of the tongue. Others, conversely, considered Vaugelas's constant invocation of usage as a way of dismissing the possibilities of action. The "tyrannie de l'usage," as Arnauld put it, was considered as a plague for grammar, a way of giving good marks to intolerable mistakes. "Quelques soins que l'Académie Françoise veuille bien y donner, elle a bien de la peine à faire revenir le Public de ses erreurs. Et en vérité j'ose dire que tant qu'on donnera l'usage pour regle, il sera presque impossible de s'accorder sur l'arrangement des termes," wrote Grimarest at the beginning of the 18th century, acknowledging that the normative power of the Academy remained limited, confronted with a general submission to usage (Grimarest 297).

For rationalists, the ideology of usage proves to be unsatisfying. Two problems remain unsolved: the problem of "reason" and the problem of "authority." More and more grammarians think the search for *principes* more valuable than constant reference to usage. This shift in representations can be seen as a major reason why the 18th century has a much bolder attitude toward neology than the 17th century, sometimes abusively considered as the age of norms in France.

In Vairasse's *Histoire des Sévarambes*, Sevarias himself has the power to create words and establish grammar. Someone has to rule over language. This dictatorial vision of language contradicts the discourse on language published in France at the time. A famous anecdote that can be found in Suetone says that for him a king was omnipotent, but did not have the power to create a word. This saying was repeated over and over, from Amyot's *Projet d'une eloquence royale* to Vaugelas and to the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (1694). It was even repeated in a law treatise of the end of the 17th century. The language is hence closely associated with customary law. But is customary law enough? The question is raised by the linguistic fictions of the late 17th century. There seems to be a strong and rather utopian desire for authority at that time, and a major

interrogation on what is called "institution." Who decides in matters of language? The political power or grammarians?

3   From the inventive to the imaginary

In this final part I will try to show that during the 17th century, one of the effects of the attention to usage was an inclination towards the imaginary rather than actual action.

Generally speaking, indeed, the word *inventive* can be connected with the general field of subjectivity. Today, the impact of subjectivity on representations and in language use is the object of extensive study and concern. It is common to estimate that a part of the activity of discourse is directed by subjectivity, and thus can be considered as a spontaneous inventive linguistic activity. In the 17th century, the role of the speaker in the production of language is subject to new speculations. As the relationship between language and the universe or the divine is no longer the centre of representations, as was the case in the Middle Ages, the capacity for human beings and even machines, to produce a language in itself, becomes a new field for investigation. It is well known that Noam Chomsky took much of his early inspiration (1966) from 17th century texts where the creative aspect of language use was stated, though sometimes in a quite ambiguous way. As a matter of fact, many of 17th century great philosophers or writers of fiction joined in their systems considerations on the mechanical aspects of speech production (see Seris 1995, especially 51-117) and considerations on the semiotic functioning of signs. These speculations can be intellectually fascinating, but can also prove of little use when applied to the consideration of real languages.

A "natural" consequence of the 17th century tendency towards the general or the abstract can thus be the overestimation of some characteristics in actual languages. Generally speaking, from an epistemological perspective, we can apply the word *inventive* to the peculiar distortions that can be observed in linguistic descriptions when these theories prefer, rather than dutifully complying with attested discourse, to comment upon a different, slightly altered version that fits better with the theory or the ideal. This can be the third and last aspect of what could be called *inventive linguistics* during the 17th century. The problem of "rules" is one of the oldest in the history of grammar. In many grammatical descriptions, we observe that some linguistic features are opposed to others, and are often privileged. Some form of value is superimposed onto them. In that respect, the ideal (in the sense of the easiest) objects for linguists can be, more than fantastic languages, *idealized versions* of real

languages. Once they have been rearranged and contemplated with magnifying glasses, natural languages can well become objects for inventive linguists.

French language, for example, differs from Latin, a long-time model and only inspiration for grammarians, in several aspects:

- – word order;
- – the use of ellipsis;
- – the presence of articles, absent from Latin;
- – the presence of "particles," apparently necessary in syntax.

All of these points represent challenges to grammarians used to deal exclusively with Latin. The article, for example, is difficult to explain if one uses only the reference terminology and methods of classical grammar. The French article does not come from the Latin language, as Scaliger noted. It is obviously not taken from the Greek either. So, it must have been *invented*. But obviously, there is no clear *author*. So is language itself a spontaneous inventive linguist? And why? Why does the French language use it? It is interesting to note that, in his fictional language, Vairasse wanted to remove articles, because they may be part of these useless categories that curiously abound in real languages, but should be absent from ideal languages. Conversely, according to Lamy (1715) a troop of illiterate people that would be released in the forest would be forced to find the path to articles while reinventing language, as articles help the discourse to be "clearer." And for Regnier-Desmarais, the "necessity" of articles to any linguistic system is so obvious, that there is no need to waste time while demonstrating it:

> Il ne s'agit point icy de montrer que l'Article est necessaire, par rapport à nostre Langue, & à toutes celles qui s'en servent: car à l'égard de celles qui le reçoivent, l'usage suffit pour en establir la necessité. Il s'agit seulement d'examiner si de luy-mesme il est tellement necessaire qu'il manque en effet quelque chose à la perfection d'une Langue qui en est privée; & cette question peut estre diversement agitée. (Régnier-Desmarais 151)

This special *value* given to some linguistic features of actual languages can sometimes lead to a possible final destination of inventive linguistics: ideological linguistics. In those cases, linguistic description is distorted, not only by theoretical biases, but by nationalist preconceptions. In some special historical contexts, a form of inventive linguistics can give birth to a whole set of values designed so as to support political decisions. Forged identities (national, ethnic, religious . . .) can sustain the way idioms are considered. John Joseph as well as Patrick Seriot have

described some of these historical attempts to reconstruct the appearance of actual languages, to reshape history, morphology, grammar, so as to make languages comply with non linguistic factors.

And of course, we observe that there are frequent links between two or more of these aspects of inventiveness in linguistics. The political consequences of such an interweaving are that some idioms being judged more "perfect" than others, linguistics can become a justification for nationalism, colonialism or imperialism.

In this paper, we hope to have shown that "Inventive Linguistics," in the 17th century, can hardly be separated from the effort to build a rationalist vision of language. When reading purely fantastic or fictional linguistics of that time, we tend to see in these texts prefigurations of future similar literary achievements, based on imagination, enjoyment, and possibly transgression. While doing so, we probably forget that these texts had strong links with what was thought of real languages at the time. For example, the readers of Cyrano in his time, could not but establish connections between what was described as the language of the *Grands* and social stratification at the time, or link what they read with contemporary speculations on signs.

There is always a utopian flavour behind all these "fantasies." These novels are not anticipation novels, in which an element of fear could nurture inspiration: they are other ways of expressing philosophy. Hence the surprise of the modern reader, sometimes, when s/he confronts the reality of older texts. To the modern reader, the works of Cyrano, despite their charm and inventiveness, seem crammed with philosophical pursuits verging on the scholarly disquisition. Philosophers, grammarians and novelists, if we accept this inappropriate partition, share a common goal: a better understanding of language as a vector of emancipation. Bacon's idea of an inventive linguistics was more lexical. The grammarians' imaginative vision was more syntactic. The vision of former fantastic novelists included intriguing pragmatic parameters. On the whole, all of these efforts carried a value in themselves, but were also supposed to have a real effect on the use of language.

Nevertheless, as previously shown, in the case of French at least, in the 17th century the quasi-Darwinian view of usage prevented potential inventive linguists to make their dreams come true; the theory of *usage*, as stated by Vaugelas, is hardly compatible with any political ambition on language. Words seem to appear by themselves, unguided by any principle or decision; and the sole power of a grammarian seems to record them, once they have been used by reasonably authoritative

speakers (the "bon usage"); hence the development of imaginary models applied on natural languages.

The attempt at Political Correctness of the *Précieuses* (another aspect of inventive linguistics) was mocked, and practically no new word was coined, even in sciences, during the 17th century. The only words which were considered inappropriate were thought so because they were outdated, disharmonious, or used only by the lower classes.

This contrasts with the image we have of Inventive Linguistics in the 20th century, after a long series of language planning experiences, when pure exotic fictions, or fantasies, often appear as ways of escaping from overly rational authoritative and intelligible languages. Indisputably, the 20th century has accomplished part of the program of Des Vallées or Leibniz by realizing purely abstract artificial languages deprived of common use such as the languages used in maths, logic, and computer engineering. The second part of the program namely the use by actual human beings of a different language, envisaged as disalienating—or differently alienating—because of its obscurity or uselessness, has obviously been left open.

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The "'Morphosis" of Words in the "Plexity" of the World: Back-formation in Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*

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Pynchon has always been a great inventor of words, from *V.*'s "apocheir" (Pynchon 1963, 9; the point at which a yoyo is furthest from the hand), to *Against the Day*'s "Zetamaniacs" (Pynchon 2007, 589; mathematicians bent on proving the Riemann hypothesis). The main twist added in his penultimate novel, *Mason & Dixon* (1997), is the complex relation to time. Historical and invented events of the 1760s are narrated in 1786 by the Reverend Wicks Cherrycoke, an untrustworthy narrator named after a twentieth-century soft drink, and the relation of words to time is twofold: anachronisms or anachronistic-sounding invented words abound, intrusions of the vocabulary of a twentieth-century reader in the eighteenth century, but the text is also strewn with archaisms or invented pseudo-archaisms, intrusions of the eighteenth century on a twentieth-century reader. The very typography is "a forest of capital letters" (Basoar 580) that both disquiets the reader and beckons him, bidding him enter this self-conscious form of Wardour-Street English, from "the name of a street in London, formerly occupied mainly by dealers in antique and imitation-antique furniture. Used *attrib.* in *Wardour-Street English*, applied to the pseudo-archaic diction affected by some modern writers, esp. of historical novels" (OED, as all subsequent definitions if not otherwise stated). What we will follow is the way Pynchon forefronts his imitation antique, adds layer after layer of cheap veneer and false sheen but in so doing seems to reveal the raw wood that language is made of.

1   A rambunctious landscape

Consider the use of "rowdy-dow" as a verb (Pynchon 1997, 576; all further references to *Mason & Dixon* will only give page number). Should it be considered as an archaism, an anachronism or a coinage? The noun "rowdy-dow" sounds archaic but is also anachronistic in the eighteenth century, as it was first attested in 1852.[1] It comes from the noun "rowdy (of American, but otherwise quite obscure, origin) A. sb. Originally, a backwoodsman of a rough and lawless type." This backwoodsman in fact created the very word that designates him,[2] and this very "rowdy" would also, according to St John de Crevecœur, clear the way for the new nation: "In all societies there are off-casts; this impure part serves as our precursors or pioneers" (60). That the Frontier and the tall talk of the rowdies was the crucible for a new variety of English would become clearer as the nineteenth century advanced, and Pynchon himself can be seen as heir and continuator, with tall tales of his own. He is nothing if not a backwoodsman, in his lawless use of vocabulary creating words that may eventually be lawfully registered in the dictionary. Remember that "rowdy-dow" is used as a verb in *Mason & Dixon*. This derivation is indeed listed in the OED (starting with the 1982 *Supplement*), but with only one example given, taken from . . . Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966).

So, in a twist typical of Pynchon's ironic voice, his anachronisms and mock-antique coinages do reflect on the time of linguistic and territorial indecision that is the time of the novel, and turn the novel itself into a territory of linguistic instability. Before we turn to back-formation as such, two other examples will help us sketch this confused landscape: "What we now style 'The Stamp Act Crisis' was in full flower. […] Thro' this rambunctious Countryside, a Coach-ful of assorted Travelers make their way Philadelphiaward, each upon his Mission" (353). Language at the time, 1764, was, like the countryside, "rambunctious," unruly, and with already a "rambunctious" etymology, even if "rambunctious" itself

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1. According to the OED. As soon as 1865, it found its place in the first, and last, "Dictionary of Reduplicated Words," by Wheatley. Pynchon is particularly fond of this type of words, and they are prominent in *Mason & Dixon*, be they rhymes—"Hurdy-Gurdy or Hum-strum" (229), "Hub-Bub" (270), "pick-nicked" (208), "Nit-wit" (516), "razzle-dazzling" (679)—, ablauts—"nitter-natter" (55, 418), "whim-wham" (33, 492, 496, 609, 618), "hi-ho" (709), "sing-song" (458, 480), "tick-tock" (110), "yin-yang" (533, 535), "yingle-yangle" (455, 456, 611)—, or more complex forms—"qui-pro-quo" and variations (175, 327, 328, 368), "tohu-vabohu" (767), "Bric-a-Brack" (688). To these we could add certain pairs of characters as Molly and Dolly, Hsi and Ho . . . Mason and Dixon?

2. Krapp notes that a number of Americanisms refer to "the undesirable citizen," be it "a poor cuss," "a bummer, hobo, or yegg, a hoodlum, a jayhawker, a plug ugly, a ring tail roarer, a rowdy, a scalawag, a soap lock, a rough neck" (115).

feels so purely American that in his master book *The American Language*, Mencken, who apparently did not know the British original, "rumbustious", called it a "purely artificial word" (96). In fact "rambunctious" is attested in 1859, a fine example of "tall talk," and the reader is ready to follow the travelers in the parody of *Stagecoach* that will follow for a few pages. But the main reason Pynchon draws extensively, and slightly anachronistically, on the tall talk of the Frontier is for the freedom it allows, because it is only a pale echo of the real freedom of the spoken word in that place and at that time. "Rumbustious" (1778) would have been normal, indeed topical, as would have been one of a number of now obsolete forms, "rambunkshus," "rambunctious," "rampunctious," "rambunksious" for the American variant, "rambustious," "rombustious," "rumbustical," "rombustical" for the British. The story of the word "rambunctious" itself tells the story of America, from British origins ("rumbustious") and Latin roots (latin *robustus*, from *robur*, "oak"), to its gradual and unruly coming to independence.

The indeterminacy brought about by the anachronism, the liberty the author takes with dates echoes the short-lived freedom of the Frontier and can be seen as the linguistic equivalent of the author's famed fondness for enclaves of relative freedom like the Zone in *Gravity's Rainbow* or the Wedge in *Mason & Dixon*. As one character remarks on approaching the border between Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia in *Against the Day*, in these places, and for a short time only, "the rule [...] is that there are no rules" (Pynchon 2007, 943). "Discombobulancy" (175) is a coinage, the OED only giving "discombobulation," but what rules apply anyway, when the real, attested variations on the verb "discombobulate" listed in the OED are "discombobracate," "discomboberrate" and "discombobulate"? The time for "discombobulate" is 1834, the place is the Frontier, and St John de Crevecœur's "mongrel breed, half civilized half savage," (67) creates the new nation, and its new language:

> Let it be admitted: American is not infrequently vulgar; the Americans, too, are vulgar (Bayard Taylor called them "Anglo-Saxons relapsed into semi-barbarism"); America itself is unutterably vulgar. But vulgarity, after all, means no more than a yielding to natural impulses in the face of conventional inhibitions, and that yielding to natural impulses is at the heart of all healthy language-making. The history of English, like the history of American and of every other living tongue, is a history of vulgarisms that, by their accurate meeting of real needs, have forced their way into sound usage, and even into the lifeless catalogues of the grammarians. The colonial pedants denounced to advocate as bitterly as they ever denounced to compromit or to happify, and all the English autho-

rities gave them aid, but it forced itself into the American language despite them, and today it is even accepted as English and has got into the Concise Oxford Dictionary. To donate, so late as 1870, was dismissed by Richard Grant White as ignorant and abominable and to this day the more careful English will have none of it, but there is not an American dictionary that doesn't accept it, and surely no American writer would hesitate to use it. (Mencken 36)

We will presently try to show it is not by chance that the most prominent example given by Mencken both of the vulgarity and the healthy life of American English should be a back-formation, "a word that is formed from what appears to be its derivative."[1] We will study a very similar, purely invented example in the book, "jobate."

2   An American trait

"To jobate" is a coinage, little understood when first read: "'The Attraction of Mountains,' Maskelyne Jobates, whilst slowly 'round him The Moon becomes a dormitory [. . .]" (158). From the sentence it would seem that "Jobates" describes a tedious manner of speaking, but the reader will have to wait for confirmation and clarification. Six hundred pages later, in an echo typical of the novel,[2] the obsolete root of the coinage is given, with its origin and its definition, taken verbatim from the dictionary: "at Cambridge he had been now and then at the receiving end of a 'Jobation,' or lengthy reproof" (730). So "to Jobate" is an incomprehensible word created by an American writer after an obscure word of English slang, following American principles. In fact the verb "to jobe" was possible, it is attested in the OED as Cambridge slang, but whether you see "Jobate" as a back-formation from "Jobation" or as a redundant suffixation from "to jobe," the two are productive rules in American English:

> A great rage for extending the vocabulary by the use of suffixes seized upon the corn-fed etymologists, and they produced a formidable new vocabulary in -ize, -ate, -ify, -acy, -ous and -ment. Such inventions as to obligate, to concertize, to questionize, retiracy, savagerous, coatee (a sort of diminutive for coat) and citified appeared in the popular vocabulary and even got into more or less good usage. Fowler, in 1850, cited publishment and releasement with no apparent thought that they were uncouth.

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1. Mencken has nearly a chapter on back-formation, but his definition of the term is very broad and includes clipping.

2. We will give only two examples: "Lunarians" are mentioned page 21, but the term and its historical importance are not explained before page 201. A "Cilice" appears in a dialogue page 230, we only learn what it actually is page 520 thanks to an extensive description.

> And at the same time many verbs were made by the simple process of back formation, as, to resurrect, to excurt, to resolute, to burgle and to enthuse. (Mencken 91-92)

In fact, as early as 1850, William Fowler proposed a special category for words which, like the invented "Jobate," can both be seen as back-formations from one word or fancy suffixing on another:

> 3. Miscellaneous Americanisms. [...]
> d. Forms of words "which fill the gap or vacancy between two words which are approved," as obligate (between oblige and obligation) and variate (between vary and variation). (Fowler 119-128, quoted in Mencken 39)

Just as after its "rambunctious" beginnings the Republic would soon endeavour to fill the voids in its territory, it is as if language too could not help "fill[ing] the gap or vacancy," as if, quite apart from Mencken's *laissez-faire* view that, "by their accurate meeting of real needs," the fittest words would naturally survive, there was a totalitarian impulse to language,[1] aiming at totally fulfilling its potentialities. Like all totalitarian tendencies, it is of course mercilessly probed in Pynchon. At its core is the same basic principle that drives the totalitarian impulse of technology: if we can do it, then we must.[2] If there is such a word as "insomniac," then there must be such a word as "somniac" (54).

The interpretation could be the same for "Peeve" (579), "object of resentment," not a coinage but an anachronism, created from "peevish" and to this day distinctly American. However time comes into the equation. "Peeve" is attested in the US as a verb in 1908, as a noun in 1919, and "peevish" is fourteenth-century English. So "peeve" is anachronistic in the novel, of course, but all back-formations invent a new past and are anachronistic in another sense, as the word from which they are formed appears to be the derivative and so to postdate the neologism. The back-

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1. Meschonnic dwells on the development of neologism during the French revolution ("Néologisme et politique" 121-126) and in the Enlightenment (145-150). Restif de la Bretonne wanted "a French dictionary according to roots, which would give a complete family to all the words," (126) with for example in the case of *urbs*: *urbane, urber, urbanité, urbaniser, urbainement, urbain*, words which for the most part actually stuck.

2. See for example, among the minor effects of the apparition of technology, that of the two-handed clock in the Castle in Cape Town: "Soon, during an interrogation, someone will wish to note the precise time that each question is ask'd, or action taken, by a clock with two hands,—not because anyone will ever review it,—perhaps to intimidate the subject with the most advanc'd mechanical Device of its time, certainly because Minute-Scal'd Accuracy is possible by now, and there is room for Minutes to be enter'd in the Records" (156).

formation claims anteriority, which amounts in this case to pretending that an American neologism predates Middle Age England. In the novel the word is associated with Captain Shelby, in the tall tale that relates his extraordinary adventures.[1] It is yet again on the Frontier that the nation invents its founding myths, and in words and deeds creates its own carnivalesque versions of the chivalric romance, and the embedded tale comes as a counterpoint to the medieval tale of the Lambton Worm.[2] And in a sense the word "Peeve" itself invents its own mythical history. In the American context, if "rambunctious" vindicated the autonomy of the American branch in relation to its English and Latin forebears, if with "Jobate" language followed its "manifest destiny" to fill all the voids in its potential territory, "peeve" reinvents an origin to language, as the American history as a whole is not much more than the constant reinvention of its mythical origins.

3   Ontology of the prefix

From each word we have extracted from the text thus far, we have felt authorized to unfurl a whole theory. It is perhaps not too late to say that this is not simply for the pleasure to be derived from such a practice, but also because these words are invariably stumbling blocks in the text: reading at least falters, or stops long enough for the reader to reach for his dictionary, and typically these asperities in the vocabulary or the syntax are places of great complexity, and places where the perplexity of the reader can lead to a meditation on what is at stake in the passage, or indeed in the whole book. "Plexity" (193, 505, 769) is in fact one of the back-formations that seem to point to a metaphysical or rather an ontological questioning. The word seems to place the text in between the complexity of the world and the perplexity of the reader. Let us consider "the trees gone to Pen-strokes and Shadows in crippl'd Plexity" (193). The echo of the shape of the trees with that of letters to be deciphered is natural to Pynchon's reader, and *Mason & Dixon* has its fair share of Gematria and Kabbal. But reading the world as a text need not be a paranoid impulse, and perhaps a roundabout way to try to show it is via the French poet Francis Ponge: "the fact of writing (of textual and scriptural production and creation) is the reading of a text of the world,

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1. Chapter 59, 575-584. The most improbable of the events in the embedded tale, including the "Baby-Repossession Order" (579), turn out to be true, or at least recorded in the "*Proceedings of the Council of Maryland*, for the Year sixty-five" (579, except that the true year is 1766).

2. 588-594, the tale is a "real" tale which can be found on the Internet homepage of the Lambton Tourist Office.

[…] things are, *already, words as much* as they are things and, symmetrically, words are *already as much things* as they are words" (Ponge 1971, 430-431; his emphasis).

So the finished text is another object to be read in the world, subsuming complexity and perplexity, negating in fact the difference between the complexity of the world and the perplexity of the reader, between things and words, objects and subjects. The aim of writing in all its "plexity" is "not to see double anymore" (Ponge 1971, 431). The classical way in which this is approached in Pynchon criticism is as a refusal of transcendence, especially in the form of "the whole Western/analytic/'linear'/alienated schtick."[1] So through the amputation of the prefixes "com-" and "per-" it is more generally the prefix "trans-" that is questioned. Consider Mason's tirade towards the end of the book: "I've ascended, descended, even condescended, and the List's not ended,—but haven't yet *trans*-cended a blessèd thing, thankee" (746). If we dared, we could say that Pynchon is looking for "scendence." This back-formation is not to be found in *Mason & Dixon*, but our last example, "'Morphosis," does away with the Greek "meta-," similar to the latin "trans-." The inverted comma and the seeming synonymy could lead us to consider "'Morphosis" as a result of the front-clipping of "Metamorphosis."[2] However we will try to show the amputation is as fraught with meaning as Francis Ponge's preference of physics over metaphysics: "It is not on metaphysics that our ethics will be built, but on physics" (Ponge 1982, 943).

There are at least ten occurrences of "'Morphosis" and its derivations in the book. The noun is not a coinage, but in normal use belongs nearly exclusively to the botanical field, and the verb is a coinage. The amputated word "loses some of its aura, of its aloofness. It seems closer to deformation than to transfiguration" (Battesti 99). What is important is not so much the resulting state, "beyond, more highly organized, more comprehensive, transcending, higher, second-order,"[3] to list but some of the meanings of the prefix "meta-," rather the amputated word tries to encapsulate change itself. The novel offers numerous variations, and a sampling of the instances in which the word "'Morphosis" or a derivative is used covers the whole gamut from the preposterous to the med-

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1. Pynchon 1969, 242. On transcendence and immanence see for example Sigvardson.

2. Which was obviously not the case with "somniac," or indeed with "Plexity," which in its very ambiguity about the missing prefix creates new meaning.

3. Quite a few of which in fact result from a misinterpretation of the meaning of the Greek "meta-" influenced by its assumed, mistaken meaning in "metaphysics," a "back-etymology" of sorts.

itative. The miner Lud normally expresses himself thus: "Ahr *Ahr* ahr, 'ahr ahhrr!" (234). But each full moon he's "'morphosed" (237) into a sophisticated dandy, to his mother's despair, and then even she cannot understand a word of what he says. The verb is used during the episode of kastoranthropy (622), an American variation on lycanthropy, but it also describes the changes brought about by technique, with men "'morphosing to extensions of a single Engine" (52) or the map operating its "Copper-Plate 'Morphosis" (689). Predominantly, six occurrences of the word or its derivatives are associated with Vaucanson's duck. The Duck transforms itself from a "simple" automaton to an independent body, and eventually becomes invisible, the Holy Ghost of technology, "flying where it wishes" (373). When it disappears, Mason thinks they should look for it in the sky, where Venus too is experiencing its "'Morphosis," its transit in front of the sun, changing from a star to a dot in front of the sun:

> For a few moments among the Centuries, we are allow'd to observe her own 'Morphosis, from luminary to Solid Spheroid. I don't know about you, but if I had a Duck disappear from me that way, I should certainly be attending closely the Categories of rapid Change, such as the Transit afforded, for evidence about the Creature's Passage (450).

So the novel does not concern itself with fixed categories but in the "Passage" between them. But doing so, it also paradoxically tries to turn "Passage" or "rapid Change" into a category. The novel aims at a "morphology," in the meaning the word had in French in the eighteenth century, "the science of visions you get in dreams" (Rey). But the paradox remains, the opposition between science and dream, between category and passage, indeed between language and passage, if we follow Octavio Paz:

> Wisdom doesn't abide in fixity or in change, but in the dialectic between the two terms, in a constant back-and-forth movement: wisdom lies in the instant. Wisdom is passage. But as soon as I have said "passage," the spell is broken. Passage is not wisdom, it is a going towards . . . Passage cannot but fade, it is the price to pay for it to be passage. (13)

Let us always remember that whether we read "Metamorphosis" or "'Morphosis," our access to visions or dreams or passage is still mediated by language. Language can only mimic immediacy, and choosing between two words can never be more than choosing between two ways

of mimicking immediacy, one not more immediate than the other.[1] It is not so much a matter of refusing transcendence as of embracing it, of refusing the opposition between immanence and transcendence, a question of not being "obsessed with the construction of one immanence (*immanere*: to inhabit) or the deconstruction of another. [...] Who ever said transcendence ought to have an antonym? *We are in, we dwell in, we have never left transcendence—that is to say, maintaining presence through the mediation of a pass*" ([par la médiation de l'envoi] Latour 175, his emphasis). To put it in another way in relation to Pynchon, and to Ponge, we need a last reversal: the aim is not to pretend that by using such a word as "'Morphosis" language is closer to the things it points to, and so closer to physics than to metaphysics, it is rather to say that by having us stop and ponder on such a word, opaque yet transparent, such a diaphanous word, language is closer to showing words as being what they really are, as things, and to that extent it is closer to physics than to metaphysics.

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1. For example the marked opposition in the novel, and in much of English-language literature in general, between Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots is only the difference between two mediations, and two ways to approach mediation. One is not "closer" to reality than the other, not forgetting of course that written words are real in the sense that they are real ink marks on real paper, whatever their etymology.

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Creativity and Inventiveness

Creation or re-creation?
Word formation processes and word creation strategies as components of lexical creativity

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> Is creativity best conceived as initiating things,
> continuing them or completing them?
>
> Pope XIV

1 Defining lexical creativity

If we limit our discussion of creativity exclusively to that of linguistic or, more specifically, lexical creativity, we might well ask ourselves, along with Pope (XV), whether true creativity resides only in totally new formations which do not incorporate any of the items previously stored in the grammar, or whether it is to be understood as an on-going process, that of "creation from something?" If we exclude the question of divine creation, I would subscribe to Pope's view of creativity as "the capacity to make, do or become something fresh and valuable" (XIV) *building upon that which already exists*. In other words, it is a collaborative effort between speakers of a language in which new constructs and new associations are "created" from previously existing elements of the language.

Novel lexical creations, viewed in this light, can thus be seen as part of a network of relations in which each new construct brings with it some suggestion of the other contexts in which its constituent elements have previously appeared. In Bybee's words (109), "any multi-morphemic word or sequence is highly embedded in connection with other words containing at least one of the same morphemes." It thus follows that newly-coined multimorphemic words or expressions reveal a certain degree of *interlexicality*. This is itself a novel word, created by analogy with Kristeva's (1980) intertextuality, and defined by Elam

(2004) as the juxtaposition of semantic constructs or competing cultural connotations within the space of a single lexical item. In other words, the meaning of a newly-created complex lexeme or lexicalized expression is mediated to some degree through the contexts with which its component parts have been associated.

From a cognitive perspective, linguistic creativity resides in the ability of the human mind to transform thoughts into novel linguistic forms. When such creativity manifests itself in the form of new lexical items, the resulting formations naturally fall into one of two distinct categories: they are either a manifestation of **strong creativity**, here intended as the *creation and naming of new concepts* through the invention of totally novel lexical items, or of **weak or rule-governed creativity**, referring to *our ability to combine already existing elements of the lexicon into new or original words, expressions or sentences* by applying the rules of the grammar (see discussion in Zawada 2006).

In the present study I shall be examining a variety of examples of weak creativity, i.e., novel lexical items which are either re-combinations of previously existing elements in the grammar or which consist in the assignment of new meanings to an already-existing word or expression. In particular, I shall consider the reasons for which nonce words are created in the first place and the functions they are created to serve.

Many of my examples are drawn from *Lexical Creativity, Texts and Contexts* (Munat 2007), and others come from my recent research on lexis in Science Fiction (hereafter SF), but I shall also look at a series of "home-made" words which appear in the recently published volume, *Kitchen Table Lingo* (Lucas *et al.* 2008). This is a collection of words which have been coined for personal use in spoken interaction and which present interesting contrasts with the other, predominantly written, data. Through the study of these examples I hope to illuminate the morphological processes employed in the creation of "new" lexemes by recombining existing elements of the lexicon, and the word-creation strategies which are a manifestation of individual speaker performance. Ultimately, I aim to shed some light on the way in which pragmatic and social factors influence a speaker's lexical choices in different contexts of use.

2   Types, functions and contexts of novel words

In what circumstances does a speaker feel the need for a fresh or imaginative lexical solution? And does the type of invented word vary according to the particular context for which it has been coined? In other words, can we identify distinct types of lexical items in different con-

texts? Though a speaker may invent a new "label" for something in the immediate context for which no appropriate word exists, this is not the only occasion in which novel words are created. Naming is merely one of the many functions of lexical innovation, and by no means the most frequent, as we will see.

Seemingly extemporaneous inventions are often the result of a conscious effort on the part of the speaker, but may also emerge spontaneously in given circumstances. One of the most oft-cited examples in the literature is Downing's "apple-juice seat" (Downing 819), a deictic compound (see Hohenhaus, 2007) which serves to specify exactly *which* chair is being indicated by the speaker, i.e. the one where a glass of apple juice has been placed. So-called *dummy compounds* are yet another type of deictic nonce word studied by Hohenhaus (2000). These are complex words in which a semantically empty head constituent (e.g., *thing* or *business*) is preceded by a word drawn from the preceding linguistic context or a word that is part of the speakers' shared knowledge and which functions as anaphoric reference, as in:

> We should talk about this *vacation thing* you know; summer's almost here.

Episodic compounds, another type of labeling device, serve a function that falls somewhere between that of naming units and deictic compounds. These are interpretable only by a limited audience, such as the readers of a given novel. A case in point is Tom Robbins' (*Another Roadside Attraction*) creative compound *body snatch* (cited in Munat, 2003, 41), which serves to condense and identify an entire episode in the novel.

Another function is that of hypostatization (see Lipka 200), where a name is created for a non-existent concept or entity. Once such a name has been invented it automatically implies that the entity named actually exists in extralinguistic reality. This technique, often employed by writers of SF, but not only, serves the purposes of textuality. Though the reader may not be familiar with the referent, the existence of such a thing or concept is accepted as plausible within the text world being created. By way of example: *projecto-stylus*, *photonic dead zone*, *scaploose way* or *thermal resistant boronberyllium*, whose existence the reader accepts on faith even when the meaning is opaque.

The coining of unusual or novel words is a strategy frequently exploited by advertisers who wish to attract the attention of possible buyers. This is the case of catchy brand names, such as the blends cited by Lehrer (2007, 130): *Count Chocula* (a breakfast cereal*) or Nutrageous* (a candy bar) or *Frutopia* (a fruit drink). Other forms of lexical

play aim quite simply to amuse the reader. A great many examples of puns or plays on words that appear in British broadsheets are discussed by Renouf (2007). For example, the numerous puns on *weapons of mass destruction* which surfaced like mushrooms immediately after the appearance of this expression in Feb. 2003. Some of the more amusing are: *weapons of mass hysteria, weapons of mass repression, weapons of mass deception, weapons of class destruction, weapons of math instruction* and the somewhat curious *weapons of moose destruction*. Among the other types of lexical inventiveness identified by Renouf in her corpus study are the incorporation of "new" prefixes that serve to create compounds: in 2000 *cyber* gave rise to *cybertainment, cyber-geeks, cyberdream, cyberpicketed*, while in 2005 German *uber* was popularized in nonce formations such as *uberpundits, uber-waif, uber-hyped* and *ubermogul*, what Renouf calls "discourse signals of modernity and humour." (Renouf 65)

Humorous wordplay, however, is not the exclusive prerogative of admen or the media, as Hohenhaus points out, but is also present in fictional texts, in particular when an author is seeking to create "authentic" extemporaneous dialogue. One example among many is Nick Hornby's *coolometer* in *About a Boy*, referring to the measure of a father's "coolness." But humorous nonce formations are particularly abundant in Adams' SF spoof, *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. SF is a genre in which creative neo-classical compounds serve to create a pseudo-scientific jargon (see Munat 2007), but Adams has stretched the point to the limits of the absurd. In order to achieve a parodic effect, his neo-classical compounds, such as *ultramahogany* or *hypermathematics*, violate the rules of the grammar: prefixes that normally attach to adjectives have here been coupled with nouns to create somewhat unlikely compounds.

Another genre in which creative wordplay serves the sake of pure pleasure is children's literature. Roald Dahl's *The BFG* is a case in point, where we find dozens of nonce words, from the quasi familiar, or almost interpretable, *brain-boggling, sizzlepan* or *kidsnatched* to more opaque compounds such as *humplecrump, flushbunking or dogswoggler*, that seem to be motivated exclusively by the sound of the word on the tongue. In consideration of the infantile audience, we may assume that these creative formations are meant to amuse, with little or no concern for semantics.

Phrasal idioms or lexicalized expressions may also be creatively manipulated for purposes of humour as Kuiper (2007, 103ff) has pointed out in his study of Kathy Wilcox cartoon captions. Similar to some of the word play that we have documented in the British press, in the cartoons that are the object of Kuiper's investigation, punning serves, in the manipulation of fixed "phrasal lexical items," as the cue for humour. Deforma-

tions of familiar phrasal items provoke laughter by upsetting the reader's expectations. Indeed, such creativity can only achieve the desired effect if the reader is familiar with the original phrasal expression. Thus the well-known *leaning tower of Pisa* is transformed into *the leaning piece of towser*; the familiar title, *A Room with a View*, is deformed into *a ruminant with a view*; and the idiomatic gambit, *Your slip is showing*, becomes *your ship is slowing* in the Wilcox cartoons.

I will not go into other cases of lexical (as well as orthographic and phonetic) creativity that have been amply discussed by other authors and in the course of this conference, in particular the creativity employed in electronic communication such as e-mails, computerspeak or SMS messaging. But this overview will have served, I hope, to document some of the many functions served by lexical invention and to illustrate the considerable variation in the types of lexemes created for different contexts.

3 Lexical styles in various genres and text worlds

I should now like to consider the way in which creative lexical play not only serves the goals of specific genres as we have seen, but may also be a marker of authorial style, or even of a particular theme in a novel. In my earlier study of lexis in SF (Munat 2007), I observed that single authors seem to display a preference for particular types of word formations: in Asimov there is a preponderance of neoclassical compounds, while Hamilton tends to adopt multiword NPs. In Dick's *The Simulacra* I concluded that the WF processes he appears to favour are blends, clippings, pseudo-derivations and semantic or grammatical recategorization. My provisional conclusion at the time was that:

> Single authors exploit different morphological processes which may be seen as markers of a given authorial style [but] a comparison of different novels by the same author might well reveal unique lexical "styles" serving particular functions in a specific text world. (Munat 2007, 175)

On a further examination of Philip Dick's novels, I have found, in fact, that he employs different lexical styles according to the theme of the novel or the text world he is creating, lexical styles which are substantially different from that in *The Simulacra*. This confirms my earlier suspicion: namely, that the particular type of lexical invention chosen may serve to reinforce the theme of a novel. In *The Simulacra* the nonce words communicate a sense of estrangement as familiar items are recombined into opaque nominals, reflecting a sense of alienation in a distorted and menacing text world with blends and clippings such as: *sim-con* (simu-

lacra construction), *relpol* (religious-political) etc. While some novel compounds may sound familiar, the reader is unable to pinpoint the precise object referred to or its function: *skypilot* (referring to a father figure), *mechanical reporting machine, homeostatic beams, etc.*; likewise, in the case of reduced phrases or clauses such as: *famnexdo* (family next door), *kinIhelpya, allost, buttinski* (someone who butts in), common expressions have been distorted, creating a kind of alien jargon.

Considerably different are the type of lexical creations in Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep,* where derivations dominate, producing nonce words such as *Mercerism, andys* (shortening for androids) *empathic, kipple-ized* (from the pseudo verb *kipple* meaning to reproduce oneself), *warmthless, hypnagogic, disemelevatored* (by analogy with disembarked) and *mentational*, though there are also a few clipped blends (*conapt, vidcall, vidscreen, autofac*) and some novel compounds as well: *hovercar, electro-spark, detek-snout*. A further comparison with yet another of Dick's novels, *The Man in the High Castle*, reveals an almost total absence of lexical invention. Neither creative derivations, nor compounds nor blends are rampant. The most marked creation here is represented by a curious neoseme (i.e., a new or invented meaning for a familiar word): *place*. This lexeme appears repeatedly throughout the novel in expressions such as the following:

place difference	high-place Latin word
idea of place	I have lost place
plenty of place	that was low-place
peoples of all place	the high-place new German rocket

Despite the frequent use of this word, its intended meaning seems to shift as the story progresses. One of its meanings is undoubtedly roughly equivalent to "class" or "status," but other meanings are more elusive. In a narrative where the identities of the various characters are ever-changing and ambiguous, word meanings may be equally fluid and ambiguous.

This look at lexical invention in different works of the same genre and by the same author has served, I hope, to illustrate how lexical invention may function as a stylistic device to serve the goals of textuality. Further, we have seen how weak creativity builds upon already-existing elements in the lexicon, creating the new from the old on an essentially rule-governed basis. By exploiting the productive WF processes of English—compounding, clipping, blending, derivation, conversion, analogy, as well as borrowing and neosemy or semantic reclassification—the

speaker can create an infinite number of "new" words to suit a variety of communicative needs.

Instances of strong creativity, or the invention of totally novel simplex lexemes, are much more rare. In my SF data there are a few instances of simplex creations, many of which appear in inflected forms: *spalled, runnels, papoola, plexons, thopter, geneering* (these last being cases of pseudo-derivation, where the base lexemes "*thopt*" and "*geneer*" are in fact non-existent), *biots, simps, bitek and kroclion.* Not surprisingly, these are the most difficult to interpret, as they contain no recognizable base morpheme from which we may glean a meaning by association with other existing lexemes. If the author offers no definition, which is frequently the case, the reader can only rely on surrounding context and on inferencing strategies to disambiguate the lexical item.

Interestingly, the data from Dahl's *The BFG* includes a far greater number of novel simplex lexemes, among which the following:

> buggles, dillions, glimp, glummy, scrotty, scuddle, slutch, squinkers, squiggle, swallop, titchy, chug, flupp, grinch, gusset, joats, lerkin, shuvv (*shove*?), slupp, snergelly, thneed, thwerll, floog, plinkee, upaloo, vengoglop, fleegix, zitskis, febbin, kibblezy, ud, yuddle, poot.

We may assume that juvenile readers, quite differently from adults, are less demanding in terms of meaning, simply allowing themselves to be carried by the sounds in a fantasy world. The characters and episodes in *The BFG* are implausible; this is a world in which anything appears to be possible and semantics are secondary. If we repeat these nonce words aloud, we may find echoes of sound symbolism or perhaps of onomatopoeia. All of these novel inventions, with the exception of *thneed*, are phonetically plausible in that they respect the phonological rules of English, even though semantically opaque. Yet somehow the mere sound gives rise to amusement, what I call phonologically funny.

4   Private words in intimate worlds

In this final section I wish to look at some "real world" data taken from *Kitchen Table Lingo* (Lucas *et al* 2008). This is a collection of "private words" invented and used by restricted groups of family members or friends, words which have never been taken up by the wider community, though in some cases they have been around for a period of many years, at times even for generations. They offer some interesting insights into the cognitive and social motivations behind these restricted coinages but, even more importantly, they allow us to note some of the differences

between words that have been created for spoken contexts and those intended for written texts.

The most commonly occurring word formation processes in English are not widely represented in this data, though we do find a few examples of derivation, as in *Britoid, Liverpolitan* or *pleasement*, and blending, as in *accifault, floordrobe*, as well as some neosemes such as *kebabs* (meaning internet speed). Above all, there are surprisingly few cases of compounding, which is normally the most frequent word-forming strategy in English. However, many of the words here, springing more or less naturally from family discourse among English speakers, have their origins in local dialects (e.g., *ladgin*, an adjective from York meaning embarrassing, or *lah-loo*, an adjective possibly of Gaelic origin, meaning a foolish person, or *loishing* from the West Country, a noun indicating persistent, non-stop rain) or they represent borrowings from immigrant languages, in particular Indian or Pakistani dialects (such as *kana* for food or *pindoo* to refer to a country bumpkin or *chaddies* for underpants or the Italian *mezza-mezza*, meaning something shared half and half). Still others originate from children's misnomers or mispronunciations which are then picked up and adopted by other family members: *bollay* for pudding or *brizzles*, an adjective describing the effect of wool on bare skin, *kizey* for squirrel, or the extremely specific and only marginally useful *lun*, meaning sunlight reflected on the ceiling from a wristwatch crystal. Such "infantilisms" are an intimate part of family dynamics, just as the lexemes originating from shared dialects that represent a means of bonding among group or family members.

A significant number of these private words is based on proper names which then undergo conversion to a different grammatical class or take on derivational affixes. Examples are: *Aganaut* (from the Aga brand name), *Busherise* (a verb meaning to make a lexical error like Bush), *Kafka*, an adjective describing a certain mood, *klemmerise*, meaning an accidental distortion of English. Likewise *nigeling* (cuddling up to Nigel), *kents* (a noun for rubbish) or the verb, to *florrie* (to save or repair something). This tendency toward the personalization of words through household associations (think of *hoover,* which has become a stable entry in the lexicon) is based on the common experiences and shared knowledge among family or friends, reflecting the intimate world of the users.

In addition to the bonding function of these private inventions, what in Zawada's words (2006, 241) serves to reinforce intimacy between group members, I wish to point out three further characteristics that emerge: 1) the surprisingly large number of invented words for remote control (many of which onomatopoeic), more than 50, which I see as evidence of

the cultural centrality of television in today's family, what we might consider as the new family hearth; 2) the great number of invented words which express feline or canine behaviour which appear to confirm the stereotype of the British as lovers of domestic animals; 3) phonological motivation that underlies many of these words and confirms yet once again that sound play is a strong force in lexical invention. The motivations and meanings behind the numerous simplex lexemes in the data remain largely unanalyzable by the outsider–aside from those which are foreign imports or that represent sound play–much as the interpretation of intimate conversational exchanges remains obscure to those not directly involved in the conversation. But we must bear in mind that, given the oral nature of these coinages (they have all originating in speech), the written transcriptions are merely an attempt on the part of the coiners to render the local pronunciation orthographically. Consequently, these orthographic approximations may well obscure the morphemes or lexical bases underlying the new word.

This brief excursus into the private wor(l)ds of everyday speakers (i.e., not linguists nor teachers nor scholars) serves to confirm two facts: first, that linguistic creativity is not the sole domain of scholars or the literary mind, but is an inherent human faculty, shared by all the speakers of a language and from the very earliest age; second, each group of speakers, whether writers, journalists, media men or private individuals, appears to display a penchant for given word forming strategies, which vary according to the functions to be served by the invented word and according to the nature of the context in which it appears and the audience for whom it is intended. These are all determining factors in the invention of new lexemes, along with the personal predilection of the speaker.

5   Closing considerations

The words examined here are unlikely candidates for official entry into the English lexicon. For this reason I have called them nonce (or one-off) formations. Unless they are felt to fulfill a naming need in the community at large, they will not be institutionalized, though it has at times happened that unlikely novel lexemes originating in SF texts have made their way into the dictionary. Such is the case of *android* or *psychohistory*, for example, though these carry with them strong connotations of an extraterrestrial nature.

There exist some evident and fundamental differences between lexical inventions that are intentionally coined for written contexts with a given audience in mind, and those which, instead, arise somewhat more spon-

taneously and less self-consciously in intimate spoken intercourse. The former are of a more literate nature, by which I mean that they almost unanimously represent canonical word formation processes. In addition, the specific contexts for which they are coined seem to demand formations of a particular type. Finally, these "literate" nonce words are, on the whole, more analyzable than the somewhat anarchic home-made variety that we have seen in familiar oral discourse. These latter are less interpretable by the outsider and far less frequently reflect the canonical English word formation processes.

Lexical creativity, as we have seen, comprises a vast range of word types and fulfills many different functions, both textual and social, in a variety of genres and discourses. Thus it merits a central position in linguistic investigation as an essential component of linguistic creativity in a wider sense.

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The Ninky-Nonk and the Number One Mucker-Upper: Children's Television and Morphological Inventiveness

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It would be as well, I think, to begin immediately with a few words about the title of this talk, which is unabashedly attention-grabbing, and where exactly the ideas that I will be expounding here come from. The reason for this brief preamble is that very often, research projects arise from casual and apparently random observations, and that there seems little reason not to openly state as much from the outset. In this instance, the starting point was observing the reactions of children exposed to two different television programmes on the BBC's young children's channel CBeebies. The first of these programmes is called "In The Night Garden." It is produced by the same company and very much in the same vein as the now infamous "Teletubbies," and is narrated by Shakespearean actor Derek Jacobi. The second is an almost disturbingly surreal programme, from an adult perspective at least, entitled "The Numberjacks", the heroes of which are a set of numbers that live in a sofa and which come out on occasion to solve digit-related problems.

"In The Night Garden" contains characters revelling in names such as Igglepiggle, Upsy Daisy, Maka Pakka, the Tombliboos and the Ninky Nonk, which as the name does nothing to suggest, is a small train that can drive up and down trees and go to sleep. These names prove to be a source of almost uncontrollable mirth for some children, who after having watched the programme for the first time, spend many happy hours repeating the names. Similarly, in "The Numberjacks", there is an occasional character called the Numbertaker, a wicked man who seeks to eliminate numbers and whose first appearance in the show is accompanied by the following song:

[…]
With his number Sucker-upper,
He's a number Mucker-upper,
He's as mean a Numbertaker as can be!!!

Likewise, children seem immensely amused by the *number mucker upper* and *number sucker upper* constructions. The question which intrigued me was why such forms were seen to be so highly amusing to this young viewer. My initial feeling was that the childish delight taken in such words was a result of the fact that they were entirely invented, and inventive, and that somehow this tapped into a seam of lexical creativity which is highly productive in young children. This hypothesis, you will note, revolves around the notions of inventiveness, creativity and, for good measure, productivity, and I would like therefore to use the morphological structures I have just highlighted to see whether we can throw any light on the notions of creativity and inventiveness.

Before moving on to examine the data, we need therefore to set out our terminological stall and attempt to see exactly what is meant, or more precisely, what I intend to mean, by the term "inventive" and in particular, the distinction to be drawn between this and creativity, as they pertain to the data presented in this talk. This of course is a huge endeavour, tackled most notably by Laurie Bauer (Bauer 1983 and 2001), so the following remarks must of necessity remain relatively sketchy.

In Bauer (1983, 63), the author tries to differentiate between productivity and creativity, whereby creativity is defined as "the native speaker's ability to extend the language system in a motivated, but unpredictable (non-rule governed) way," in contrast with productivity, which is, instead, defined as "rule-governed innovation". In his later study of morphological productivity (Bauer 2001), the distinction between creativity and productivity is looked at again in considerably greater detail, and once again, productivity is seen as rule-governed, creativity as, in some sense, escaping the rules. Both of these terms are seen by Bauer as hyponyms of "innovation," and creativity is identified as "non-productive innovation", therefore lacking generality and predictability, but ultimately Bauer confesses that "a precise definition of the difference proves elusive." (Bauer 2001, 206). However, in neither of these works does Bauer use the term "inventiveness."

To introduce the notion of inventiveness to the debate, it seems to me that we need to group creativity and productivity together, as Bauer does, and contrast them with inventiveness. Creativity, at least as it should be understood in a linguistic perspective, refers to potentiality, which may

or may not be expressed as the case may be. It is, strictly speaking, a highly neutral notion, one that should be devoid of any form of value judgement as to the output. Indeed, the creativity of language should be seen merely as a process, a mechanical procedure whereby X becomes, or can potentially become, Y by virtue of the application of rule Z. This is close to what Bauer terms productivity, and to what Chomsky refers to as "the 'creative' aspect of language" (Chomsky 1978, 11), famously "the central fact to which any significant linguistic theory must address itself" (Chomsky 1964, 7).[1] To take a lexical example, the application of a rule stating that the suffix –*dom* can be added to nouns to create a noun meaning something along the lines of "a territory under the dominion of X" could result in the creation of a lexeme *lobsterdom*, which should be seen as an example of creativity.

Inventiveness, on the other hand, a term not used by Chomsky in any of his works, I believe should be seen as the individual appropriation of creativity, the output of which is not only novel but positively valued by others. Inventiveness is rule-governed creativity renewed and highly thought of. Thus the example of *lobsterdom* should only be seen as inventive inasmuch as listeners or readers respond positively to its use. What it means to "respond positively" is something in itself which needs theorising, of course, but for the purposes of this paper, we shall rely on a pre-theoretical and largely intuitive notion of what it might mean. In this instance, it may be to find the word *lobsterdom* amusing.

This distinction needs to be borne in mind as we look at the two phenomena I propose to examine. I shall want, for reasons of time and space, to concentrate here on the second phenomenon, that of reduplicated -*er* suffixation, but if only because of the unashamedly self-publicising character of the title, I shall begin with a few words about the Ninky-Nonk.

It would appear that *ninky nonk*, in its formation, is an example of rule-governed creativity. It is a fine example of what has been called *ablaut reduplication*, *apophony*, *consonance*, *consonantal rhyme* or *vowel gradation* (Aroui and Arleo, 2009), whereby two or more contiguous segments in a binomial expression are identical, except for vowel contrast.[2] This is something that has been addressed by a number of linguists in the past (most notably Thun), who have noted the very strong cross-linguistic

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1. For an excellent and very comprehensive discussion of the notion of creativity in the Chomskyan framework, see D'Agostino 1984.

2. Note that the two contiguous segments in question are not strictly identical, the first containing a second syllable in <-y> absent from the second. I am undecided as to how this pattern impinges on the conclusion I reach as regards the metrical structure of both ablaut reduplication and double –*er* suffixation. Aroui and Arleo include a number of such non-identical pairings in their study.

bias towards a sequence of high vowel in the first item and low vowel in the second. For example, Aroui and Arleo, in a survey of 51 languages, find that almost 60% of such binomials have the close front vowel /i/ in the first item.[1]

In that *ninky nonk* conforms to this pattern, it is clearly creative. Inasmuch as it caused peals of laughter among the watching children, it also qualifies as an inventive form. The question that arises, of course, is why *ninky nonk* crosses this line. There is something about this form that is "phonologically funny" (Munat 177) or "euphoniquement accrocheur" (Busuttil 140), but just what that factor is remains frustratingly elusive. It cannot simply be the succession of vowels, because intuitively *flip flop* and *hip hop* would probably not adduce the same result, though of course this could be tested. The succession of velar nasals is almost certainly a factor, as may well be, and this is the crucial factor which enables us to move on to the second phenomenon at more length, the metrical structure or rhythm.

I believe that these same broadly euphonic considerations have a role to play in what I refer to as double -er suffixation. The English suffix -er can be used to form agentive nouns from verbs, and is universally considered to be highly productive. The Oxford English Dictionary, in the entry on -er, suffix,[1] states "In mod.Eng. they [-er derivatives] may be formed on all vbs., excepting some of those which have agent-nouns ending in *-or*, and some others for which this function is served by ns. of different formation (e.g. *correspond*, *correspondent*)." With phrasal verbs, there are three logical possibilities for using the -er suffix, all of which are attested:

1. V -er + particle:

    passer-by / runner-up / hanger on

2. V + particle + -er:

    put outer (a device for stealing the light from street lamps, from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling)

    washer up / pepper up (these last two have entries in the OED)

3. V + -er + particle + -er

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1. Powerful confirmation of this bias was provided to me, entirely serendipitously, but unfortunately equally belatedly, by my four year-old son, who recently remarked to me that "we say 'kiss and cuddle.' We can't say 'cuddle and kiss', because it doesn't rhyme." I take "not rhyme" here to mean something akin to "somewhat dissonant" or "euphonically unlikely"—perhaps the words my four-year old was groping for!

> You know what they say, a non-answerer backer alone is in bad company.[1]
>
> Andy Fenner dressed up as a pantomime horse and galloped around while a nice helper-outer rode astride, handing out fruit.[2]

It is of course these latter examples that are of interest here, where there appears in contemporary English to exist a case of reduplicated suffixation, the -er suffix being appended both to the verb and its particle. A number of questions arise, in particular in light of the distinction between creativity and inventiveness I am trying to uphold. Recall that the working hypothesis is that because of the "success" of the *mucker upper* formation with a young audience, this pattern is inventive rather than merely creative.

To attempt to put this idea to the test, we need first of all to determine how widespread the phenomenon is. The following table shows the results of a brief and preliminary Internet survey conducted to answer this question. The verbs in question were taken from an on-line list of phrasal verbs, `www.usingenglish.com/reference/phrasal-verbs`, and comprise all of the phrasal verbs beginning with the letter "A." The first of the two figures is the number of hits obtained on a Google search conducted on 15 January 2009 using the string "Verb+ER Particle+ER" (i.e. accounter forer, acher forer, acter on(n)er, etc.). This figure has been adjusted, where possible and feasible, to account for repeated hits and false positives, notably spelling mistakes. The second of the figures is the number of hits for the same string using the GoogleBooks search engine, the aim being to weed out as many of the hits from blogs, forums and other similar sites as possible.

The first remark to be made is that out of 20 possible words, 6 have attested reduplicated suffixal forms. Preliminary investigations further into the alphabet would seem to indicate that this ratio approximately holds good throughout the corpus, though this necessitates confirmation. Any conclusions on this evidence would be laughably fragile, of course, but it would appear that this is not a vanishingly rare form. Also worthy of note, *en passant*, and something to which we will return, is the phonological form of the attested verbs: five out of six have a particle

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1. `http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile\` `&friendid=85064969`, accessed 21 April 2009.

2. Example taken from the OED, under the entry "pantomime."

1. The relatively large number of Google Book hits is due to "acter outer" being a term in psychoanalysis to refer to a particular behavioural disorder.

ACCOUNT FOR	0	0
ACHE FOR	0	0
ACT ON	0	0
ACT OUT[1]	**169**	**69**
ADD UP	**251**	**29**
ACT UP	**7**	**0**
AIM AT	0	0
ALLOW FOR	0	0
ANGLE FOR	0	0
ANSWER BACK	3	0
ANSWER FOR	0	0
ARGUE OUT	0	0
ASK AFTER	0	0
ASK AROUND	**1**	**0**
ASK FOR	**31**	**0**
ASK IN	0	0
ASK OUT	**294**	**0**
ASK OVER	0	0
ASK ROUND	0	0
AUCTION OFF	0	0

Table 1: Google hits of phrasal verbs with reduplicated -er, beginning with "A"

that finishes with an occlusive, and five out of six are composed of two monosyllabic forms.

We turn now to see how the reduplicated forms fare in dictionaries, and in particular in the OED. There are a total of 14 reduplicated -er forms to be found in the OED, which can be divided into three categories:

1. Words which are granted their own entry:
   picker upper
   fixer upper (colloq. US)[2]
   maker upper
   opener upper (colloq. US)
   pepper upper (colloq. and chiefly US)

2. Words which are the subject of a sub-entry of the verb or derived noun:
   looker upper
   mucker upper
   tearer downer (colloq.)

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2. Where the OED gives an indication as to geographical origin and style, this has been indicated.

    tidier upper (colloq.)

    waker upper (colloq.)

    warmer upper

    washer upper (colloq.)

3. Words which feature in citations for other entries, and are subject to no exemplification or discussion

    chatter upper (in sex)

    helper outer (in pantomime)

While it might be argued that 14 examples in a corpus as extensive as the Oxford English Dictionary is hardly evidence of a frequent pattern, it is nevertheless a figure which puts considerable pressure on my original hypothesis, which was that the *mucker upper* form was a highly inventive pattern which drew its appeal from its originality.

Also important to note is that of the 14 forms, all 14 have particles with a final occlusive and 13 are a combination of monosyllabic verb with monosyllabic particle, such that when the suffix is appended, we are left with a pattern of four syllables, strong/weak/ strong/weak. Even the apparent exception to this, *opener upper* < *open up*, when suffixed, is likely to be pronounced [əʊpnə ʌpə] with four syllables, and is thus only partially exceptional.

Before returning to the issue of phonology, we need to continue picking apart the original hypothesis by seeing to what extent this pattern has been picked up on in the linguistic literature. Once again, the picture is somewhat mixed. There are indeed references to such reduplicated forms, stretching back over a number of decades, thus suggesting that the pattern is not original, but these references are rather disparate, an indication that it has yet to be taken seriously as an object of linguistic analysis or that such analysis has proved elusive. For example, Bauer (1983, 289) says they "tend to feel very clumsy, and as a result tend to be used mainly in colloquial speech."[1] Similarly, Blevins (527) refers to them as "colloquial." In both cases, it is hard to escape the suspicion that the term "colloquial" is used rather dismissively, as if the very fact that

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1. Despite the very high esteem in which I hold Bauer's work, this strikes me as a rather odd statement. First of all, it is by no means clear why a correlation should be established between clumsiness and colloquialness. Second, the logic would seem to be backwards. It is not hard to understand how some people, speaking from the purist corner, may wish to claim that because something is colloquial, it is *ipso facto* clumsy, but more difficult to see why something which is clumsy would come to be colloquial, as Bauer seems to be arguing. Finally, I shall try to argue that the popularity of these formations arises precisely because they are NOT clumsy, however we may wish to qualify that notion.

something is colloquial means that it is somehow less worthy of serious consideration.

This last remark is borne out by the following citation, which also presents the advantage of being somewhat older, thus providing the perfect transition to a brief consideration of the diachrony of reduplicated -er suffixation. In a pre-war article, Wentworth refers to:

> The current, popular, grotesque way of forming new low-colloquial and slang compound nouns of agency—adding -er to an intransitive verb and another -er to its adverb, e.g., *maker-upper*—is (judging tentatively from eighteen documented and countless undocumented instances of use) national in occurrence, journalistic in origin, collegiate in vogue, and economical in expression of ideas.

The pattern receives brief mentions elsewhere in the literature (Bolinger 116—"popular coinages," Busuttil 145, for example), but to my knowledge, there is only one full scholarly article devoted entirely to the issue, that by Bert Cappelle, to which we will return.

Another way of testing what we might wish to refer as the "degree of inventiveness" of the pattern is to look at its history, to determine whether we are dealing with something that is well established or which seems to be relatively novel. A number of sources, discussed in Cappelle (forthcoming), would seem to indicate that this is a purely twentieth century phenomenon, with a peak in popularity between the 1920s and the 1940s. The attestations in the OED, in particular, as well as the quote from Wentworth above would seem to support this view, along with the remarks of no less an authority than H.L. Mencken, who wrote in 1956 that "There was a transient fashion in the second lustrum of the 30s for nouns on the order of *maker-upper*, compounded of a verb and an adverb, with *-er* added to each. A somewhat similar fashion, in the days before the Civil War, had produced forms such as *come outer*" (Mencken 381).

Further support to this position is provided by a search on the TIME corpus[1] of all the nominalised phrasal verbs with "up," which produced the following results:

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1. http://corpus.byu.edu/time/x.asp.

FIXER-UPPER	77 hits
BUILDER-UPPER	3
STIRRER-UPPER	3
CHECKER-UPPER	2
BUSTER-UPPER	2
CLEANER-UPPER	2
PEPPER-UPPER	2
WHIPPER-UPPER	1
UPPER-UPPER	1
TRIPPER-UPPER	1
SOFTENER-UPPER	1
PICKER-UPPER	1
PANTS-PULLER-UPPER	1
DISHER-UPPER	1
CHEERER-UPPER	1
TOTAL	**29**

Table 2: *Upper* phrasal verbs in the TIME corpus

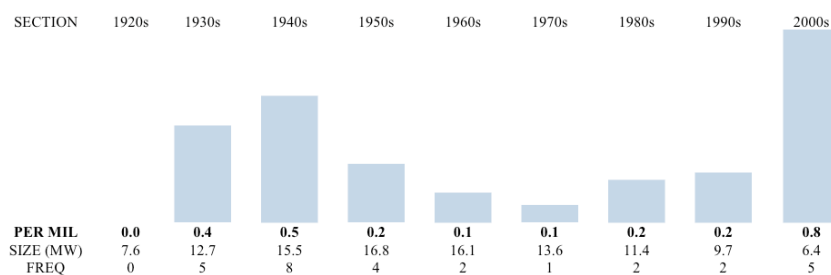| SECTION	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
PER MIL	**0.0**	**0.4**	**0.5**	**0.2**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.8**
SIZE (MW)	7.6	12.7	15.5	16.8	16.1	13.6	11.4	9.7	6.4
FREQ	0	5	8	4	2	1	2	2	5

Table 3: Relative frequency of *upper* phrasal verbs in the TIME corpus[1]

The results here are very much in line with previous discussion, with one notable exception. First, we have an overwhelming majority of monosyllabic verbs (14 out of the 15 different verbs, the only exception being *soften up*, but for which the same remarks apply as for *open up* above). Second, it does indeed appear as if there was a peak in the use of reduplicated phrasal verbs in the 1940s and that they began to tail off thereafter. The new point to note, however, is the dramatic increase in the pattern after 2000. We can only speculate as to why this may be: genuine revitalisation of a morphological rule which appeared to be disappearing, or colloquialisation of the magazine TIME, such that formations of this kind, without ever having been under threat in speech, were able to find their way more readily into the pages of the magazine? If the former,

then this is a tiny shred of evidence in favour of the starting hypothesis, that this is a novel form—a re-inventive one, so to speak. If the latter, and I would be inclined to favour this view, then again, the hypothesis falls flat. Reduplicated -er affixes are not inventive, they are simply creative, in that they are the application of a morphological rule whereby double affixation is possible on English phrasal verbs.

Or is it? Might it yet be possible to rescue a modicum of inventiveness for this double -er pattern? To do so, we will need to examine whether they are indeed the result of a morphological rule, or whether we might be able to draw a form of parallel with the Ninky Nonk we appeared to have abandoned by the wayside earlier.

To doubt that *doubler upper* nouns, as Cappelle cleverly dubs them, are not the result of a morphological rule might on the face of it seem a rather ridiculous proposition. As we hinted in the introduction, the suffix -er is a staple of textbooks on word formation in English, because it is so productive and transparent in its usage. Cappelle provides an extremely enlightening attempt to explain the existence of such nominalised forms in morphological terms. But we need, I think, to give serious consideration to the idea that these forms have gained a certain popularity for phonological reasons, and more particularly for reasons of euphony, not unlike the ablaut reduplication forms. Cappelle regards such an attempt as "linguistically naïve," but there is some evidence that needs careful consideration, evidence of two kinds: the metrical patterns we have already seen, and retriplication.

The vast majority of double suffixed phrasal verbs involve a monosyllabic verb and monosyllabic particle, which when suffixed produce a four syllable structure with alternating strong and weak syllables. There is strong evidence that this metrical pattern is universal in children's counting rhymes (Arleo 2001), among other things, and the possibility that in some sense, the output of the affixation process is pleasing to the ear is a factor in its extension that should not be dismissed out of hand. There is clearly something euphonic about the ninky nonk and other ablaut reduplicates, just as there is with the childish initial /w/ reduplication (*milky-wilky, hurty wurty*), and the same may be true of reduplicated -er suffixes. Further evidence, or at least food for thought, in favour of this proposal is that while phrasal verbs do admit a double -ee suffix, in examples such as "Can anyone tell me what my askee outee meant when he said 'well, I am kind of splitting up with my girlfriend right now,'"[1]

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1. http://manslations.com/2009/02/23/is-he-shy-or-just-not-interested/, accessed on 23 January 2009.

these are emphatically rarer than the -er counterpart. While other explanations may well be possible, it is hard to imagine that the obligatory final stress born by -ee is not a factor.

Exhibit B in the case for an explanation of double -er based in part on euphonic considerations is a phenomenon I propose to call -er retriplication, i.e. whereby a phrasal verb actually bears the -er suffix three times, once on the verb and twice on the particle. Examples include:

> They cram into the restaurant hoping to get a glimpse of the famous restaurant closer-downerer[1]
> I'm very much a dreamer and a tryer-outerer i.e. being a wannabe geek[2]

This third -er surely does not lend itself to morphological analysis, and yet it is by no means very rare. A Google search on 13 March 2009 showed 3 880 hits for *upperer*, the vast majority of which appeared to be genuine phrasal verb derivations. That this third -er is not felt by speakers to be anything other than a phonetic addendum is evidenced by occasional spellings such as "Are you a good adder-upper-rah?? or do you need a calculator?"[3] or "U can be my advice giver-outer-rah."[4]

That -er may in many cases not be a morpheme, but a useful euphonic tool in that it supplies an additional syllable necessarily pronounced with a schwa, is also suggested by more outlandish and playful inventions such as "It is handy having a spider-getter-outer-ofer-the-houser around"[5] or "Dishwasher getter outer ofer," which is a creation of the author, but one that has been used without attracting so much as a murmur of protest from fellow English speakers.

To conclude then: both of the quasi-morphological phenomena I chose to illustrate this paper can lay a certain claim to inventiveness, within the scope of the definition I proposed at the outset. The claim of the ninky nonk ablaut reduplication is stronger, because the positive evaluation is more evident (to state matters bluntly, everybody I have questioned loves the word *ninky nonk*!). As for -er duplication, the inventive-

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1. http://forums.2kgames.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-1022-p-2.html, accessed on 24 January 2009.
2. http://kornfest.com/userstags/hobbies/i039m-very-much-dreamer-and-tryer-outerer-ie-being-wannabe-geek, accessed on 3 February 2009.
3. http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index;_ylt=AomuzLIpZpOburvd xG9zFcTty6IX;_ylv=3?qid=20070419231721AAZA2Lu\&show=7\#profile-info-6185ce64ac6d19a3788c83d88d5e8998aa, accessed on 3 February 2009.
4. http://l0st-with0ut-y0u.spaces.live.com/Blog/cns! 1peyj5-FclMD5DylgB279d1A!778.entry, accessed on 3 February 2009.
5. http://sabrinafaire.com/2004/08/06/thumbs-and-weddings-and-grandmothers-oh-my/, accessed on 3 February 2009.

ness, I would contend, lies not so much in its popularity, which remains to be proven, but in the fact that speakers appear to be innovating in their use of the morpheme and transforming it into something of a phonetic adjunct for purely euphonic reasons. Both cases seem to suggest that we might be well advised to pay more attention to the question of "ear-catchiness" in our analyses of linguistic structures.

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Euphemisms for Death:
Reinventing Reality through Words?[1]

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> Since ancient times human beings have traditionally felt
> reluctant to deal with death in an undeviating way. Either
> owing to religion, superstition or social concerns,
> language users have generally avoided to look death full
> in the face. [...] Hence, it is hardly surprising that
> language users resort to a wide variety of linguistic
> devices in order to compliment the departed and show
> respect to those left alive, satisfying, in this way, both the
> religious and the social impositions traditionally
> associated with human mortality.
>
> Crespo Fernández 2007, 7.

In almost all societies, human beings have always had a hard time coping with death, and one of the best ways of putting it aside is to avoid mentioning it, or to mention it by using indirect, oblique terms known as euphemisms. Death euphemisms seem to be at the crossroads of language and society, and as the call for papers of this conference indicates, "inventive linguistics thus seems to be linked to some form of political or social utopia". Are the euphemisms used to refer to death primarily "intended as a mark of respect for the dead" (Gross 205) or do they also reinvent reality?

The present paper is organized as follows: after briefly going over the history of the taboo of death and euphemism, I will analyze the death euphemisms found in my corpus, which is drawn from the American drama series *Six Feet Under*, from now on referred to as *SFU*. This

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Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning series produced by HBO is created by the Oscar-winning writer of *American Beauty*, Alan Ball. It focuses on the cathartic journey of the Fisher family: Ruth, the mother, Nate and David, the two sons who run the funeral home, and Claire, the younger daughter. Their personal trials and tribulations are played out against the solemn backdrop of an independent funeral home in LA.[1] The theoretical assumptions on which my paper is based are essentially derived from the works of cognitive linguists such as Lakoff and Johnson, the pivotal study on euphemism and dysphemism by Allan and Burridge, as well as from a number of books and articles.

1 Theoretical framework: the taboo of death and euphemism

1.1 Why is death a taboo?

The term "taboo" was supposedly coined by Captain Cook, during his 3rd voyage around the world in 1784. The term, borrowed from the Polynesian language Tongan, denoted "prohibited behavior" and applied to "all cases where things are not to be touched." For some Australian tribes, it was forbidden to pronounce the word "death" because you could induce it just by mentioning the word. The taboos of death seem to relate both to the "taboos of fear" (superstitious and religious bans) and to the "taboos of delicacy and propriety" (psychological and social bans).

According to Allan & Burridge (153, 159), taboos are motivated by five types of fears:

1. fear of the loss of loved ones;
2. fear of the corruption and disintegration of the body;
3. fear that death is the end of life;
4. fear of malevolent spirits, or of the souls of the dead;
5. fear of a meaningless death.

These may all be summarized as the fear of "our own finiteness" (Allan & Burridge 159). Those fears are so entrenched in our culture that language seems consequently unable to convey the very notion of death, as Jankélévitch (107-108) rightly points out:

> Vous voyez, le langage même n'est pas taillé pour exprimer la mort. Tous les mots dont on se sert sont des mots empiriques: l'Autre-Monde, un

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1. Adapted from the HBO website.

monde, l'autre, c'est-à-dire très certainement le nôtre, mais encore un
monde, la sur-vie, encore que vie, mais différente de la nôtre.

We may wonder why death represents such a taboo, even in our suppos-
edly "liberated" contemporary western societies. It may be because you
experience it only once, and the first time is also the last; in addition, it
is certainly because the Grim Reaper often strikes without warning, at
random. More than a secret, death is a mystery (Jankélévitch 38), and as
such, is prone to give way to numerous euphemisms, as we will see in
part 2. Man has no control over his/her death, which certainly explains
why death is tabooed and spoken of euphemistically. Death is the ulti-
mate non-sense which nevertheless gives meaning to life. Various stud-
ies have shown that in our contemporary societies death has quite para-
doxically become the greatest taboo: "Death, we are frequently told, has
replaced sex as the great forbidden subject" (Gross 203). Since the Vic-
torian era, death has been considered to be "unmentionable" in our con-
temporary societies, and "has become the pornography of modern times"
(Allan & Burridge 157). The relationship to death was different in the
Middle Ages, a period which was obsessed with man's finitude (remem-
ber the "Dance of the Dead"), but which made it clear that death was
part of life, and that human beings had to be reminded of death, hence
the *Memento Mori* ("remember you will die") (Allan & Burridge 154-156).
There seems to be a "generalized denial and fear of death so prevalent in
our culture" (Sexton). Hence, the dead bodies are not shown as such in
the drama series *SFU*, but need preparing (or "fixing") by an embalmer.
In the terms of Allan & Burridge (158):

> Death has become altogether less ritualized. For example, wakes are no
> longer considered an acceptable practice in most Anglo-communities.
> There is something rather morbid and shocking about that sort of open
> acknowledgment of death [...].
> [...]
> And—in striking contrast with the medieval fascination for corrupting
> corpses—we now rely on modern embalming techniques to help create
> for us "the Beautiful Memory Picture" (cf. Baird 1976, 87). In addition,
> cremation has now replaced burial as the most usual means of disposing
> of the dead
> [...]
> We go out of our way to avoid death.

Death is one of the most—if not the most—fundamental human expe-
riences and, as such, it tends to be sacralised, and is therefore subject to

taboo and euphemism. As E. Crespo Fernández (2006: 101) writes: "Some experiences are too intimate and vulnerable to be discussed without *linguistic* safeguards" (my emphasis). Human beings have to find ways to explain, or at least to "make sense" of death, i.e. to make sense of nonsense. As we are about to see, euphemisms prove to be an interesting means of coping with such a reality as death, for they provide a "protective shield" against a feared, fearful and unpleasant reality (Allan & Burridge 3). Just as a rotting corpse needs burying or embalming because of the pestilent smell it gives off, we need euphemisms to refer to death, as they represent, according to R. Adams (48), "the deodorant of language."

1.2 The role of euphemisms

The English word "euphemism" is found for the first time in a book written in 1656 by Thomas Blount, *Glossographia* (Burchfield 13), and comes from Greek *euphèmismos*, which is itself derived from the adjective *euphèmos*, "of good omen" (from *eu*, "good," and *phèmi*, "I say"). A euphemism consists in replacing the original signifier, perceived as being offensive or unpleasant, by another one; it is often referred to as a "veil" or a "shroud" thrown over the signified, as if to conceal it. Just like the shroud thrown over the dead body to conceal it, or rather to conceal death, euphemism is a way of blurring the harsh reality of death.

In this presentation, euphemism will not be restricted to a mere lexical device, but will be considered as an everyday, comprehensive phenomenon, a form of "verbal behavior" (Crespo Fernández 2005, 78) which serves a specific, *functional* purpose in social discourse (Fairclough). Indeed, euphemism is not just a matter of pure lexical choice— i.e. elegant stylistic variation, a sort of "linguistic makeup" (Crespo Fernández 2005, 79)—but a real choice made by the speaker in a given discursive context. As Allan & Burridge (4) write: "[E]uphemism and dysphemism are principally determined by the choice of expression within a given context: both world spoken **of**, and the world spoken **in**". Discourse will therefore be considered in its social dimension, as recommended in Fairclough's (1) analysis:

> Today individuals working in a variety of disciplines are coming to recognize the ways in which changes in language use are linked to wider social and cultural processes, and hence are coming to appreciate the importance of using language analysis as a method for studying social change.

Euphemism participates in a larger, more general phenomenon used by speakers to soften the potentially offensive effects of a taboo area to preserve social harmony in communication and to avoid any face-threatening acts.[1] That is why it is voluntarily given a broad definition in this paper. As previously mentioned, euphemism can be seen as a "deodorizing spray and perfume" (Allan & Burridge 25), and euphemistic language as a "'deodorizing' language" (Allan & Burridge 25). Euphemism thus represents a means of keeping death at bay, and constitutes a "protective magic" (Fryer 19). We have said it is a way of blurring the harsh reality of death, but it seems to be more than that: it is also a way of reinventing reality. Through his/her choice of words, the speaker passes judgment and conveys a vision of reality. In this presentation, I will thus define "euphemism" as Allan & Burridge (11) do:

> A **euphemism** is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or some third party.

There are basically two ways of dealing with a taboo such as death: either by using euphemisms, or by using dysphemisms, which are, according to Allan & Burridge (7), "obverse sides of the same coin" which "do not form clear-cut categories" (Crespo Fernández 2007, 15)[2]:

> A **dysphemism** is an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or euphemistic expression for just that reason. (Allan & Burridge 26)

Death is such a frightening concept that we sometimes need humorous, dysphemistic metaphors to release the pressure, to pretend it is not such a big deal. Most of the idioms referring to death in English partake of this dysphemistic dimension: *push up the daisies, go west, kick the bucket*, etc. Some dysphemisms can be found in *SFU*, such as *Now he is just **dirt in a jar*** (S.3, Ep.7) / *A big **chunk of dead meat in a box*** (S.2, Ep.3) / *We'll **torch** him then* (about cremation) (S.2, Ep.13) / *Mr. Bolston is all **juiced up*** (S.1, Ep.6) / *Body **farms*** (S.1, Ep.10) / *Being **creamed** by a bus* (S.4, Ep.2).

All this explains why death is very rarely called by its own name. According to the following rule pointed out by Allan & Burridge (7), the language of death is supposed to swarm with euphemisms: "Generally

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1. The notion of "face" is borrowed from Goffman.
2. Ferguson shows that euphemism also coexists with dysphemism in the obituary columns of newspapers.

speaking, the greater the oncoming face-affront, the greater is the polite-
ness shown, and the greater the degree of euphemism required". Some
studies have shown that our contemporary western society appears to
have more euphemisms for death than any other period and that those
euphemistic expressions tend toward the "gradual suppression of direct
reference to death" (Allan & Burridge 159). Hence, speakers will resort
to a wide range of euphemistic tools to talk of death, such as lexical sub-
stitutions and euphemistic discursive strategies. These euphemistic tech-
niques will be a means of showing respect not only toward the subject-
matter, i.e. death, but also toward the interlocutor, whose face we wish
not to threaten. As a consequence, "these indirect verbal tactics tend to
minimize the illocutionary force of a speech act without modifying the
content of the message" (Crespo Fernández 2005, 81).

Yet, it is interesting to note that taboo euphemisms, such as death
euphemisms, tend to conventionalize very quickly, and turn into mere
clichés, losing their motivation and becoming quasi-synonymous and
quasi-transparent terms, as noted by Enright (2005, 121): "On other occa-
sions we use euphemism unconsciously —it might be the only acceptable
term, or the term that everyone uses, and we therefore employ it with-
out thinking". They are felt as the (only?) accepted way of expressing
oneself. But when death euphemisms become clichés, the link between
the language and the threatening reality they tend to conceal is evoked
afresh.

2   Death euphemisms in *SFU*: reinventing reality?

2.1   Characteristics of the language of death in *SFU*

In *SFU*, a real "funeralese" (Allan & Burridge 171) can be observed,
in addition to a "riot of euphemisms" (Gross 210): undertakers turn
into *grief therapists* or *bereavement counselors*; dead people are invariably
referred to as *the loved ones* (S.1, Ep.1) or *the beloveds* (S.1, Ep.6). Here is
a short extract of what you might hear when entering Nate and David's
funeral home[1]:

> When there is a *walk-in* (S.1, Ep.8) (*when somebody shows up for a
> death) in a *funeral home* (S.1, Ep.3) (*morgues), you need to *do intakes*
> (S.1, Ep.7). You ask if there has been a *pre-need* (S.2, Ep.11) (*when you
> arrange your own funeral), and if your *loved one* wants an *open* or a *closed
> casket* (S.1, Ep.1) (*coffin). Often the body needs to be *reconstructed* (S.1,

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1. The asterisked words are the "dispreferred expressions". Some of them are context-
dependent and deliberately humorous.

Ep.1) and *embalmed* (embalming (S.1, Ep.6)) in the *prep room* (S.1, Ep.8) (preparation room in which the bodies are embalmed) (for *morgue) to *be prepared for the viewing* (S.1, Ep.6) (*ceremony when the dead body is viewed by family and friends). This should help the *grieving process* (S.4, Ep.2) for the *bereaved*.

I would like to begin with a relevant excerpt in S.1, Ep.3 of a conversation between Nate and Gilardi, a man trying to buy out Nate and David's business:

> Nate: "I never realized how much money there was to be made in the **funeral business*."
> Gilardi: "**Death-care industry**."
> [...]
> Nate: "So it's like **a little factory. Of embalming*."
> Gilardi: "**Preparation for visitation**. We maintain a **small fleet of vehicles**."
> Nate: "**Hearses*?"
> Gilardi: "**Funeral carriages**."
> Nate: "**Dead wagons*."
> Gilardi: "**Removal vans**."

This escalation of euphemisms is reminiscent of the so-called "euphemistic treadmill" (Pinker) found with death metaphors. Just like any words in the lexicon, euphemisms are prone to variations, and, as R. Adams (45) writes: "We have euphemisms for our euphemisms". For instance, the word *undertaker* was replaced by the euphemism *mortician*, which was replaced by another euphemism: *funeral director*. Interestingly, the word *undertaker* was originally a euphemism, as mentioned by Allan & Burridge (22):

> English *undertaker* once meant "odd-job man" (someone who undertakes to do things), which was used as a euphemism for the person taking care of funerals; like most ambiguous taboo terms, the meaning of *undertaker* narrowed to the taboo sense alone, and is now replaced by the euphemism *funeral director*. What often happens with euphemisms like this, is that they start off with a modifying word, "funeral" in *funeral undertaker*, then the modifier is dropped as the phrase ceases to be euphemistic [...]. It is conceivable that *funeral director* will one day be clipped to mere *director*, which will then follow *undertaker* and become a taboo term.

And when Nate is incidentally referred to as a *mortician*, he corrects the person he is talking to by saying he is a *funeral director*. The term *mortician*, which originally was a euphemism, is not perceived as such anymore; a

proof of this is found when some of Claire's schoolmates at high school make fun of her by calling her *Morticia* (S.1, Ep.3).

I now would like to examine the death euphemisms found in *SFU*, and try to explain how they reinvent reality.

2.2 Euphemistic devices in *SFU*

Death euphemisms are carried out by a wide range of linguistic devices and mitigating discursive expressions in *SFU* and can be classified as follows. My classification will go from the least to the most productive phenomenon.

One of the lexical devices to generate euphemisms is to resort to **technical terms, learned and loan words**; the words are generally borrowed from Latin or French, two languages perceived as more abstract, and which allow the creation of distance between the signifier and reality:

Expire (S.3, Ep.12) (*die), *Necrophilia* (S.2, Ep.5), *Mortuary* (S.2, Ep.6), *Mortician* (S.2, Ep.3) (*undertaker), *The deceased* (S.2, Ep.8) (cf. *We can pick up the body—er—the deceased.* (S.1, Ep.12)) (*dead person), *A crematory* (S.2, Ep.12), *Cremate sb* (S.1, Ep.1), *Inurnment* (S.1, Ep.7) (*burial of an urn), *Interment* (S.1, Ep.9), *inter* (*bury, cf. *The ashes which we interred* (S.4, Ep.10)), *Receptacle for his cremains* (S.1, Ep.7) (a blend, *cremated remains, *ashes), *The bereaved* (S.4, Ep.12), etc.

Circumlocution is also quite a productive device; in the euphemisms from *SFU*, there seems to be a dilution of the signifier, as if it was one of the most useful ways of diluting its threatening effect too. The longer the mitigating euphemistic expression, the more polite it is expected to be. As an example, let me quote the new names given to cemeteries / graveyards in the USA: *Memorial park / Garden of remembrance*. Other examples include: *A bereavement group* (S.4, Ep.5), *A grief counsellor* (S.4, Ep.5), *Death-care facilities* (S.1, Ep.1), *Human remains* (S.1, Ep.3).

Acronym can also be a morpho-lexical device generating euphemisms, as the signifier is "minced", or "cut up", and is felt to be less offensive: *He OD'ed* (S.1, Ep.1) (*he died from a drug overdose).

Deletion serves the same purpose in the form of quasi-omissions: *I did a pickup Ø this morning* (S.2, Ep.11) (of bodies) or full omissions: *What did you have in mind for your son's . . .* (S.1, Ep.11) (*burial). Sometimes, the taboo word can be omitted and replaced by a hyperonymic term: *The coroner still has his . . . still has him* (S.1, Ep.12) (*corpse).

As Brenda says in Season 1, Episode 9, when you lose a husband or a wife, you're a widow or a widower; when you lose your parents, you're an orphan, but what are you called when you lose a child? The reality is so frightening that no word exists. This taboo is so strong, that the traditional euphemisms have to be replaced by "stronger", deliberately vague euphemisms in case of babies' deaths: *I haven't **done** a baby since Julio was born* (S.1, Ep.11).

Hyperonymy and metonymy. The two notions are closely linked: *You met him at Dad's **thing*** (S.1, Ep.3) (*death ceremony), *Dad already took care of **everything*** (S.2, Ep.9), *Wonderful **service*** (S.1, Ep.1) (*religious ceremony for a funeral), *Wonderful **job*** (S.1, Ep.1) (*reconstruction, itself a euphemism. It shows that even some euphemisms need to be euphemized). *What **happened** to her?* (S.4, Ep.2) / *I was only 5 when he . . . when it **happened**.* (S.3, Ep.5), *I didn't think she would **do it*** (S.3, Ep.9) (*commit suicide), *You don't have to **go through this** alone* (S.1, Ep.1).

Death is rarely called by its own name, but more by the dead (metonymic process); let me quote two examples: *His heart **gave out*** (S.2, Ep.4), where the action (*die) stands for the result (*die) and *- Where's my daddy? - Daddy**'s not here*** (S.5, Ep.10), with the result for the process.

Finally, death itself is referred to metaphorically, as *the **Grim Reaper*** (S.2, Ep.1), both linguistically-speaking and visually-speaking. The vast majority of euphemisms found in *SFU* are metaphorical, i.e. **metaphor** is by far the most powerful mechanism in the creation of death euphemisms, as noted by Sexton (337): "One would be hard pressed to find a type of reference to death that is both frequently used and without metaphoric content". I think the reason lies in the fact that death is an abstract notion; if we follow the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory elaborated by Lakoff and Johnson, the only way of perceiving and understanding abstract domains of experience—such as death—is to resort to more concrete (i.e. physical, bodily, social) domains of experience that will serve as a mapping, or blending according to the various theories. One of the most frequent and pervasive ways of mapping a concrete domain of experience onto an abstract domain is so-called metaphorical cross-mapping. As Lakoff and Johnson (5) point out:

> The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. [...] The metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience [...] in terms of a very different domain of experience [...]. The metaphor can be understood as a mapping (in the mathematical sense) from a source domain [...] to a target domain.

I will now focus on the euphemistic expressions referring to death, most of which are metaphorical, trying to bring out the conceptual metaphors[1] and the ways they reinvent reality. A conceptual metaphor[2] is defined by Kövecses (4) as follows:

> CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (A) IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (B), which is what is called a **conceptual metaphor**. A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another. A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience.

If we can find various studies on the conceptualization—be it literal or metaphorical—of death, we have to acknowledge, like Crespo Fernández (2006, 102), that "not much scholarly ink has been spilled over conceptual metaphor as a purely euphemistic device". Metaphor and euphemism nonetheless seem to partake of the same mechanism, as they are both means of perceiving, organizing, and making sense of reality. I will try to show that the often unconscious everyday euphemistic metaphorical expressions used to refer to death are a way of inventing the abstract domain of death. Death being the great unknown, the only way of conceptualizing it is very often through metaphors. Metaphor is a way of dealing with, perceiving—and making real—the unfamiliar, the big unknown that is death, by likening it to a known domain of experience, very often *with positive connotations*. It consequently allows us to have some power over death by controlling it. The metaphors used are very often "consolatory metaphors, i.e., highly poetic and connotative metaphors aiming at evading death-related linguistic taboos" (Crespo Fernández 2007, 11). As a consequence, it is no surprise that we find such an array of metaphors to refer to death and mortality as a whole. Those metaphors are so entrenched in our conceptual system and are so pervasive in our cultural and linguistic consciousness that we are rarely aware of them. Let me now examine the various conceptual metaphors generating death euphemisms in *SFU*:

DEATH IS A JOURNEY

Just as life, death is frequently conceptualized as a journey; hence the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A JOURNEY. Ancient religions already mentioned the crossing of the river by Charon for a voyage to an

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1. Allan & Burridge (161) suggest four broad categories for death euphemisms, and Crespo Fernández (2006, 113) brings out six types of conceptual metaphors to generate death euphemisms.

2. Small capital letters are conventionally used by cognitive linguists to refer to conceptual metaphors, which account for all the metaphorical expressions generated by them. They indicate that the particular wording does not occur in language as such.

unknown land. Interestingly, the very term "obituaries" is itself originally euphemistic, as it originates from Latin *obitus* meaning "departure".

Various examples are to be found in *SFU*: *You can't **skip over** too. Then you can **move through** it and get on with the rest of your life* (S.4, Ep.2) / *He **passed away suddenly*** (S.4, Ep.6) (*he committed suicide) / *I don't even know how to **go*** (S.4, Ep.6) (*die) / *Try to let it **go*** (S.2, Ep.13) (*somebody dying) / *I don't wanna **go*** (S.2, Ep.13) (*die) / *I won't let you **go*** (S.2, Ep.13).

*And suddenly, he**'s gone*** (S.3, Ep.2) / *Your daddy **has gone away for a very long time*** (S.5, Ep.10). This last example mixes up space and time. *Mr. Bloomberg is dead. I'm getting him **ready** so his family can see him for the last time and **say goodbye** to him* (S.1, Ep.1).

*A nice **send-off** **(S.4, Ep.9),** A cremains **vessel** **(S.2, Ep.1),** Royal **Funeral Coach** **(S.1, Ep.1) (ad for a hearse).***

The end of episode 13, season 2 is quite revealing, as the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A JOURNEY is visually expressed: Nate is near death, and in his dream, a bus arrives to pick him up. This may also explain another conceptual metaphor to refer to death: DEATH IS A NEW BEGINNING, A NEW LIFE, often used with religious connotations. Very often, these religious metaphors have hyperbolic overtones, and the danger lies in the nature of hyperbole which, according to Crespo Fernández (2007, 13), "can be viewed as a rhetorical figure leading to half truths, false inferences and even actual lies". Almost no example is to be found in *SFU*, except for *The world **to come*** (S.2, Ep.7) and *She is **on her way to Jesus*** (S.4, Ep.2). These euphemisms tend to reinvent the notion of death, by conceptualizing it as a journey, as something dynamic, with a purpose. Let me finish by quoting an interesting euphemism used to refer to a coffin, sorry . . . a casket: *an appropriate resting vessel* (S.1, Ep.1). What is interesting to note is the combination of two conceptual metaphors: DEATH IS A JOURNEY and DEATH IS REST, a conceptual metaphor I want to study now.

DEATH IS REST / SLEEP

This conceptual metaphor generates euphemisms such as *sleep, be laid to rest, be put to rest*, and account for the inscriptions found on grave stones: *here lies/sleeps, in this grave rests* . . . Allan & Burridge (162) point out that *cemetery* derives from Ancient Greek *koimētērion* "dormitory." Some euphemistic metaphorical expressions are found in *SFU*: ***Fall off to sleep*** (S.3, Ep.12) / *A **resting** place* (S.1, Ep.3) / *He looks like he is **sleeping*** (S.1, Ep.11).

*We'll do our best to help you **through** this **dark time*** (S.3, Ep.2) / *See God as a message **through** this **dark time*** (S.5, Ep.10). The last two examples comprise not only the notion of space (travel), but also the notion of time, as exemplified in **Length** *of visitation* (S.2, Ep.6).

Through these euphemisms, death is conceptualized as sleep, which implies that it is temporary. Yet, a closely-related example such as *It was her **time*** (S.4, Ep.2) calls for the need of another conceptual metaphor reinventing death as something terminal.

Death is the end

This conceptual metaphor accounts for euphemisms such as *Your **candle has been blown out*** (S.2, Ep.1), *There's no **mortgage** on my life* (S.2, Ep.2), *Did she **off herself***? (S.3, Ep.11) / *She **offed herself*** (S.3, Ep.11), *Until I **cease** to exist* (S.4, Ep.3), *It will not **bring her back*** (S.4, Ep.2), *Our **fallen** brother* (S.1, Ep.4).

If death is terminal, the loved one will not be back, and his/her death will be perceived as a loss, and (s)he will be missed by those left behind.

Death is a loss

Examples include: **Lose** *a brother, a father . . .* (S.1, Ep.4) / *The **loss** of Jeffrey Shapiro* (S.2, Ep.7) / *A profound **loss** (S.1, Ep.11)* / *I'm very sorry about your **loss*** (S.2, Ep.8).

All the conceptual metaphors mentioned above tend to reinvent the very notion of death, and as such, death euphemisms seem to act as "deflectors of reality" by building up a virtual, fictional wall between reality and the perception we have of reality. If the first hypothesis I departed from in this article assumed that most of the language we use nowadays to refer to death is euphemistic, I think I need to revise this opinion as the euphemistic expressions we use most generally are no longer perceived as "an alternative to a dispreferred expression" (Allan & Burridge 11), but the usual, normal, accepted way of referring to death. If we follow Allan & Burridge's (29) principle that "euphemisms and dysphemisms are deliberate", doubts arise when we are confronted with death euphemisms . . .

Conclusion

There are various means of keeping death at bay, be they euphemisms or dysphemisms. Both of them enable the speaker to create a distance between reality and the name given to reality. This study on death euphemisms seems to justify Lakoff and Johnson's claim that our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature, given the sig-

nificant number of metaphorical euphemisms in *SFU*. This also confirms that the everyday language we use is not divorced from our perceptions and conceptions of the world.

Even though euphemisms are generally considered as "harmless substitutes" (Ullmann 205) for a harsh reality, we could nonetheless wonder if death euphemisms are "dishonest," given that they sometimes offer a biased vision of reality, as Sexton writes:

> Metaphors as tools may assist us in better understanding life's turns into unknown territory. However, metaphors may also be the bandage which prevents us from exposing wounds which may on some level require attention. Metaphors may assist us to a certain extent in coping with the pain of loss and the fear of dying which we all have or will encounter at some point. However, they also may alter our perceptions and prevent us from facing uncertainties which we would do well to face.

As is said in S.1, Ep.7, the dead person runs the risk of turning into a "dead plastic version of your loved one", and just like Nate, we may want to "refuse to *sanitize* it anymore" (S.1, Ep.1). Death has to be clean (*A cleansing ritual* [S.2, Ep.10]) and look like the dead body of a woman whose face has been reconstructed by Rico: *She really is your Sistine Chapel* (S.1, Ep.8).

This reinvention of reality is the potential danger of any metaphor which, by nature, is based on a highlighting—hiding process. But once again, it is not so much the metaphorical process *per se* that is dangerous, but the confusion of metaphor with reality, as Sexton puts it:

> It is not the fact that our perceptions are altered by our metaphors that makes them potentially dangerous; it is that we are too often unaware of this alteration. This then may be our challenge: to become conscious of the words we use in reference to our own death, and the deaths of those near to us, and then to realize where these comparisons may lead us.

Yet, as Enright (2005, 125) points out, this is a general phenomenon found in language: "[N]early every word in the language is, in one way or another, a terminological inexactitude. Which is part of their magic, and goes towards explaining the power of language". So, if euphemisms can be said to (re)invent reality, we may wonder whether there is a reality of death other than the terrible sadness one experiences when losing someone. No euphemism can conceal that . . .

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"Mad I am not" . . . or am I? Poe's Voices of Madness

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It is generally agreed that Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales* gave his contemporary readers a radically new vision of insanity. As such, they stand as a landmark in the history of literature, and generations of critics have since praised Poe's genius and ability to put to writing "the disintegrative vibration" (Lawrence 21) of the human mind. From the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s, Poe's narrators' demented stories provided an unprecedented insight into extreme states of minds,[1] shattering the frame of rationality. Poe's approach to madness is ambivalent. While anchored in the Romantic tradition according to which the creative imagination is visionary and designed to trigger a profound resounding echo in the psyche, it simultaneously anticipated the popular trend in the 1960s and 70s which was to consider the madman as a seer, one for whom the doors of perception have been flung wide open. Some, such as neo-gothicist Patrick McGrath, also see Poe as a forerunner of Freud's case studies and the latter as a mere "usurper" of Gothic insights into the psyche.[2] Yet one would beg to differ, as it seems that the power of internal focalization in Poe's most celebrated tales of madness outdo, from a reader-response perspective, Freud's clinical descriptions in the third person, no matter how unsettling they often are.

As Shoshanna Felman observed, there is in Poe's tales of madness something of a "uniquely striking and undeniable manner, what might be called a *genius-effect*: the impression of some undefinable but compelling *force* to which the reader is subjected" (120). The word "manner" here seems to call for further development. First, Poe's manner can be

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1. With the exception, perhaps of some of Brockden Brown's most deranging narratives, particularly *Wieland,* yet with a somewhat lesser degree of intensity.

2. In "Transgression and Decay" (1997), he writes that: "The wealth of psychological insight that the Gothic raised from the darkness of the unconscious [. . .] was usurped by Freud" (McGrath 1997, 157)

understood as a means to reach a goal, as a method, a method in madness, as it were. The written representation of the madman's inner speech is an extremely challenging task, not to say an impossible one, at the outer limits of representation. The texts of diagnosed "mad writers" such as Nerval, Artaud and to a lesser extent Woolf or Joyce, provide arresting examples of authentic representations of "l'infini turbulent", to use Henri Michaux's phrase. However, in the case of a writer like Edgar Allan Poe, who never was clinically diagnosed as insane, the situation is different. For him, the aim of the writing is not the unleashing of wild inner voices, but the careful, controlled and conscious elaboration of the madman's discourse, which was to provide a paradigm for the literary representation of all the psychopaths or "moral monsters" (McGrath 1991, 240) that were to flourish in the late 19th century and still abound today in contemporary literature. This leads us to consider the second meaning of the word "manner", as Poe's "uniquely striking and undeniable manner" is primarily linguistic, as words are the stuff his madness is made of. Baudelaire, in his famous *Notes sur Edgar Poe*, thus commented that he was no less than "le premier Américain qui, à proprement parler, ait fait du style un outil" (1019).

The aim of this paper is to suggest that Poe's "genius effect" lies primarily in his linguistic creativity. "Berenice", "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat", the three tales under study here rank among Poe's most famous. They all are confessional narratives purported by psychopathic first-person intradiegetic narrators, often murderous ones. As such they share not only thematic features but also what Genette called the narrative mode and are thus apt for stylistic and linguistic comparison. On a diegetic level, they could almost be seen as perfectly identical. Does this also hold true on a linguistic level? How do these three tales linguistically stage madness?

First, it is important to bear in mind that Poe was writing at a time when psychiatry was only just emerging. In her compelling study of Poe's contemporary discursive framework, Elizabeth Phillips observes that the poet was most likely to have read two main books of his time dealing with mental disorder, namely Benjamin Rush's *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind* (1812) and Isaac Ray's *Treatise on the Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity* (1838). In spite of his fascination with interior entropy, Poe was not really acquainted with contemporary psychiatric science of his time. His approach to mental decay was primarily poetic and literary, his main concern being the "metaphysics

of mania".[1] Elizabeth Phillips rightly observes that "[Poe] shows no awareness of medical theories connecting 'dissipation' with mental disturbance; the language in which he described the disturbance predates that of early nineteenth-century 'psychiatry'"(102).

The word "psychiatry", according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* did not appear in the English language until 1846, that is to say very shortly after the stories were written. Accordingly, this lexical item does not feature in any of Poe's tales, while phrenology is mentioned repeatedly in "The Imp of the Perverse". On the other hand, a grotesque story such as "The System of Dr Tarr and Professor Fether" suggests some acquaintance with Pinel's modern therapeutic practices. The contextual and discursive framework in which the stories were written is obviously of some significance for a study of Poe's "linguistics of madness"; it shows at least that the madman's speech was going to be as heuristic as poetic. The coining of the adjective "*psychal*" in the tale "A Magnetic Revelation" (1844) is, as Henri Justin (220-226) rightly observes, first evidence of the poet's intuitive anticipation of the future linguistic tools of psychoanalysis.

1 The vocabulary of mania and pathology in "Berenice"

"Berenice" was published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1835, that is to say close to ten years before the other two—something French readers are usually unaware of, as Baudelaire's *Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires* (1857) totally upset the chronological order of the stories' publication. Its significance in Poe's dealing with demented narrators is essential "because the story launched him in the kind of subject matter he was later to treat with unquestionable coherence, lucidity, and skill" (Phillips 120). It must therefore be seen as the prototype or blueprint of the later two, which are arguably his most famous tales of madness. Interestingly, the language of "Berenice" is far less agitated than that of the other tales studied here. The dominant mood is one of profound melancholy.[2] Reading it, one does not feel immediately confronted with the voice of a madman. The opening lines are solemn, with a ponderous simile verging on the parable, followed immediately by a reflection of a narrator questioning his singular, sombre mood:

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1. This sentence is taken from "The System of Dr Tarr and Professor Fether" and was rather inappropriately translated by Baudelaire as "la physiologie de la folie".

2. It is well-known that melancholy was seen as one the main mental afflictions before the birth of modern psychiatry. The word, however, is only used once in the story in the physical description Berenice, insisting on the "reigning **melancholy** of the countenance" (194, my emphasis).

> Misery is manifold. The wretchedness of earth is multiform. Overreaching the wide horizon as the rainbow, its hues are as various as the hues of that arch,—as distinct, too, yet as intimately blended. Overreaching the wide horizon as the rainbow. How is it that from beauty I have derived a type of unloveliness? (189)

Aegus, the intradiegetic narrator, strives for logic and refined words in most of the story. Sentences are often long, the syntax extremely intricate, only interrupted by dashes—an aspect to which we shall return—and one long succession of exclamations, yet one which reads more like a rhetorical lament, a mournful ode, than a demented speech:

> Berenice!—I call upon her name—Berenice!—and from the grey ruins of memory a thousand tumultuous recollections are startled at the sound! Ah! vividly is her image before me now, as in the early days of her light-heartedness and joy! Oh! gorgeous yet fantastic beauty! Oh! sylph amid the shrubberies of Arnheim!—Oh! Naiad among its fountains! (191)

Immediately following this emphatic address to the departed one, the syntax becomes more ruptured and fragmented while simultaneously the word "disease" appears for the first time, and is repeated in the same sentence: "Oh! Naiad among its fountains!—and then—then all is mystery and terror, and a tale that should not be told. **Disease**—a fatal **disease**—fell like the simoom upon her frame" (191, my emphasis). This example of syntactic dislocation is however exceptional in the tale. "Berenice" does not exactly attempt to stage madness through syntactic innovations, it rather does so on a lexical level. The lexical item "disease" occurs repeatedly—6 times altogether—and is associated with "disorder" (193) and mostly "monomania" (repeated three times), the affliction Aegus is often remembered for. These items, together with other terms and descriptions, construct an elaborate and pervasive isotopy of pathology in the whole text, preparing for the grand finale, that is to say the achievement of the single effect Poe is justly famous for, in this case the ultimate periphrastic revelation that during the night he has savagely extracted all of Berenice's teeth with a spade.

At the time when Poe was writing, the word "mania" encompassed more or less all kinds of known psychopathological disorders. The diachronic evolution of the terminology is of course significant, and as Elizabeth Phillips remarks, Aegus, in today's psychoanalytical terms would be diagnosed as suffering from no less than "'schizoid tendencies' as well as tendencies to 'obsessional ruminations' and an epileptoid attack, followed, as is generally the case, by amnesia" (116). In

other words, the narrator is raving mad. Yet it must be stressed that this adjective—mad—together with the derived noun—madness—are entirely absent from the whole story, unlike in the two later tales.

To complete this lexical survey of psychopathology in the tale, let us also note the use of the word *phantasma* (italicized, moreover) during the climax of the narrator's anxiety as Berenice, seized by a violent epileptic fit, is struggling for her life:

> And the evening closed in upon me thus-and then the darkness came, and tarried, and went—and the day again dawned—and the mists of a second night were now gathering around—and still I sat motionless in that solitary room; and still I sat buried in meditation, and still the *phantasma* of the teeth maintained its terrible ascendancy as, with the most vivid hideous distinctness, it floated about amid the changing lights and shadows of the chamber. (195)

Phantasma, a word that has existed in the English language with its current spelling since the 16th century, is, like misery, manifold. First, it can refer to a spectral apparition, a ghost-like vision, an image, in the sense of the Greek etymology. Accordingly, the phrase was translated by Baudelaire as "*le fantôme des dents*" (334). Could it have been otherwise, given that the translation predates by almost half a century the second, psychoanalytical meaning of the word, where *phantasma* refers to a creation of the imagination or fancy, a fantasy[1]? Similarly, can the modern reader but help reading "the *phantasma* of the teeth" as "*le fantasme des dents*" rather than their "*fantôme*"? Isn't Poe here successfully exploiting this particular lexical item for the literary representation of madness, thereby anticipating Freudian phantasmatic narratives? Gothic spectres become figments of a demented mind and gothic tropes are internalised—"Berenice" is consequently not only the first tale to stage a demented narrator, it is also the first text inclined on turning the physical material into mental material, starting with Berenice's teeth, Aegus "seriously believ[ing] *que toutes ses dents étaient des idées*[2]" (195). In a similar fashion, language had to adapt this internalization process; by, for instance, turning ghosts into fantasies.

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1. Although the *OED* provides the following definition, dating back to 1656: "Phantasm is that, to which we are attracted by that frustraneous attraction, which happens in Melancholy or Mad Persons". Such a definition does seem to bridge the gap between the spectral and the psychological.

2. In French in the original text.

2 Madmen in "The Black Cat" and "The Tell-Tale Heart"

In "The Black Cat", another famous tale of psychological terror, the word phantasm is used twice, and its spelling slightly updated. The two occurrences seem to illustrate the word's semantic ambivalence; the first one leaning on the psychological—the narrator mentions "some intellect (. . .) which will reduce [his] phantasm to the commonplace" (563)—while the second is definitely more spectral: "I could not rid myself of the phantasm of the cat", he says after murdering Pluto (567). Yet the "The Black Cat", written eight years after "Berenice" shows a clear evolution in Poe's linguistics of madness. To begin with, the word "mad" inaugurates the narrative, occurring twice in the opening lines:

> For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not—and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburden my soul. (563)

The famous authoritative statement "mad am I not", whose grammatical inversion annihilates the originally intended denial of madness through a process of double negative (grammatically negating what is firstly semantically negated), is arguably Poe's best achievement in his literary tackling of madness. It certainly is the most economical. Besides, his rejection of dreams gives evidence of Poe's choice of method in the literary handling of insanity. Unlike Nerval, whose *Aurelia* (1855) relies extensively on dreams to convey the quality of unconscious experience and seeks to "develop a metamorphic style that recreates the processes of mental pathology, particularly schizophrenia" (Feder 248), Poe's efforts to reach the fluctuations of the unconscious are carried out through a conscious manipulation of language. Isn't madness, after all, "an over-acuteness of the senses", as the narrator of the "Tell-Tale Heart" puts it (315)?[1] In Poe's tales, extreme rationality, no matter how destructive, becomes the gateway to insanity. This of course is one of the factors allowing to rank Poe among the *fantastiqueurs* as in such stories, one is led to wonder whether "la folie n'est pas en fait une raison supérieure" (Todorov 45).

Although no sane reader could possibly doubt that Poe's narrators are insane, the latter keep negating their conditions, particularly in the later tales and most vehemently in "The Tell-Tale Heart". Published in *The Pioneer* in 1843, this tale is probably that in which Poe's linguistics of mad-

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1. This exact same phrase is also used in "The Fall of the House of Usher".

ness are used most inventively and experimentally. As such, it pioneered a whole generation of texts which were thereafter to give literary texture to the inner representation of the collapse of the psyche such as Patrick McGrath's *Spider* (1991), written a century and a half later.

The differences in language, style, tone and pace with "Berenice" are blatant. Melancholy and emphasis yield before the urgency of the speech. A mere glance at the incipit suffices to illustrate this change of strategy:

> True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses— not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (313)

While the narrator uses the same rhetorical strategy as in "The Black Cat", consisting in denying madness the better to indirectly assert it, the linguistic changes are evident. In a very "un-Poesque" fashion, sentences are kept extremely short and there is in these lines an immediacy that is totally absent from the tortured confession of Aegus and even from the anonymous narrator of "The Black Cat". As D.E.S. Maxwell observes, "The hysterical energy of the opening sentences (. . .) is authentically colloquial, modulating to the speaking tones of insanity, which impinges on the outer world in the experience" (81). Elizabeth Phillips even goes on to suggest that the composition of these lines may have been written so as to mimic the pulse of the madman in the pace of the prose, as Benjamin Rush noted in his *Inquiries* that "the [madman's] pulse is twenty beats more frequent than in the natural state" (quoted by Phillips, 142). How much more inventive could one be in order to offer, through diegesis, a mimetic representation of the internal entropy, some fifty years before the discovery of the unconscious?

Though the shortest tale of the selection, "The Tell-Tale Heart" abounds with linguistic and stylistic devices aiming at conveying a sense of madness. Addresses to the reader are recurrent: "You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen *me*." (313)/ "And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but an over-acuteness of the senses?" (315)/ "If you still think me mad, you will think it no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the conceal-ment of the body" (316). However, in a deliberately perverse fashion[1]

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1. In this case, what may be termed a "discursive double negative": the addressee is told he is not dealing with a madman by the narrator, yet what he is told cannot be told but by

these obsessive addresses only serve to reinforce the assumption that one is indeed dealing with a madman.

Repetitions are numerous. They come close to saturating the whole text, which once again may be a way for the writer to mimic the mental short-circuit of the madman. One particular repetitive structure is found in qualifiers. On several occasions, an adjective is repeated after a dash with the double adjunction of the adverb. Such qualifying phrases almost become a *leitmotiv* in the story:

> I moved it slowly—very, very slowly . . . (313)
> I resolved to open a little—very, very little crevice . . . (315)
> It was open—wide, wide open . . . (315)

Another repeated adjective is the comparative "louder", the loudness being of course that of the old man's heart, the eponymous tell-tale heart of the story. To illustrate the growing sense of anxiety and panic subsuming the narrator, Poe sets up a crescendo effect by repeating the adjective first twice, then thrice, and finally four times until the final revelation:

> But the beating grew louder, louder! (315)
> It grew louder, louder, *louder*! (317)
> hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder!* (317)

Repetitions in "The Tell-Tale Heart" thus end up denoting the mental entrapment of the protagonist in his own madness. While on a clinical level, the psychopathic tendencies of the narrator compare very much with that of Aegus in "Berenice", the language of the tale, though less ornate, is nonetheless far more intent on producing what may have been, in Poe's mind's eye at least, the violence of the madman' inner voice. With this tale, Poe is also proving inventive on a narratological level. From the tormented, memoir-like confessions of a diseased mind as found in "Berenice" and arguably in "The Black Cat", we seem to have moved to a raw, dynamic representation of madness at work in language. The final paragraph of the "Tell-Tale Heart", with its countless repetitions, interruptions, exclamations and hesitations, verges on the stream-of-consciousness as the deluded aural perception drives the delirious narrator to confess his deed. In this case, not only do we read a first-person report of mad deeds, we almost hear the madman think aloud thanks to a narrative technique that verges on free direct speech. The only significant difference between Poe's text and free direct speech (or interior monologue) is that we remain in a retrospective confession

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a madman. Hence the narrator is mad, and his denial is further evidence of this.

and that the tense used is the simple past, not the present. However, even this confession is somewhat challenged by Poe at the end of his paragraph, with the return to the present tense in an assertion of certainty: "Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think" (317). As a result, the sense of urgency, not to say panic, taking hold of the narrator is made quite palpable. From today's postmodern vantage point, it is rather interesting to re-read this entire paragraph substituting the present for the past. The effect is striking; one feels almost propelled in *Fight Club* (1995), Chuck Palahniuk's frantically fast-paced inaugural novel, often hailed by America's "Generation X" children as their own literary manifesto.

3   The role of the dash

One characteristic of free direct speech—a typically modernist technique, and thus not usually associated with Romantic or Gothic writers—is the use of a ruptured, almost syncopated syntax aimed at mimicking the instability of the human train of thoughts. One linguistic tool enabling this instability is the dash. Contrary to the full stop or the comma, which generally convey an impression of control, the dash neither closes nor connects; on the contrary, more often than not it "wreak[s] havoc on the sequentiality or the usual logic of linear progression" (Dayan 173). As such the dash would seem a rather appropriate tool for the written expression of interior entropy. It would almost be an understatement to say that Poe makes an extensive use of the dash in the three tales studied here. Whether it be in "Berenice", "The Black Cat" or "The Tell-Tale Heart", the use of the dash is as constant as it is pervasive. There are 82 dashes in "Berenice", 68 in "The Black Cat", 66 in the "Tell-Tale Heart" (a proportionally speaking high incidence, with one dash for roughly every 30 words). This paralinguistic sign often occurs mostly in moments of great mental agitation, as for instant when the narrator of "The Black Cat" discovers the real nature of the mark on the animal's chest:

> It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name—and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster had I dared—it was now, I say, the image of a hideous—of a ghastly thing—of the GALLOWS!—oh, mournful and terrible engine of Horror and of Crime—of Agony and of Death!

In this short passage (65 words only) there are no fewer than 6 dashes, by far the most frequent punctuation mark, compared with four commas, two exclamation marks and, most tellingly, no full stop. In "Berenice", a text which, as we said earlier, is more solemn and written in a more refined and ponderous prose than the other two, dashes become the agents of disruption, the very *élément perturbateur* of the text's flow. As in "The Tell-Tale Heart", dashes are primarily used to support repetitions, or, as we saw before, when the narrator mentions the irruption of the disease. Yet dashes take on a remarkable force at the end of the tale, when the menial arrives to tell Aegus about the night's events:

> What said he?—some broken sentences I heard. He told of a wild cry disturbing the silence of the night—of the gathering together of the household—of a search in the direction of the sound;—and then his tones grew thrillingly distinct as he whispered me of a violated grave—of a disfigured body enshrouded, yet still breathing, still palpitating, still alive! He pointed to garments;—they were muddy and clotted with gore. I spoke not, and he took me gently by the hand;—it was indented with the impress of human nails. He directed my attention to some object against the wall;—I looked at it for some minutes;—it was a spade. (197)

With one dash for every ten words approximately, this linguistic sign is hard to overlook. Interestingly, it is associated with speech, language and perception. Aegus only hears some "broken sentences" (note the inversion of the word order as well) at first, and the dash seems to represent what he does not hear. In the later part of this excerpt, however, the dash becomes associated with the narrator's own perceptions or mental processes, denoting perhaps the mental progress toward the unspeakable deed he committed during the night, or possibly standing for the sole graphic sign able to represent what is going on in the mind of a schizophrenic subject, one who, as French psychoanalyst Paul-Claude Racamier notes, is doomed to spend his time trying to set down his demented experience: "Écrire intérieurement sa vie, chacun le fait sans cesse, le névrosé le fait en hiéroglyphes, et le psychotique sur un écran qui ne prend pas l'encre" (192).

Conclusion

It seems possible to draw from the preceding observations a certain number of partial conclusions regarding Poe's literary handling of madness. First, the significance of the intellectual background in which Poe was writing must be insisted upon. It is remarkable that Poe was writing

his tales of mental disorder at the exact same period when psychiatry was emerging as a science. Yet Poe, who was above all a poet, dealt with madness primarily from an intuitive and aesthetic angle. His main aim was to trigger in the reader an aesthetic response, located somewhere between Gothic terror, Burkean sublime (the two being of course connected) and interior transcendence. Secondly, and still in keeping with the fact that Poe was writing in the first half of the eighteenth century and was thus unaware both of the notion of the unconscious and of the distinction between signifier and signified, one must reassert in Poe's tales of madness the implacable supremacy of the conscious over the buried layers of the psyche. In those three tales, one has to recognize, as Daniel Hoffman did with *The Fall of the House of Usher*, "the apocalypse of the unconscious, as told by the conscious mind" (177), and thus the unique nature of Poe's linguistics of madness. Thirdly, this paper has endeavoured to avoid the question of whether Poe as an individual was mad, which has occupied critics and biographers alike for several decades. It is a well-known fact that ever since Marie Bonaparte, Poe has been the unfortunate victim of many psychobiographical readings, and even Elizabeth Phillips' essay does not always avoid this pitfall. To try and establish a clinical diagnosis from a literary production seems a flawed endeavour to start with, especially if one fails to take into account the unbridgeable gap that separates the author from his narrators. Let us therefore rather enjoy the workings of an over-acute creative mind and become convinced, like the two policemen at the end of "The Tell-Tale Heart", by the poet's remarkable *manner*.

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Conclusion

If, according to Quintilian, language is based on four elements (reason, authority, antiquity and usage), as **Gilles Siouffi** reminds us in his paper, on page 126, then the separation of any of these aspects from the others can only lead to a partial study of the linguistic substance. Yet, historically, the first two elements have tended to be separated from the last two, drawing a wedge between a linguistics based on general and reasoned principles organised according to a system tending to be detached from any particular context (as epitomized by *La Grammaire générale et raisonnée* of Port-Royal), and a linguistics concerned with particular usage, deeply aware of language evolution (Vaugelas warned that his own analysis could only last 30 years, asserting that language is made anew every 20-30 years), which implies that the job is constantly in need of redoing. Focussing on interpretation, **John E. Joseph** draws a similar picture, in his claim that the way desires and opinions are expressed and transmitted have always been perceived as "trivial" in the study of language, on page 104. The search for a unique, "true" interpretation that would be *authoritative* precisely because it was revealing the author's intention was a way to block the path to the personal interpretations of individuals. Is it for a return to Reason or to some form of authority in linguistic matters that Laura (Riding) Jackson abandoned unreliable poetry for the security of univocity, as **Anett Jessop** shows us here? The ex-poetess seems indeed to adopt a conservative stance, perceiving in ambiguity the potential for harmful misinterpretation. Her book *Rational Meaning* that she regarded as "the only medicine", on page 71, belongs to a long tradition of attempts at arresting the uncontrollable proliferation of meaning and thereby curing humanity, reminding users of their responsibilities as regards the words they use. "Come, Words, Away / I am a conscience of you" is a line extracted from one of her poems that seems particularly revealing of her love ("come") / hate ("away") relationship with language and her struggle to keep words consciously at

bay.

What some of the papers gathered in this volume tend to demonstrate is that the separation between "serious" and "folk or poetic/ literary" linguistics—which is linked to the establishment of linguistics and literature as separate disciplines[1]—can prove to be detrimental to the study of language itself. **G. Siouffi** shows that when scientific considerations have been linked to "fantasy" (defined as not based on scientific facts that can be tested), the alliance is more "thought-provoking" than any scholastic treatise can be, on page 124. Likewise, **Judith Munat** shows here and elsewhere that the strict distinction between rule-governed linguistic invention and fictional erratic creations should be reconsidered. Indeed the nonce lexical creations that seem to be "falling outside the system" might be "less rule-breaking that might initially be thought."[2] Predictable lexical productivity cannot be very rigorously distinguished from unpredictable creative lexical items "as all are created from the 'connections made among related stored items'."[3] Most often than not what appears to be literary creations in fact turn out to put the system to the test or "exploit" it rather than completely transgressing its limits, which brought **Sandrine Sorlin** to call the linguistic inventor a linguistic *bricoleur* as she tended to make do with what is at hand, on page 89. **Gilles Chamerois** takes a step in the same direction in somehow comparing Pynchon to a cabinet maker who the more he carves or embellishes the linguistic substance the more he reveals "the raw wood" of which it is made, on page 135.

It is in this questioning or renewal of traditional conceptions that an inventive linguistics would aspire to inscribe itself. **Jim Walker** proposes to displace the notion of creativity—very much associated with Chomsky and focused on the creator/author—to give pride of place to that of inventiveness that would take into account the effect of linguistic invention on the listener/reader. In the author's own terms, inventiveness would be "rule-governed creativity renewed and highly thought of", on page 161. It would lie in the positive response given by others to the inventive formation. He mentions the immense pleasure experienced by young children when watching CBeebies programmes (repeating the double suffixed phrasal verbs like "mucker upper" for hours on

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1. In France, "linguistics" used to comprise both what was called Grammar and the *Belles Lettres* that got separated into "linguistics" on the one hand (the word first appeared in Germany in 1780) and "literature" as we know it now on the other (established as a separate discipline in 1820).

2. Judith Munat, "Lexical Creativity as a Marker of Style", in J. Munat (ed.), *Lexical Creativity, Texts and Contexts*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing, 2007, p. 168.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 167. Munat follows R. Fisher and J. Bybee (quoted here).

end). Their popularity might be due to their euphonic quality—**J. Munat** describes such lexical creations as "phonologically funny." It might be that bodily affects speak here directly through the metrical pattern of these formations alternating strong and weak syllables, which **Andy Arleo** elsewhere regards as universal in children's counting rhymes.[1] In his article here, **A. Arleo** shows how linguistic alienation might be exploited to the full in the singing of a meaningless language with no identifiable grammar categories (Dogorian) that yet elicit in the singers meanings that are both personal and universal (like fraternity and solidarity). The author shows that the adults were at first more reticent than the teenagers to sing in this imaginary language, which confirms children's particular receptivity to inventiveness, adolescence being, as **A. Arleo** reminds us, "a period of linguistic experimentation, innovation and play, as has often been noted in relation to teenage slang and secret languages", on page 50.

Laure Gardelle, in her historical study of linguistic reforms on pronouns, throws new light on what we call a "correct" expression by adding a sociolinguistic dimension (following James Milroy). The notion of "correct" is not here associated with "correct" usage conforming to the rules of grammar but is transferred on the "usage" side: it is linked to the feeling the speakers have that there is something *right* about their use of a particular pronoun. If "she" for a ship when referring to "a rusty tanker" in front of us might be insulting to a woman, **L. Gardelle** shows that for the layman this use "should not be read as semantically motivated by the immediate cotext", on page 115. Thus the updating of language to make it coincide with a politically correct society is not an argument convincing enough for a whole community to accept the change. Usage has much to do here with tradition ("antiquity" in Quintilian's terms). The author also shows that the struggle of feminists to invent a new epicene pronoun is not a new one; although not concerned with inventing a new pronoun as a tool against discrimination, grammarians have struggled with the incoherence of a system lacking such a pronoun in generic reference to men and women (campaigning against the use of "they" for such usage). Seventy forms at least have been invented since the 18th century to deal with the lacuna, most of them being "a reassignment of existing tools", on page 116, confirming the general trend noticed so far in matters of linguistic innovation. This need to equip language with what is missing might find an echo in Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*: **G. Chamerois**

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1. Andy Arleo, "Do children's rhymes reveal universal metrical patterns?", *Bulletin de la Société de Stylistique Anglaise* 22 (2001): 125-45.

shows how such verbs as "obligate" and "variate" fill in the vacancy between "oblige" and "obligation," and "vary" and "variation" as America proclaims its "manifest destiny" to occupy new geographical as well as linguistic territory, on page 140. The social dimension of inventiveness is also underlined by **J. Munat** in her study of lexical creations that have a bonding effect within a family or a community. Among these private inventions, we will remember the creation of a verb composed of a well-known proper noun and a derivational suffix: "Busherise" meaning "to make a lexical error like Bush", on page 154.

Denis Jamet gives us a clue as to why language *needs* to be endlessly renewed. Working on euphemisms or dysphemistic metaphors aiming at "releasing the pressure" created by the reality of death, he shows that new euphemisms are invented to replace old ones that have lost their euphemising effect through constant usage. We thus forget that "undertaker" was itself a euphemism now superseded by such expressions as "grief therapists" or "bereavement counselors," at least by the heroes of *Six Feet Under* working hard at embalming language as much as bodies, on page 178. To push the metaphor of a "deodorizing" language further, we might say that every now and again another spray of the linguistic deodorant needs to be activated if the embalming effects are to pursue their function. If, as **D. Jamet** recalls, metaphor has the potential to highlight certain aspects (while inevitably hiding others), it can bring forth elements that were previously hidden from view. In that sense it works like the agrammaticalities of Deleuze's stylistics, apt to displace frontiers, bringing to the surface what is beneath "the certainties of the positive syntactic field," as **Jean-Jacques Lecercle** puts it, drawing on Grauer's notion of "antax", that is the underlying "negative" field of syntax, compelling the reader to perceive "another subversive *Gestalt*", on page 30. The contrast is striking between this approach of style as a re-invention of syntax and Laura (Riding) Jackson's yearning for univocity and accuracy. In the poem "The World and I", Jackson desperately tries to say what she means: "This is not exactly what I mean / Any more than the sun is the sun / But how to mean more closely / If the sun shines but approximately?" (see, by contrast, **J-J. Lecercle**'s analysis of Beckett's first sentence in *Murphy*: "The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new", on page 30). If, as **J-J. Lecercle** makes clear, linguistic alienation—as experienced here by L. R. Jackson—cannot be escaped, it can however be played with. The very exploitation of the contradiction between (linguistic) constraints and liberty that Judith Butler reunites in one expression ("enabling constraints") is the best strategy that **J-J. Lecercle** knows of against linguistic alienation. Among many other examples, he shows

how American poet Alex Dickow's bilingual poetry manages to reveal "the genuine creativity of poetic language" in subverting the syntax of the two major languages, letting other "Englishes" or "Frenches" appear, on page 30. Powerful "linguistic imagination" has the merit of shaking our brains and keeping on renovating our way of apprehending the world.

This is precisely through exposition to unknown (non-European) languages that Benjamin Lee Whorf was able to perceive that there were alternative ways of getting in touch with the world, opening his mind, as **J. Joseph** recalls, to "new interpretative possibilities", on page 101. Posterity has wrongly associated Whorf with the so-called "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" according to which our language would determine or orientate our way of thinking about things: in his exploration of linguistic otherness, the author argues, Whorf has nothing of a "controller" or a "limiter", on page 101. Experience of "bilingualism" is also what might characterise the poetics of diasporic literature displaying linguistic hybridity, an optimistic way to disalienate language, according to **J-J. Lecercle**, but one that has strong limitations. Drawing on Shklovskij's equation between linguistic transparency, automatisation of discourse, lack of aesthetics and therefore small possibility of change, **Sandhya Patel** comes very close to offering a similar pessimistic conclusion in her analysis of linguistic hybridity (Samoan/English) in Albert Wendt's *The Mango's Kiss*, on page 44. Indeed the more we read, the less hybrid the language becomes, as if Wendt was giving up on linguistic opacity in favour of a progressively transparent English to signify that the Samoan specificities are progressively disappearing into the all-English credo. But disalienating the English language itself is possible and even required when faced with the challenge of portraying mental alienation like the one described in Poe's tales by **Jocelyn Dupont**. While the narrator appears to have total mastery over himself and his conscience, his madness is yet stylistically signified, as Poe uses style itself—there is no invented lexical items in the tales—to progressively make the reader share the urgent "rhythm of the madman's pulse", on page 195. Through repeated stylistic devices and an apt use of punctuation, Poe renders panic and anxiety. He linguistically stages mental disorder most powerfully at the very same time, **J. Dupont** recalls, when psychiatry was emerging as a scientific discipline.

We could come to the conclusion that linguistic invention is what fills a gap, or rather, what brings to the surface areas that have been left in the shadow, offering new paths of exploration. This is also what **Gérard Mélis** shows in his re-evaluation of Saussure, Benveniste and Culioli's theoretical links, not describing the evolution in terms of epistemological ruptures but in terms of "re-invention." The author indeed

perceives the lacunae, aporias or dead ends of the preceding theories as starting-points or "opportunities for reformulations and displacements, which are conditions of possibility for inventions", on page 78. If Benveniste developed a theoretical framework of *parole* that Saussure left aside, more concerned with the linguistic sign itself, Culioli in turn de-compartmentalizes Benveniste's distinction between semantics and semiotics, perceiving language as an unconscious activity whose traces can be perceived in the utterances we produce. In an after-symposium discussion with the author, as I asked him whether there was room in Culioli's theory for reinvention, **G. Mélis** pointed out that in her collection of interviews with A. Culioli, Claudine Normand mentions the fact that Culioli uses the terms "discursive" and "text" (oral/written), but not "discourse" or "textual"[1] thus indicating a lack of symmetry between noun and adjective forms that might be a clue as to a possible theoretical lacuna in the Culiolian text and prove to be the basis of further elaborations about the relationship between textuality and *l'énonciatif*.

In its desire to remain open to all aspects of language, an inventive linguistics should aim at such re-formulation or re-organisation both inside and outside its frontiers. Its first objective would be to acknowledge the contradiction constitutive of language; language does show regularity in usage but it is at the same time produced by rules that are changing and changeable (putting into question Chomsky's notion of invariable rules). **J-J. Lecercle** sums up the paradox in a nutshell—language is a "system of variations."[2] It cannot be immobilized since it is always, as **G. Chamerois** mentions in Pynchon's prose, in the "Passage" between fixed categories, on page 142. This is part of the "magical power" of language to always leave some void, some lacuna for a new item to spring up, as nearly every word is "a terminological inexactitude" (D. Enright cited by **D. Jamet** on page 185). To isolate language from what can potentially disrupt it or prevent a "true" scientific analysis is to run the risk of furthering linguistic alienation, which might lead to the complete reversal pointed out by **S. Sorlin**: "looking in on language from a scientific observation-platform" (to quote Laura Jackson's conception of scientific linguistics), one might *invent* an object that is disconnected from the strings that gave birth to it and should be carrying on bringing life to it (what the author calls cases of "inventedness"), thus creating a "fiction" of language; on the opposite, fictional language in literature tends to come closer to "real" language as it is lived out and evolving in the real world. In closing in on itself, lin-

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1. Antoine Culioli & Claudine Normand, *Onze Rencontres sur le langage et les langues*, Gap, Ophrys, 2005, p. 89.
2. J-J. Lecercle, *Une philosophie marxiste du langage*, Paris, PUF, 2004, p. 132.

guistics might become solipsistic and the linguist might face the same fate as the poet in **J-J. Lecercle**'s tale going mad because he realised he had written in a language that existed nowhere, on page 20.

Rather than the inoperative distinction between "serious" and "fantastic" linguistics, we might more simply view things in terms of "theory" and "practice," and we know that both feed on each other to evolve—this is here that linguistics can be compared to science. Just as "practice" can and does question and qualify "theory," theoretical tools are invaluable elements to help us out on our analysis of (practical) linguistic experience (oral utterances like written texts). There is no transgression of linguistic frontiers possible if one does not know where the delimitations are but this does not imply that the frontiers are established once and for all. This view of things might prevent the relegation of what is deemed as less "serious" to the margin, as **J. Walker** remarks about the reduplicated -er suffixation certainly dismissed from analysis for being "colloquial" hence "somehow less worthy of serious consideration", on page 166.

To come full circle and go back to the "interdisciplinary" dimension of this conference mentioned in the introduction, we will conclude by recognizing the utopian element present in the idea of bringing together people from different disciplines and have them work with each other. Institutional disciplines cannot easily be moved. Yet interdisciplinarity demands that the barriers between them be dissolved. In Barthes' definition indeed, interdisciplinarity "does not consist in confronting already constituted disciplines (as none in fact is willing to abandon anything of itself). To be really interdisciplinary, it is not sufficient to take up a topic (a theme) and to convene two or three sciences. Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to nobody."[1] This book is just a first and modest step on the way to a possible reorganisation or breaking down of the partitions in our approach to language with, in view, this new "object" belonging to nobody that remains to be (re-)invented. . . .

<div align="right">Sandrine Sorlin</div>

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1. Roland Barthes, "Jeunes chercheurs", *Le Bruissement de la langue*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1984, p. 106, my translation.

Notes on Contributors

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Gilles Chamerois is a former student of the École Nationale Louis Lumière and *agrégé d'Anglais*. He teaches Film and American Literature at the University of Brest. He once worked in the film industry and collaborated with Élise Ouvrard on a book on *Jane Eyre* (Paris: Atlande, 2008), writing the part on the film adaptation. After a thesis and articles on *Mason & Dixon*, he edited a collection of articles on Thomas Pynchon's following novel, *Against the Day* (`www.graat.fr/backissuespynchon.htm`).

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Denis Jamet is Professor in English Linguistics and Head of the English Department at the University of Lyon (Jean Moulin). He also taught French at the University of Georgia (USA) and at the University of Auckland (New Zealand). His research interests include metaphorical language and thought, euphemistic language, and English word-formation processes. He is the author of various books: *Idiomes et proverbes: d'un minéral à l'autre* (Spratbrow, 1996), *L'Épreuve de linguistique à l'agrégation interne d'anglais* (Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2008), *L'énonciation métaphorique en anglais et en français* (Lambert-Lucas, 2009) and the editor of *Mélanges en hommage à Malcolm Clay* (Université Lyon 3, 2008), *Métaphore et perception* (L'Harmattan, 2008), *Dérives de la métaphore* (L'Harmattan, 2008) and *Empreinte de l'euphémisme: tours et détours* (L'Harmattan, 2010). He is also the founder and Editor of *Lexis, E-Journal in English Lexicology*: http://screcherche.univ-lyon3.fr/lexis.

Anett Jessop earned a Master's Degree at the University of Minnesota and is completing her doctorate at the University of California, Davis, USA. Her dissertation, "'The Linguistic Ultimate': Laura Riding's Way to Language," evaluates the literary and philosophic opus of American poet-turned-linguist Laura (Riding) Jackson. Since her death in 1991, there have been several posthumous publications of Riding's writings on language, most notably her massive lexicological study, *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words* (University Press of Virginia, 1997). While Riding is an acknowledged contributor to Modernist poetry and a literary forerunner of what would become New Criticism, her linguistic work (some still in manuscript) has received virtually no critical evaluation. This dissertation will position Riding's intellectual works in a discourse with 20th century philosophies of language and linguistic theory.

John E. Joseph is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. In 1980-1981, while completing his PhD at the University of Michigan, he was exchange lecturer in English and linguistics at the Université de Montpellier-3. From 2005 to 2008 he held a Major Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust. His books include *Eloquence and Power: The Rise of Language Standards and Standard Languages* (New York: Blackwell, 1987), *Limiting the Arbitrary: Linguistic Naturalism and its Opposites in Plato's* Cratylus *and Modern Theories of Language* (Amsterdam &

Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2000), *From Whitney to Chomsky: Essays in the History of American Linguistics* (John Benjamins, 2002), *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) and *Language and Politics* (Edinburgh University Press, 2006). He has edited a four-volume collection on language and politics (*Language and Politics: Major Themes in English Studies*, London, Routledge, 2010.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Paris in Nanterre where he used to teach English literature and linguistics. He has worked at the frontiers between literature and linguistics ever since his doctoral work on the Nonsense. A specialist in Victorian literature and the philosophy of language, he is the author of *The Violence of Language* (Routledge, 1990), *Philosophy of Nonsense* (Routledge, 1994), *Interpretation as Pragmatics* (Macmillan, 1999), *L'Emprise des signes* (with Ronald Shusterman, Seuil, 2002), *Deleuze and Language* (Palgrave, 2002), *Une philosophie marxiste du langage* (2004), *The Force of Language* (with Denise Riley, Palgrave, 2005).

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Jim Walker is a Senior Lecturer in English language and linguistics at the Université Lumière Lyon 2. His doctoral research was on the sociolinguistics of French and he has since researched and published both on the ideologisation of the French language by the Far Right in France and elsewhere, and on non-standard syntax and morphology in English. His particular focus is the use of the present perfect in English, both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective, and on the influence of standardising processes on language use.