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Mastery in servitude:
Representations of Hegel's Phenomenology in late-
Victorian fiction

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Mastery in servitude: Representations of Hegel's Phenomenology in late-Victorian fiction

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ÖZ

Bu tez, Joseph Conrad'ın **Heart of Darkness** (1899), Robert Louis Stevenson'ın **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** (1886) ve Oscar Wilde'ın **The Picture of Dorian Gray** (1890) isimli yapıtlarını G. W. F. Hegel'in **Phänomenologie des Geistes** (1807) kitabındaki efendi-köle diyalektiği bölümünün perspektifinden okumayı, bu yapıtların geç-Victoria dönemindeki kültürel konumlarını belirginleştirmeyi ve sözü edilen yapıtlarda üslup, karakterler oluşumu ve Hegel'in fikirleri arasında nasıl belirgin bağlantılar kurulduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Hegel'in efendi-köle diyalektiği şeması, yalnızca fiziksel bir efendiye değil, bir kültür ve dile hizmet etmenin anlamını okumak amacıyla da kullanılabilir; üçü de Britanya'nın çevre kültürlerinden gelen yazarlar, Hegel'den öğrendikleri diyalektiği farklı biçimlerde içselleştirmişlerdir ve bu çalışma bu içselleştirmenin kapsamını ortaya koymaktadır.

Giriş bölümü, Hegel düşüncesinin geç-Victoria döneminde alımlanışını özetlemeye ayrılmıştır. Birinci Bölüm, Hegel'in **Phänomenologie des Geistes**'deki kuramını açıklar ve Conrad'ın **Heart of Darkness**'ındaki karakterlerin nasıl gönüllü köleler haline gelip efendi konumlarını inşa ettiklerini yakın okuma yöntemiyle gösterir, öte yandan "ses" ve sözellik kavramlarının Conrad için önemini inceler. İkinci Bölüm, Stevenson'ın **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**'inde servet, efendilik ve iktidarın ele geçiriliş biçimlerinin nasıl metne örüldüğünü araştırırken Stevenson'la Conrad'dan hangisinin daha "modern" bir teknikle çalıştığını tartışır. Üçüncü Bölüm, Wilde'ın **The Picture of Dorian Gray**'inde kölelik ve efendiliğin doğa, botanik ve portre sanatıyla karşılaştırılarak işlendiği bir edebi stratejiyi tarif eder. Sonuç bölümünde

Hegel'in diyalektik fikrinin ge-Victoria dnemi yazarları tarafından iselleřtirildiđi ve yalnız karakter, olay örgüsü ve edebi teknik kullanımında deđil, kendi konularını belirginleřtirmede de kullanıldıđı vurgulanmaktadır.

**Mastery in servitude: Representations of Hegel's Phenomenology in late-Victorian
fiction**

Kaya Genç

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to read Joseph Conrad's **Heart of Darkness** (1899), Robert Louis Stevenson's **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** (1886) and Oscar Wilde's **The Picture of Dorian Gray** (1890) in the light of G. W. F. Hegel's **Phänomenologie des Geistes** (1807). Hegel's work defines in detail the master and slave dialectic; I use this concept to read three major late-Victorian texts. Subjecting them to meticulous close-reading, I undertake to clarify their cultural contexts and show the elaborate intermingling of literary style, character motivation and Hegelian dichotomy in their structures. Interpreting Hegel's master and slave dialectic as something broader and more abstract than a singular relationship between a specific master and slave, I look at the implications of a more general servitude to culture and language.

In the Introduction, I sketch a portrait of the reception of Hegel's ideas in late-Victorian Britain. The first chapter discusses relevant parts of **Phänomenologie des Geistes** before examining how Conrad's protagonists in **Heart of Darkness** constitute their master and servant positions through being hailed to ideology. Their voluntary servitude is mediated through the use of sound, and this leads to a larger discussion about the significance of sound in Conrad's text. The second chapter describes methods with which wealth, mastery and power are inherited in **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**. I then discuss whether Stevenson's text is more "modern" than Conrad's. In the third chapter I attempt to show how nature, botanics and the art of portraiture are used in **The Picture of Dorian Gray** as parts of the process of mastery and servitude;

they kickstart a broader discussion about temporality which I analyse in detail. The conclusion shows the extent to which Hegel's dialectics have been internalised by those late-Victorian authors. Their works attest to how they have struggled to master the literary and political context to which they belonged.

FOREWORD

Writing this thesis took five years, during which time I was a voluntary servant to various institutions, including a national newspaper, numerous publishing houses, around half a dozen British and American literary magazines and the Turkish Military, where I served as librarian of a gendarme squadron. The crux of my argument, that the notion of servitude is a defining feature of literary texts as well as the understanding of their contexts, was repeatedly affirmed, if not thoroughly proven, during those experiences. Servitude to the professional discourse is a quality expected in both journalism and military. Only those who imitate the prevalent grammar of the present institution are awarded promotion in its ranks and this comes at the expense of losing one's own voice. While writing a thesis, the student of literature takes part in a similar experience where the previously unfettered and unruly capacities of argumentation, text analysis and critique are subjected to centuries old rules, and restrictions, of English literary studies. This process leaves the student, in accordance with Hegel's ideas, more liberated, for need of a better word.

Numerous masters, in university and the media, made it easier for this servile student to complete his Hegelian thesis. My editor at Sabah newspaper, Elçin Yahşi sympathised with my frequent excursions to the university campus for PhD meetings; she was among a number of friends who showed understanding for my growing immersion in the works of a set of authors whose literary affinities dominated my ideas more than anything, even at times when they were needed elsewhere.

Professor Murat Seçkin, my fellow Wildean in the English department, immensely contributed to the writing process, as did the helpful comments of Buket Akgün, my fellow PhD candidate.

Yelin Bilgin, whom I met in the first year of the PhD programme was there for me from the beginning to the end, and it is to her that this thesis is dedicated.

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INTRODUCTION

Much academic work has been done about the ideas of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel but very little about his influence on late-Victorian literature. J. B. Baillie's first complete English translation of **Phänomenologie des Geistes (Phenomenology of Spirit)** appeared as late as in 1910, more than a century after the German original was published in 1807 but a number of English excerpts were available in Victorian England where Hegel's name had already made its mark. In fact, Hegelianism had become the current trend in British philosophical fashion during the late-Victorian era and the period between 1875 and 1915, in which the three texts that I will discuss in this study were published, had seen such an overwhelming ascendancy in the interest to his ideas that Hegel's name could scarcely be ignored or avoided in intellectual circles. For Victorians, Hegel represented many things, not always positive and often dangerously foreign, but his role remained indisputably influential. In this work, I will show the extent of the influence of Hegel's ideas in arguably the most popular texts of three late-Victorian authors; in Joseph Conrad's **Heart of Darkness**, Robert Louis Stevenson's **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, and Oscar Wilde's **The Picture of Dorian Gray**.

In none of these texts is Hegel's name directly mentioned, nor his ideas openly discussed. As is often the case with late-Victorian literature, Hegel's influence mostly plays a structural rather than a contextual role. His ideas, concepts and methods, not being openly referred to, are embedded into characters, plots, literary tropes and what T. S. Eliot has defined as objective correlatives.¹ It will be in those compartments that I will trace Hegel's influence and attempt to see how the ideas of dialectics and

¹ T. S. Eliot, **The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism**, London, Faber and Faber, 1997, p. 85.

phenomenology played formative roles not only in those works but also in literary discussions of prominent late-Victorian authors, to which group Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde belonged.

In his essay on the critical reception of Hegel in Britain during 1830-1900, Kirk Willis argued that the diffusion of German thought in Victorian cultural life had been "entirely neglected" as an academic subject.² In his historical account of Hegel's influence in that era, Willis showed how the German philosopher's ideas were damned as "pernicious or nonsensical" by some authors while being embraced by others. The crucial point made by Willis is that Hegel had been initially introduced to his Victorian audience as an aesthetic theorist and not as a philosopher. He was associated with the appreciation and critique of German literature which had remained almost totally inaccessible to Britons who did not speak the language.

This inaccessible and distant position of German culture began to change during 1820s and 30s, when authors like Thomas Carlyle, Samuel Coleridge and William Hazlitt showed interest in Germanic works. A 1842 essay by George Henry Lewes, which focused on Hegel's **Aesthetik**, helped increase interest in Hegel, as did Bernard Bosanquet's English translation of Hegel's introduction to this work.

After his concepts became known among Britain's intellectual circles, Hegel was often interpreted as a metaphysical philosopher and his ideas were seen as detrimental to the prestige of British rationalism. 1846, the year George Eliot's translation of David Friedrich Strauss's **Leben Jesu** appeared in English, marked "the beginning of the serious study in Britain of at least one aspect of Hegelian thought"³: the book featured an extended chapter on Hegel's philosophy while Strauss, who was among the most ardent followers of the German philosopher, attempted to continue the dialectic tradition through his own work.

² Kirk Willis, **The Introduction and Critical Reception of Hegelian Thought in Britain 1830-1900**, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 32. No. 1 (Autumn, 1988), p. 85.

³ **Ibid.**, p. 94.

Another factor that intensified Hegel's influence on late-Victorian audiences was the lack of a major philosophical figure in that era—William Hamilton, James Frederick Ferrier, Henry Longueville Mansel and John Stuart Mill, the leading philosophers of the era, had all passed away at the time. This meant "Britain was without a dominant philosophical figure; it lacked not merely a thinker of the stature of Kant or Hegel, but even a single individual of the standing of Rudolph Hermann Lötze, Friedrich Paulsen, or Christoph Sigwart."⁴ Even though Hegel, with his reputation of a metaphysical, foreign and often dangerous philosopher, had little chance of filling the void, the need for a major European thinker was apparent for many.

It was in this same period that Hegel's political stance became the subject of various discussions. Initially described as a political conservative and an apologist for Prussian militarism, Hegel gradually came to be associated with Karl Marx, who set out terms of his dialectical materialism using frequent references to **Phenomenology**. This helped change the former's status as conservative philosopher and a new image of Hegel as the revolutionary thinker, who is essentially and eternally dangerous for Britain's order, emerged. As Willis succinctly puts it, "in the eyes of many well-informed late Victorians, Hegel stood condemned for an incomprehensible and contradictory crime: as apologist for Prussian militarism and as logician for Marxian revolutionism."⁵ His subsequent redefinition with adjectives like Jacobinical and irreligious, produced a new image of Hegel that directly negated what various authors identified as quintessentially British values.

Nevertheless, in the cases of Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde, Hegel's ideas played an inspirational role, as is apparent from the thoroughgoing interest they showed to the master and slave dialectic. Hegel had appropriated the ancient concept of dialectics to modernity and described power relations between subjects through this perspective;

⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 101.

⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 105.

those late-Victorian authors transported the dialectic into the sphere of late-Victorian fiction where it was used to reflect the status of the modern individual whose struggle for mastery in arts, sciences and politics was identified to have a Hegelian form.

Their interest in Hegel's ideas can partly be described by the "outlandish" status of these authors. Neither of them came from the centre of the empire, they all had peripheral backgrounds (Conrad was born in Ukraine, Wilde in Ireland and Stevenson in Scotland) with a shared interest in continental ideas and philosophers. As foreigners to London's literary world, they were forced to master their host culture as well as its language and literary conventions. In other words, they took pleasure in the foreignness of Hegel's influence, while identifying with the servant character whose transformation into mastery Hegel meticulously described.

My analysis focuses on a close-reading of their texts, which I believe reflect their cultural contexts. While discussing the effects of what Homi K. Bhabha has christened as the "location(s) of culture"⁶ on those texts, my analysis retains its focus on finding literary tropes that best reflect binary structures. It is through this technique that I hope to show how the master and slave dialectic was woven into their discourses. I read those texts as fictional representations of Hegelian ideas, among other things. My reading relies on the basic premise that those works dramatise the following questions: (i) how does one overcome his cultural, financial and political limitations and become a master figure in a given environment? And, (ii) upon achieving the status of mastery what does one do with it, and to whom does one transmit it? (iii) Finally, who is it at the end that inherits this mastery—is it indeed a servant, as Hegel argued?

Marlow, Jekyll and Dorian, the protagonists of those texts, are all masters of their domains. Gradually they are challenged by external influences and ideas that unsettle their positions. Those influences and ideas annihilate them once their mastery is transmitted to the servants who undermine them. It is thanks to the influence of Kurtz,

⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, **The Location of Culture**, New York, Routledge, 1994.

Hyde and Lord Henry that Marlow, Jekyll and Dorian can be turned into servants. Marlow, the narrative authority in Conrad's text, becomes servile to Kurtz's ideology. Jekyll, the esteemed surgeon and master of his surgical theatre, is dominated by the dark pleasures of the underworld represented by Hyde. Dorian's financial and social position attest to his masterly status that is gradually undermined by his extreme submission to artificial pleasures.

While these plot structures can safely be interpreted through Hegel's terminology, the dialectical patterns I identify in the texts are not limited to plot and character. The authorial positions of Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde in their late-Victorian context, repeat the Hegelian pattern, as do their struggles with literary forms in which they produced their works. During the thirteen year period in which those three texts were published, the future prospects of British fiction was subject of numerous intellectual discussions. The texts themselves are manifestations of a will to master a specific language, literature and culture.

Literary and aesthetic problems in those texts are parts of a broader dialogue in between authors. Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde have attempted to master literary form. In this struggle they became subject to Hegelian imperatives. Their attempts at dominating their texts result in their extreme submission to those artificial constructs. As their struggle for mastery continue, it becomes clear not only *what* they are inheriting but also from *whom* they are inheriting it.

It is in this light that I look at fundamental components of literary composition, like narrative point-of-view, stylistic devices, diction, figures of speech, symbolism, tone and imagery, trying to see how those compartments were influenced by the internalised Hegelian dialectics. In all those compartments the Hegelian idea of mastery through servitude played a crucial role. In their late-Victorian context, Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde had internalized the master and slave dialectic to such an extent that they saw little alternative to it.

None of these texts are told entirely from the perspective of first person narrators. Nevertheless, Conrad and Stevenson use the technique with different results. While Wilde's text embraces the Flaubertian and Jamesian tradition of detached narrators, psychological realism, and a point of view rendering of scenes, Conrad's text attempts to resurrect the pre-modern tradition of oral story telling. Stevenson's text, which I believe is the most elaborate construct of all three, is more inventive and varied in its approach towards modern and pre-modern literary traditions which it dissects and unsettles.

When the term "master" is used in relation to late-Victorian and Edwardian literature, and in the context of the English novel, it is generally taken to refer to Henry James.⁷ James's legacy as *the* Master of English novel continues to this day. While he remains, to a large extent, an absence throughout this study, many techniques, concepts and ideas associated with the Master surface in certain parts. While participating in the Hegelian struggle for mastery in which they tried to master their cultural contexts and literary techniques, Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde come to terms with *the* Master who had cast a shadow over their work.

What begins in this study as an ontological and phenomenological analysis of self-mastery eventually turns into a discussion of literary form and technique. The terms of the discussion are materialised in the notions of voice, movement and image. I believe they are crucial and essential parts of the formal problems discussed in this thesis.

How can the text represent the voice? How can it render movement into its structures? Is it possible for the text to produce a similitude of the visual image? As voice, movement and image are concepts very much embedded in those texts, I decided to organise this study under headings related to those concepts. The problem of representing voice is the centrepiece of Conrad's **Heart of Darkness**. **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** is formally and thematically focused on the phenomenon of

⁷ Michael Gorra, **Portrait of a Novel: Henry James and the Making of an American Masterpiece**, New York, Liveright, 2012, p. xix.

movement. **The Picture of Dorian Gray** has at its core the problem of representing temporality in literature.

While compartmentalising the study into three, conceptual parts, I picked three objective correlatives from the texts, which I magnified at the beginning of each chapter, before attempting to read the remainder of the works through the focus they provided.

Having transported Eliot's concept of objective correlative to the field of philosophy, I used a concept, the act of "hailing", which appears in the French philosopher Louis Althusser's book **On Ideology**. It provides a useful apparatus for appropriating the ideological crux of Hegel's argument to a contemporary setting. Apart from those imports from philosophy, I tried to stay at the field of English studies, struggling to master the desire of stepping over the line.

CHAPTER 1

VOICE: THE “SPEAKING-TRUMPET” AND SPIRALS OF IDEOLOGY IN HEART OF DARKNESS

“But you are afraid of yourself; of the inseparable being forever at your side—master and slave, victim and executioner—who suffers and causes suffering. That’s how it is! One must drag the ball and chain of one’s selfhood to the end. It is the price one pays for the devilish and divine privilege of thought; so that in this life it is only the elect who are convicts—a glorious band which comprehends and groans but which treats the earth amidst a multitude of phantoms with maniacal gestures, with idiotic grimaces.”¹

1.1. A vision of sounds: Conrad’s dialectical aesthetics

Joseph Conrad is a Hegelian in disguise. Arguably his most controversial text, **Heart of Darkness** is the best example of his many dramatisations of the struggle between mastery and servitude. Oppositions in between sights and sounds and masters and servants are woven together into the text while Kurtz and Marlow, the protagonists of the book, impersonate antithetical roles. Using contrasts and oppositions, Conrad devises a form of literary impressionism that illustrates the process with which subjects are hailed to ideologies and reveals how body, speech and text are used in this hailing process. In **Heart of Darkness**, ideology and aesthetics are intermingled, revealing the manner in which visions and sounds can be made to serve power and to its deconstruction.

Conrad lays a specific focus on those distances; it is through those distances that I will discuss his deconstructive practices. To show what I understand by the term distance, I will elaborate on a specific example which illustrates the main problematics

¹ Joseph Conrad, letter to Marguerite Poradowska, dated 20 July 1894. **The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol 1. p. 162.

of the text. The symbol of the speaking-trumpet, which first appears towards the end of the text, highlights Conrad's concerns about distance, sound, repetition and agency. I will approach Kurtz's hail as well as Conrad's modernism through the specificity of this trope.

In the final part of **Heart of Darkness**, Charles Marlow wakes up shortly after midnight and finds the object of his quest lying before him, conveniently unarmed, almost begging for being captured. Amidst an "audible" silence he comes upon Kurtz who rises "like a vapour" in stark contrast to a "noisy" background abound with a "murmur of many voices."² The scene presents overlapping layers of sounds and images; there is an air of uncertainty as to whether Marlow's experience belongs to the sphere of reality or that of a dream. Kurtz instructs him to go away and hide himself from the natives. But we know that it is an impossible demand; Marlow will need to interrogate Kurtz in order to fulfil his duty and in the process will capture the essence of his voice. He asks a simple a question to him—"Do you know what you are doing?"—and Kurtz's response comes in the deceptive form of an adverb that reveals the nature of his political rule in Congo. Kurtz maintains a specific configuration of order around the Inner Station, where he is located, precisely through his use of language and grammar.

'Perfectly' he answered raising his voice for that single word; it sounded to me far off and yet loud like a hail through a speaking-trumpet.³

Kurtz utters a single word, which is an adverb that speaks of perfection. His response is articulated in a raising voice through the agency of a single word. Rather than uttering the simple present form of the verb "to know" (he does not say "I perfectly

² Joseph Conrad, **Heart of Darkness**, New York and London, A Norton Critical Edition, 2006, p. 65.

³ **Ibid.**

know what I am doing”) Kurtz uses an adverb which defines an absent verb. He claims to know “perfectly” what he is doing but this is in fact a moment that expresses his physical as well as psychological downfall. Kurtz is a ruined, and sick man who is about to be assassinated; therefore the “perfectly” knowledge of his actions strikes a particularly false note in his present circumstances. He declares knowing “perfectly” the meaning of his actions, thereby laying claim to his mental faculties which are here associated specifically with his capacity of knowledge.

Kurtz’s utterance is defined by Marlow who analyses and locates its origins. We are told that it comes from “far off” but as Marlow and Kurtz are physically close, the expression “far off” can hardly be literal. Instead, it can be i) metaphorical, reaching from the “far off” depths of one’s own person to an other; or ii) temporal, reaching from a place temporally different from the present time of its utterance. Which is to say that Kurtz’s utterance should be “far off” either because of a metaphorical or a temporal distance in between its territorial and temporal location and the territorial and temporal location of its addressee. Therefore the sound cannot belong to the present time or to the present territory. Being far off it should come “from a difference” and that difference is a distance. The text describes the response to have come “far off” not to any person but specifically to the addressee (“sounded to me far off”, is how Marlow specifies it). This particular addressee hears the sound from a particular distance whose nature remains unspecified. But how has that distance been created and what textual meaning does it serve?

This unspecified space was wrongly seen by many of Conrad’s critics as an example of his stylistic eccentricities, or flaws.⁴ In fact, this space is an expression of Conrad’s musical impressionism. As a foreigner in England, Conrad was well-placed to appreciate how language was used in the creation of an English subject. He was intimately familiar with the affinities of language, ideology and identity; in **Heart of**

⁴ Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979, p. 21.

Darkness, as in his other fictions, he represented the manner in which an individual is forced to internalize those cultural artifices in order to become an English subject. This provided him with the privileged knowledge about how sound and articulation were crucial parts of language. It seemed as if without a proper accent and proper articulation of English words, it was not possible to become a proper English subject. This knowledge of the aural aspect of English language also employed him with another kind of knowledge: ideology and political power influence their subjects in ways that are similar to those experienced by a learner of the English language. There are distances in between hailing and hailed subjects as well as in between native and foreign speakers. These distances provide the space necessary for literary experimentation; as a life-long learner of the language, Conrad was well-placed to reveal this linguistic and political process.

The trope of the speaking-trumpet is among the most carefully devised in Conrad's text. Its main function is to produce temporal and metaphorical distances. Kurtz's response to his addressee, whom we know is placed "afar" from that sound's origin, is a good example of how effectively the trope is used in the text. Kurtz's response comes through repetition. It echoes on the river Thames and a group of listeners can hear it. Those listeners can testify to Kurtz's answer sounding to them to be "far off" at the present time of the narration. This sound, once having been "far off" for its sole hearer, presently dominates its expended circle of addressees. At the moment of its utterance we witness a sign of distance ("far off") metamorphosing into one of proximity ("right here").

But how can Kurtz's distant voice dominate the present time and location of a hearer, in this case Marlow? I will focus on the enunciation of Kurtz's response with this question in mind; , the manner in which language is pronounced and is heard throughout the text are matters of utmost importance. Only by revealing the crucial role played by enunciation can I reveal the specific "aurality" of Conrad's modernism, which produces a musical, rather than literary or visual, aesthetics of impressionism.

Marlow makes clear for his listeners that Kurtz's single adverb was uttered not in a single, raised utterance but in a "raising" voice. The degree to which Kurtz knows himself is therefore expressed in a word which sounds briefly like an adjective ("perfect") before revealing itself as an adverb. But is it possible for us to certainly know the "truth" behind Kurtz's enunciation? Is that even the voice of a proper speaker of the English language?

We know that Kurtz speaks to Marlow using English words. About the particularities of his English we are left in the dark. The text has informed us about how "the original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and—as he was good enough to say himself—his sympathies were in the right place". The offspring of a half-English mother and a half-French father, Kurtz may or may not be speaking English "perfectly".⁵ But there is a correlation in between his "perfectly" response and his mastery. This correlation leads us into questioning the extent to which Kurtz is a master of his mental, physical and linguistic faculties. As one of his fundamental attributions in the text is that of a "voice", we need to define whether it is an active or a passive voice and ask how it can come from so "far off" when its origin is spatially so close.

1.2. Strategies of distance: Trumpets and binoculars

Collins Dictionary defines the speaking-trumpet as "a trumpet-shaped instrument used to carry the voice a great distance or held to the ear by a deaf person to aid his hearing".⁶ Like a megaphone or a "loud hailer" it functions as an instrument which concentrates the sound of its speaker to a specific direction. A more extensive definition is provided by **Encyclopedia Britannica's** 1911 edition.

⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 49.

⁶ "speaking trumpet." **Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition**, HarperCollins Publishers, 12 Dec. 2011, <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/speaking-trumpet>>.

The speaking trumpet, though some instrument of the kind appears to have been in earlier use, is connected in its modern form with the name of Athanasius Kircher and that of Sir Samuel Morland, who in 1670 proposed to the Royal Society of London the question of the best form for a speaking trumpet. Lambert, in the *Berlin Memoirs* for 1763, seems to have been the first to give a theory of the action of this instrument, based on an altogether imaginary analogy with the behaviour of light. In this theory, which is still commonly put forward, it is assumed that sound, like light, can be propagated in rays. This, however, is possible only when the aperture through which the wave-disturbance passes into free air is large compared with the wave-length. If the fusiform mouth of the speaking trumpet were half a mile or so in radius, Lambert's theory might give an approximation to the truth. But with trumpets whose aperture is only a foot in diameter at the most the problem is one of diffraction.

In the hearing trumpet, the disturbance is propagated along the converging tube much in the same way as the tide-wave is propagated up the estuary of a tidal river. In speaking and hearing trumpets alike all reverberation of the instrument should be avoided by making it thick and of the least elastic materials, and by covering it externally with cloth.⁷

This definition presents a distinction in between different functions of the device: it can be used both as a speaking and a hearing trumpet. The trumpet is defined primarily as a “transmitter” of sound, and the function of transmission proves is vital for the configuration of ideology in **Heart of Darkness**.

According to the definition, “sound” is essentially different from “light” but is transmitted through a method that bears its likeness. The behaviour of sound is presented in an analogy with light: in the likeness of light, sound is presumed to be “propagated” in rays. As an instrument and literally a tool for propaganda, the speaking-trumpet propagates in an analogy with light. In its verb form (“propagate”) propaganda is a process that involves breeding and transmission. It causes an organism to multiply or transmit characteristics from one generation to another.

In **Britannica**'s definition, the hearing experience is likened to a tide-wave's propagation “up the estuary of a tidal river”. The sound-wave functions as a tide-wave

⁷ Chisholm, Hugh, ed. "Trumpet, Speaking and Hearing". **Encyclopædia Britannica (Eleventh ed.)**, Cambridge University Press, 1911.

which creates formations and irregularities on the estuary of the tidal river. Sound breeds, multiplies and transmits ideology; hearing receives the sound-waves of that breeding, multiplication and transmission. Before their integration with the “open sea”, the estuary of the tidal river is formed by the tide-wave’s propagation.

Conrad introduces the image of an estuary in the first part of **Heart of Darkness**: “it was difficult to realise his [the Director’s] work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him, within the brooding gloom”. The estuary is positioned in a geographical opposition with darkness (the “brooding gloom”) and this way Conrad can attribute political significance to a natural formation.⁸ The propagation of sound reaches a hearer who is positioned in a marginal location “just behind” the open sea, in the specific form of waves.

The hail “far off” is not exactly a hail but rather “loud like a hail”. Marlow’s grammar connects these two qualities through the idiomatic “and yet”. “‘Perfectly’ he answered raising his voice for that single word; it sounded to me far off and yet loud like a hail through a speaking-trumpet”. Conrad’s use of a double conjunction marks “the voice“ to be simultaneously distant (far off) “and yet” close (loud). This effect is achieved by the hail’s specific technological function. We know the speaking-trumpet to have a double use: it amplifies the sound of the speaker and it can also aid the sense of his hearing. The device may simultaneously serve a speaker and a hearer, placed at its both ends. Alternately, it may involve a singular speaker or a singular hearer. Therefore the ability to be simultaneously “far off” and “loud” is established through this particular function of the speaking-trumpet.

The hail has initially been described with a simile: it is “like” a speaking-trumpet and thereby compared to it. This usage implies the classification of knowledge: through what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls a “metaphoric” principle, the classification of

⁸ Conrad, **op. cit.**, p. 1.

knowledge is established through comparisons on the rhetorical plane of Marlow's discourse.⁹

But why is the speaking-trumpet used in relation to this particular figure of speech? As Paul Ricoeur discusses in his **The Rule of Metaphor**, it was Aristotle who has presented "mastery" over the rhetorical device of metaphor as the sign of a great author. Only through perfecting mastery over this figure of speech could one become a genuine master of the poetic form. Aristotle's **Poetics** emphasise the relationship between the two:

It is a great thing, indeed, to make a proper use of the poetical forms, as also of compounds and strange words. But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor [literally: to be metaphorical, *to metaphroik on einai*]. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius [*euphuias*], since a good metaphor [literally: to metaphorize well, *eu metaphérein*] implies an intuitive perception of similarity [*to to homoion theôrein*] in dissimilars.¹⁰

Metaphor is a capacity for identifying the identical in the different and for identifying identity in difference. According to Ricoeur, metaphor is never mere ornament; it "bears information because it 're-describes' reality".¹¹ In other words the identity in difference is re-described through the agency of the metaphor. Reality, as well as its re-description, are defined in relation to difference and identity.

Conrad's speaking-trumpet, however, is presented through a simile. Rather than metamorphosing into it, it is "compared" to the speaking-trumpet. The choice of a simile creates a "distance" of comparison and through this use we understand that the voice is

⁹ Paul Ricoeur, **The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language**, London, Routledge, 1986, p. 24.

¹⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 23.

¹¹ **Ibid.**, p. 22.

not the speaking-trumpet but only comparable to it. Ricoeur finds in the essence of the “comparing” function of a simile its discursive character: a quality he exemplifies with the phrase, “Achilles sprang up like a lion”. In order to compare Achilles and a lion, “one needs two terms that are both equally present in the discourse — ‘like a lion’ is not comparison by itself.”¹² Conrad’s metaphorical speaking-trumpet similarly needs the existence of an other to which it may be compared. The general category of voice provides this object of comparison. It is only through the presence of both the voice and the speaking-trumpet can the present discourse make itself known to the senses.

Quoting Aristotle, Ricoeur argues that the proper function of the figure of speech is “to place things before the eyes” and this description closely resembles Conrad’s own artistic mission (“by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel-it is, above all, to make you see”) which he sets out in his preface to **The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’**.¹³ But Aristotle assigns to metaphor quite a different role. “Liveliness is got by using the proportional type of metaphor,” he writes, “and by being graphic [literally: making your hearers *see* things]”.

Marlow makes his hearers see things precisely through this “metaphorical” principle. But there is a second objective correlative which concerns the sense of sight: Marlow uses a set of binoculars for gazing at Kurtz. There is a fine distinction here in between two instruments: whereas the speaking-trumpet is a metaphorical instrument, the set of binoculars is a physical object. This distinction has aesthetic and ideological reverberations. Marlow can see enlarged visions of Kurtz through his binoculars in much the same way as we are presented with amplified sound-waves. It is thanks to this function that the binoculars can remove the distances.

It is less clear whether the speaking-trumpet is used for uttering or for hearing speech. After all, loss of hearing can force the hearer to use a speaking-trumpet (in

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³ Joseph Conrad, **The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’: A Tale of the Sea**, London, William Heinemann, 1898, p. xiv.

Britannica's definition, a hearing-trumpet) and this reverse function of the trumpet may assist Marlow in hearing Kurtz's "answer" more clearly. The hail is given to us as a pronoun ("it sounded to me") and the choice of the verb "to sound" can be interpreted as indicating both utterance and hearing. Speaking and listening thereby constitute a process with simultaneously active and passive agents. The hail, with its aural form, is a subject; Marlow, who is on the receiving end of the verb, is its object. This way the text can present the hail as both noun and verb. It is both the subject and the medium with which that subject reaches an object. This reflects the particular function of the "retained" distance in the speaking-trumpet. In verb form, sound retains a distance from its subject ("the sound") and thereby has a double function as agent and action. Only through this double function can the sound impose its specific order of words upon its subjects.

1.3. The hail, the spirit: Heart of Darkness and Hegel's Phenomenology

Kurtz's hail presents two major undercurrents which run throughout the text. It is simultaneously Hegelian and Althusserian. Because Althusser's critique of ideology has been strongly influenced by Hegel's ideas, it is easy to identify a fellowship between the Hegelian and the Althusserian. Althusser's project had incorporated many parts of its Hegelian variation. It was Althusser's critique which clarified, and updated, what Hegel has defined as a more abstract and "world-historical" movement in between lordship and bondage. Althusser made a connection between the bondage and the hail through a process he termed "interpolation".

In Hegel, bondage is an underlying, all-encompassing principle which applies to all human relations. In the second chapter of **Phenomenology of Spirit**, Hegel presents his concept of "Lordship and Bondage" and describes self-consciousness which lays the foundations of both one's self and its other. Hegel's understanding of self-consciousness had a lasting influence on Althusser's concept of hailing. In order to penetrate the

complexities of Althusser's theoretical toolbox, it is necessary to understand his definitions of these concepts.

Hegel's notion of self-consciousness emerges from the knowledge of the self. That knowledge is always "is with" the knowledge of the other. **Phenomenology** describes self-consciousness as existing "in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another".¹⁴ This description is fitting for the speaking-trumpet which shares many of its ideological functions. Like the speaking-trumpet, self-knowledge serves as an instrument of knowledge; we can hear the adverb that defines the verb "to know" through its techné. The speaking-trumpet exists in one or both of the double functions of self-consciousness. It exists in the hearing addressee (the Hegelian object) and in the speaking utterer (the Hegelian subject) at the same time.

Like Conrad's speaking-trumpet, Hegel's self-consciousness exists in being acknowledged. The process of acknowledgement, however, is more difficult to define. In Hegel's dialectic, acknowledgement corresponds to the phenomenological movement. As a movement "in" and "of" time and space, it is consequently temporal and spatial. The movement actualises itself in a process of self-acknowledgement. It is recognised only after the appearance of another self-consciousness which has come "out of itself".¹⁵

In losing itself, self-consciousness finds in this other self-consciousness "an *other* being". This process sees the supersession of that other being. As Hegel puts it, "it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self". Hegel then moves to the process of supersession itself. The superseded object constitutes "the other" of self-consciousness. "First, it must proceed to supersede the *other* independent being in order thereby to become certain of *itself* as the essential being; secondly, in so doing it proceeds to supersede its *own* self, for this other is itself".

¹⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, **Phenomenology of Spirit**, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 111.

¹⁵ **Ibid.**

In **Heart of Darkness** characters are shaped through sound and grammar. Kurtz is described frequently as a “voice” and “a name”; he embodies an intermingling of the action and the object, the verb and the noun. He supersedes his object through exploitative labour. As director of the Inner Station, Kurtz is one among many masters of the Company. His position is one of a commercial and political sovereign. Kurtz rules by his word and we know his word to take its legitimacy (its lawfulness) from the so-called Kongokonferenz of 1884. This historical event was used to annex some two million square kilometres to the property of Belgium’s King Léopold II. Association Internationale Africaine, established by the King, had supreme authority over the annexed territories and that authority was related closely to the particular word-orders of colonial masters. King’s hierarchical Association was run from the “sepulchral city” of Brussels. It gave immediate and unbounded authority to its large network of company directors whose words effectively served as law in their respective jurisdictions. While establishing an essential connection between the verbal and physical regimes of exploitation, **Heart of Darkness** also makes the crucial argument for a metonymic relationship existing in between the oral law of masters and their hail which imposes order on its subjects. In Conrad’s text, the uttered word is the law. Law is oral and is possessed by the word. One follows the word in order to remain in the domain of the lawful. The name possesses the word. In his turn, the master possesses the name.

In other words, Kurtz’s administration in Congo presents a grammatical order: self-knowledge belongs to a master whose name defines a hail. This hail reduces all others to the vulnerable position of its nameless, servile objects. The master’s word is at once all encompassing and specific. It comes from “far off”; it is distant but being a “loud” voice it is also omnipresent. It creates, retains, but also destroys, distances. It is precisely that far off and yet loud voice which Marlow has heard and to which he replied.

‘Perfectly’ he answered raising his voice for that single word; it sounded to me far off and yet loud like a hail through a speaking-trumpet. If he makes a row we are lost, I thought to myself. This clearly was not a case for fisticuffs, even apart from the very natural aversion I had to beat that Shadow—this wandering and tormented thing. ‘You will be lost,’ I said ‘utterly lost.’¹⁶

Our knowledge of Marlow’s journey is rendered through the filter of his orality. He is the “eye” as well as the “I” of the text; as a consequence of this specific role, Marlow is equipped with what Henry James has famously called “the double privilege of subject and object”.¹⁷ Performing an oral narrative, he is treated as an object of the text while being subject to its rules. We inhabit Marlow’s self-knowledge on the River Thames; our reading is “of” his knowledge and is characterised, restricted and consequently constructed by it. His voice and knowledge transmit bits of information to us. In terms of Hegel’s **Phenomenology**, his is the self-consciousness that comes across the other. His voice dominates our reading but it is Kurtz’s voice that dominates his.

In the quote above, Marlow confesses to fearing a row and a fist fight with Kurtz. But why does he feel “a very natural aversion” to beat “that Shadow” which is defined as a wandering and tormented thing? This is in fact a perfect illustration of the Hegelian death struggle between the master and his bondsman.

According to Hegel, when self-knowledge supersedes its other, the movement that follows makes an ambiguous return into itself. “For first, through the supersession, it receives back its own self,” Hegel writes, “because by superseding its otherness, it again becomes equal to itself; but secondly, the other self-consciousness equally gives it back again to itself, for it saw itself in the other, but supersedes this being of itself in the other and thus lets the other again go free”. Marlow also needs to supersede his other (Kurtz) to become “equal to itself” and turn into a master.¹⁸

¹⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 65.

¹⁷ Henry James, **The Ambassadors**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, xlii.

¹⁸ Hegel, **op. cit.**, p. 111.

For Hegel, the complete opposite of this proposition must also be true. Initially, Conrad's text seems solipsistic in the sense that it presents Marlow's self-consciousness as the only possible self-knowledge that can exist. In fact, the phenomenology of one self-consciousness is equally present in all others, as each and every one is equally independent and self-contained. Conrad acknowledges this when he presents us with the existence of not only Kurtz's self-consciousness but also that of the unnamed narrator who turns Marlow into its own object.

We know "this wandering and tormented thing" to be the other of self-consciousness. In Marlow's case, the tormented other is Kurtz but in the case of the narrator it is Marlow himself. This echoes Hegel's dialectics which involve a double movement that applies to two, separate self-consciousnesses. "Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same".¹⁹ This movement is defined by a double recognition. The self and its other recognise themselves as "*mutually recognising one another*". Here springs forth two extreme positions: a passive, "recognised" role and an active, "recognising" one. These roles can also be expressed in terms of "speakers" and "hearers," "addressers" and "addressees" who are placed in the opposite ends of the speaking-trumpet.

1.4. The fist fight: a life-and-death struggle

The fist fight, much anticipated and feared by Marlow, corresponds to the life-and-death struggle in Hegel's phenomenology. This struggle brings two texts closer. It binds them together and reveals the specific nature of Marlow's struggle against Kurtz.

Why is Marlow so afraid of the fist fight? Why is he afraid to supersede his other and become a master when the occasion finally arrives? In Hegelian terms, this is the result of the disintegration of a unity into two halves. These halves are defined as

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

“subject” and “object”, named according to their internal relations. Hegel’s recognising self is defined as an “individual” while his other is an unessential, “negatively characterised object”.²⁰ Conversely, this “other” object is an equally similar self-consciousness. Hegel’s dialectics prefers the present to the absent. As the “other” is always absent, the recognising self can continuously take advantage of being spatially and temporally present.

Conrad reverses the Hegelian precedence of the present over the absent and presents Marlow’s narrative as one in which the absent hail overwhelmingly dominates a present agent. This reversed dialectic brings us back to **Phenomenology** where both the present, recognising self and its absent, recognised other remain convinced of their own self-consciousnesses but not “of” the other, thereby remaining purely “being-for-self” in themselves and never quite becoming “being-for-other”. In other words, their “being-for-other” roles are reserved to moments of presence while the “other” has to be annihilated. “In so far as it is the action of the *other*,” Hegel writes, “each seeks the death of the other”.²¹

The confrontation between the master and the bondsman is fatal for both sides. As Marlow seeks the death of Kurtz while Kurtz similarly seeks the death of Marlow. In Conrad, Hegel’s metaphorical “seeking” becomes an increasingly physical affair. In **Heart of Darkness**, Marlow’s “seekings” for his object through numerous gazes have an intricate design. In order to carry out these searches, Marlow employs binoculars and uses them extensively during the third part of the text. The penultimate part ends with the image of Harlequin’s eyes which create an introduction to the final part where we finally “see” the origin of the hail. Harlequin’s eyes are again defined by the adverb

²⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 113.

²¹ **Ibid.**

“perfectly”: they are perfectly round, blue eyes. This description is followed by Marlow’s gaze which is “lost in astonishment”.²²

These gazes emphasise how Conrad presented “seeking the death of the other” as a twofold process in the manner of Hegel. As in Hegel, both parts seek not only the death of their others but more crucially the death of their own “selves”. If the action against the other is also an action on one’s “own” self-consciousness, the resultant death is both the death of self-consciousness and that of the speaking-trumpet.

The crucial point in Hegel’s phenomenology appears when he describes two separate individuals who “prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle”.²³ Engaging in this struggle, individuals raise their certainty of being for themselves. In Hegel’s phenomenology it is only through “staking one’s life that freedom is won”.

The gesture of death is equally a gesture of emancipation. Hegel proposes that “the individual who has not risked his life may well be recognised as a *person* but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness”. Therefore the aggressive strike against the other is the precondition of the self-structuring manoeuvre of any self-consciousness. In Hegel’s dichotomy, the inevitable conclusion of the relation between a self and its other, both staking their lives in the struggle for existence, is annihilation. Each self-consciousness seeks his own death and following this “trial by death” each puts an end to their lives.

During their life-and-death struggle, Marlow’s response to Kurtz’s adverb (“perfectly”) reads both as warning and threat: ““You will be lost,’ I said ’utterly lost.’” Kurtz knows “perfectly” and loses himself “utterly”. In Hegelian terms, Kurtz’s loss provides Marlow with autonomy and a right to self-consciousness. But before achieving those privileges he needs to die and lose his previous consciousness which retains its

²² Conrad, **op. cit.**, p. 54.

²³ Hegel, **op. cit.**, p. 114.

attributes as a servile object. Hegel illustrates the confrontation between the perfectly knowing subject and its utterly threatening “other” when he describes the process of self’s split into two halves as “two opposed shapes of consciousness”. In this description “lord” is defined as the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself while the “bondsmen” is described as “the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another”. From that moment onwards the lord is “the consciousness that exists *for itself*,” his existence mediating itself through the consciousness of the bondsmen. The nature of the bondsmen “is to be bound up with an existence that is independent”.²⁴ Their relation is mediated by an independent being which holds the bondsmen in bondage.

This independent being provides a crucial bond with the hail: “It is his chain from which he could not break free in the struggle, thus proving himself to be dependent, to possess his independence in thinghood.”²⁵ Because he possesses the vessel which mediates their relationship, the lord can hold the bondsmen in subjection. His “chain” provides a secondary vessel which is employed to keep his “other” in bondage. The vessel of subjection had been his own self-knowledge, represented by the speaking-trumpet; now a second vessel appears in the image of the chain which corresponds to Kurtz’s hail.

The former bond in between the master and his bondsmen can be likened to Marlow’s self-knowledge which we saw to have been objectified in the speaking-trumpet that carries the voice of a master. This Hegelian invention—the chain—demands a new objective correlative which is part of the speaking-trumpet while being slightly different from it. The “chain” and the “hail” fulfil the same function. Only through this hail can Marlow remain trapped in a mechanism which Hegel describes as a

²⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 115

²⁵ **Ibid.**

chain. The hail and the chain of language outlive the annihilation of both Kurtz and Marlow.

In other words, Conrad uses a simile (the speaking trumpet) in order to create a space where he can compare things and focus on Kurtz's voice. This voice is described as a hail which can create and destroy distances, constituting a vessel for the flow of ideology. It is similar to Hegel's concept of self-consciousness; Conrad's metaphorical speaking-trumpet fulfils a similar function.

Once the Hegelian lord is recognised by the bondsman, the confrontation is taken to a new stage. "The other consciousness sets aside its own being-for-self, and in so doing itself does what the first does to it". For the lord, the bondsman's essential nature is to exist only for himself. In Hegel's terms the labour of the lord is "pure" whereas that of the bondsman is impure and unessential. Therefore the recognition which takes place in this process is an unequal one.²⁶ According to Hegel, the bondsman is servile because he takes lord for his essential reality. A similar "essential reality" defines Marlow's self-knowledge throughout his journey on the Congo river. His metaphorical speaking-trumpet amplifies the knowledge of the master. The hail of Kurtz is transmitted through the speaking-trumpet, defining the position of Marlow.

Over the course of his servitude to the master, the bondsman "rids himself of his attachment to natural existence in every single detail, and gets rid of it by working on it."²⁷ The bondsman's self-consciousness, therefore, is constituted *through* labour. Hegel concludes this point by proposing that "through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realises that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own". Therefore the acquirement of self-consciousness is the result of annihilation and the subsequent reconstruction of one's own self.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117

‘Perfectly’ he answered raising his voice for that single word; it sounded to me far off and yet loud like a hail through a speaking-trumpet. If he makes a row we are lost, I thought to myself. This clearly was not a case for fisticuffs, even apart from the very natural aversion I had to beat that Shadow—this wandering and tormented thing. ‘You will be lost,’ I said ‘utterly lost.’ One gets sometimes such a flash of inspiration, you know. I did say the right thing, though indeed he could not have been more irretrievably lost than he was at this very moment when the foundations of our intimacy were being laid—to endure—to endure—even to the end—even beyond.²⁸

Marlow’s threat to Kurtz (“You will be lost, utterly lost”) seems to have been caused by a flash of imitation, rather than a “flash of inspiration”. The adverb is a clear match to Kurtz’s “perfectly” knowledge of his faculties. This indicates that Marlow has completed acquiring Kurtz’s epistemology. The metaphoric speaking-trumpet now belongs to him, he has completely acquired it. Marlow once used it as an aid for hearing the “voice”; now that he has physically captured the instrument, he is placed on the other end as its speaker.

Having obtained the master position, Marlow turns Kurtz into a fragile subject. It is obvious from his mutterings that Kurtz’s resolution has presently deserted him. It is now Marlow who speaks in a raising voice: “Yes,” he says, “but if you try to shout I’ll smash your head with...” These words imply how Marlow’s new discourse has its beginnings in the “voice” and “hail” of Kurtz. Repeating the violent discourse of Kurtz is to “say the right thing” and when Marlow says the right thing, he finds Kurtz at his most “irretrievably lost”.

Conrad’s speaking-trumpet is an instrument of distance and amplification. It presents us a reversed dialectics which prioritises the absent over the present. Having described the direction, position and agency of the hail, I will now focus on the “hail” of ideology in order to discuss the aesthetics, and politics, of Kurtz’s voice.

²⁸ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

1.5. Voice, hail and interpolation in Conrad and Althusser: an attempt at close reading

Marlow's saying the "right thing" during his confrontation with Kurtz illustrates a subject's "interpolation" to ideology, a concept Louis Althusser defined in his book, **On Ideology**. Conrad's treatment of Kurtz's "hail" as a vessel for transmitting ideology and creating distance, brings to mind Althusser's terminology, as well as the "ideological instruments of the state" that he described. Through these instruments Althusser exposes a web of hierarchies deeply embedded in modern state. He emphasises how techniques and "knowledges" are transformed and reproduced through schools, military barracks and government departments ("the ideological instruments of the state") on a daily basis. For example, school children "learn to 'speak proper French', to 'handle' the workers correctly, i.e. actually (for the future capitalists and their servants) to 'order them about' properly, i.e. (ideally) to 'speak to them' in the right way, etc".²⁹ This "right way" of speaking corresponds to Marlow's saying the "right thing". The aim of the hail is to make its subjects say the "right thing" at all times.

Althusser's describes the nature of hailing as a repetitive process, something we also find in **Heart of Darkness**. Every morning in prisons, schools and army barracks vows to ideology are repeated in words; Conrad's Congo is similarly defined as a space of repetitions, a setting in which the repetitious form of ideology finds a perfect location.

Marlow's "inspiration" before saying "the right thing" is repeated ad infinitum. It is not only Marlow who is inspired by the hail, numerous others played similar roles before him as many others will do after him. Conrad describes the flow of ideology as a repetitive process with a particular form and pattern. Initially, and I believe erroneously, we think of this as a "circular" flow:

²⁹ Louis Althusser, **On Ideology**, London and New York, Verso, 2008, p. 6.

Kurtz>Marlow>Narrator>Reader>Text>Kurtz>Marlow> etc.

Figure 1: How ideology flows in the river of words: The circular hailing scheme

According to this scheme, Marlow is hailed through a repetitious, circular pattern. Kurtz hails Marlow who then hails the narrator. Finally, we are hailed by the narrator's text. Another text that hailed Kurtz may exist but is absent from the text just like an imaginary, "hailed" friend who directs the attention of the reader to **Heart of Darkness**. This process of repetitions resembles what Althusser describes as the reproduction of ideology:

The reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'.³⁰

According to Althusser's scheme of interpolation, ideology presents itself as a process of "recruitment". It is a process that "recruits" subjects among individuals by a very "precise operation" which he calls "*interpolation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'" Once he turns around, Althusser's hailed subject becomes a subject.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

“Because he has recognised that the hail was ‘really’ addressed to him, and that ‘it was *really him* who was hailed’ (and not someone else)”.³¹

This is reminiscent of a passage in **A Personal Record** where Conrad recalls the first time he was “hailed” in English. “For the very first time in my life,” he writes,

I heard myself addressed in English—the speech of my secret choice, of my future, of long friendships, of the deepest affections, of hours of toil and hours of ease, and of solitary hours too, of books read, of thoughts pursued, of remembered emotions—of my very dreams!

Being “too short for eloquence and devoid of all charm of tone”, the hail consists “precisely of the three words ‘Look out there!’”.³² Conrad’s “Look out here” is an almost perfect echo of Althusser’s “Hey, you there”; they are both short sentences that aim to grasp the attention of their addressees. When they succeed, they both change these addressees into subjects.

Like Marlow, Kurtz has been “interpolated” into a subjectivity, taking part in the Hegelian struggle for existence. In **Heart of Darkness**, the Althusserian postulates the Hegelian while the hail precedes the voice and the speaking-trumpet. Had it not been for the initial interpolation of the hail, the Hegelian struggle would not have taken place at

³¹ **Ibid.**, p. 48.

³² Joseph Conrad, **A Personal Record**, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 136.

all. The hail presents merely the introductory act of this struggle which has a repetitious pattern and a helical (or spatial) rather than a circular shape.³³

There are several “markers” in the text which represent stages of the relationship between a hailer and his subject. The famous description in the opening section about the river Thames (“the old river”) is one of them. Bursting with narratives of its ancient conquerors, the old river fulfils a double function of knowledge and servitude. It “had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled—the great knights-errant of the sea”.³⁴

This implies that because its history and language are organised around the principle of the proper name’s supremacy, the British Empire is non-existent (or undefinable) without its proper names. The proper name can function as an ordering principle in a given historical narrative through this supremacy. The narrator’s mingling of the proper names of conquerors with British ships reveals the nondiscriminatory nature of the grammatical unit. It may belong to a person, a ship or a piece of land annexed by the empire: compared to that proper name’s essential function of manifesting a certain mode of subjectivity, all of those things are insignificant. Only those “properly interpolated” and “subjectified” are allowed their proper names while others remain nameless. *Golden Hind*, *Erebus* and *Terror* are on an equal footing with their masters, Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Franklin, sharing the privilege of possessing proper names.

³³ In “**A Voice without a Body: The Phonographic Logic of ‘Heart of Darkness’**”, Ivan Kreilkamp points to a parallel in between Thomas Edison’s phonograph which was invented in 1877 and the radical alteration in the concept of voices in modernist literature, particularly in fictions of Conrad. “**Heart of Darkness** draws on new representational possibilities suggested by the phonograph—possibilities to which, as we shall see, Conrad was especially sensitive—in order to depict the effects of a disembodied voice, speech lacking the corporeal ground of a speaker’s body.” He remarks how “Conrad’s depiction of the voices of Kurtz and Marlow refigured the drift of articulation away from agency, of text away from author.” He also emphasizes the disintegration of spatial and temporal spheres through the aid of technological inventions: “Edison’s phonograph suggests that an individual voice might bear no permanent attachment to any particular moment in time, might be made to re-articulate itself again and again, thus destabilizing the traditional structures of knowledge and subjectivity.” Ivan Kreilkamp, “**A Voice without a Body: The Phonographic Logic of ‘Heart of Darkness’**”, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Winter, 1997), p. 213-216.

³⁴ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Those proper names used in relation to the historical narrative of “the old river” are in fact “voices”. In **Heart of Darkness** there is a crucial interaction in between “proper names” and “voices”. It is obvious that the proper name possesses the voice but it is harder to tell the extent to which the voice itself possesses the proper name. The reader has to decide whether Kurtz is predominantly a voice or a proper name.

Upon his departure in the French steamer, Marlow’s first impressions of the African continent are described in relation to “voices”. He looks on to the coast and sees voices instead of sights and images: “There it is before you—smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering—Come and find out”.³⁵ These words have “an air of whisper” around them: they come in a volatile voice constantly on the move. Described through a multitude of adjectives, the whisper invites its subject to discover the proper names behind it. These names become visual entities in the text: Platonic “shadows” of concealed origins.

Marlow’s narrative style is markedly vivid in the parts where he describes his initial impressions of Africa where his emphasis on colour and texture give a painterly quality to his narration (“The edge of a colossal jungle so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf, ran straight, like a ruled line, far far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist”³⁶ is a good example). This painterly style is continuously interrupted by whispers and enunciations of proper names.

Every day the coast looked the same, as though we had not moved, but we passed various places—trading places—with names like Gran’ Bassam, Little Popo, names that seemed to belong to some sordid farce acted in front of a sinister back-cloth.³⁷

³⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 13.

³⁶ **Ibid.**

³⁷ **Ibid.**

Because the texture of territories are described through sounds and proper names, they present the narrator with a sense of brotherhood. Marlow's gaze over the coast is accompanied by other voices which provide him with a sense of security. Marlow thinks about how "the voice of the surf heard now and then was a positive pleasure," and how it was "like the speech of a brother. It was something natural, that had its reason, that had a meaning". The voice is associated with the field of the familiar: a positive entity which invites a subject to explore the unknown and the unfamiliar.

Marlow finds a brotherly refuge in that "voice" which he likens to the "speech of a brother" but ends up alienated by it.³⁸ This motif of brotherhood shows how the voice manages to accompany Marlow's gaze, by assuring and providing it with a sense of security. Marlow's gaze objectifies the "black fellow" and his surroundings from the position of a secure observer; he sees from afar "the white of their eyeballs glistening" and can hear how they "shouted, sang".³⁹ The sense of brotherhood provided by their voices cannot change the subjectifying nature of the gaze.

Marlow's first mission is to deliver some letters. Upon reaching their destination, his crew comes across "some places with farcical names" before meeting an unnamed Swedish captain. The captain speaks "English with great precision and considerable bitterness".⁴⁰ The text describes the captain through his ability to speak precise English,

³⁸ According to Anne McClintock, the reason for Africa's "featureless" vision was that it had "withdrawn beyond the horizon of known language". Here, like the colonial writer "having traveled too far and too suddenly beyond the limits of tradition", Marlow may be said to discover a landscape that is "still unbaptised. It is drained of meaning because there is no inherited language which can rightfully give it tongue. It withdraws to a distance." As for the silence of the coast, McClintock points to the fact that "what appalls Marlow most of all is the refusal of the landscape to speak. With ritualistic insistence, Conrad describes the landscape for most of the book as silent, refusing to yield up its 'unspeakable secrets'." The absence of sounds points to another absence: "The absence that silence signifies is the absence of meaning, and the absence of meaning for Marlow is so calamitous that it is seen at moments as capable of threatening the mind with extinction." Anne McClintock, "**Unspeakable Secrets**": **The Ideology of Landscape in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"**, *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, Vol. 17, No.1 (Spring, 1984), p. 41, 43, 48, 49.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

rather than his proper name. This is not the first instance when the text focuses on English language as a distinctive quality. The unnamed Belgian doctor in Brussels who is visibly excited by Marlow's appearance, explains that Marlow is "the first Englishman coming under my observation." Marlow assures him that he "was not in the least typical," and adds: "If I were ... I wouldn't be talking like this with you".⁴¹

In a later scene in which Marlow comes across six chained natives, his "atypical" position as an Englishman resurfaces. He likens the ominous voices of the natives to a man-of-war he had seen "firing into a continent".⁴² The adjective "ominous", which defines their voices, is also used while describing London ("farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town" being "still marked ominously on the sky"). In the beginning of the text, the adjective describes the visual texture of London; in Africa it describes a voice. What was an ominous mark on the sky in London becomes an ominous voice in Africa. This is but one example of how **Heart of Darkness** presents voice as a precursor of image. The aural precedes the visual; voices anticipate images while describing them.

Following the introduction of Kurtz's name, a chorus of voices makes itself heard. Those voices speak in different registers and Marlow suddenly hears "a growing murmur of voices and a great tramping of feet. . . All the carriers were speaking together, and in the midst of the uproar the lamentable voice of the chief agent was heard 'giving it up' tearfully for the twentieth time that day. . ." ⁴³ These native voices are described in musical terms and constitute "a growing murmur".

This murmur has the potential to create an uproar. The voice of the chief agent, on the other hand, is lamentable: not at all the proper voice of a master. In his role as chief agent he is equipped with the highest political and economic privileges in Congo.

⁴¹ **Ibid.**, p. 12.

⁴² **Ibid.**, p. 14.

⁴³ **Ibid.**, p. 19.

In terms of hegemonic power, his position is only suppressed by the domineering figure of Kurtz. Nevertheless, the chief agent fails to dominate either his subjects, Marlow, his listeners or the reader. His voice does not “hail” like Kurtz’s voice, so we are unable to hear his hail. Furthermore, the chief agent never seems to inspire an ideological agenda in his hearers. He is described as “commonplace in complexion, in feature, in manners, and in voice”. His “commonplace” voice attests to a servile status in the hierarchy of the Association.

However commonplace he may be “in voice”, the chief agent does possess a distinguishing, and unique, capacity for “sealing” his words. While describing his speeches Marlow mentions “a seal applied on the words to make the meaning of the commonest phrase appear absolutely inscrutable”.⁴⁴ We can thereby surmise that instead of involving a distant, “absent” voice but his verbal existence is made up of a set of “present”, sealed words. The chief agent excels at forcing his subjects into submission. He may be commonplace in voice but he inspires constant submission. He is a “hollow man” who exists with his capacity to “seal” his utterances. Nevertheless, his “seal” is different from the hailing voice of a master. The commonplace voice does not hail, it merely “orders” and asks for submission. The hail, on the other hand, sets into motion a larger set of attitudes that share a particular form of mastery in their identity. This particular form of mastery is discernible by its aural capacity for “hailing” hearers into subjects.

Marlow is introduced to ivory by a word which is articulated in a whisper and a sigh. He describes this moment of encounter in enigmatic, almost ritualistic terms: “The word ‘ivory’ rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed... You would think they were praying to it”.⁴⁵ The comparison in between the articulation and the ritual is an intriguing, and enlightening one where ivory plays the role of a relic. It is part of

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Congo's material resources hitherto exploited by the Company. It also plays a larger, metonymic function of defining exploitation as a sort of ritual. In that sense, ivory's role in the text is similar to the Eucharist. It is part of the blood and body of Kurtz. Natives pray to it while articulating its name. Describing the scene, Marlow again uses a simile rather than a metaphor. He informs us that the natives are not "praying to it" but rather one "would think" they are praying to it. The metaphor of prayer helps us compare the seemingly contradictory image of a religious prayer with the material reality of exploitation. The descriptive passage carefully preserves the prepositions in the idiomatic form of "one would think". The reference then positions itself on the intermediary plane in between implied meanings ("prayer") and their manifestations (whisperings and sighings of the word, "ivory"). With this the name, the word and the voice come together, before being disjointed, dismantled, and even "deconstructed". They deviate from a moment of perfect unity where word is one with voice. This perfect unity is similar to what Hegel has defined as the Absolute Spirit which knows no spatial or temporal limitations.

In the fragmented nature of the text, the Absolute can remain itself only as an abstract category. Marlow's hearings consist of fragmentary sentences formed in "dissonance" with proper English grammar. The hail takes a fragmented shape, which resonates and is repeated in fragments.

Another example of the overwhelming effect of articulated words is offered in the scene where Marlow is assured by "a European man" that all natives in Central Station had been "behaving splendidly, splendidly".⁴⁶ The repetition of the adverb is a reminder that both cat o' nine tails and Kurtz's proper name were deployed as instruments of torture. Words were part of the weaponry used to force the natives into submission. Cat o' nine tails which played such an infamous role in imposing obedience

⁴⁶ **Ibid.**

have a similar function with Kurtz's proper name and are described in equally ambiguous terms.

Our sense of perception becomes fragmented in the moments when Kurtz's name is articulated. This is exemplified in the scene where Marlow accidentally comes across two pilgrims talking to each other unaware of his eavesdropping: "I heard the name of Kurtz pronounced, then the words, 'take advantage of this unfortunate accident'".⁴⁷ This is the first instance in which Kurtz's name is pronounced; following this pronunciation Kurtz's name begins to carry with it an "official seal" which differentiates it from the chief agent. When the chief agent "seals" his words, his "seal" remains a verb; in the case of Kurtz, however, the name itself becomes a seal and it is through this proper name that he can "seal" his sentences.

The chief agent introduces Kurtz's name to Marlow in an official capacity. He describes Kurtz as "the chief of the Inner Station" in a "short tone, looking away". The "short tone" of his pronouncement is fitting, as Kurtz's name is very similar to "kurz", which mean "short" in German. The pronouncement imposes a vision from whence all the hearers should "look away".⁴⁸ When the agent blows out the candle, Marlow sees black figures strolling about, "pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing. . . the beaten nigger groaned somewhere". The pronouncement of Kurtz's name and the groan of the "beaten nigger" come from similarly distant locations, a fact which illustrates how in **Heart of Darkness** it is the aural that carries the image to the hearer. The speaking-trumpet carries images of the "beaten nigger" to various distant places.⁴⁹

But there is another hail which exists in the text. It originates in the natives and plays a similar role for the pilgrims. The hail carries visions which feature Kurtz and "barbaric niggers" in its cast of characters. Marlow imagines "the pathetic sight" of

⁴⁷ **Ibid.**, p. 24.

⁴⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 25.

⁴⁹ **Ibid.**

pilgrims taking sticks to bed with them for fear of their lives: sound brings visions to both sides, visions of “barbaric natives” or “barbaric colonisers”. The voice doesn’t serve a single purpose, it is put to ideological use in various forms.

Fences used in accommodations of the pilgrims are a good illustration of this. Their chief function is to keep the natives outside. But fences also serve the more metaphysical function of a boundary which distinguishes lords from their bondsmen. Fences are described as entities beyond which “the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight and through the dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one’s very heart. . .”⁵⁰ They separate the spectral from the aural. Like the pilgrims, Marlow also experiences the forest as a reassuring thing but is later interrupted by the “faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard”. The fence separates spheres that belong to pilgrims and natives. For both parties there is chaos beyond the boundaries. The terrorised pilgrims who lie on their mattresses resemble infants seeking ways of domesticating their surrounding chaos.

The case of fences illustrates the mutual fear of annihilation in between masters and slaves. While pilgrims fear death in the hands of natives, natives fear death in the hands of supreme European masters. Pilgrims have the political and financial means to keep their objects of fear at a safe distance; but natives have to live close to Kurtz whose name and hail produce the reality in which they operate.

Lacking the necessary knowledge and technique for creating distances, the natives find that solutions such as those provided by fences fail to work for them. Experiencing Kurtz as a hegemonic entity which is an inextricable part of their lives, natives recognise his hail as a kind of fence that keep them apart while imposing a certain order of words.

Beyond those fences lies the imaginary origins of the hail. Once set into motion the hail moves in spirals which makes it impossible to determine its genealogy in a

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

linear way. The hail is both verb and noun: one can hail while simultaneously being hailed at. This dialectical nature of the hail makes it similar to the Congo river on which it operates.

Towards the end of the second part, Marlow muses about whether the river is an active or a passive force. Trees and courtyards are described as silent entities surrounded by voices; the river, on the other hand, flows “broadly by without a murmur”. The river is called “that dumb thing”. An interesting aspect of Marlow’s question (“Could we handle that dumb thing, or would it handle us?”) is the change of the modal auxiliary from “could” to “would”. While Marlow’s active engagement with the river is expressed in relation to one’s abilities (“could we handle”), the passive option has an air of inevitability (“would it handle us?”). In terms of grammar, this is Conrad at his most Hegelian.

The active agent’s labour is associated with his abilities while the passive agent is associated with imperative forces of a larger, historical movement. The choice of the Old Saxon word “dumb” describes both the state of being “wordless” and being “unable to speak”. Kurtz is famous for having “something to say” and saying it. In contrast, the dumb river has nothing to say and is therefore mute. The capacity of speech with which the river is associated is shown to be a means of control.

Like the circular flow of the river, Kurtz’s proper name is repeatedly pronounced. In fact, Marlow is a bit surprised by the frequency of the pronouncement and remarks that he had heard “Mr Kurtz was in there. I had heard enough about it too—God knows!”⁵¹ This is followed by Marlow’s turning to his hearers on Nellie and reducing Kurtz into a single word: “He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him?”

This question helps Kurtz’s proper name to migrate from the domain of the aural to that of the visual. Marlow can see voices and hear images thanks to Kurtz’s name. The

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

previously impossible and improbable things are suddenly possible and probable for him precisely through the agency of Kurtz's name. In this scheme of Eucharist, Kurtz's proper name plays the role of transubstantiation. The invisible, mute Kurtz becomes tangible and audible. He is resurrected and provided with a voice. Kurtz's image is carried through sound-waves; his hail, on the other hand, is transported by fragmented word-images. These word-images are carried through voices. English and African rivers which are located on different geographies play the similar ideological role of imposing mastery through servitude. In terms of geography they may be distant but they end up flowing into each other.

According to this scheme, it is imperative that Kurtz's voice uses Marlow's voice; only then can it be transported to temporal and territorial distances. Through the agency of Marlow's voice and the transubstantiation realised by Kurtz's name, listeners and readers alike can "see" the voice. This marks the fulfilment of Conrad's artistic task: he achieves to make us hear, feel and "before all" see the voice by the power of the written word. This is Conrad's broader artistic project behind the question, "Do you see him?".

Whether Kurtz's hearers can indeed see him, is a different question. Up to this point Marlow has had various "glimpses" of Kurtz's voice in the form of fragmented word-images but he had remained to be a word for him. After his journey, however, Kurtz begins to represent various other things. It is important to note that Marlow renders his tale using a technique Ian Watt called "delayed decoding"⁵². The process of "seeing" Kurtz has three, interrelated components.

In the first place, there is the problem of Marlow's perception of Kurtz. His perception creates knowledge which is transmitted to Marlow's listeners through delayed decoding. In the second place, there is the problem with the gazes of Marlow's hearers. One of these hearers later records his experiences: otherwise we would not be

⁵² Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981, p. 12.

able to read them. Finally, there is the problem of our own understanding of Kurtz. Until that moment in the narrative, he had remained a name for us.

Kurtz exists as a name throughout the narrative but when one looks closely at his proper name it turns out to be a vapour-like, hollow thing which is devoid of essence. Marlow's rhetorical question clarifies that Kurtz belongs to the sphere of hearing and not to that of sight. He is ideology in its aural, enunciated form. His proper name is necessary to provide him with a signature. Without the signature and the proper name, Kurtz's voice loses direction and meaning. The speaking-trumpet concentrates the sound of its speaker towards a specific direction and fulfils a similar function.

When Marlow becomes silent, the narrator who is apparently influenced by this narrative, draws an analogy between listening and seeing. "It had become so pitch dark," he reflects, "that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice". Marlow's invisible presence possesses a tangible voice but not a tangible body. He is no more to his hearers than a "voice"; Kurtz, in his turn, had been no more to Marlow than a "name". Kurtz communicates his ideas through Marlow's voice; this voice postulates Kurtz's name. The position of the narrator is defined in aural terms as well. "I listened," he says, "I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river". Listening "on the watch for the sentence," the narrator tries to resolve the mystery inspired by this tale which shaped itself "without human lips".⁵³

Marlow is disembodied before our eyes. He becomes no more to his hearers than an invisible voice; he lacks a physical origin. Marlow lacks not only a body but also the lips of a narrator; his narrative is presented to us as an impersonal hail.

⁵³ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Conrad's narrative strategy works according to a principle of removal. As Marlow becomes invisible on the river Thames, the visual texture of his Congo reminiscences becomes inaudible. His loss of self-image is compensated by the emergence of Congo's visual texture. His voice becomes increasingly more audible while the voice of Congo is muted, becoming incomprehensible. Marlow describes the local vegetation as "a rioting invasion of soundless life"⁵⁴: rivers and trees are voiceless. It is there that Kurtz appears to Marlow as something more than a name. "As for me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time," he says, "It was a distinct glimpse... His name, you understand, had not been pronounced once. He was: 'that man'".⁵⁵ Following the introduction of his figure, Kurtz's name ceases to be pronounced. While Marlow is reduced to a voice without an image, Kurtz becomes a voice without a proper name. Once the proper name disappears, a noun replaces it and this fascinates the pilgrims.

"The word 'ivory' would ring in the air for a while—and on we went again into the silence..."⁵⁶ In the absence of Kurtz's proper name, ivory becomes Congo's new relic. It transforms the notion of silence and makes it a spatial entity; silence becomes something one can take refuge in, like a shade or a cave. The metaphor of silence as a space for refuge provides an intersection for temporal and spatial spheres, and for visual and aural ones.⁵⁷ The voice of a native reminds Marlow of his disturbing kinship with "this wild and passionate uproar"; using the intermediacy of voices to create a genealogy between himself as an Englishman and the natives, Marlow's narrative takes a self-reflexive turn. "Very well. I hear, I admit, but I have a voice too, and for good or evil

⁵⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 30.

⁵⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 32.

⁵⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 35.

⁵⁷ Vivek Dhareshwar finds, in that silent quality of the text, a certain suggestion of unnarratability. "The event is indeed extraordinary, but Marlow cannot narrate it. Or it begins when Marlow's narratorial voice stops." Vivek Dhareshwar, **The Song of the Sirens in the Heart of Darkness: the Enigma of Récit**, boundary 2, Vol. 15. No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1986 - Winter, 1987), p. 71.

mine is the speech that cannot be silenced,” he says.⁵⁸ This affirms Marlow’s status as a domineering and hailing voice. The comparison makes us realise how Marlow interprets nature as a silent space devoid of proper names. They had played their roles and departed from the scene as their services were no longer required. Marlow’s speech now gains independence from Kurtz’s proper name. He had already heard “enough about it” and Marlow can finally undertake to locate its origin.

This new habitat produces interminable miles of “spatial silence”. Marlow observes how “the wooded banks slipped past us slowly, the shore noise was left behind, the interminable miles of silence—and we crept on, towards Kurtz”. The use of an em dash introduces an interpolation to the narrative where silence is presented as a territorial entity that can be found in this specific space.

As he moves on that spatial plane towards Kurtz’s voice Marlow comes across a written account which bears marks on its margins. “An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship” is a professional English textbook authored by a “Master in His Majesty’s Navy”⁵⁹. Conrad himself might have studied a version of it in order to improve his navigational skills. The owner of this document is initially unknown. It later turns out that the document belongs to Harlequin, Kurtz’s last and arguably greatest disciple. Marlow is unaware of this fact and believes for a time that the hut belongs to an Englishman. He misinterprets the scribblings in the book to be part of a “ciphered” language. These scribblings are placed on the margins of the book, providing fruitful hermeneutic material for Conrad’s postcolonial readers. “I couldn’t believe my eyes!” Marlow exclaims. “They were in cipher! Yes, it looked like cipher. Fancy a man lugging with him a book of that description into this nowhere and studying it—and making notes—in cipher at that! It was an extravagant mystery”.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Those notes turn out to be “ciphered” only for Marlow who seems to anticipate an English reader scribbling in English or in one of its cryptic variations. To Marlow’s great surprise, the text turns out to be Cyrillic and not cryptic. Conrad shows how he had failed to imagine the existence of a language apart from English which would retain its grammar in Kurtz’s order of words which does not allow natives their voices let alone their native tongues.

As he moves closer to Kurtz, Marlow feels increasingly futile and his depressing state of mind is likened to a trance: “Not the faintest sound of any kind could be heard. You looked on amazed and began to suspect yourself of being deaf—then the night came suddenly and struck you blind as well”.⁶¹ He hears “a cry, a very loud cry as of infinite desolation” in the opaque air and feels as if the mist itself screams before a “tumultuous and mournful uproar”. From the deck he can only glimpse at the outlines of the streamer while the rest of the world seems to be “nowhere as far as our eyes and ears were concerned... Gone, disappeared, swept off without leaving a whisper or a shadow behind”. As Congo disappears visually uproars and whispers of an ominous kind emerge. Marlow hears “awed” voices of pilgrims, one of whom whispers a question to him (“Will they attack?”) while another murmurs a prophecy (“We will all be butchered in this fog”).⁶²

Marlow then comes across “essentially quiet” faces. As he looks down at the sounding-pole, he realises that the river, the shore and the woods are “very quiet—perfectly quiet”.⁶³ What F. R. Leavis famously called Conrad’s “adjectival insistence”⁶⁴ has rarely described a thing more insistently as it does here. This adjectival excess in the description of silence is accompanied by a gradual amplification of Kurtz’s hail. Amidst

⁶¹ **Ibid.**, p. 39.

⁶² **Ibid.**, p. 40.

⁶³ **Ibid.**

⁶⁴ F.R. Leavis, **The Great Tradition**, London, Faber, 1948, p. 206.

the massive, overbearing silence, Marlow meets a wounded man who dies “without uttering a sound”.⁶⁵ Natives are denied their voices even during their last breath. At moment of his passing away the native frowns heavily “as though in response to some sign we could not see, to some whisper we could not hear”. Here Kurtz’s voice cannot allow the existence of other visions and demands total devotion to itself, constituting a totalitarian discourse.

Marlow then remarks that he “flung one shoe overboard and became aware that that was exactly what I had been looking forward to—a talk with Kurtz”. He discovers how he had

never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing. I didn’t say to himself, ‘Now, I will never see him,’ or ‘Now I will never shake him by the hand’, but, ‘Now I will never hear him.’ The man presented himself as a voice.⁶⁶

Kurtz had served as a navigational point to which Marlow steered his ship, guiding, routing and directing his subjects through his hail. He is a geographical coordinate which his subjects struggle to reach. Once his coordinates are located by his subjects, Kurtz’s hail comes back in the form of political discourse. As one of those subjects, Marlow learns about the particularities with which Kurtz can stand out among his peers. Kurtz is a great orator and among “of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence was his ability to talk, his words—the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness”.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The appreciation of Kurtz's gift comes with an unsurpassable fear of not being able to hear him in person ("I will never hear that chap speak after all," Marlow remarks with grief). In fact, even without hearing "that chap speak" Marlow already heard him numerous times: Kurtz's hail is immaterial and impersonal.

Marlow also fears losing his opportunity to confront the origins of the hail. In its absence, he fears losing direction and is

cut to the quick at the idea of having lost the inestimable privilege of listening to the gifted Kurtz... Oh yes, I heard more than enough. And I was right, too. A voice. He was very little more than a voice. And I heard—him—it—this voice—other voices—all of them were so little more than voices—and the memory of that time itself lingers around me, impalpable, like a dying vibration of one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean without any kind of sense. Voices, voices—even the girl herself —now...⁶⁸

Kurtz is "very little more than a voice" and this "very little more" represents a marginal space which hosts Kurtz's proper name. Once the actual confrontation with the hailer takes place, that marginal space of "very little more" can be removed. But before that happens, Kurtz's hail continues to possess the marginal space. According to this scheme, Kurtz plays the role of both hailer and possessor. His voice constantly speaks of his possessions and has the powerful capacity to possess its objects as well as its subjects. Marlow reminisces about this 'possessive' aspect of Kurtz as well: "You should have heard him say, 'My ivory.' Oh yes, I heard him. 'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my—' everything belonged to him".

The pace of this sentence is similar to Kurtz's own mutterings whose style Marlow now unconsciously imitates with his speech. He talks about the "utter solitude without a policeman—by the way of silence—utter silence, where no warning voice of a

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion”⁶⁹ and compares those civilised voices of Europe with the silence of the African continent which refuses to offer shelter to its European inhabitants. When it offers silence, Africa becomes a space of barbarity for those who desire to colonise it.

Marlow speaks of Kurtz’s “initiated wraith” which honours him with an amazing confidence because it “could speak English to me”. From his seventeen page report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, we know that Kurtz had in fact written certain tracts in English. At a certain point his nerves “went wrong and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites”. Having been a listener and loyal follower of Kurtz’s hail until this point, Marlow becomes his ideal reader, appreciating Kurtz’s linguistic “gifts” revealed in that “beautiful piece of writing”.⁷⁰ He then speaks of the “unbounded power of eloquence—of words—of burning noble words” and describes a period in which he was fascinated by his “magic current of phrases”. Kurtz “had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back—a help—an instrument”. Marlow thereby produces a relationship in between Kurtz’s writing and his “steering”.

Kurtz’s magical current of phrases is a mixture of his use of grammar and dominance over geography. Kurtz steers his subjects through his hail and voice. In a curious substitution, his voice plays the role of a hand while he is reduced to his lips. He is a voice which controls a hand which in its turn steers a subject. This metaphorical disembodiment turns Kurtz into a collection of rhetorical figures. He is a synecdoche to the extent that his hail is part of a larger, ideological hail. Kurtz is also a metonym because his proper name represents the larger hail of ideology.

One example of Kurtz’s extraordinary powers of influence is his “magic current” of words with which he can diffuse into his hearers. The garments of his most devoted

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

disciple provides a second example: he is literally furnished with garments which have a metaphorical relationship with Kurtz's ideas. Harlequin's clothes are made of "some stuff that was brown holland probably, but it was covered with patches all over, with bright patches, blue, red, and yellow—patches on the back, patches on front, patches on elbows, on knees"⁷¹. Those colourful patches bring to Marlow's mind a memory of his youth where he sees many blank and unexplored spaces on a world map. Those blank spaces had gradually given way to various colours which represent Europe's conquerors. He can still remember those blank spaces providing "a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over"⁷². With his gloriously decorated outfit, Harlequin is a synecdoche, representing Kurtz's mixed identity with the colourful patches on its surface.

As his most committed disciple, Harlequin asks a question about his identity ("You English?"⁷³) to which Marlow replies with another question ("Are you?"). Marlow then wonders whether Harlequin talks with Kurtz at all. People "don't talk with that man", listening to him instead. The aural representation of Kurtz gives way to a visual description until we see Kurtz in the final part of the text.

Until he is properly seen by them, Kurtz continues to be a problem for his hearers. He remains a disembodied and fragmented thing, retaining these qualities even for his disciples. Kurtz's hail has the potential to influence his subjects even in his absence. Kurtz becomes present through his words while remaining physically absent for his hearers.

In the final part of the text, Marlow once again becomes a hearer and learns how "the intercourse" in between Kurtz and his last disciple consists entirely of long "acts" of speech. Harlequin tells him about how Kurtz "talked all night"⁷⁴, describing the

⁷¹ **Ibid.**, p. 52.

⁷² **Ibid.**, p. 8.

⁷³ **Ibid.**, p. 53.

⁷⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 55.

whisper of wilderness which told many things about himself “which he did not know, things of which he had no connection till he took counsel with this great solitude—and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating”. That whisper “echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core,” and that is Harlequin’s most profound diagnosis of his master. As his last disciple, Harlequin is aware of how Kurtz rules “in words”. In a “hurried, indistinct voice” he tells Marlow not to be afraid of natives as “they would not stir till Mr. Kurtz gave the word”.⁷⁵

The violent outcome of Kurtz’s ideology is revealed in the shape of severed heads placed on wooden stakes. Before his first “visual” glimpse of Kurtz, Marlow hears a cry “whose shrillness pierced the still air like a sharp arrow flying straight to the very heart of the land”.⁷⁶ This cry is a sinister instrument with the power to strike its hearers, flying like an arrow before destroying them.

In the final section of the text, Marlow puts together Kurtz by bringing his disembodied words, limbs and organs back to a unity. He uses an intermediary instrument, a pair of glasses, which is similar to the speaking-trumpet. With this instrument Marlow can see Kurtz’s thin arm for the first time. He describes the embodiment of a hail which had steered him this far: “I saw the thin arm extended commandingly, the lower jaw moving, the eyes of that apparition shining darkly far in its bony head that nodded with grotesque jerks”. Kurtz’s phallic, bony head is the origin of the hail which ends up severing heads of the natives. Inspecting his head closer, Marlow looks in detail at Kurtz’s lower jaw and eyes. Kurtz’s name now comes naturally to Marlow’s lips: “Kurtz—Kurtz—that means ‘short’ in German—don’t it? Well, the name was as true as everything else in his life—and death”.

Marlow grasps the meaning of Kurtz’s name immediately after seeing him through his glasses. Having already familiarised himself with his proper name, Marlow

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

is also well-versed in Kurtz's writings. Once Marlow sees him with his own eyes, Kurtz's name gathers a new dimension: previously defined by a number of points of view, Kurtz is now redefined. This process removes the qualities which had been erroneously attributed to him. Marlow's glasses continue to "amplify" Kurtz's image while simultaneously removing the distance in between the servant and his master. A single strike severs Marlow's attachment to his hail as well as his relation to his origins. During this flash of inspiration, Marlow penetrates the mystery of Kurtz's name. The ideology is exposed to him for what it is. Kurtz is nothing more than a commanding arm, a bald head: a short man on the edge of collapse.

Kurtz's image still has the force to fascinate Marlow. When he opens "his mouth wide" Kurtz's image gives him a "weirdly voracious aspect as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him". While his phallic head is a masculine organ, Kurtz's voracious mouth plays a more feminine role. Marlow is glad to penetrate Kurtz's voracious mouth. But the head which hosts the mouth had already penetrated Marlow's mouth as it had been hailing him by putting words there. Kurtz has a "deep" voice which reaches Marlow too "faintly"; but his words prove to be very ordinary and too meagre compared to the fascination they inspire.

Kurtz's first sentence is very simple ("I am glad,"⁷⁷ he says) and seems to come from an ordinary speaker of the English language. Kurtz is a good listener who patiently hears a native woman who "talked like a fury to Kurtz for an hour..."⁷⁸ His listening capacity is presented as sign of Kurtz's mastery. Unlike many of his disciples, Kurtz understands the native dialect and has a grasp on their customs. With his appetite for knowledge, Kurtz can annex local practices. It is this masterful capacity to speak and listen that makes Kurtz a practitioner of Hegel's dialectic.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Like in Hegel, Kurtz's struggle for mastery moves in spirals and not in the negations of negations. Kurtz does not aspire to be a native himself; neither does he choose to go native in Congo. He also refuses to become a simple colonial master who speaks a European language which natives fail to comprehend. Instead, his mastery moves in a helical shape. This absolute form of mastery both uses and imposes its own words. The words of the natives are grasped by Kurtz. Natives then begin to speak a new tongue which is slightly different from its original. This slightly differentiated tongue is grasped by Kurtz. Rather than enforcing a totalitarian order of words on his subjects, Kurtz begins a discourse. The process he sets in motion begins in his words and in articulation. This implies that colonisers (masters) are already integrated into the colonised (servants) through language and words. They are inseparable as it is impossible to locate the moment in which the helical discourse integrates into the discourse of the natives.

Kurtz's helical discourse is irreversible. But his mastery can still be undermined by those whom he forced into servitude. Kurtz's "deep" voice now comes from behind a curtain: "Save me—save the ivory, you mean. Don't tell me! Save *me!*"⁷⁹ Marlow characterises Kurtz's speech as some "dust" being thrown into "a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets".⁸⁰ This image of the grave where words echo is replaced by another one: "A steady droning sound of many men chanting each to himself some weird incantation came out from the blackflat wall of the woods as the humming of bees comes out of a hive, and had a strange narcotic effect upon my half-awake senses".⁸¹ Kurtz's hail echoes in chants coming from hexagonal cells of a beehive. This voice reaches to Marlow in patches. It is fragmented, disembodied, decomposed and stored in cells.

⁷⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 61.

⁸⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 62.

⁸¹ **Ibid.**, p. 63.

With the image of the beehive we come full circle, returning to the scene of life and death struggle. Marlow approaches Kurtz amidst an “audible and soothing silence” before likening him to a “vapour exhaled by the earth”.⁸² This Kurtzlike vapour sways “slightly, misty and silent before me while at my back the fires loomed between the trees, and all the murmur of many voices issued from the forest”.⁸³ Through the intermediacy of what Marlow sees as the “heavy mute spell of the wilderness,” the reader is able to hear voices of natives. Kurtz’s words are “common everyday words—the familiar vague sounds exchanged on every waking day of life”. He uses common nouns and adjectives whereas the syntax of his sentences produces a dreamlike discourse which fascinates Marlow. He describes how Kurtz speaks with “words heard in dreams, of phrases spoken in nightmares”.⁸⁴ These “words” of the hailer are encircled by native voices which “shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled not sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany”. Finally, the native woman “shouted something, and all that wild mob took up the shout in a roaring chorus of articulated, rapid, breathless utterance.”⁸⁵

Marlow signals his departure by pulling the string of the whistle. Natives are terrified by the “flying terror of the sound”. Any attempt to escape from “this flying terror of the sound” is futile as the sound is able to fly on air and can overcome all boundaries. As long as natives articulate those “intonations,” territorial distances in between their origins and places of utterance remain irrelevant.

Until his final breath, Kurtz is defined in aural terms: “A voice! a voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of

⁸² **Ibid.**, p. 64.

⁸³ **Ibid.**, p. 65.

⁸⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 66.

⁸⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 67.

eloquence the barren darkness of his heart.” Marlow describes his inextinguishable “gift of noble and lofty expression. My Intended, my station, my career, my ideas—these were the subjects for the occasional utterances of elevated sentiments”. His voice grasps and takes possession of all its objects; he uses possessive determiners in a rapid, machine gun manner. Marlow describes how Kurtz possesses his subjects through words and describes how he rehearsed those speeches in his dreams, making use of fragments or phrases “from some newspaper article”.⁸⁶

Kurtz’s speeches are never quite finalised and he constantly rehearses them. This is why they are repetitious. His final words sound incomplete; they seem to be articulated during a rehearsal which ends unexpectedly. Kurtz cries “in a whisper at some image at some vision—he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath: ‘The horror! The horror!’”⁸⁷ This final hail is backgrounded by “some image at some vision”. In this final vision, Kurtz lives his life again from beginning to end “in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge”. Marlow’s speculations are the only sources of our knowledge of Kurtz’s final vision.⁸⁸ In Figure 2, I illustrate the structure of Kurtz’s ideological hail which comes to an end with that vision.

⁸⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 68.

⁸⁷ **Ibid.**, p. 69.

⁸⁸ Watt finds this “final gasping anaphora” straining “rather hard for its effect” and identifies three ironies associated with it. According to Watt this is the only occasion in which “Kurtz’s voice loses its preternatural resonance”. “The truth about his deeds” is revealed to us precisely at this moment. The contradiction between “the rhetoric and the reality of progress” is presented to us in Kurtz’s drastic stylistic simplification. This simplification, Watt finds, breaks “so completely with the note of consolatory serenity which is traditional for deathbed utterance in fiction.” Watt, **op. cit.** p. 236. I agree with Watt about how Kurtz’s final words present a radical break from deathbed utterance in fiction; I would also add that the radical nature of his parting words is but a reflection of the radical nature of Kurtz’s speech throughout his life.

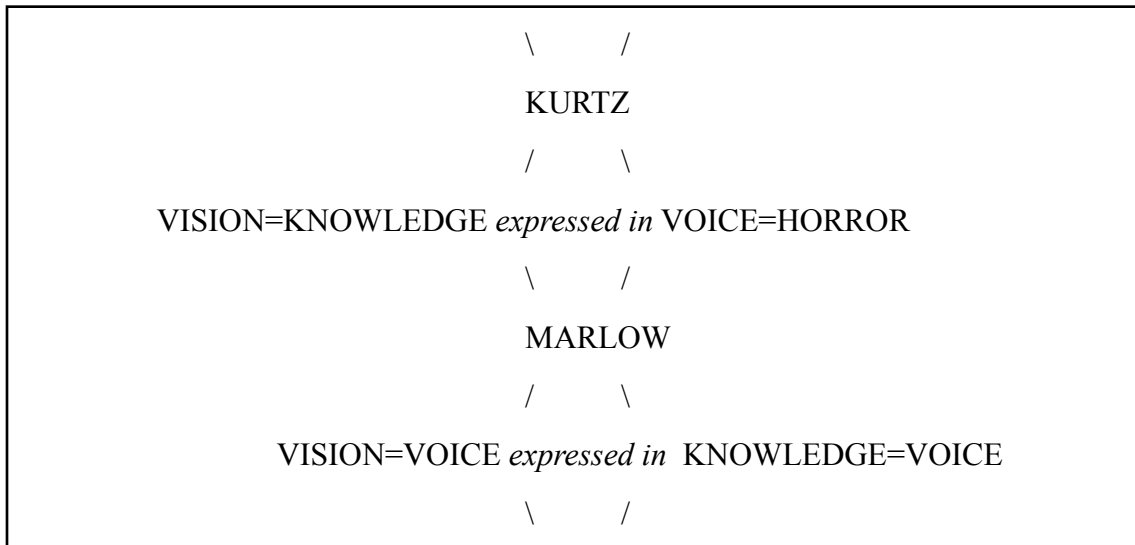


Figure 2: Ideology diffuses in a beehive of subjects: The helical hailing scheme

In this scheme, (1) a certain vision is transported through speech; (2) before the movement of that speech takes a helical or spiral shape which remains mutual, interdependent and dialectical; (3) Kurtz’s final vision is represented by the final enunciation of the word “horror”; (4) Marlow’s vision is dominated by Kurtz’s hail, which has the power to turn Marlow’s voice into a substitute for Kurtz’s vision. In other words, Marlow’s voice is Kurtz’s vision.

Rather than linearly, the hailers and the hailed converge through a hexagonal scheme. The speaking-trumpet is an objective correlative that represents the transmission of Kurtz’s vision. The objective correlative for this hexagonal transmission, on the other hand, is the beehive which was likened to the “weird incantations” of natives. In this scheme of hexagonal transmission, all cells get sufficient ideological “honey”; the structure equips its subjects with Kurtz’s knowledge which annexes various forms of local knowledges while setting into motion a certain mode of subjectivity that repeats itself even beyond Kurtz’s annihilation.

After Kurtz draws his last breath, the manager’s boy repeats the news of his Kurtz’s death “in a tone of scathing contempt”. The subject repeats the truth of his

vision, using the honorific almost correctly (“Mistah Kurtz—he dead”); but his sentence curiously misses a subjunctive. It is difficult to understand whether Kurtz “is” dead or “was” dead or “had been” dead or “will be” dead in future time. He attempts to localise Mister or Master with his “mistah” which shows how Kurtz’s mastery penetrates through language. In the second part of the sentence (“he dead”) the pronoun and the noun are directly linked, leaving out the proper name, verb, adverb and adjective. Master’s proper name is replaced by a pronoun. His name disappears through “work” in the form of a conclusive noun.

Now that his name is no longer needed, Kurtz’s voice also becomes obsolete. Marlow remarks that “the voice was gone”. He admires how “he had something to say. He said it”.⁸⁹ Although he has something to say Kurtz has a strange way of affirming life: “The horror! The horror!” Because Marlow remains loyal to him, never disclosing his secrets, Kurtz’s final noun echoes “to the last and even beyond”.

As he repeats the helical shape of Kurtz’s speech “in words”, Marlow attempts to discover the archeology of its knowledge. He can still hear the eloquent phrases of Kurtz which accompany his voice. These phrases still reach him from beyond the grave: “A long time after I heard once more not his own voice but the echo of his magnificent eloquence thrown to me from a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal”.

Marlow goes back to Brussels to meet a man who claims to be Kurtz’s cousin. He learns that Kurtz was in fact a painter, a journalist and surprisingly for Marlow, was essentially “a great musician”.⁹⁰ No details are revealed about Kurtz’s musical education but a second visit by a journalist confirms Kurtz’s extraordinary musical gifts. The journalist remembers “how that man could talk!”⁹¹, clarifying details about his musicianship. Kurtz composes, conducts and performs speeches; he possesses an

⁸⁹ Conrad, **op. cit.**, p. 70.

⁹⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 71.

⁹¹ **Ibid.**, p. 72.

extraordinary capacity to control voices and can turn them into musical and ideological instruments. Kurtz had been able to electrify large meetings; his voice had a kinetic energy passing from one hearer to another.

When Marlow visits Kurtz's Intended, the "broken phrases" of the deceased director are transmitted through the intermediacy of Marlow's speech. His voice transmits Kurtz's voice through "broken phrases", thus being able to bring together Kurtz and his Intended. Marlow finally plays the part of a speaking-trumpet, amplifying a voice and a vision simultaneously. If Marlow's voice is Kurtz's vision then his status as mediator is thrown into doubt. Rather than mediating it, Marlow's voice embodies Kurtz's vision: "I saw her and him in the same instant of time—his death and her sorrow—I saw her sorrow together—I heard them together. She had said with a deep catch of the breath, 'I have survived'—while my strained ears seemed to hear distinctly, mingled with her tone of despairing regret, the summing-up whisper of his eternal condemnation".⁹²

Thanks to Marlow, temporal and territorial distances in between Kurtz and his Intended are transcended; ideology has the power transcend all territorial distances to bring its ideological visions through the act of speech. As we reach the end of his narrative, Marlow inhabits the hearing end of the trumpet and before falling into silence, again becomes a listener: "I listened. The darkness deepened... And the girl talked, easing her pain in the certitude of my sympathy she talked, as thirsty men drank".⁹³ She celebrates Kurtz's prodigious talent for hailing ("Who was not his friend who had heard him speak once?"); she remembers how Kurtz's hail "drew men towards him by what was best in them". While Kurtz's voice is transmitted to the Intended through Marlow, the voice of the Intended is also transported: thanks to Marlow it travels to Congo. Marlow notes how

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

the sound of her low voice seemed to have the accompaniment of all the other sounds full of mystery, desolation, and sorrow I had ever heard—the ripple of the river, the sighing of the trees swayed by the wind, the murmurs of the crowds, the faint ring of incomprehensible words cried from afar, the whisper of a voice speaking from beyond the threshold of an eternal darkness.

The voice of the Intended has the power to alter Marlow's memories of Congo. She draws a parallel in between hearing ("you have heard him") and knowledge ("you know") and appreciates Marlow's position as the inheritor of Kurtz's voice ("His words at least have not died").

Sitting on the hearing end of the speaking-trumpet, the Intended demands to hear Kurtz's "last words". She is desperate in her thirst for this final piece of knowledge: "I would have treasured every sigh, every word, every sign, every glance..." As the only witness of Kurtz's last moments Marlow possesses this knowledge and is "on the point of crying at her, 'Don't you hear them.'" Marlow describes their conversation as being backgrounded by dusk which repeats to them "in a persistent whisper" that seems to "swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. 'The horror! The horror!'"

However, Marlow doesn't repeat Kurtz's final words to the Intended; "his last word—to live with" is replaced by a fabrication: the proper name of the Intended ("The last word he pronounced was—your name"⁹⁴).

With the fabrication of Kurtz's final words, vision and knowledge converge in the proper name of the Intended. Carried by voices, and amplified by the speaking-trumpet, Kurtz's ideology forces the "horror" to metamorphose into "your name". This is the crucial point where the lie takes the shape of a proper name. The helical movement of Kurtz's hail always hides its origins, making it impossible to determine precisely where and when his "original voice" had been distorted. During the subtle finale,

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Marlow hears “an exulting and terrible cry” which speaks of an “inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain.” Marlow’s speech has added a lie to Kurtz’s hail: “Hadn’t he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn’t. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark—too dark altogether...”

By leaving out the essential truth about Kurtz (“The horror! The horror!”), Marlow becomes an accomplice to his ideology. Having inherited Kurtz’s discourse, he reproduces it by lying about its nature. But in his role as a speaking-trumpet, Marlow is also an embodiment of the struggle for mastery and of the fact that in his role as a hailed servant, Marlow had gradually become a master himself.

CHAPTER 2
MOVEMENT:
“A SUDDEN SPLUTTER OF THE PEN” AND THE VOICE OF THE
MASTER IN DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

“Hegel, the German, got the best word of all philosophy with his antinomies: the contrary of everything is its postulate. That is, of course, grossly expressed, but gives a hint of the idea, which contains a great deal of the mysteries of religion, and a vast amount of the practical wisdom of life.”¹

2.1. Body, movement and mastery

In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson represents the Hegelian movement as “a sudden splutter of the pen”.² The movement compartmentalises the body, assigning various ideological functions to its parts. Like Kurtz, Hyde interpolates his subjects, finding ways to merge into them. His movement takes the shape of a hail; he can speak to his servants through a collection of movements which correspond to his organs. Hyde is associated with the movement of his feet and is defined in relation to his ability to walk. He is a “footman” who, thanks to his talent for movement, becomes a master.

In Stevenson’s text movement has ideological functions. Movement results in authority and subjectivity. In between feet, hands and faces lies the mechanism which produces subjectivity and authority. While Kurtz’s hail diffuses through the sense of hearing, Hyde’s movement penetrates texts through the difference it has as handwriting,

¹ Robert Louis Stevenson, letter to his father, dated 20 December 1883. Robert Louis Stevenson, **Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001, p. 242.

² Robert Louis Stevenson, **Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**, New York and London, A Norton Critical Edition, 2003, p. 35.

as the splutter of a pen. Like Kurtz, Hyde is a proper name, a signature, a position, a course of action, an ideology, a voice, a destination, and later, a bringer of annihilation.

In **Heart of Darkness**, the struggle for mastery takes place in the sphere of sound; in **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** it takes place in the body. Bodily organs get into a Hegelian struggle with each other. In this struggle, hands become metonyms of the servant character while feet are associated with mastery. Handwritings and signatures are presented as manifestations of subjectivity. Throughout the text, bodily movements represent a harbinger of cultural, ideological and material change.

There are two types of movement in the text: disciplined and erratic movements. The former aims to preserve the status quo while the latter struggles to annihilate it. A good illustration of the erratic movement occurs in the scene where Utterson comes across a letter left to him by Jekyll before the latter's death. The composition of this letter is interrupted with a sudden splutter of the pen. This splutter, which reveals the underlying tensions of the text, is the point of departure for my analysis.

Jekyll's note runs "composedly enough" up to the point when Utterson realises that the gentlemanly rhetoric of his discourse is replaced by another voice, that had been hitherto unknown to him.

Poole felt in his pocket and handed out a crumpled note, which the lawyer, bending nearer to the candle, carefully examined. Its contents ran thus: "Dr. Jekyll presents his compliments to Messrs. Maw. He assures them that their last sample is impure and quite useless for his present purpose. In the year 18--, Dr. J. purchased a somewhat large quantity from Messrs. M. He now begs them to search with most sedulous care, and should any of the same quality be left, forward it to him at once. Expense is no consideration. The importance of this to Dr. J. can hardly be exaggerated." So far the letter had run composedly enough, but here with a sudden splutter of the pen, the writer's emotion had broken loose. "For God's sake," he added, "find me some of the old."³

³ **Ibid.**

Jekyll's letter has an obvious resemblance with Kurtz's seventeen page report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. In his report, Kurtz lays out his agenda for civilisation. Speaking the eloquent language of manners with "burning noble words", his words are shockingly replaced by another voice that is "a kind of note at the foot of the last page, scrawled evidently much later, in an unsteady hand."⁴ Speaking with a noble and scientific phraseology that is disturbed by an erratic movement, both texts expose the façade of ideology as a deceiving construction. In both instances, an erratic behaviour of the pen produces an erratic kind of dissent.

While Jekyll's emotions break loose with his desperate appeal to God ("For God's sake,' he added, 'find me some of the old'"), the change of register in Kurtz's essay come through a comparison with a natural disaster ("a flash of lightning in a serene sky").

'By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded,' etc., etc. From that point he soared and took me with him. The peroration was magnificent, though difficult to remember, you know. It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence. It made me tingle with enthusiasm. This was the unbounded power of eloquence—of words—of burning noble words. There were no practical hints to interrupt the magic current of phrases, unless a kind of note at the foot of the last page, scrawled evidently much later, in an unsteady hand, may be regarded as the exposition of a method. It was very simple, and at the end of that moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes!' The curious part was that he had apparently forgotten all about that valuable postscriptum, because, later on, when he in a sense came to himself, he repeatedly entreated me to take good care of 'my pamphlet' (he called it), as it was sure to have in the future a good influence upon his career.⁵

⁴ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁵ *Ibid.*

The scrawled note which undermines the civilising discourse is the product of an unsteady hand. With its erratic movement it has the power to produce dissent. Like Hyde who speaks with the cold, scientific and rational discourse of a surgeon, Kurtz's voice gives voice to the ideology of the western civilisation. The change of register in Hyde's message demonstrates the coexistence and dissonance of discourses. The erratic behaviour of his pen reveals the carefully knitted texture of ideology, making it possible for us to see the patterns used in its making.⁶

With his unsteady hand Kurtz scrawls the truth of ideology and assists Marlow in understanding his hail. Utterson, on the other hand, comprehends Hyde's erratic movement as part of a larger ideology thanks to the splutter of Jekyll's pen. In both cases, our attention is directed towards the pen that authors the discourse. The splutter or the scrawl reveals the truth of the ideology.

Jekyll's splutter resembles Kurtz's "scrawl" of an "unsteady hand"; it is similarly associated with speech. Cambridge's English dictionary defines the verb form of "splutter" as speaking "in a quick and confused way, producing short unclear noises because of surprise, anger, etc., or (of a person or thing) to make a series of noises similar to this." Oxford English dictionary, on the other hand, offers a different description: splutter is an activity that produces "a series of short explosive spitting or choking sounds." OED defines the noun form of "splutter" as "a short, explosive, spitting or choking noise." The etymology of the word goes back to the Dutch "sputteren" which is "spitting with explosive sounds." The splutter is a phenomenon of speech as it is of writing.

Poole informs Utterson about the mysterious figure beneath the laboratory door and raises questions about that document's authorship. During the last couple of weeks the author had been writing directives to Poole; his chemist the addressee of those

⁶ In "Frankenstein, Detective Fiction, and Jekyll and Hyde", Gordon Hirsch also points to the parallel in between Jekyll's splutter and Kurtz's scrawl. Gordon Hirsch, "Frankenstein, Detective Fiction, and Jekyll and Hyde" in **Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 23.

directives, was expected to prepare draughts necessary for Jekyll's survival. Throughout the text, Poole and the chemist are employed as "hands" who are expected to bring various articles to their master. Jekyll is a master continuously served by a group of hands.

Jekyll had led a solitary existence in his cabinet for the duration of a week, crying "night and day for some sort of medicine". In that period, the master had written his orders "on a sheet of paper" which he subsequently threw on the stairs from where Poole collected them. When the lawyer demands to see those papers, Poole hands him "a crumpled note" which the lawyer then undertakes to analyse in detail.⁷

The splutter of the pen in Jekyll's note is part of a larger pattern of displacement in between organs of an individual body. Through this displacement, aspects of mastery are attributed to organs.

When Utterson's reading is abruptly interrupted by the short, explosive and spitting noise, the role of the splutter is not initially revealed. Does it signify a change of register in the scientific discourse? Or is it abandoned completely? This is a shift from a scientific *demand* to a religious *appeal*. Through this abrupt movement, the splutter reveals the nature of ideology: rather than embodying or abandoning an idea, the ideology modifies it.

Through its scientific tone and careful wording, the note seems to presuppose a cultural affinity with its addressee. It is part of a professional dialogue in between colleagues. Jekyll had thrown the "crumpled" paper outside his laboratory; it had produced a movement which resist the transformative powers of the splutter. The hand plays both masterly and servile roles. Having overthrown the function of servitude assigned to it, the hand is able to transform into a masterly organ.

⁷ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

2.2. The hail and the community of tongue: Stevenson's two hands

Interpreting Jekyll's hands is a way of interpreting Stevenson's thoroughgoing Hegelianism. In the introduction to his letters, Sidney Colvin argues that Stevenson had "at his command the whole vocabularies of the English and Scottish languages, classical and slang—the slang both of general use and of a kind of private code current among his intimates—with good stores of the French."⁸ According to Colvin's account Stevenson had the privilege of having two hands: a British hand with English and Scottish "fingers", alongside a slightly tinier French hand.

Recent scholarship emphasises Stevenson's linguistic failures which is another way of saying that his hands had failed. His letters show how Stevenson had difficulties with writing grammatically correct English or French sentences. Judging his own ability to compose French prose insufficient, Stevenson had trouble spelling many English words as well^{9 10}. In his notes to Stevenson's **Catriona**, Iain Galbraith argues that several of the characters in the book use "pseudo-Highland features in their speech."¹¹ In a letter to Sidney Colvin, Stevenson himself admitted using pseudo-dialect. "This is an old puzzle of mine," he wrote, "You see C.'s dialect is not wholly a bed of roses. If only I knew the Gaelic." In his introduction to **The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson**, Roger C. Lewis argues that Stevenson's Scots verse was in fact a written "representation" of contemporary popular speech in his region. And in a letter written in

⁸ Stevenson, **Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, p. viii-ix.

⁹In his introduction to the **Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, Ernest Mehew mentions how Stevenson "was uncertain of the spelling of 'ei' words such as neighbour, leisure, seize and weigh: he often wrote 'excercise', 'carreer' and 'adition'." (**Ibid.**, p. xii) It is also possible that Stevenson was dyslexic; in either case it is apparent he was a poor speller.

¹⁰On November 4, 1887, after submitting his "A Chapter on Dreams" to Scribner's, Stevenson confessed to James B. Carrington about how he supposed his "system of punctuation to be very bad; but it is mine; and it shall be adhered to with punctual exactness, by every created printer who shall print for me." Later, when his Scottish is confused for Latin, he wrote to Sidney Colvin: "Well, I say nought of the *homunculus*; but vim is a good Scottish at least—if not (as I am tempted to think) a good English, word; never a thought of Latin was in my mind; I used a current and a very general and a very definite colloquialism." (**Ibid.**, p. 355)

¹¹ Robert Louis Stevenson, **Catriona**, Köln, Konemann, 1996, p. 296.

French to Auguste Rodin on December 1886, Stevenson apologised for his poor command of French (“I cannot even express myself in English; how can you expect me to manage it in French?”) and wrote:

I wish I could write to you, but it isn't me who holds the pen—it's the other one, the stupid one, who doesn't know French, who doesn't love my friends as I love them, who doesn't appreciate things of art as I appreciate them; he whom I disavow, but whom I control sufficiently to make him take up a pen and write this twaddle. That creature, dear Rodin, you do not like; you must never know him. Your friend, who is asleep just now, like a bear, in the depths of my being, will awaken before long. Then he will write to you in his own hand. Wait for him. The other one doesn't count; he is only a poor unfaithful secretary with a cold heart and a wooden heart.”¹²

His letters attest to Stevenson's affinities with dialectics. He thought in terms of oppositions and tried to overcome them through works of fiction. Struggling to master English, French and Scots, Stevenson was torn in between those languages. He was able to admire both the passionate and radical Highlander mentality of his dreams and the more rational, liberal Lowland reality of his surroundings.¹³ Coming from a family of Scottish Calvinists, he was well-versed in religious Scottish ideas. His family also produced many distinguished builders of lighthouses. The coexistence of religious and scientific mentalities in his family had been instrumental in Stevenson's interest in reconciling them. Going against his parents' wishes, he had refused to become an engineer and was subsequently estranged with their respectable bourgeois lifestyle in Edinburgh.

¹² Robert Louis Stevenson, **The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson**, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, p. 324.

¹³ In a letter to Henry James on December 23, 1886, Stevenson described his native tongue as an ‘oracular medium’: “I am also considering a volume of verse, much of which will be cast in my native speech, that very dark oracular medium.” (**Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, p. 326)

On December 20, 1883, Stevenson wrote a letter to his father and mentioned Hegel's name for the first time in his correspondence. He was in Hyères, recovering from poor health. His father advised him to read John Gibson Lockhart's biography of Walter Scott, the Scottish writer par excellence. Stevenson used the letter as an excuse for giving voice to his musings about life which he thought shouldn't be taken too easily or lightly. In the letter Stevenson compared seriousness with lightness, and wrote:

we are all, in our serious moments, too much inclined to forget that all are sinners and fall justly by their faults, and therefore that we have no more to do with that than with the thundercloud; only to trust, and do our best, and wear as smiling a face as may be for others and ourselves. But there is no royal road among this complicated business.¹⁴

He summarised the problem in terms of philosophy: "Hegel, the German, got the best word of all philosophy with his antinomies," he wrote: "the contrary of everything is its postulate. That is, of course, grossly expressed, but gives a hint of the idea, which contains a great deal of the mysteries of religion, and a vast amount of the practical wisdom of life." This was the nucleus of what he thought and he later formulated in a different way: "everything is true; only the opposite is true too: you must believe both equally or be damned."

His father protested Stevenson's interest in Hegel and described the German idealist as the polar opposite of a proper Calvinist philosopher: "As to Hegel and his 'secret' I really know nothing," he wrote, "but the only prescription which I know for black views of life is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when that doesn't light up the scene, I fear Hegel is not likely to do so."¹⁵

¹⁴ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 242.

¹⁵ **Ibid.**

For Stevenson, Hegel was a rebellious figure whose ideas gave offence to his father's strong Calvinism. Like his contemporaries, Stevenson perceived Hegel as part of the continental philosophy which as a young bohemian in Edinburgh he often found attractive. Alongside the radical republican ideas of France, he was happy to study the dialectical school of German thought. Hegelianism showed a way to reconcile divisions he had made in between languages and cultures.

During the late-Victorian era, Stevenson was an outsider figure who lived on the cultural and geographical fringes of the English literary scene. He resembled Conrad who was later often compared to Stevenson. Stevenson wasn't born in the capital of the empire; his relationship with the official tongue of the empire was often complicated. This passage from "The Scot Abroad" in **The Silverado Squatters** represents Stevenson's ideas about what he had called the "community of tongue".

Scotlands is indefinable; it has no unity except upon the map. Two languages, many dialects, innumerable forms of piety, and countless local patriotisms and prejudices, part us among ourselves more widely than the extreme east and west of that great continent of America. When I am at home, I feel a man from Glasgow to be something like a rival, a man from Barra to be more than half a foreigner. Yet let us meet in some far country, and, whether we hail from the braes of Manor or the braes of Mar, some ready-made affection joins us on the instant. It is not race. Look at us. One is Norse, one Celtic, and another Saxon. It is community of tongue. ¹⁶

The hail of language creates a community of tongue in between Scots speakers, even when it is heard outside the British isles. Stevenson defines this community in relation to the act of speech. The community demands its subjects to speak with its own words. Stevenson could sustain his membership to the community of tongue through participating in this process of hailing.

¹⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 11.

In **Underwoods**, a collection of his poems, Stevenson referred to Scots as “our dying language”. Classifying himself with Burns and Fergusson, Stevenson claimed to be “one of Scotland’s ‘three Rabbies’”. In his introductory note to the same book, Stevenson expressed his sadness over the extinction of the Scots tongue: “The day draws near when this illustrious and malleable tongue shall be quite forgotten; and Burns’s Ayrshire, and Dr Macdonald’s Aberdeen-awa’, and Scott’s brave, metropolitan utterance will all be equally the ghosts of speech.”

In her book length study of Stevenson’s role in the fin de siècle, Julia Reid showed how Stevenson was fascinated by oral culture. He admired

and often sought to emulate— preliterate, oral culture. He composed poetry in Scottish dialect, published a volume of Scottish and Polynesian ballads, wrote many folk tales and towards the end of his life praised Haggard’s *Eric Brighteyes*, a romance inspired by the Icelandic sagas, confiding his desire to ‘try my hand at a saga’, and requesting ‘any volumes that are out’ in the Saga Library.”¹⁷

This was part of Stevenson’s desire to make a literary return to the “speaking voice”. Like Wilde (“Writing has done much harm to writers. We must return to the voice”¹⁸), Stevenson made Hegelian distinctions in between spoken and written cultures. He associated speech with the natural and the natural “with the plural and the

¹⁷ Julia Reid, **Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 23.

¹⁸ Oscar Wilde, **The Soul of Man under Socialism and Selected Critical Prose**, London, Penguin Classics, 2001, p. 223.

disruptive.”¹⁹ Orality was part of the “outdoor” life.²⁰ In his response to protests about the lack of “visual sense” in his novel **Catriona**, Stevenson advocated oral literature: “I *hear* people talking,” he wrote, “and I *feel* them acting, and that seems to me to be fiction. My two aims may be described as — 1st. War to the adjective. 2nd. Death to the optic nerve.”²¹

The war against the adjective and the optic nerve may also be interpreted as a war against Conrad and James, writers who both emphasised the importance of being able make the reader “see” things. Conrad was attacked for his lavish use of adjectives; James was a defender of the importance of the “visual sense” in fiction. In contrast, Stevenson who insisted on orality wanted to support the authenticity of oral Scots in contrast to written English. Although he wasn’t much acquainted with the former and had problems composing the latter Stevenson perceived them as parts of a master and slave relationship. His hand might be writing in English but Stevenson’s heart was in Scots. *Catriona*’s protests about the Scots tongue in the eponymous novel is but one example of this: “Your fathers and mothers talked it, one generation with another. And it is sung about the cradles before you or me were ever dreamed of; and your name remembers it still. Ah, if you could talk that language you would find me another girl. The heart speaks in that tongue.”²²

¹⁹ Penny Fielding. **Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 135.

²⁰ Reid also quotes Stevenson’s essays on “Talk and Talkers” where he argues that written literature is the product of *degeneration*. “Literature in many of its branches is no other than the shadow of good talk; but the imitation falls far short of the original in life, freedom and effect... Talk is fluid, tentative, continually ‘in further search and progress;’ while written words remain fixed, become idols even to the writer, found wooden dogmatisms.”

²¹ **Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, p. 566.

²² **Ibid.**, p. 92.

Attempts at reading Stevenson's fiction has to have these dichotomies between the spoken tongue and the written word, between nature and culture, between heart and reason and between Scotland and England, in mind.²³

As opposed to the biblical claim that "no man can serve two masters"²⁴, Stevenson was eager to serve the servile, authentic Scots culture and its masterly, artificial, English counterpart at the same time. Donald McFarlan wrote about Stevenson's "obsession with Scottishness"; in spite of being an exile for most of his adult life, "it was an itch which he simply could not stop scratching."²⁵ His non-fiction writings attest to Stevenson's description of Scottish and English cultures in Hegelian terms:

²³ Claire Harman describes **Catriona** as "probably his most Scots book" for the "quantity and variety of Scots language used in it." Claire Harman, **Myself and the Other Fellow**, Harper Perennial, New York and London, 2005, p. 435.

²⁴ Barry Menikoff emphasises Stevenson's remarkable ability to recognize both the achievement of the Victorian novel and its limitations and that "just as he admired Walter Scott as a fellow countryman and a writer whose subject touched him personally, he also knew that Scott's fiction had played itself out, or at least that Scott's method was defunct." It is also interesting to note Stevenson's interest in the French language. Menikoff proposes that "it is virtually a commonplace that Stevenson's connection with French literature and culture was as deeply rooted as his attachment to the country itself. From his laudatory remarks on Victor Hugo at the beginning of his career to his dedication of **Across the Plains** to Paul Bourget near the end, Stevenson retained an unshaken admiration for French writers." In his stories he required "a form that would maintain the detachment and objectivity of the French with the moral implicitness, even discursiveness, of the Americans."

²⁵ In a letter to J M Barrie in February 1892, Stevenson again mentioned his community of tongue:

We are both Scots besides, and I suspect both rather Scotty Scots; my own Scotchness tends to intermittency but is at times erisypelitous - if that be rightly spelt. Lastly, I have gathered we had both made our stages in the metropolis of the winds [Edinburgh]: our Virgil's 'grey metropolis', and I count that a lasting bond. No place so brands a man.

In another letter to his mother, Stevenson wrote about the "hopeless gulf that there is between England and Scotland, and English and Scotch. Nothing is the same; and I feel as strange and outlandish here as I do in France or Germany." In "The Foreigner at Home" he described England as a culture foreign to him:

it is not alone in scenery and architecture that we count England foreign. The constitution of society, the very pillars of the empire, surprise and even pain us. The dull, neglected peasant, sunk in matter, insolent, gross and servile, makes a startling contrast with our own long-legged, long-headed ploughman... The first shock of English society is like a cold plunge."

(**Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, Vol. II, p. 94.)

The fact remains: in spite of the difference of blood and language, the Lowlander feels himself the sentimental countryman of the Highlander. When they meet abroad, they fall upon each other's necks in spirit; even at home there is a kind of clannish intimacy in their talk. But from his compatriot in the south the Lowlander stands consciously apart. He has had a different training; he obeys different laws; he makes his will in other terms, is otherwise divorced and married; his eyes are not at home in an English landscape or with English houses; his ear continues to remark the English speech; and even though his tongue acquire the Southern knack, he will still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind.²⁶

The Master of Ballantrae is significant for its meticulous illustration of the master and slave dichotomy.²⁷ Narrated by the family servant Mackellar, the text reveals many of the dichotomies Stevenson made in between highlands and lowlands, masters and servants and English and Scottish cultural identities. Among these, Mackellar singles out the “rivalry between Mackellar’s pen and the Master’s tongue”; it is thanks to this rivalry in between the written and the spoken word that Stevenson can illustrate his “fascination with the disjunctions between writing and voice.”²⁸ **The Master** is about the “cursed Irish tongue” and the “barbarous and disgusting” Scots accent; it ends with the striking of “the Master in the mouth.”²⁹

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde features similar tensions in between servants and masters, oral and written traditions, and Scottish and English cultural traditions. In a

²⁶Robert Louis Stevenson, **Memories and Portraits**, Charleston, Nabu Press, 2010, p. 11.

²⁷Thus Adrian Poole states that “The attraction for Stevenson was exactly the way in which the special Scots meaning of ‘Master’ runs arhwart the dominant meanings of the word in English. These of course connote the presence of power and authority rather than its promise. It was exactly these questions - about the real location and workings of ‘mastery’ - that Stevenson found so happily coiled in the word.” Poole then asks how one can tell the difference “between a lord and master and Master”. There are distinctions between the upper and lower cases but one “cannot hear it.”

²⁸ Robert Louis Stevenson, **The Master of Ballantrae**, London, Penguin, 1996, p. xx. Adrian Poole describes how, to “express his sense of the Master’s unique delivery, Mackellar finds himself coining a new verb or giving a twist to an old one. He says that the words were sung (or rather ‘soothed’) to me by a master-singer.”

²⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 94.

letter to Edward Purcell on February 27, 1886, Stevenson described his “old Scotch Presbyterian preoccupation” with morbid affairs in “an age of transition”. He voiced his belief in the categorical imperative which he described as being ever with him, uttering “dark oracles”. Stevenson also admits his “Scotch side came out plain in Dr Jekyll”.³⁰ Stevenson’s binary oppositions in between his Scotch and English “sides” is part of a larger issue about ancestors.³¹ During the last part of his life in Samoa, Stevenson used Polynesian oral language in his writings; according to Reid, this was a result of Stevenson’s mistrust of “imperialist written culture” that stood in opposition to the genuine orality of subservient cultures.³²

2.3. Stevenson in between Jamesian and Conradian hands (part one)

In **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, Utterson plays a role that is similar to Marlow’s: they are both carriers and inheritors of ideologies set into action by their master figures. While an unnamed observer frames Marlow’s narrative; Utterson is described by a detached narrator. The former’s monologue is recorded by a narrator; the latter’s perceptions and ideas are rendered through a third-person narrative. The unnamed narrator of **Heart of Darkness** has access to an uninterrupted, “complete” narrative of events. Stevenson’s narrator, on the other hand, operates through his absence. It embodies the underlaying tension in between presence and absence, which is a key motif in the text. His absent role reflects Utterson’s inquisitorial position: bringing together evidence presented to him by a number of sources in order to better make sense of the transformations he has witnessed, Utterson attempts to produce a coherent history of events. In its organisation of texts, the unnamed narrator plays a similar function

³⁰ **Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**, p. 309.

³¹ Robert Mighall locates this same problematic of ancestors in Oscar Wilde’s **The Picture of Dorian Gray** and comments that Stevenson (in **Olalla**) and Wilde (in **The Picture**) both use ancestral portraits “to convey the power of hereditary determinism”.

³² **Robert Louis Stevenson, Science and the Fin de Siecle**, p. 157.

The inquisitorial function of the narrator is in stark contrast with Conrad's unnamed narrator. Henry James and Fredric Jameson both interpreted Conrad's narrator as a pre-modern figure working inside the framework of traditional storytelling. In contrast, Stevenson's narrator is extremely modern in its employment of various narrative techniques. Although he had reservations about Stevenson's lack of visuality, James was among the first to champion Stevenson's "presentation of the tale".

The title of the first chapter ("Story of the door") is an early sign of the modernist aspects of the narrative. As opposed to Conrad's more archaic, chronological account of past events, Stevenson's modernist narrative works non-chronologically. This focus on textuality is shown by the emphasis on chapter titles which feature labels like "narrative", "tale" and "statement". In terms of discursive diversity, Stevenson's text is more nuanced compared to **Heart of Darkness. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde's** self-reflexive construction is the main reason behind this discursive diversity.

2.4. Movement, hail and transformation

The first sentence of the narrative features the word "discourse". This is expected as Stevenson's text is focused primarily on discourse. Although described as being "embarrassed" in discourse, Utterson's proper name implies an interest in uttering things and in the act of utterance itself. A silent observer of events, Utterson's name, which includes a suffix ("son"), clarifies his position: he is the son of an utterer. As heir and prospective inheritor of Jekyll's fortune, he is the "son" of the uttering master.³³

In his introduction, Utterson is described in relation to his "rugged countenance". The narrative then focuses on the character traits which all point to a shallow man. The "door" in the title of the chapter is Utterson's countenance: we enter the story from there. His face provides the beginning point of the Hegelian transformation; he changes only after the door and his face are penetrated from outside.

³³ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 7.

“Something eminently human” beacons from Utterson’s eyes; this never finds its way into “his talk”. Utterson is a profoundly silent man. Throughout his relationships and “bonds” with other characters, the solitary aspect of his personality is continually emphasised.

Utterson takes long Sunday walks with his cousin Enfield; during these sessions they “said nothing, looked singularly dull, and would hail with obvious relief the appearance of a friend”. Their friendship is entirely on their mutual silence and turns into a form of confinement for both parties. It is also contagious: all the characters who encounter them gradually turn into silent listeners. Only a “hail” coming from outside can break the spell of these sessions; only then Utterson becomes receptive of outside influences.

The “silent symbols” of Utterson’s “after-dinner face” exemplify his cold, distant and dry manner.³⁴ These features are associated with his lack of interest in conversation, speech and music. When the hail comes from outside, it rescues Utterson and Enfield from the oppressive nature of their silent walk. It associates the silence of Utterson with the door which appears later in the narrative.

Utterson and Enfield come to a bystreet which is described as “small and what is called quiet”. The silence of their weekly excursions is in stark contrast with the noisy atmosphere of the street during weekdays.³⁵ Besides its aural qualities, the quiet street is also described in relation to its visual aspects. It shines “in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood, like a fire in a forest”; its “freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note” instantly catches, and pleases “the eye of the passenger”. The narrator describes the door in a way that is reminiscent of the earlier description of the lawyer’s countenance. Both the door and the face provide “visual”, mute and inaudible façades which conceal what lies beneath them.

³⁴ **Ibid.**

³⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 8.

The door is described as “blistered” and “distained” (discoloured), qualities which resemble Utterson’s rugged countenance. While they stare at the door, Enfield and Utterson’s position is similar to that of the narrator whose interpretation of lawyer’s countenance kicked off the narrative.

After observing it for some time, Enfield asks Utterson whether he “remarked” that door before. Utterson’s negative response comes in “a slight change of voice”. Following the change of voice, Enfield begins to recount a recent experience. He had walked the streets of London at nighttime when “literally nothing to be seen but lamps”. All the streets had been empty as churches and “lighted up as if for a procession”. This religious tone used in the description of the setting resembles the Eucharist in **Heart of Darkness**: in both examples, the Hegelian transformation is presented as a religious ritual. Kurtz and Enfield experience the transformative process of a movement which reaches them in a religious shape.

Enfield remembers seeing the unlikely figure of a “little man” walking towards a little girl. At this moment Enfield “listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman”. During the confrontation, the movement represented by Hyde’s feet dramatically tramples over the little girl. This trampling introduces the element of sound to his experience and Enfield hears the screaming of the girl. As he tramples over the girl Hyde makes no sound; he is seen as a disagreeable character precisely because of his silence. Enfield takes a “loathing” to him at first sight. Like Utterson’s face and the backdoor of Jekyll’s laboratory, first impressions about the mysterious, new phenomena are often negative.

Enfield describes Hyde as a character continuously on the move. Hyde embodies a movement which “speaks for himself”, *through* and *in* himself. The first time Hyde is described he is “stumping along eastward at a good walk”: he is associated with his feet and his footwork.³⁶

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Hyde's trampling over the little girl is described as sounding "nothing to hear" and "hellish to see". A vision that is "hellish to see" is transported to the domain of words where it becomes something to hear. What sounds "nothing to hear" but is "hellish to see" for Enfield becomes "hellish to hear" and "nothing to see" for Utterson, who is the listener of his cousin's tale.

In the previous chapter, I showed how Marlow's voice had become Kurtz's vision in **Heart of Darkness**. In **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, Enfield's voice plays a similar function for Utterson. His vision is defined by aural characteristics which are extensions of bodily movements. The doctor ("sawbones") who collaborates with Enfield is described as "the usual cut and dry apothecary, of no particular age and colour, with a strong Edinburgh accent, and about as emotional as a bagpipe." In hindsight, we know that this doctor is a professional colleague of the "little man" who shares with him a scientific state of mind. The doctor is distinguished from others by his "strong Edinburgh accent" which remains inaudible for us throughout the narrative. Not once do we hear his voice directly: nevertheless, his strong accent is presented as his distinguishing characteristic. Turning "sick and white with the desire to kill" Hyde after the incident, the doctor is like a mirror of Enfield who says he knew "what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine."

The silent dialogue in between bystanders of Hyde's violence is odd. The act of speech has been left out of the narrative; the Scottish accent of the doctor is never revealed to the reader through a dialogue that represents its nature. The "strength" of his Scottish reflects something else: it represents the feelings of a character capable of erratic, violent and irregular behaviour when faced with a movement like Hyde's. Thanks to its erratic nature, accent defines its subject.

As Hyde tramples over the child "calmly" and leaves the child "screaming". For the reader Hyde's trampling and the girl's screaming are thereby equated. The trampling had constituted a voice as erratic, and irregular, as the doctor with the strong Scottish accent. At this point, Hyde lacks a proper name: neither Hyde's nor Jekyll's proper

names have yet been uttered in the text. This reticence in uttering their names is part of the pattern of respectability, which is a larger issue that run throughout the text.

His captors try to intimidate Hyde and tell him they “could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other.” Hyde, without a proper name, exists solely as movement and accent. The captors who surround him, on other hand, are seen as a couple of “hateful faces”.³⁷ When he speaks with those hateful faces for the first time, Hyde asks them to “name your figure”.

In a literal sense, Hyde simply demands to learn the amount of money required to keep his name out of scandal. But Hyde’s statement can also be interpreted as a narratological demand to the narrator to “name” his “figure” who had been described only in relation to his trampling of the child. The main characteristic of the movement is its Hegelian violence: Hyde’s encounter with the little girl represents a power struggle in between a master and a servant figure.

In other words, Enfield had witnessed a servant’s confrontation with a master figure. Hyde’s masterly qualities are self-evident. He is able to walk quickly, carrying a phallic cane with him. He is represented as a patriarch who demands from others to name him. The movement represented by Hyde is associated with his feet; but he remains unnamed. When Hyde goes behind the door to bring a cheque to his captors, the association with his feet is displaced by a new association with his hands. As he carries a cheque from an author to an addressee with his hands, his role as harbinger of annihilation is replaced by a servile role.

Hyde’s hands are capable of serving, as well as mastering, their subjects. In their servile function they carry articles in between subjects like a proper servant. In their master function, on the other hand, they represent authorship. As authors they possess the authority of signing legal, literary and financial documents. Enfield describes them as servile things precisely because Hyde’s hands dutifully bring to his captors a cheque

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

“signed with a name that I can’t mention.” This cheque bears the name of someone “very well known” whose name is often “printed” but not uttered in the text. It is the proper name of a Victorian master whose respectability has to be protected at all costs.

The signature and the proper name with which Hyde is assumed to author documents are associated with various physical features. The “figure” on the cheque is described as “stiff” while “the signature was good for more than that, if it was only genuine.” This draws a parallel between a figure and a signature, implying that figures and signatures are similar things. A signature is a figure as much as a figure is a signature. Thanks to Enfield’s narrative, Utterson and the reader can see how figures and signatures mirror the Hegelian movement.

Is Hyde’s signature genuine or a forgery? The question unsettles assumptions about Enfield and other witnesses of Hyde’s movement. Is there such a thing as a genuine handwriting? According to Gordon Hirsch, Enfield’s concerns about the validity of Jekyll’s signature on the cheque are “misplaced”. The signature is “counterfeit only in the sense that all signatures are ‘counterfeit’ as Derrida has argued. That is, they presuppose the absence of the signer, the irrecoverable nature of his or her intentions, and a resistance to any constraints of meaning that the context may seem to impose.”³⁸

The question of signature also unsettles our assumptions about the nature of subjectivity. As we look closer at Hyde, his image becomes increasingly complicated. Initially he is described as part of a movement represented by feet. Later, he is defined as being a terrible sight but still without a proper name of his own. Finally, he emerges with his signature but his captors think this might be a forgery. Only after the cheque is proved to be genuine that Hyde is granted the privilege of possessing a proper name.

Enfield finally reveals his name in a curious sentence: “It was a man of the name of Hyde”. Rather than formulating it in a grammatically simple sentence (“his name was Hyde”), he puts the emphasis on the pronoun (“it”) and creates a certain distance

³⁸ Gordon Hirsch, “Frankenstein, Detective Fiction, and Jekyll and Hyde”, in **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde After One Hundred Years**, p. 238.

between Hyde and himself. Rather than describing him, Enfield externalises Hyde as an genderless object. His sentence emphasises the word “name”, rather than the name itself. Thanks to Enfield’s double use of prepositions, Hyde’s linguistic function precede his actual proper name. According to Enfield, Hyde’s capacity of being a man with a proper name is more significant than what his name actually represents.

Uttersen’s question (“What sort of a man is he to see?”) reduces Hyde to a servile, visual entity: a passive object for Enfield to behold. Hyde migrates into the sphere of appearances and is externalised as an image and a proper name. From Enfield’s description, he emerges as an unsettling image which resists attempts to describe and name him.

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn’t specify the point. He is an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can’t describe him. And it’s not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment.³⁹

Hyde is described with so many adjectives that Enfield’s statement about his failures to describe him sounds self-contradictory. His narrative provides the reader with numerous details about Hyde’s financial situation, violent behaviour, and signature. The reader knows his movements, his physical features and even his name. Nevertheless, Hyde still manages to remain “indescribable” for his observers. What is missing from these descriptions is Hyde’s voice. In fact, this is revealed to the captors through Hyde’s bodily movements: like Kurtz who is described as being “very little more than a voice”

³⁹ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 11-12.

Hyde's voice is his primary characteristic, one that makes itself heard through bodily movement.⁴⁰

When Hyde asks his captors to "name" their "figure", he plays the role of a master who can order things from his inferiors. He produces a demand which can only be satisfied by those who set eyes on him. Through his image and proper name, Hyde can produce this demand throughout the text.

Hyde and Kurtz both hail their subjects but their hails take different shapes. While Hyde makes his "voice" heard among his subjects through his movement, Kurtz's ideology diffuses through his proper name. One hears Hyde's voice by seeing his movements; in order to see Kurtz, on the other hand, one needs to hear the hail of his proper name. Hyde's movement transforms servile characters to masters. Throughout the text, Utterson becomes an observer of those transformations set into motion by Hyde.

The first chapter ends with the lawyer and his cousin "shake hands on" a bargain to never talk about the Hyde incident in the future. This "bargain" to never mention the issue produces a bind that "seals" the narrative it predates.⁴¹ It also presents a protean view of the lawyer. The first chapter begins as the story of Utterson's face before telling the story of Hyde's door. Although the similarities in between the face and the door are revealed, the reader is allowed to penetrate neither of them.

While Hyde is associated with his feet, Utterson is represented by the movement of his hands. Hyde's feet set into motion the diffusion of the ideology; the hands of the lawyer, on the hand, can only carry ideology to other subjects.

After paying for the damages, Hyde returns with a cheque that represents his intention to compensate the loss he had caused. His captors assume that the cheque bares the forged signature of Henry Jekyll; the bank approves its authenticity and Hyde is finally identified as a "hand" mediating in between his captors and Jekyll. His hands are

⁴⁰ Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

presented as servile organs whereas his feet retain their masterly capacity of beginning Hegelian transformations.

Had Hyde “authored” the handwriting on the cheque, he would have been considered a master figure with an authentic signature. The attribution of a servant character to his name reduces Hyde to a figure moving between masterly figures. It is thanks to this double role that **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** can present hands as both masterly and servile instruments.

It is strange to have mastery represented by Hyde’s feet as feet are often seen as servile parts of the body. In the hierarchy of the body, after all, organs closer to the ground (like feet and legs) have less authority while those on the upper parts are granted more authoritative, intellectual functions. But in the text hands symbolise mastery (Jekyll’s authorship) and servitude (Hyde’s role as carrier of documents and transformations) at the same time: the hierarchy is undermined.

In the second chapter (“Search for Mr Hyde”), Utterson is already immersed in the Hegelian process as his position undergoes a dramatic change. He shows interest in Hyde’s “figure”, “name”, “movement” and “signature”; in order to comprehend these manifestations, Utterson has to move closer to the physical origin of Hyde’s proper name.

Utterson’s bachelor house is ruled by an overbearing silence that is only interrupted by the ringing out of the neighbouring church. Silent environments are ideal for transformations; Utterson’s silent house provides the solitary space that is necessary for Utterson to approach Jekyll’s will. Bringing a candle with him, the lawyer takes refuge in his business room and opens a safe, taking out “the most private part of it a document endorsed on the envelope as Dr. Jekyll’s Will”.⁴² It is not clear whether this the envelope contains Jekyll’s actual “willpower” or just a legal representation of it.

⁴² **Ibid.**

Looking at the metonymic aspect of the will helps one see it as representing the will to which it belongs.

Jekyll's will is described as a holograph. It was written, from beginning to end, by the person in whose name it appears. Utterson refuses the least assistance in the making of this holograph; the will therefore represents Jekyll's character entirely. It reduces Hyde to a servile role. Hyde is associated with the servile function of a hand: he can bring documents but is not allowed to author them. If Hyde plays the role of a servant for Utterson, it is because he is never allowed authorship of documents. Even as a forger of signatures, Hyde is denied authorship; the holograph will is described as having nothing to do with his hands.

Utterson's reading of the will marks the beginning of his interest in Jekyll's inheritance. From this point onwards, Hyde and Utterson compete to inherit Jekyll's "will" both literally and figuratively.

Looking at his competitor's servile status, Utterson finds it difficult to accept that a figure like Hyde can be capable of inheriting the wealth of a master who possesses so many professional titles ("M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., &c.").⁴³ The master is associated with a servile and "absent" status. As the prospective inheritor of this will, Hyde gains a status of masterly presence. A clause in the will states that in the case of "the decease of Henry Jekyll" and in case of his "disappearance or unexplained absence" Hyde "should step into the said Henry Jekyll's shoes" in which role he would be "free from any burthen or obligation". When the transfer takes place, Jekyll's possessions will pass "into the hands of his 'friend and benefactor'". Utterson finds this legal situation difficult to accept.

In order to rationalise this prospective transmission of material goods, Utterson believes that Jekyll is subjected to blackmail by Hyde. Jekyll, after all, is a bachelor figure without any children; Hyde's unexplained financial gains are therefore explained

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

by the concealed fact that he is Jekyll's illegitimate son. These suspicions unsettle Utterson and he calls Jekyll's will an "eyesore". Alienated by the existence of the will, Utterson externalises the will in order to take a distance from it.

Irritated by Jekyll's will, which he finds unjust, Utterson is hailed into the movement set off by Hyde. Hyde's movement produces an anxiety comparable to Jekyll's will. The transfer of capital from a masterly subject to his servant servile is the main source of this anxiety; Hyde's trampling of the little child had caused similar disarray. In both cases, the educated classes feel undermined by movements which represent new, and energetic forces in society that are seen as threats to the status quo.

Utterson's indignation is caused by his ignorance of Hyde. But as his knowledge increases, Utterson is more repulsed by Hyde. His knowledge of Hyde's name is presented in a strangely formulated sentence: "it was already bad enough when the name was but a name of which he could learn no more". Now that looks beneath the proper name it begins to be "clothed upon with detestable attributes". Those attributes are compared to a change in weather, with Hyde likened to "the shifting, insubstantial mists" which baffle Utterson's eye.

Hyde represents a transformative power. Thanks to this power he can influence his subjects and diffuse into them. Dr. Lanyon's butler is among those subjects influenced by the movement; he is also the first professional servant introduced by the text. He is among numerous servants in the text associated with the role of hands. Those figures have the power to open and break doors, bring documents, serve food and transmit information in between characters. They are basically hands on the move and are often defined as vessels to communicate information.

Hyde's movement sets into motion numerous transformations among servile figures. The figure below illustrates the changes that take place in the process. As a "prime mover", Hyde is part of a Hegelian movement. His movement gives rise to various responses, including resistance. Through resisting the movement, the privileged classes give voice to their anxieties about the emergence of new forms of knowledge

threatening their position and stability. These are similar to anxieties felt by Marlow who interprets Kurtz's possession of new spaces as resulting from an aggressive capitalism. The hail of Kurtz and Hyde both represent an invitation to this new ethos; they are both affirmations of it.

Uttersson describes the process with which the movement gathers its attributes like a body being furnished with clothes. Hyde's movement represents new scientific discourses seen as suspect by those who have a more traditional view on scientific matters. Distinguished and externalised as a separate category of knowledge, Hyde lead its subjects into imitating its movement. He produces his own reproduction: he resembles Kurtz who, with his eloquent speech, leads his hearers into producing a discourse identical to itself.

Dr Lanyon is also described as a silent observer of events. Uttersson finds him sitting "alone over his wine" in his dining-room. In contrast to Uttersson's position as a man of legal knowledge, Lanyon is defined in relation to his scientific expertise. He also happens to be one of Jekyll's oldest friends.

Uttersson praises Lanyon's capacity of knowledge and believes that "if anyone knows, it will be Lanyon". In his room, Lanyon greets and welcomes Uttersson "with both hands"; this is the second instance where Uttersson uses his hands to create a partnership.

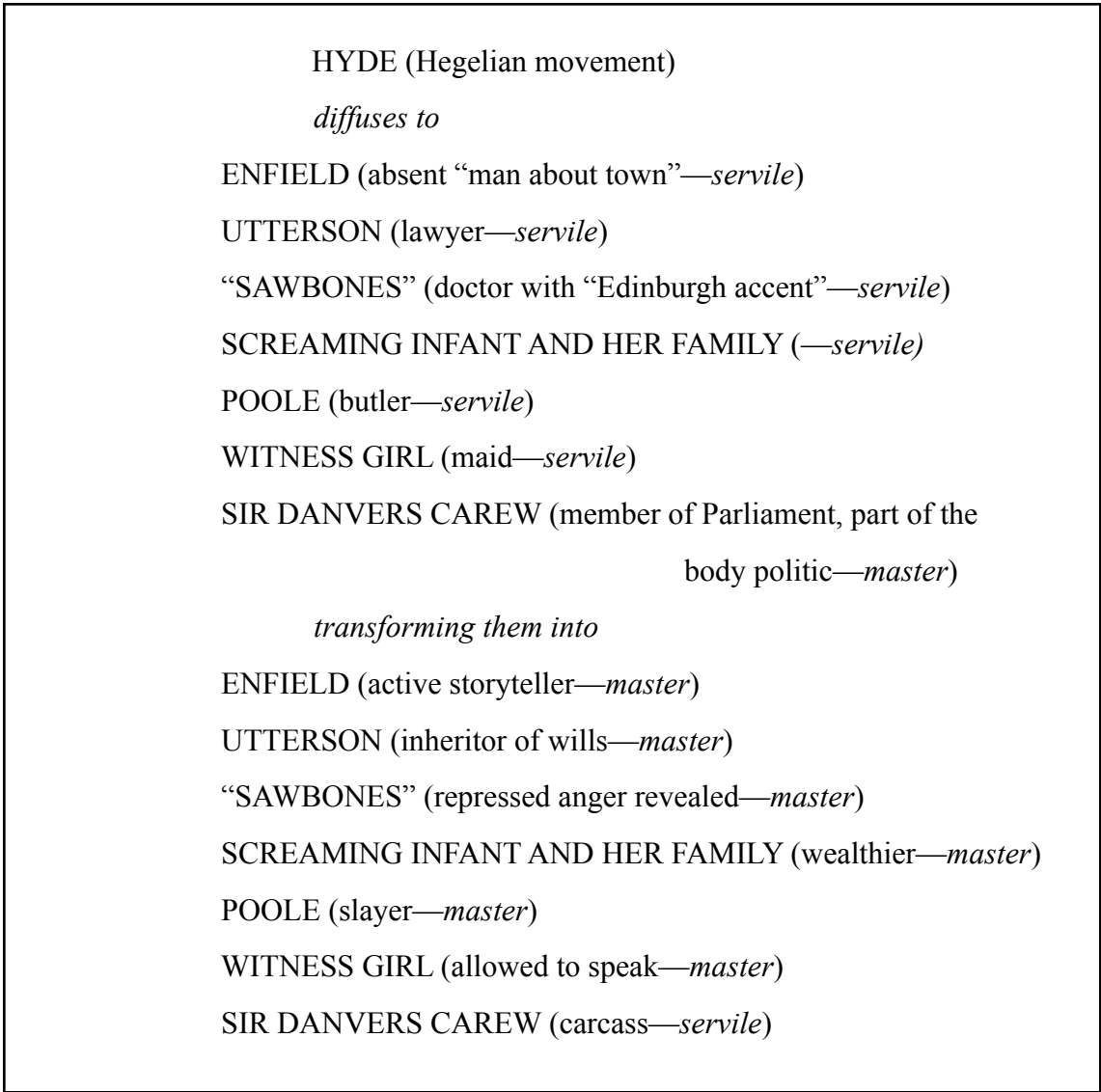


Figure 3: Hyde’s Hegelian movement diffuses into its subjects

The bond in between Utterson and Enfield is replaced by a new one between Utterson and Lanyon. All of those partnerships are extensions of the “master”

relationship in between Jekyll and Hyde. The figure below⁴⁴ shows the initial state of the transformative process. Those positions are later altered following the emergence of Hyde.

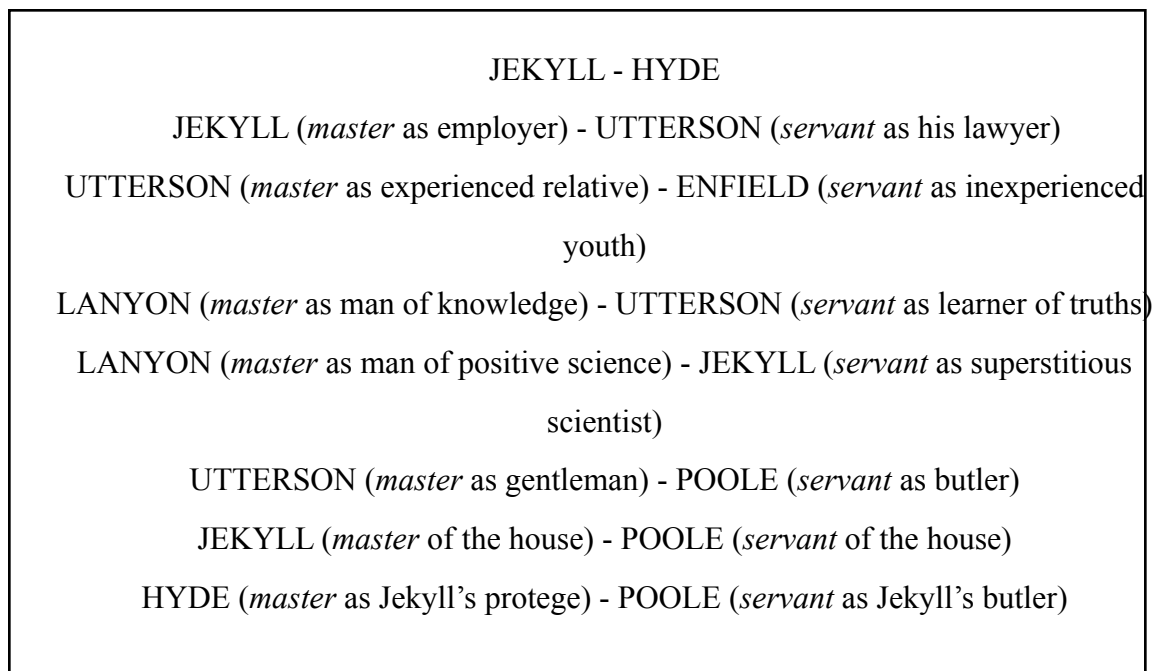


Figure 4: Partnerships: the initial stage

⁴⁴ In “Children of the Night”, William Veeder writes about the attraction in between misogynic men. “Jekyll and Hyde fit quite obviously into a long tradition of male doubles,” he says and includes “Dorian Gray and his picture” into his history of those doubles.

Structurally, the interchange between a pair of men—as in the Cain/Abel and Damon/Pythias stories foreground by Stevenson—shapes the staging of or constitutes subject matter in every scene in the novella:

Cain and Abel (29), Utterson and Enfield (29), Enfield and Hyde (31-32), Utterson and Lanyon (36), Damon and Pythias (36), Utterson and Hyde (37), Mr. Hyde and Mr. Seek (38), Utterson and Poole (41), Utterson and Jekyll (43), Hyde and Carew (46), Hyde and the servant Maid’s master (46), Carew and Utterson (47), Utterson and Newcomen (49), Utterson and Jekyll (51), Utterson and Guest (53), Utterson and Enfield (60), Utterson and Poole (62-73), Utterson and Lanyon (74), Lanyon and Jekyll/Hyde (77-80).

William Veeder, “Children of the Night”, in **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: After One Hundred Years**, p. 141.

Utterson is privileged to play the role of central consciousness in the text. He establishes partnerships through activities like walking and conversation; with Enfield he enjoys having weekly strolls; with Lanyon it is the “rambling talk” that he likes. Strolling sessions with Enfield exclude speech; conversations with Lanyon exclude movement. As the figure above shows, Utterson plays the master role in the former relationship while here his position is inferior compared to Lanyon’s status as man of knowledge. Lanyon possesses scientific knowledge as well as information vital for solving the mystery of Hyde.

In his role as detective, Utterson understands that transformations take place *in between* characters as well as *inside* them. In the Hegelian scheme, servants eventually immerse the power of their masters. In order to reach this position, they need to be a masters and servants at the same time.

The elaborate nature of the dialectic movement undermines the existence of any stable relationship in between a master and a servant. These are destined to be temporary, always subject to change. Because of the unstable nature of the movement, Utterson gradually undermines Lanyon’s superior position.

In the early stages of their relationship, Utterson has no illusions either about his own or his superiors’ status. He speaks of “a bond of common interest” in between Jekyll and Lanyon. Accepting them as his superiors, he looks up to Lanyon and Jekyll. Utterson also comprehends that they belong to the gentlemanly class of British society. Their names and prestige have to be protected at all costs. As eminent surgeons, Lanyon and Jekyll represent the prestige of their profession and are privileged with the right to practice scientific knowledge. Their respectability puts those surgeons into a vulnerable position, especially in their relations with “lower” classes.

Proper names of Jekyll and Lanyon distinguish them from members of “lower” classes. Utterson learns that Jekyll lately went awry in his behaviour and that the “bond” presumed to exist between him and Lanyon reached its final stage; their proper names,

in other words, are in danger. Lanyon believes Jekyll went too “fanciful” with his scientific beliefs. He refuses to see his old friend as his equal. After all, during his studies Jekyll has employed what Lanyon considered to be “unscientific balderdash”.⁴⁵ This is sufficient reason for Lanyon to feel himself superior to Jekyll. In contrast with the surgeons, Utterson is described as a man of no scientific passions “except in the matter of conveyancing”. His only scientific expertise is associated with technicalities of the transfer of property. This clarifies Utterson’s position as a mover of properties. Like Marlow before him, Utterson performs the duty of securing a master’s integrity. Marlow’s mission to secure Kurtz fails because he ends up as one of his disciples; similarly, Utterson’s mission to secure Jekyll’s will fails because he ends up as one of its claimants.

Utterson asks Lanyon whether he has ever “come across a protégé” of his old friend, as he assumes Hyde to be one of Jekyll’s protégés. Although it does not refer to the sense of hearing, Lanyon interprets Utterson’s inquiry as a question about whether he has “heard” Hyde’s proper name. Utterson’s question includes the expression “coming across” which has several connotations: on the one hand, the expression implies meeting a person. In its slang use, on the other hand, the expression implies paying over money that is demanded, as in “coming across with the check”. The expression also refers to Hyde’s coming across as a hideous man.

Saying he has never “heard of him” Lanyon ignores Utterson’s questions about i) whether he has met Hyde in person; ii) whether was blackmailed by him; and iii) whether he has gathered any impressions of the man. Lanyon’s response answers none of these questions.

His ignorance about Hyde is reminiscent of Utterson’s initial state. Utterson’s knowledge about the surgeon is now superior to that of Lanyon. The Hegelian “problem” has hitherto touched Utterson merely on the intellectual side whereas now

⁴⁵ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

“his imagination also was engaged or rather enslaved” by it. Lying on his bed, Utterson can see Enfield’s tale in his mind “in a scroll of lighted pictures”. In this dream Utterson sees “the figure of a man walking swiftly”. He observes the appearance of “a child running from the doctor’s”. When they meet, the “human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams”. In his dream Utterson correctly identifies Hyde as a movement rather than a proper name or a figure with discernible features.

Next, Utterson sees Jekyll lying silently at his bed. This peaceful sight of the sleeping master is abruptly interrupted by the Hegelian movement: “and lo! there would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given.”⁴⁶ When the authority of his friend is undermined by a new entity to “whom power was given”, Utterson becomes anxious and fears this unexpected change in social relations to be the beginning point of an epidemic.

Utterson correctly attributes the source of these fears to Hyde’s feet and describes how

the figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night; and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly and still the more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wider labyrinths of lamp-lighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming.⁴⁷

Those “wider labyrinths” of London broadens the horizons of Hyde’s movement; it is through these labyrinths that the Hegelian influence makes itself felt in British society. As the movement is equated with his feet, Hyde gradually becomes a metonymy

⁴⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 15.

⁴⁷ **Ibid.**

and resembles the metonymic nature of Kurtz. Utterson realises how both bodies stand for body-politics. The establishment will be increasingly undermined by a “swift” movement that “glides more stealthily through sleeping houses”.

Hyde’s silent figure produces a signature, describing and giving voice to its subject. His “splutter of the pen” communicates its content through its movements in the text. The movement lacks a countenance and Utterson notes that the figure had “no face by which he might know it”. The removal of the face and the subsequent emphasis on the swiftness of the movement are signs of the compartmentalisation of Hyde’s body. Even in Utterson’s dreams Hyde

had no face, or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes; and thus it was that there sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer's mind a singularly strong, almost an inordinate, curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr. Hyde. If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined. He might see a reason for his friend's strange preference or bondage (call it which you please) and even for the startling clause of the will. At least it would be a face worth seeing: the face of a man who was without bowels of mercy: a face which had but to show itself to raise up, in the mind of the unimpressionable Enfield, a spirit of enduring hatred.

Utterson interprets this faceless movement as a threat to his security. His demand to “behold” Hyde’s features echoes his earlier confrontation with the clauses of Jekyll’s will. Jekyll’s will and Hyde’s facial features are both presented as documents reflecting the wills of their owners.

Following the dream, Utterson begins to “haunt the door” to satisfy his curiosity about Hyde. The countenance of Utterson had been likened to a door; his search for Hyde is therefore also a search for his own subjectivity. During various hours of the day Utterson goes to his “chosen post”. In this post he is gradually “hailed” by ideology while undertaking to seek a face in order to open the metaphoric door. Utterson defines

his role as that of “Mr. Seek”, ignoring the sense of hearing altogether in his mission to locate Hyde.

A number of lamps decorate the scene of Utterson’s confrontation with Hyde. The scene features a pattern made of lights and shadows. The streets are “as clean as ballroom floors” while the “solitary” by-street is described as being “very silent” in spite of “the low growl of London from all round”.

When backgrounded with this silent scene, Hyde’s sound amplifies easily. Before his arrival to the door, Utterson describes how he was surrounded by small sounds “carried far”; the lawyer is all ears, expecting to hear Jekyll’s footsteps at any moment. He is a figure defenceless against the approach of ideology. Utterson observes how the sound of ideology is artificially carried to great lengths before making a visual impression.

It is here that Utterson discovers the nature of ideology; that it moves through rumours capable of swift movement (“the rumour of the approach of any passenger preceded him by a long time”). Ideology makes its initial appearance as rumour. Listening to this rumour, Utterson can hear “domestic sounds of the houses” which are “clearly audible” to his sense of hearing. This implies that sounds can precede and replace visions.

The lawyer hears “an odd, light footstep drawing near.”⁴⁸ It is a “light” movement with an “odd” character, difficult to distinguish from other voices. Hyde’s role is to combine voice with movement. While waiting for Hyde, Utterson grows accustomed to the “quaint effect with which the footfalls of a single person, while he is still a great way off, suddenly spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city”. Hyde’s “sharply” and “decisively” falling steps arrests his attention. As they “drew swiftly nearer, and swelled out suddenly louder as they turned the end of the street” Utterson looks forth to see “what manner of man he had to deal with.” He comes face to

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

face with the object of his inquiry. Hyde is described as “small and very plainly dressed” whose “look” even at that distance goes “somehow strongly against the watcher’s inclination”.

Hyde’s image produces an “impression” capable of moving from one rumour to another. It can “go” against the inclination of its beholder and represents the anxieties and assumptions of those threatened by its emergence. In the beginning Hyde has no voice; eventually he gains that ability through his movement. His footwork moves towards a door described in terms similar to the door associated with Utterson’s countenance. Even before being hailed by it, Utterson willingly subjects himself to a movement whose dangers he can clearly identify. He then withdraws to a place from where he can safely behold Hyde’s face. When Hyde makes a shortcut and heads “straight for the door, crossing the roadway to save time”, things take an unexpected turn for Utterson. Hyde draws “a key from his pocket like one approaching home” and Utterson springs forward to touch him on the shoulder.

Following this touch on the back, Hyde turns and faces Utterson. The latter becomes aware of the movement which is about to penetrate his mind. Hyde avoids being captured, shrinking back “with a hissing intake of the breath”. It is a moment where the focus of the text shifts from Hyde’s feet to his mouth.

This new “oral” representation of Hyde intersects with his christening. When Utterson asks him whether “he is” Mr Hyde, the latter replies using a demonstrative pronoun as a substitute for his proper name (“that is my name”). When he asks Utterson what he wants, Hyde sets into motion a movement, leading the lawyer into examining his life where he is accustomed to be surrounded by piles of legal documents and wills. Hyde’s question (“what do you want?”) begins a movement associated with new juridical powers through which Utterson eventually inherits Jekyll’s wealth and will.

Having introduced himself as an “old friend of Dr. Jekyll’s”, Utterson says Hyde “must have heard” his name and asks to be admitted inside the house. This symbolic request attests to the competition in between Utterson and Hyde who both struggle to

influence Jekyll's character. Utterson's influence seems outdated and passive while Hyde represents the emergence of a more aggressive power.

Thanks to this meeting of competing influences, Utterson gathers the knowledge necessary to know Hyde in the future. Hyde is classified as information necessary for the realisation of self-knowledge in the Hegelian process. Both parts recognise themselves as influences on Jekyll while struggling to control him. It is with this information in mind that Utterson wonders whether Hyde "too have been thinking of the will?"⁴⁹ He acknowledges his position as a rival and natural enemy working against his will. Utterson and Hyde are natural enemies in adverse positions. This is reflected in their struggle to define each other as units of knowledge.

Utterson's reply to Hyde's question ("how did you know me?") reflects an acknowledgment of this fact. It also brings Hyde's attention to those "common friends" serving as intermediaries in between them. Hyde rejects the idea that such friends do exist and accuses Utterson of lying. Giving out "a savage laugh" he unlocks the door.

His encounter with Hyde's Hegelian movement leaves Utterson exhausted. He begins "slowly to mount the street, pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity." As he analyses Hyde's formal features Utterson becomes "pale and dwarfish", giving "an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation." Hyde had a "displeasing smile" and borne "himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somehow broken voice". There is no "nameable malformation" in his outlook but Hyde still gives the impression of deformity, as an outcome of his Hegelian nature. Neither the outcome nor the beginning point of the transformative process, Hyde embodies the movement's mixed nature both literally and figuratively. Hyde is neither timidity nor boldness. Instead, he is timidity turning into boldness. As he speaks in a

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

whispering, low-pitched, “husky” and broken voice, Utterson has difficulty listening to Hyde. Paying more attention to his words Utterson focuses entirely on Hyde’s mouth.

Following the encounter with Hyde, Utterson visits Jekyll’s house and is greeted there by the butler Poole who goes inside to see whether his master is at home. Jekyll had lately been absent; his servants need to check whether he is currently a “presence” or an “absence” in his house.

In the present instance the master is absent. Utterson mentions how he saw “Mr Hyde go in by the old dissecting room door.”⁵⁰ He learns that servants have “orders to obey” Hyde and that they “see very little of him”. Utterson surmises that his friend had been possessed by “the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace”. According to this theory of “hidden disgrace”, Jekyll fears the coming of punishment “pede claudo”.⁵¹ This is a Latin expression referring to a limping foot; having been identified as a ghost, a disease (“cancer”) and a form of legal punishment, Hyde is finally associated with the movement of a limping foot.

Before diffusing into British society like a disease, Hyde is furnished with the power of possessing his subjects. Previously described as “odd” and “light”, Hyde is now defined by his “limping” quality. Becoming aware of Hyde’s approach, Utterson reflects on his own character, wondering whether he has already been effected (“And the lawyer, scared by the thought, brooded awhile on his own past, groping in all the corners of memory, lest by chance some Jack-in-the-Box of an old iniquity should leap to light there. His past was fairly blameless...”)

Protecting Jekyll from the evil influence proves to be a difficult task. His understanding of this difficulty helps Utterson perceive Hyde as a master character (““This Master Hyde, if he were studied’ thought he, ‘must have black secrets of his

⁵⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 18.

⁵¹ **Ibid.**, p. 19.

own..."). As his evaluation of Hyde shifts from "protégé" to "Master Hyde", Utterson is finally able to acknowledge the masterly aspect of servants.

Following this acknowledgment he has a nightmare where Hyde steals "like a thief to Harry's bedside". This image inspires in him the protective feelings of a lover ("poor Harry, what a wakening!"). Utterson becomes aware of what he calls the "danger" of Hyde's discovery of Jekyll's will; he now grows "impatient to inherit" it.

The lawyer still fails to admit the similarities between his position and that of Hyde. He plays the role of a dangerous servant rather than a vulnerable master. It is thanks to this illusion that Utterson decides to "save" his friend ("Ay, I must put my shoulder to the wheel—if Jekyll will but let me," he added, "if Jekyll will only let me.") The image of "the strange clauses of the will" which are "as clear as a transparency" is then brought to his mind.

Following the introduction of Hyde, the social hierarchy undergoes various alterations. The strange clauses of Jekyll's will have become transparent while the protégé turns into a master. This change is related to the identification of the dissecting room behind Hyde's door. In fact, it is the movement itself that has dissected Jekyll. His disciple undergoes a similar transformation; the wills of Jekyll and Utterson are undermined while they are transformed by Hyde who is finally acknowledged as a "master".

The next chapter ("Dr Jekyll was quite at ease") introduces a shift of focus from objects ("the door") and processes ("search") to the subject proper ("Dr Jekyll").⁵² Utterson moves among Jekyll's friends who are "all intelligent, reputable men". His prospective role of inheritor of Jekyll's will becomes apparent when after all the guests depart from the surgeon's house, he remains. It is through his love for solitude that Utterson is distinguished from other guests who sober their minds on his "rich silence

⁵² **Ibid.**

after the expense and strain of gaiety." While other guests whom he looks up to and sees as his masters continue with their conversation, Utterson remains silent.

Finally alone with the surgeon, Utterson asks him about his will. Jekyll is quite surprised by this interest ("I never saw a man so distressed as you were by my will; unless it were that hide-bound pedant, Lanyon, at what he called my scientific heresies").⁵³ Calling Lanyon "an ignorant, blatant pedant" Jekyll says he had never been "more disappointed" in his life in "any man than Lanyon".

The distinction made between two types of scientists is an important one. While describing Lanyon as a "pedant" Jekyll refers to what he sees as Lanyon's servile position in his relations with scientific orthodoxies. In contrast, Jekyll remains as a figure who can master unknown regions of information. His ambitions shadow Lanyon's pedantic devotion to scientific traditions.

Utterson abruptly tells Jekyll that he has never approved of his will. This interruption causes Jekyll to grow "pale to the very lips". He doesn't care "to hear more" about the will; they agree to drop the matter. Jekyll's unwillingness to hear about the will is reminiscent of the previous bond between Utterson and Enfield who had decided to stop talking about Hyde.

Utterson acknowledges his "painful" situation, saying how his "position is a very strange—a very strange one" that cannot be "mended by talking". This "strange" position brings to mind Hyde's strange footwork. Jekyll is fragmented into two separate parts represented by Hyde's "odd" feet and Utterson's silence. When faced with Hyde, Jekyll has to be silent; this silence is sign of a servile position in his relations to a master movement. Social hierarchy decides whether he speaks or stays mute. His servile position is further emphasised when Jekyll tells Utterson that he can get rid of Hyde whenever he wants. This promise ("I give you my hand upon that") parallels the bond in

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

between Utterson and Enfield. Jekyll's servile position once again resembles that of the lawyer.

Jekyll voices his concerns about Hyde's well-being in such a manner ("If I am taken away, Utterson, I wish you to promise me that you will bear with him and get his rights for him") that he produces a dichotomy in between Hyde's presence and Jekyll's absence.⁵⁴ Once Jekyll becomes an "absence" Hyde emerges as a "presence" and as a master figure. Expressing his concerns about the matter, Jekyll lays "his hand upon the other's arm" which now become a limb that can create a bond in between Jekyll's servile hands and Hyde's masterly torso.

Jekyll convinces Utterson to play the role of a hand in his absence. When Utterson promises to do as he is told, their relationship is reconfigured. The lawyer's "presence" becomes associated with Jekyll's absence. Thanks to his promise of getting Hyde's rights for him, Utterson becomes a guardian as well as a prospective inheritor.

The following chapter ("The Carew Murder Case") introduces a more esteemed figure with the duty of guardianship.⁵⁵ Not belonging to the body-politic triangle constituted by Utterson (arm), Hyde (feet/torso) and Jekyll (hand), Sir Danver Carew is the text's most powerful figure in terms of political privilege and influence. A member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, his role is superior to all the masterly characters in the text, including two eminent surgeons. While Jekyll and Lanyon are merely medical professionals, Carew is part of the governing body of United Kingdom and is furnished with the highest political powers available in its isles. His formal title attests to Carew's status as statesman. He may have been awarded a knighthood or a baronetery. Murdered by a figure described as carrying a stick with him (which is later revealed to be a gift from Utterson to Jekyll, a further sign of Utterson's

⁵⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 21.

⁵⁵ **Ibid.**

function as arm), Carew's carcass represents the actualisation of a conservative's fears about the abolishment of the parliamentary system.

Apart from Hyde, the only witness of Carew's annihilation is a "maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river." After retiring to bed after work at around eleven o'clock, the maid stares outside from the window and becomes an observer of Hyde's transformation. Situated in "a box" where she can safely watch the outside world, the maid's location brings to mind the architecture of a theatre previously associated with the dissecting theatre in Jekyll's house. But whereas the dissecting theatre assists in Jekyll's disintegration, the box presents a safe place from where the servant can observe the violence of the Hegelian movement.

The Carew chapter is a mixture of numerous narrative styles. Describing the murder scene, the narrative focus shifts from Utterson to the maid and returns to him a few pages later. This shift produces the first instance where the reader knows more than Utterson. Related news articles are placed alongside the official indictment of the case and information concerning Carew's murder is presented through journalistic and juridical discourses.

The servile point of view of the maid resembles Enfield's account of the trampling of the little girl. Unlike Enfield who plays an active part in the events he describes, the maidservant remains absolutely passive. Once she comes back to her senses, her passive role changes and the maidservant becomes an active storyteller possessing the privilege of describing the last minutes of a member of the parliament.

In her description of the encounter in between Hyde and Carew we learn that

when they had come within speech (which was just under the maid's eyes) the older man bowed and accosted the other with very pretty manner of politeness. It did not seem as if the subject of his address were of great importance; indeed, from his pointing, it sometimes appeared as if he were only inquiring his way; but the moon shone on his face as he spoke, and the girl was pleased to watch it, it seemed to breathe such an innocent and old-world kindness of disposition, yet

with something high too, as of a well-founded self-content. Presently her eye wandered to the other, and she was surprised to recognise in him a certain Mr. Hyde, who had once visited her master and for whom she had conceived a dislike.

Both Enfield and the maidservant describe Hyde as a dislikable character. According to the latter's account, the elder man begins to talk to this dislikable man by "accosting" him. The focus then shifts to Carew's face and the servant carefully looks at his lips in order to understand what he says. The scene presents Carew as a master figure with the authority to accost, speak and inquire.

The maidservant's narrative about the murder weapon is a reminder of Hyde's "splutters" always being related to Utterson. At the beginning of the narrative, the trampling of the child was witnessed by Utterson's cousin, Enfield. The murderer of Carew killed the man with a gift of Utterson. Lanyon, who is later annihilated by Hyde, is also one of his friends. Hyde's movement engulfs Utterson and grasps his will. The maidservant describes how Hyde had "in his hand a heavy cane, with which he was trifling; but he answered never a word, and seemed to listen with an ill-contained impatience."⁵⁶ This description of Hyde resembles Utterson's role as a hearer of things. His violent behaviour is associated with the "splutter" of Jekyll's pen. During his outburst, Hyde suddenly breaks out "in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane, and carrying on (as the maid described it) like a madman."⁵⁷ In order to murder Carew, Hyde makes use of the walking cane as well as his feet. "Trampling his victim under foot" and "hailing down on a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered", Hyde forces the body into jumping upon the roadway.

Through his employment of the walking cane and his feet, Hyde reveals the nature of his violent movement. He represents both Jekyll and Utterson, while

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21-22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

embodying a Hegelian projection of both. As he shatters Carew's bones, Hyde's movement becomes a voice causing the maid to faint. Another manifestation of this voice is "a sealed and stamped envelope, which he had been probably carrying to the post, and which bore the name and address of Mr. Utterson." Discovered among the remains of his body, the document shows affinities in between Carew and Utterson who were "inclined" towards each other. Carew is one of Utterson's clients; he plays a role similar to Jekyll. He also resembles a monarch: "stamping" with his foot while "brandishing the cane", his violent movement resembles the violent stamping out of a rebellion.

The life and death struggle taking place between Hyde and Carew puts an end to Utterson's passivity. He visits the police station, learning from an officer that "this will make a deal of noise". Once newsboys cry out news of Carew's death, a helical movement comparable to the one set into motion by Kurtz begins to diffuse in British society. Worried by the association of noises with proper names which represent the respectability of their owners, Utterson gains insight about how proper names have the unprecedented power to make and destroy their subjects.

The chapter introduces Newcomen, the inspector who is assigned to the case by Scotland Yard. They pay a visit to Hyde's apartments in a densely impressionistic scene of London that is in stark contrast with the dry juridical discourse that precede it. (Utterson sees "a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the-back end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths".⁵⁸)

Becoming conscious of "some touch of that terror of the law and the law's officers, which may at times assail the most honest", Utterson is terrified by the structure

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

of the British political system. After all, this system is based on acts of parliament rather than a single constitutional document. Houses of Parliament are Hegelian entities constantly susceptible to change and influence. Utterson interprets the murder of Carew as an attack to the British political system whose “oral” nature as a space for conversation is a cause for fear to his conservative mind.

In fact, Utterson has no cause for worry about the law nor for its officers. As a practicing lawyer he knows that in England acts of parliament are open to debate; like Jekyll’s will, those parliamentary acts can be reversed, cancelled and suppressed at any time. Laws of Britain “know not the word or the idea” of being unconstitutional⁵⁹. Likewise, wills of Utterson and Jekyll are open to political debate, scrutiny and sabotage.

During his visit to Hyde’s lodgings, Utterson is occupied with those anxieties. He perceives Hyde as “a man who was heir to quarter of a million sterling” and learns that he is away. Inside the room Utterson comes across “a pile of grey ashes, as though many papers had been burned” alongside “the butt end of a green cheque book, which has resisted the action of the fire; the other half of the stick was found behind the door.”⁶⁰

This scene reveals Hyde’s role as carrier of possessions. Both objects mentioned in the description, after all, actually belong to Jekyll. In his servile role, Hyde transforms characters while carrying their possessions. He also manages to secure several thousands of pounds in his bank account. Upon discovering this, inspector Newcomen decides that he has the murderer in his “hand”. This new hand attempts to confine the murderer; its professional obligations parallel the movement it seeks to control.

Newcomen believes that Hyde “must have lost his head, or he never would have left the stick or, above all, burned the cheque book.” In order to capture this headless man Newcomen focuses on his proper name. Once they “get out the handbills”, the will

⁵⁹ S. B. Chrimes, **English Constitutional History**, London, Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 42.

⁶⁰ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 24.

to capture Hyde diffuses to the general public who in their role as hailed subjects are to make Hyde's arrest possible. In fact, preparing handbills proves to be a difficult task as it is almost impossible to describe Hyde ("even the master of the servant maid had only seen him twice; his family could nowhere be traced; he had never been photographed; and the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will.") A bastardly character without a family, Hyde is untraceable, non-photographable, indescribable and almost invisible. His observers fail to agree about his outlook. The only agreement they reach is "the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders".⁶¹

According to Newcomen, Hyde is an indescribable movement with the uncanny ability to cast a lingering impression on his beholders. In order to compensate this descriptive lack, Newcomen introduces various texts to the narrative. Hyde's presence is associated with banknotes, wills, envelopes, cheque books and letters. Once handbills are added to the list, the movement reaches its most public stage.

The title of the next chapter ("Incident of the letter") is a sign of this textual turn in the narrative. From this point onwards, Hyde's movements are represented increasingly in textual terms. Hyde has already managed to transfer a large sum of money into a bank account that bears his name; having annihilated numerous subjects, Hyde influences those who struggled to confine him. His proper name and signature turn into more complicated subjects as his physical "deformity" is associated with the deformity of his signature.

The narrative presents a brief history of Jekyll's house. He had bought the house from "the heirs of a celebrated surgeon"; it is this house that provides the setting for the Hegelian transformation.⁶² Allowed in the "laboratory or the dissecting rooms" across the yard for the first time, Utterson carefully moves towards the stage necessary for his

⁶¹ **Ibid.**

⁶² **Ibid.**, p. 25.

future inheritance of Hyde's wealth. Described as being without windows, the dissecting theatre is the Hegelian core of the narrative: a deserted space for scientific experiments.

Once crowded "with eager students" the theatre is "now lying gaunt and silent". Its silent and deserted atmosphere makes it a perfect setting for Utterson's transformation. The dissecting room is described as being "fitted round with glass presses, furnished, among other things, with a cheval-glass and a business table." Unlike Hyde's door which resembles Utterson's countenance, glass presses are transparent, revealing the transformative processes taking place behind them.

Their transparency brings to mind the transparent clauses of Jekyll's will. The surgeon is described as "looking deadly sick", a man on the verge of extinction. Certain changes have taken place in Jekyll's hand as well as in his voice. Instead of rising up to greet Utterson, he therefore holds out "a cold hand and bade him welcome in a changed voice."

Jekyll's cold hand and altered voice attest to his fragile position. The master is about to be annihilated by his servile parts; his voice reflects this alteration in his status. When asked about whether he heard the news of Carew's death, Jekyll replies that he heard newsboys "crying it in the square." In his new role as a listener of hails, Jekyll becomes servile, losing his privileged ability of speech. As Ronald Thomas points out, even before we come to the end of the book, Jekyll's voice is muted and replaced by the texts he produces. Thomas argues that Jekyll's voice "is exposed as a form of writing itself—as a sign of Jekyll's absence rather than his presence." It is through this mechanism that the text recounts "the estrangement of a speaker from his own voice and a writer from what he has written" while also declaring "the independence of the text from the mastery and intentionality of its author."⁶³

In the same chapter Jekyll swears to Utterson that he "will never set eyes on him again". Jekyll is done with Hyde, asking the lawyer to mark his words that "he will

⁶³ Ronald R. Thomas, "The Strange Voices in the Strange Case: Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde, and the Voices of Modern Fiction", in **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde After One Hundred Years**.

never more be heard of'. If Hyde is never to be heard of, that is because all his beholders had begun speaking with his words. Hyde had successfully penetrated his subjects through the bodily role of feet and movement. Leaving an indelible impression on those subjects, he still remains unnameable. Instead, Hyde produces various noises which become subject of newspaper accounts and rumours.

Warning the doctor about the possibility that his “name might appear” in case Hyde is summoned to a trial, Utterson defends his previous master’s proper name, trying to keep it away from insult.⁶⁴ In fact, this conflict in between an impulse to keep one’s proper name away from infamy and the desire to realise one’s fantasies is a central problem of the text. A new juridical discourse classifies the proper names of figures who undergo the Hegelian movement. Movement and action are associated with the proper names which are seen as suspect representatives of Hegelian movements.

Becoming aware of the problem, Jekyll presents Hyde’s handwriting to Utterson so that he can analyse it. He alleges to have “received” the letter which he places in Utterson’s hands. Hyde trusts that the lawyer can judge its contents; apart from evaluating the meaning of Hyde’s movement, Utterson’s role also involves analyzing handwritings. In his role as Jekyll’s trustee, Utterson demands to see the letter which is described as having been “written in an odd, upright hand and signed ‘Edward Hyde’”. The letter makes a clear distinction between its author and Jekyll (“the writer’s benefactor, Dr. Jekyll, whom he had long so unworthily repaid for a thousand generousities, need labour under no alarm for his safety as he had means of escape on which he placed a sure dependence”). The letter seems to have been written for the sole purpose of attributing a role of presence to its author.

While Utterson’s hands remain loyal to him, Hyde’s hands desert Jekyll with their absence. In order to solve the mystery of this absence, Utterson demands to see the envelope containing the letter. Jekyll claims to have burned the envelope and the note

⁶⁴ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 26.

“bore no postmark” as it was “handed in”. The hand that handed in the handwriting belongs to Hyde. It is through hands that Hyde can control Jekyll’s authorial role.

Identifying Hyde as the author of the handwriting, Utterson asks Jekyll whether “it was Hyde who dictated the terms in your will about that disappearance?” As he questions whether Hyde did or didn’t dictate terms to his old friend, Utterson is in fact dictating his own terms. Jekyll, on the other hand, is reduced to the role of a witness. In response to Utterson’s inquiry, he is forced to “shut his mouth tight and nodded”. Like Utterson did before the transformation, Jekyll begins to play a servile role, waiting to be influenced by an external movement. Nodding his head, Jekyll shows his new role in which he affirms, rather than negate things.

Jekyll’s affirming head and silent mouth resemble Kurtz in his moment of confrontation with Marlow. The difference between Kurtz and Jekyll is that the former is annihilated by one of the servants of his discourse while the annihilation of the latter comes with his own servile hand.

When he talks to Poole about the “letter handed in to-day” and asks him to describe the “messenger”, Utterson plays Newcomen’s inspectorial role. In fact he plays the triangular roles of inspector, solicitor and judge. During his interview with the butler, Utterson discovers how the information received witnesses needs careful scrutiny before being accepted as credible evidence. After all, Poole tells him nothing had come that day except by post, leading Utterson to wonder whether the handwritten note could have been handed in by Hyde. He surmises that the letter should have come “by the laboratory door; possibly, indeed, it had been written in the cabinet; and if that were so, it must be differently judged, and handled with the more caution.”⁶⁵

The implication is that rumours and noises are transmitted in numerous ways. The narrative describes Victorian society as a confederacy of transmitters and newsboys, assisting the policemen, responding to the hail directed at them. They are seen “crying

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

themselves hoarse along the footways: ‘Special edition. Shocking murder of an M.P.’” Utterson interprets this as “the funeral oration of one friend and client”, and cannot help “a certain apprehension lest the good name of another should be sucked down in the eddy of the scandal”.

To get professional advice he brings the signature to Mr. Guest, his head clerk. Guest is acknowledged for his gifts of analysing handwritings and is described as a "great student and critic of handwriting". Having familiarised himself with Jekyll’s holograph, Utterson identifies the document as "a murderer's autograph".⁶⁶ The holistic text (holograph) is interpreted in relation to the characteristics of the handwriting (autograph). After studying the document, the lawyer and his clerk come to the same conclusion: it is the product of "an odd hand".

This oddity of Hyde’s handwriting leads Utterson to associate it to an author with the same quality ("by all accounts a very odd writer"). This is followed by the entrance of an unnamed servant, holding a note in his hand. Thanks to this second note Guest can show off his expertise in making distinctions between the registers of voices. Handwritings are used to distinguish authors who perform them. The new note is authored by Jekyll; his handwriting is described as having “a rather singular resemblance” to Hyde’s. Their hands are “in many points identical: only differently sloped”.

A slope is a diversion from the vertical or the horizontal. This diversion implies a shift from a subjectivity uninfluenced by the Hegelian movement to another controlled by it. The vertical set of the previous state of existence is substituted with a horizontal set in which master and servant roles are not neatly distinguished but are subject to the Hegelian movement. The slope plays the role of a signature; it comes from Jekyll's hand, undermining his signature by replacing it.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Asking his head clerk to keep the knowledge of the "quaint" handwriting a secret, Utterson warns him against speaking about the matter. He wants to keep the note as an "unspeakable" secret. This need for secrecy resembles Hyde's "figure" which remains indescribable even when one of its witnesses attempts to speak about it.

Placing it next to Jekyll's will, Utterson locks the note into his safe. Possessing those crucial documents, the lawyer has the authority to consider whether Jekyll may be forging for a murderer—an idea that makes his blood run cold in his veins. He suspects his own hand to produce a slope and splutter in the future, undermining his subjectivity.

The next chapter ("The remarkable incident of Dr. Lanyon") shifts the narrative focus from Carew to Lanyon. Hyde is now described as an absence; he disappears "out of the ken of the police as though he had never existed". His disappearance results in a dramatic increase in the number of stories that describe his character ("tales came out of the man's cruelty at once so callous and violent, of his vile life, of his strange associates, of the hatred that seemed to have surrounded his career; but of his present whereabouts, not a whisper."⁶⁷)

Hyde's disappearance is linked to a dramatic change in Jekyll's life. Once Hyde's "evil influence" is withdrawn from his character, "a new life" begins for Jekyll. His "renewed relations with his friends" and various altruistic activities reflect Jekyll's updated status as a servile character with a newfound interest in religion. Jekyll is now happy to have "an inward consciousness of service"; however, this peaceful state of mind last only two months.⁶⁸

With his newfound interest in service, Jekyll can ease tensions he has with his friends. Happy to accompany Lanyon during a small dinner party, Utterson feels optimistic about his friend's future prospects. But the surgeon's peaceful mental state

⁶⁷ **Ibid.**

⁶⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 29.

doesn't last long and Jekyll's door is shut to the lawyer once more as he is "refused" entry to the house.

Following the shutting of the door Utterson decides to dine with Guest and visits Lanyon. The privileged aura of the eminent doctor seems to have deserted him completely. In fact it is Utterson who now plays an aggressive new role with which he can grasp and classify crucial knowledge. Once he makes his way to Lanyon's house, his spirits are raised ("there at least he was not denied admittance"). The ghastly figure of Lanyon is a shocking sight; Utterson realizes the former's mastery had been taken away from him. Lanyon is a character who "had his death-warrant written legibly upon his face". His skin color turns "pale", "his flesh had fallen away" and he becomes "visibly balder and older." His face reveals signs of a "deep-seated terror of the mind".

Those "tokens of a swift physical decay" are so displeasing to observe that Utterson believes they are signs of a serious disease. Lanyon's skin had fallen off and the mark of death had appeared upon his face; Utterson interprets those as physical signs of Hyde's influence. He associates this disfigurement with Lanyon's knowledge about the change he undergoes. Being perfectly aware that his days are numbered, Lanyon recognizes his fatal transformation and the knowledge fact becomes a precursor of his annihilation.

Once Utterson informs Lanyon about Jekyll's sickness, the surgeon's face changes and he holds up "a trembling hand" to the lawyer. He no longer has the self-confidence of a master and so Lanyon is reduced to a trembling hand. In a "loud, unsteady voice" he tells Utterson about his wish "to see or hear no more of Dr. Jekyll".

These gentlemanly bonds in between Jekyll and his friends are examples of the chivalric code employed by Victorian gentlemen throughout the nineteenth century. In his eminent study of the era, **The Return to Camelot**, Mark Girouard shows how Victorian gentlemen needed to retain their entrepreneurial ideals as businessmen while remaining loyal to codes of gentlemanly conduct they inherited from their fathers. In

that sense, the transformation offered by the Hegelian movement was a deeply ungentlemanly thing, a source of embarrassment for those who are influenced by it.⁶⁹

Lanyon's demand to talk about other things ("but if you cannot keep clear of this accursed topic, then, in God's name, go, for I cannot bear it") is a sign of this unease.⁷⁰ Like Jekyll before him, Lanyon takes refuge in God's name in order to escape his anxieties. But the name of God represents a movement which resembles Hyde's: a religious man's devotion to God through piety, service and reverence echoes the Hegelian subject whose overcoming of his servile part demands a similar devotion a master.

Compared to God, all other names pale in grandeur. God as proper name is conveniently Hegelian. Both movements use abbreviations in their operations; both are employed as shorthands for a system that demands submission. God's name replaces the proper name of Hyde and become a source of inspiration for Jekyll and Lanyon. In their new found reverence, Jekyll and Lanyon become figures inferior to Utterson who still retains his privileged position, gathering and classifying knowledge.

Writing to his old friend to complain about his exclusion from his house, Utterson asks "the cause of this unhappy break with Lanyon". His letter exemplifies Utterson's ongoing inquisitional role. He describes Jekyll's response as "often pathetically worded, and sometimes darkly mysterious in drift." Jekyll asks Utterson to respect his "silence", thus making clear that in his new role he had lost his voice and became a passive listener.

Utterson learns about Lanyon's death three weeks after the incident of the letter. Locking the door of his business room he sets before him "an envelope addressed by the hand and sealed with the seal of his dead friend." Analyzing his handwriting and the seal, Utterson discovers a superscription ("PRIVATE: for the hands of J. G. Utterson

⁶⁹ Mark Girouard, **The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman**, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1981.

⁷⁰ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 30.

ALONE and in case of his predecease *to be destroyed unread*") that point to a shift of the narrative focus from feet to hands. Having begun as part of Hyde's feet, the movement is now defined by hands and handwritings.

The superscription on the envelope resembles Jekyll's will, a document that underwent many textual revisions by its author during the painful process of its composition. Retaining marks of the previous annihilations on their surfaces, both texts resemble what Roland Barthes famously described as a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture".⁷¹

In his new master role Utterson is given unlimited access to the contents of the document. He also has the privilege of handling the envelope. The needs to be destroyed unread in case of Utterson's "predecease"; the text makes an association between the annihilation of a reader and the annihilation of a text.

Utterson is in possession of two conflicting wills; despite their conflicting nature, they are bound together with Lanyon's seal. Utterson hesitates for a moment before breaking the seal, but later condemns his own fear "as a disloyalty" and breaks it.

For Utterson the symbolic gesture of breaking the seal is an approval of his friendship with Lanyon. His gesture also represents a new level in his Hegelian transformation. Having destroyed Carew through an intermediary Utterson absorbed Lanyon's mastery; he can now approach Jekyll in order to grasp his will. The envelope includes "another enclosure, likewise sealed, and marked upon the cover as 'not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr. Henry Jekyll'" which illustrates the conflicting nature of the two wills.

The first enclosure demands Utterson's presence as reader as a precondition; the second enclosure, on the hand, demands Jekyll's absence as master as a precondition. The master figure who gains power in the Hegelian process has the privilege of

⁷¹ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", *Image-Music-Text*, Hill and Wang, London, 1978, p. 146.

presence, while the annihilated subject is required to be an absence before he is listened to.

The mentioning of the word “disappearance” is enough to unsettle Utterson (“as in the mad will which he had long ago restored to its author, here again were the idea of a disappearance and the name of Henry Jekyll bracketed”). He identifies the handwriting of Lanyon on the enclosure (“Written by the hand of Lanyon, what should it mean?”).⁷² Upon reading Lanyon’s presentation, Utterson decides to place the envelope “in the inmost corner of his private safe” in order to fulfill his obligations towards his “professional honor and faith to his friend”.

Assigned with the task of staying alive and remaining a “presence” until Jekyll’s approaching death, Utterson is led into “disquieted and fearful” thoughts. He visits Jekyll’s house but is denied admittance; he visits a socially inferior figure, preferring to “speak with Poole upon the door-step and surrounded by the air and sounds of the open city, rather than to be admitted into that house of voluntary bondage, and to sit and speak with its inscrutable recluse.”⁷³

Utterson’s attitude towards the master of the house has changed considerably. He no longer demands his company, instead preferring to speak with his servants. His house (“that house of voluntary bondage”) has become a theatre for annihilation rather than that of effortless inheritance. A group of servants, headed by Poole, now control this masterless house. Poole informs Utterson about Jekyll’s growing silence: the silent role of the master anticipates the approach of his annihilation.

In the shortest chapter of the text (“Incident at the window”) Jekyll is located behind the window of the second floor of his house. The Hegelian movement had entered his house from the door; it leaves the house from one of its windows upstairs. During their weekly stroll, Utterson and Enfield speculate about whether Hyde is

⁷² Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 31.

⁷³ **Ibid.**

currently in London. Enfield is assured that they “shall never see more of Mr Hyde”. Moving inside the court, the couple comes across the old master. A prisoner of Hyde’s movement, Jekyll sits behind the window, serving as a warning to Utterson and Enfield of the fate that awaits them.

Utterson advises him against staying too much indoors, asking him to join them for a nice Sunday walk in the city in order for “whipping up the circulation”.⁷⁴ The current locations of Jekyll, Utterson and Enfield misrepresent their hierarchy: although placed upstairs, much above Utterson, Jekyll is in fact in a vulnerable position and it is no longer possible for him to hold onto his masterly role. His attempt to say a few words to his friend fails (“the words were hardly uttered, before the smile was struck out of his face and succeeded by an expression of such abject terror and despair, as froze the very blood of the two gentlemen below”); Jekyll’s face alters and the window is thrust down. Utterson and Enfield leave the court “without a word”. Only after reaching the neighboring thoroughfare do they dare turn to look at each other; both seem pale, their paleness reflecting their approaching annihilation.

In the next chapter (“The Last Night”), Poole pays an unexpected visit to Utterson. Poole’s appearance “amply bore out his words”: his manner had been altered. The butler, like Utterson and Enfield before him, is a pale creature. While Utterson and his cousin have a difficult time talking to each other after seeing Jekyll, Poole cannot look “the lawyer in the face” except “for the moment when he had first announced his terror.”⁷⁵ Poole had announced his terror through his “appearance”; his speech is simply an extension of his countenance. When asked to name the strange things he had witnessed in Jekyll’s house, Lanyon refuses to give an answer (“I daren’t say”). The Hegelian transformation is the movement that dare not speak its name: it is unnamable, undefinable and unclassifiable.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

In order to name, define and classify the movement, Utterson takes a walk towards Jekyll's house. During this "silent" walk, the wind makes it difficult to talk, flecking the blood to their faces. Walking on London's deserted streets, Utterson fears living a solitary life like Jekyll. The Hegelian transformation requires solitude; Utterson's solitary life is perfectly suited to its needs.

Throughout their journey, Poole walks "a pace or two ahead" of Utterson. In spite of the biting weather, he takes off his hat and mops "his brow with a red pocket-handkerchief." These dews are described as "the moisture of some strangling anguish" and Poole's face becomes the perfect reflector of his ongoing transformation. His face is white, his voice "harsh and broken".

Once inside its rooms, Utterson realizes the master's house is overtaken by its servants. He sees servants standing in the hall, "huddled together like a flock of sheep." They haven't been liberated but are reorganized around different principles. They welcome Utterson as the new master of the house; the housemaid breaks into a hysterical whimpering while the cook cries out "Bless God! It's Mr. Utterson" and runs forward to him "as if to take him in her arms."⁷⁶

The flock of servants is distinguished from the silent master through their cries and whimpers. In his new role as the master of the house, Utterson warns them about these noises ("master would be far from pleased"). When Poole speaks to Utterson, his words are greeted by "blank silence" among servants. Nobody dares protest the words of the new leader. Their silent submission is interrupted when the maid lifts her voice and begins to weep. Her reaction infuriates Poole; he exclaims: "Hold your tongue!" with "a ferocity of accent that testified to his own jangled nerves".

Poole's outburst reflects the text's thoroughgoing association of silence and submission. Silence provides a suitable setting for the servants. They can overcome their servile subjectivities through silence.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Addressing the knife-boy, Poole orders him to reach a candle; it has to get “thorough hands at once”. Jekyll’s annihilation requires a collaboration of hands. Poole then makes a crucial demand from Utterson (“I want you to hear, and I don’t want you to be heard. And see here, sir, if by any chance he was to ask you in, don’t go.”) Jekyll is not to be obeyed under any circumstances as it is now Utterson who dictates the terms of their relationship.

Poole and Utterson approach the door. Behind it lies the surgical theatre which provides the setting for Jekyll’s Hegelian drama. Knocking “with a somewhat uncertain hand on the red baize of the cabinet door” Poole instructs Utterson to listen to the old master’s voice. He signs the lawyer “to give ear” to voices coming from inside. Before striking the final blow to Jekyll, Poole is associated with his hands and Utterson with his ears. Moments later, “a voice” answers “from within”, leading Poole into having “a note of something like triumph in his voice” before questioning whether the voice really belonged to Jekyll (“was that my master’s voice?”).

In his new role as the master of the house, Utterson has the last word on the voice’s authorship. He finds the voice to be “much changed”. The butler heartily agrees with his conclusion.

Have I been twenty years in this man’s house, to be deceived about his voice?
No, sir; master’s made away with; he was made away with, eight days ago, when we heard him cry out upon the name of God; and *who’s* in there instead of him, and *why* it stays there, is a thing that cries to Heaven, Mr. Utterson!⁷⁷

While he describes Jekyll’s transformations, the slope of Poole’s speech changes considerably, demanding a script of its own. This change from roman to italic script is

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34-35.

significant. It reflects an increased focus on the pronoun and the adverb, echoing the shift of focus in Hyde's movement.

When Poole informs Utterson about how "it was sometimes his way—the master's, that is—to write his orders on a sheet of paper and throw it on the stairs" we come full circle to the center of my analysis. During the week of Jekyll's confinement his servants had nothing but "papers, and a closed door, and the very meals left there to be smuggled in when nobody was looking". The stairs are a symbol of servile feet used as communicatory vessels with which Jekyll distributes his message to his numerous hands. Thanks to this mechanism Jekyll can become a voice without a mouth, a discourse without an organ. Subjects fail to locate the origin of his discourse but are still forced to hear its content distributed through papers thrown on the stairs. While orders of the master are transmitted through textual artifacts, the voice diffuses the message in a way that makes the master invisible but also audible for his subjects.

Jekyll desperately needs to "get his hands on" various chemicals, only by possessing them can he control his subjectivity. Utterson struggles to grasp, classify and absorb all the information related to Jekyll. Feeling in his pocket, Poole hands out "a crumpled note" to him, continuing to fulfill his duty as handler of documents.

After trying to identify the author of the voice, Utterson and Lanyon now struggle to determine the author of the crumpled note. This reading reveals a change in the handwriting, representing a change in the discourse of the author. With "a sudden splutter of the pen" the author's emotion had broken loose; the letter which "had run composedly enough" until this point had turned into a desperate appeal ("for God's sake") to the chemist to "find some of the old."

Jekyll's note reveals his frustration with the prospect of losing his grip on the old hierarchical system in which the hierarchy of masters and slaves is perceived as an eternal, unchangeable thing. Nevertheless, once set off the movement of the servant is irreversible and so is its eventual grasp of its master's position. In the absence of the

master, Poole's voice regresses to its natural, working-class dialect ("The man at Maw's was main angry, sir.")

Calling the document a "strange note" Utterson asks Poole whether he agrees with his conclusions about its authorship ("This is unquestionably the doctor's hand, do you know?") Poole thinks "it looked like it" but is not completely sure that it belongs to Jekyll's hand. When Poole looks at Utterson's face, his voice changes and the butler exclaims: "But what matters hand of write. I've seen him!"⁷⁸

Following a painful introduction to the Hegelian transformation, the servant finally acknowledges the handwriting of its master. In his previous position Poole could identify neither the voice nor the handwriting of his master. Now he can make fine distinctions in between varied manifestations of subjectivity. He cannot name the creature in the surgical theatre, because the composite nature of the creature produces a long list of alternatives (Jekyll, Hyde, Jekyll/Hyde, Hyde/Jekyll or an unnamed new creature).

The cry of the creature comes as a shock to Poole. His master's face had also changed ("Sir, if that was my master, why had he a mask upon his face? If it was my master, why did he cry out like a rat, and run from me? I have served him long enough. And then..." the man paused and passed his hand over his face."). This is followed by Utterson's quasi-medical explanation of what happened inside the theatre ("Your master, Poole, is plainly seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer; hence, for aught I know, the alteration of his voice; hence the mask and his avoidance of his friends.")—a diagnosis which fails to take into account how the diagnostician is also effected by the disease. In contrast to Jekyll's "absent" role, Utterson and Poole have the advantage of presence; they also have the privilege of utterance and analysis. These privileges come with the greater power of defining truth ("that thing was not my master, and there's the truth. My master'—here he looked

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

around him and began to whisper—'is a tall fine build of a man and this was more of a dwarf'''). Only after identify and classifying the master can the servant annihilate him.

Having named Hyde "that thing in the mask" Poole informs Utterson about how "the creature was so doubled up" and how "queer" he was as he jumped around the theatre like a monkey.⁷⁹ He then gives his "bible-word" that the creature there was Hyde and not Jekyll. Utterson orders Poole to call Bradshaw, the footman; he assists them in destroying the door.

Utterson christens their operation ("let our name be vengeance") before hearing "the sound of a footfall moving to and fro along the cabinet floor". Hyde's Hegelian steps fall lightly and oddly ("with a certain swing, for all they went so slowly.")⁸⁰ His movement is "different indeed from the heavy creaking tread of Henry Jekyll" just like Hyde's handwriting had been "differently sloped" when compared to the handwriting of Jekyll.

As he walks in the room Hyde weeps like a woman or a lost soul. When Utterson's entourage besieges his theatre, his "patient foot" continues to go "up and down, up and down, in the quiet of the night." Utterson walks towards the laboratory door which is the final barrier keeping them apart from the creature; he decides to voice his demand from the old master ("Jekyll, I demand to see you"). Thanks to his new role as master Utterson can demand to see his face and go so far as to warn him ("I give you fair warning, our suspicions are aroused, and I must and shall see you, if not by fair means, then by foul—if not of your content, then by brute force!") His warning causes a dramatic change in the voice of the creature ("'Utterson,' said the voice, 'for God's sake, have mercy!'") while the latter's appeal for mercy affirms his servile status when faced with forces seeking to destroy his subjectivity. Once Hyde's identity is affirmed ("that's not Jekyll's voice—it's Hyde's") his captors proceed to strike the final blow, ordering the

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

butler to destroy the door. Utterson, previously associated with a door, gives the order himself.

Once the old one is destroyed, Utterson gains a new face defined by characters inferior to him. His new mask brings Utterson's role as carrier of documents to an end. Described once again as a face, Utterson parts with his previous roles of hands and feet, assigning them to Poole's servants. Together with his entourage, Utterson leads the fatal campaign where the butler swings

the axe over his shoulder; the blow shook the building, and the red baize door leaped against the lock and hinges. A dismal screech, as of mere animal terror, rang from the cabinet. Up went the axe again, and again the panels crashed and the frame bounded; four times the blow fell; but the wood was tough and the fittings were of excellent workmanship; and it was not until the fifth that the lock burst in sunder and the wreck of the door fell inwards on the carpet.⁸¹

The wreck of the theatre door echoes the wreck of the annihilated master. Its dismal screech shows the extent to which the door had become an extension of the creature. The timing of Hyde's death intersects with the axing of the door.

Throughout this scene Poole and Utterson are described as "besiegers" of the door. They are appalled "by their own riot."⁸² Inside the quiet cabinet they come across "neatly set forth" papers alongside the "still twitching" body of Hyde. Walking on "tiptoe" and turning Hyde's body "on its back", they discover "the body of a self-destroyer." Often quoted as evidence of Jekyll's masturbatory habits, the description in fact refers to the self-destroying power of the Hegelian transformation. In order to come into possession of an improved body, the subject needs to self-destroy his subjectivity.

⁸¹ **Ibid.**

⁸² **Ibid.**, p. 39.

The text implies that there had been other self-destroyers before Hyde. The previous owner of the house, a surgeon, is described as Jekyll's predecessor ("crazy lumber, mostly dating from the times of the surgeon who was Jekyll's predecessor"). Through this historicization, the Hegelian movement reveals its capacity to produce and annihilate at the same time: the movement's productions are a number of annihilations.

The door which guards the transformative process provides an entrance to it ("perfect mat of cobweb which had for years sealed up the entrance"). Once the transformation begins, the former self leaves the system ("nowhere was there any trace" of Jekyll "dead or alive"). Utterson needs to trace Jekyll by unlocking another door whose key is found on the flags. Stained with rust, the key is broken as if "a man had stamped on it."

Discovering "a copy of a pious work" Utterson notes how it is "annotated, in his own hand, with startling blasphemies."⁸³ It is not clear whether the annotations belong to Jekyll's or Hyde's "own hand". Poole and Utterson also discover a "cheval glass, into whose depths they looked with an involuntary horror." Their "horror" resembles Kurtz's final hail backgrounded by "some image at some vision", revealing the struggles of the annihilated master. This is the "supreme moment of complete knowledge" experienced by Kurtz moments before his death.

The cheval glass in the room reveals the shape of Hyde's movement, illustrated in the figure below. My figure illustrates the footwork with which Hyde's Hegelian movement reaches its subjects. The horrifying depths Utterson and Poole see as they look in the cheval glass attest to the Hegelian transformations that irreversibly changed their natures.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

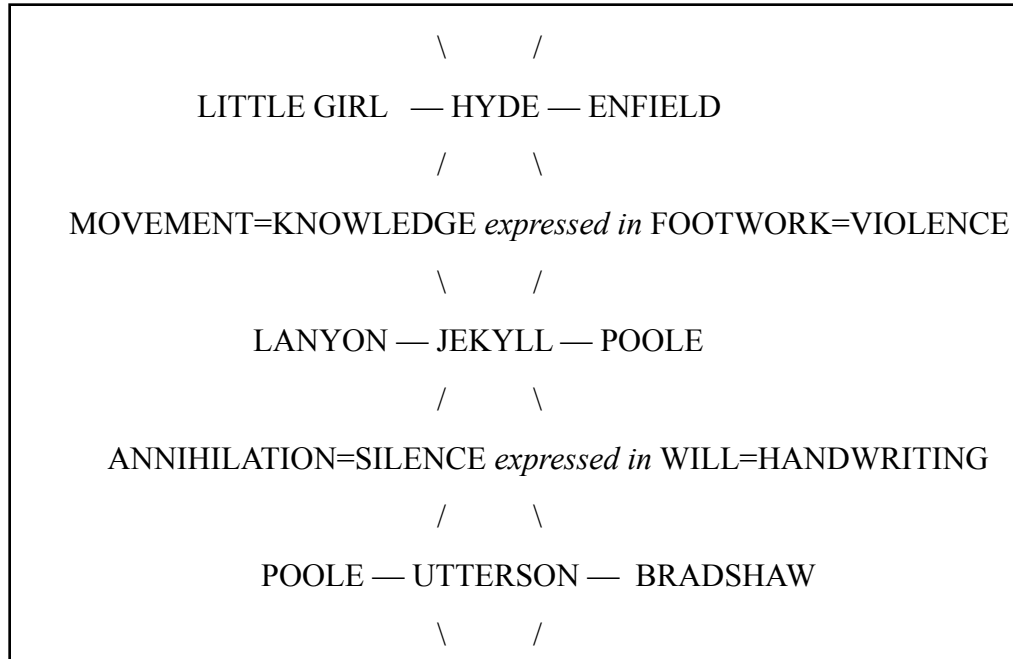


Figure 5: How ideology's footwork diffuses into its subjects

Utterson and Poole can see their reflections only when the cheval glass is turned to a particular angle ("so turned as to show them nothing but the rosy glow playing on the roof, the fire sparkling in a hundred repetitions along the glazed front of the presses, and their own pale and fearful countenances stooping to look in"). Situated in between the cheval glass and the presses, the images of Utterson and Poole are infinitely multiplied. The fire's sparkling in a "hundred repetitions" illustrates their repetitive submission to the spiraled movement, their countenances turned "pale and fearful".

With the introduction of the cheval glass, a self-reflexive turn takes place in the narrative. The glass is described as having seen "none stranger than itself"—the strangest object of this strange tale.

After this self-reflexive turn Poole utters Jekyll's name and Utterson catches himself "up at the word with a start" before conquering his weakness. Having excelled at searching, besieging and conquering Jekyll's body, Utterson does the same to his own fears and weaknesses inspired by Hyde's proper name.

In the scheme above I illustrate how (1) a certain type of knowledge is transported through the agency of movement; (2) the footwork of the movement takes a helical/spiral shape: it is mutual, interdependent and dialectical; (3) Jekyll's final vision of annihilation is represented in the strange clauses of his will; (4) Utterson grasps this vision in his role as collector of documents and he can see the handwriting of the Hegelian movement.

In his new role Utterson begins to read the textual remains of Jekyll and Lanyon. On the business table he discovers a large envelope which bares "in the doctor's hand, the name of Mr. Utterson." Once unsealed, a will ("drawn in the same eccentric terms as the one which he had returned six months before, to serve as a testament in case of death and as a deed of gift in case of disappearance") falls out of it on which "in place of the name of Edward Hyde, the lawyer, with indescribable amazement, read the name of Gabriel John Utterson." This confirms Utterson's role as inheritor of Jekyll's will. He finally inherits the will of the annihilated master as this deed of gift attests to the successful outcome of his labors.

The gift deed is a specific type of will employed to transfer the ownership of property in between subjects or institutions. The difference between an ordinary will and Jekyll's "gift deed" this: the former allows the owner of the will to change the declaration of intentions, while the latter will cannot be revoked once it is accepted and executed. This crucial difference attests to the existence of two competing movements. While the ordinary will is more advantageous for its authors, the gift deed furnishes its inheritors with more power. Aside from real property, a deed of gift is also used in transferring intellectual property in between subjects or institutions. Utterson's grasp of

Jekyll is therefore an intellectual as well as legal endeavor used to displace the annihilated master.

Moments after finding the document, Utterson and Poole realize Hyde had been "all these days in possession" of the will. They are excited by the idea of how "he must have raged to see himself displaced; and he has not destroyed this document." Inside the folder Utterson discovers a handwritten note of Jekyll showing how his abrupt disappearance from the text resulted with the disappearance of his legal rights. This note's appearance in Utterson's hands is associated with Jekyll's disappearance ("When this shall fall into your hands," it reads, "I shall have disappeared"), which is another example of the text's correlations in between documents and their authors.⁸⁴

In his introductory note, Jekyll instructs Utterson to first read Lanyon's narrative before turning to his confession ("if you care to hear more turn to the confession..."). Poole leaves this note alongside the large packet "sealed in several places" in Utterson's hands. Before his disappearance from the narrative, Utterson makes a final bond with Poole, warning him against the contents of the letters ("I would say nothing of this paper. If your master has fled or is dead, we may at least save his credit") and locks "the door of the theatre behind them."

With this bond in their minds, they pass amidst the servants gathered around the fire in the hall. Utterson's final action before his disappearance is to trudge back to his office in order to read those "two narratives". His final role is that of a reader; the unsettling sight of servants flocked together like an army of hunters ready to attack their pray undermines his master position. As the master figure of the text, he will experience similar transformations and be annihilated by those servants.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

2.5. Stevenson in between Jamesian and Conradian hands (part two)

Unlike Conrad, Stevenson presents numerous instances where the narrative is detached from its subjects, rendering scenes with an objective perspective. When discussing the holographs of Lanyon and Jekyll, it is important however, to note the shift from a third-person, Jamesian, “objective” perspective to a “subjective” style, often associated with impressionist texts of Ford Madox Ford and Conrad.

The holographs of Lanyon and Jekyll presents a conflict in between present and absent authors. In fact, all narrators build their authorities on the absence of other narrators. In the case of a first person narrator, this absence is a prerequisite for the voice’s formation of its subjectivity. In "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative", the formation of a subjective voice is assisted by numerous textual intermediaries.

Lanyon receives “by the evening delivery a registered envelope, addressed in the hand of my colleague and old school companion, Henry Jekyll." This new and subjective voice presupposes the existence of a reader who has access to its content. Hidden inside Utterson’s reading of Lanyon’s narrative is Lanyon’s own reading of Jekyll’s letter. In that letter Jekyll affirms the bond between himself and Lanyon. He pledges support for Lanyon by saying he would do everything to help his old friend. In case of need, he would have “sacrificed my fortune or my left hand to help". After this "preface" to the narrative, he asks for Lanyon’s assessment of his situation.

In his discussion of this paragraph, William Veeder points to how the original idiom (sacrificing one’s right hand) refers to the right, and not the left, hand. Reading the relationship in the context of a paternal rivalry rooted in Genesis, Veeder explains Jekyll’s “left-handed” compliment by pointing to how “patriarchs, despite their ostensible unity, put self before brotherhood, make brother into other.”⁸⁵ According to Veeder, the Hegelian struggle in between hands is part of a brotherly tradition in which hands have historically been defined.

⁸⁵ Veeder, *op. cit*, p. 26. p. 138.

The instructions in Jekyll's letter illustrate the nature of this bondage. Jekyll expects from Lanyon nothing less than total submission. He demands to have him at his side even if Lanyon is "summoned to the bedside of an emperor."⁸⁶ His butler Poole has his orders, waiting for Lanyon's arrival with a locksmith. Once inside the laboratory, Lanyon is instructed to open the "glazed press (letter E) on the left hand, breaking the lock if it be shut". Jekyll asks Lanyon to bring the drawer to his own house after completing his "first part of the service". Having undergone a Hegelian struggle, Jekyll expects from Lanyon a similar devotion to the transformative principles.

Once the eminent doctor returns home, the Hegelian movement makes a visit, claiming the drawer. In other words, once the Hegelian movement locates its subject, it sets in motion the process of possession. Preferring the visit to take place in an hour when Lanyon's servants are in bed, Jekyll instructs his friend "to admit with your own hand into the house a man who will present himself in my name, and to place in his hands the drawer." This visitor is neither Jekyll nor someone who is not Jekyll. It is Jekyll altered by the Hegelian transformation.

The mere thought of his friend's disobedience is enough to make Jekyll's "hand tremble". Asking him to "punctually serve" his demands, Jekyll concludes the letter by demanding Lanyon to "serve" and "save" him.⁸⁷ Only by serving Jekyll can Lanyon hope to save his proper name. The postscript at the end of the letter, however, complicates this seemingly simple process of "serve-and-save". In the postscript Jekyll mentions how a "fresh terror struck" upon his soul when he already "sealed up" the letter about the possibility of the post office's failure to deliver the envelope "into your hands until to-morrow morning." Jekyll's preface precedes Lanyon's narrative and is read by Utterson as well as Lanyon. Ours constitutes a third reading of it. The preface hails its

⁸⁶ Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 42.

⁸⁷ **Ibid.**, p. 43.

readers into the discourse of the Hegelian transformation in a fashion similar to Kurtz's hail. Once it is read, Lanyon feels "bound" to realize his friend's demands.

But Lanyon is not the only one who is hailed. Poole experiences a similar thing when he receives a letter from his master whose instructions he duly executes. It is through reading the handwriting of the master that he is able to show his submission. Poole sends for a locksmith and a carpenter, both of whom are hands that assist him. Inside the drawer he finds powders, liquors and a "version book" (a Scottish definition for a notebook for translation exercises). This implies a parallel between the Hegelian transformation and the act of translation; both processes produce duplicates from originals. In fact, their "original" sources are also fabrications as all beginnings are preceded by others, according to the helical shape of ideology.⁸⁸

The version book includes a genealogy of the movement's transformations and translations. Those are indicated by a series of dates marking moments in Jekyll's transformation over "a period of many years." Several hundred entries are placed in the notebook where the word "double" is frequently repeated. The book includes an entry about "total failure!!!" The exclamation marks accompanying the entry exemplify another "splutter" of the pen.

While he waits for the arrival of the movement, Lanyon dismisses his servants to bed, loading an old revolver in case he needs it for self-defense. His door is knocked; a "small man crouching against the pillars of the portico" appears, refusing to obey Lanyon's orders for entering the house. Instead he casts "a searching backward glance", seeing a policeman who had "his bull's eye open". While Lanyon is under Hyde's surveillance, Hyde is under the surveillance of the police. Lanyon views Hyde's face through this double surveillance and discerns a "shocking expression" as well as an "odd, subjective disturbance" that strongly influence its seer. He describes Hyde as "something seizing, surprising and revolting." Mimicking Jekyll's earlier gesture, Hyde

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

lays his hand upon the surgeon's arm, trying to shake him. Irritated by this hand gesture, Lanyon reminds Hyde that he has not yet the pleasure of his "acquaintance". Despite his best efforts to act in a civil way, Hyde's manner abruptly changes, like the sudden splutter of Jekyll's pen:

"I come here at the instance of your colleague, Dr. Henry Jekyll, on a piece of business of some moment; and I understood..." He paused and put his hand to his throat, and I could see, in spite of his collected manner, that he was wrestling against the approaches of the hysteria—"I understood, a drawer..."⁸⁹

Hysteria approaches, reaching the throat with a ball of emotion. Lanyon mentions how he "could hear his teeth grate with the convulsive action of his jaws". Hyde's face is "so ghastly to see" that he grows alarmed both for his life and reason. Shocked and repulsed by this show of emotion, Lanyon tells Hyde to "compose" himself.⁹⁰ Once Hyde prepares the chemical mixture, Lanyon can see with his own eyes the fascinating process of the Hegelian transformation. As Vladimir Nabokov argues in his discussion of the text, Jekyll/Hyde is "a composite being, a mixture of good and bad, a preparation consisting of a ninety-nine percent solution of Jekyllite and one percent of Hyde."⁹¹ Lanyon's account provides further chemical details. The mixture is at first of a reddish hue before it begins

in proportion as the crystals melted, to brighten in color, to effervesce audibly, and to throw off small fumes of vapor. Suddenly and at the same moment, the ebullition ceased and the compound changed to a dark purple, which faded again

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁹¹ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, p 182.

more slowly to a watery green. My visitor, who had watched these metamorphoses with a keen eye, smiled, set down the glass upon the table, and then turned and looked upon me with an air of scrutiny.⁹²

This chemical account of the transformative draught points to the similarly chemical nature of the Hegelian movement. Hyde reaches to the potion with his hand, bringing it to his mouth before speaking about beholding "a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power." In an effort to protect the details of the transformation from the outside world, Jekyll asks Lanyon to keep his observations as a secret.

Hyde scolds Lanyon for being "bound" to what he calls those "most narrow and material views."⁹³ As he puts the glass to his lips, Hyde affirms his masterly role in their relationship.

A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; and as I looked there came, I thought, a change—he seemed to swell—his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter—and the next moment, I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arms raised to shield me from that prodigy, my mind submerged in terror.

The blackening of Hyde's face, Lanyon's springing to his feet and the raising of his arms exemplify the theatrical nature of the Hegelian transformation. Seeing Jekyll "pale and shaken, and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death" Lanyon foresees his own transformation and annihilation. The

⁹² Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

movement is part of a ceaseless chain of transformations. Lacking an origin, it represents the struggle in between a master and his servant.

Finally, as he confirms the role played by Hyde's proper name in the Hegelian process, Lanyon decides to christen the creature which crept into his house (with "the name of Hyde"), almost exactly as Enfield has done. It is the proper name of the author, set in capital letters (HASTIE LANYON) that puts an end to Lanyon's narrative.

In contrast to Lanyon's statement, Henry Jekyll's account is described as a "confession", making it possible to read it as a legal or religious narrative. As Ronald Thomas argues, the chapter seems to dramatize "what Foucault has called the medicalization and legalization of the confessional act. Rather than revealing the speaker's error or sin, this confession has value only as a legal or therapeutic operation intended to elucidate a case of law or medicine."⁹⁴ As it elucidates a case of law, the confessional act produces an ordering principle through which it can be read. Presupposing that Lanyon's narrative had been read before it, Jekyll's confession remains out of Lanyon's reach.

Throughout the account, Jekyll insistently uses the nominative, singular pronoun "I" which distinguishes the confession from texts that precede it. Jekyll's frequent use of the singular pronoun is an example of the subjective nature of the Hegelian transformation. The shift from a Jamesian, third-person perspective to a first-person rendering of events introduces a change in the descriptions of characters. Jekyll is described as having "excellent parts"; an account of his physical features, which the reader had already been acquainted with in the previous chapters, are left out of his confession.

Reading a first person narrative, the reader expects the narrator to be placed behind his face. The lack of Jekyll's facial description therefore seems natural in the

⁹⁴ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

beginning. But it becomes the centerpiece of Jekyll's confession. The main subject of the confession is nothing other than countenances.

In his youth, Jekyll finds it hard to "wear a more than commonly grave countenance" and decides to "produce" a new face. The problem with his "grave" face forces Jekyll into concealing his pleasures. Seeing himself as a double-dealer, Jekyll describes how a "perennial war" among his "members" took place. Then he makes the crucial discovery of a radical duality in his subjectivity.⁹⁵

Jekyll excels at the Hegelian ability of identifying with master and servile parts of his character. As a result of his early attempts at classifying knowledge about his subjectivity, Jekyll believes he can house his separate parts in "separate identities". He presents these parts as twins:

the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil.⁹⁶

Both twins are allowed to exist separately and independently from each other. They are compared to faggots ("these incongruous faggots" which are "bound together") and described as polar twins "continuously struggling" in "the agonized womb of consciousness." Jekyll wants to dissociate these parts into separate bodies; he believes a single body is not sufficient to accommodate two parts of the same Hegelian movement. Focusing on the particulars of his body, Jekyll becomes aware of "the trembling immateriality, the mist-like transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired." He recognizes his

⁹⁵ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

natural body for the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers that made up my spirit, but managed to compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy, and a second form and countenance substituted, none of the less natural to me because they were the expression, and bore the stamp, of lower elements in my soul.⁹⁷

Jekyll's self-analysis is Hegelian in both theoretical and practical senses of the word. He represents, and describes, the movement at the same instant. Jekyll becomes the historian of a historical process where he plays the role of subject.

Hesitating for a long time before putting "this theory to the test of practice", Jekyll prepares a tincture to bring about the changes necessary for the transformation. Compounding the elements, Jekyll watches them "boil and smoke together in the glass."⁹⁸

Rather than observing it from the safe distance of an objective narrator, the subject finally embodies the transformation. The scene introduces a shift from a first-person to a third-person perspective; the position of the narrator changes from inside to the outside. The shift brings with it various philosophical questions related to the cohabitation of an object and a subject, as well as that of a servile and a master part in a single body. An objective narrative replaces the subjective one and Jekyll's new representation undermines the grammatical construction of his subjectivity.

Jekyll experiences physical pains that come with the Hegelian transformation: the "most racking pangs", a "grinding" in the bones and feelings of nausea and horror accompany this process. The pains of transformation exceed those experienced at the hour of birth or death: the transformation is birth and death, health and sickness at the

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49-50.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

same time. Annihilating of one's subjectivity, the process leads to the formation of a new one.

He remembers coming to himself "out of a great sickness" and experiencing "indescribably new and, from its novelty, incredibly sweet" sensations. These are followed by agonies that come with the new birth and the author seems divided between two conflicting discourses. Part of a broader conflict between two late-Victorian literary schools (realism and literary impressionism), Jekyll's feeling "younger, lighter, happier in body" coincides with Stevenson's employment of the first-person narrative. Identifying a "mill" racing in his fancy and making him conscious of "a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images", the author experiences a fascinating new voice that come with the subjective rendering of his history. His new position, in terms of both subjectivity and authorship, brings a "a solution of the bonds of obligation."

In his "new life" Jekyll acknowledges being "sold a slave" to his "original evil". While his soul is sold a slave to its transformative part, Jekyll has a difficult time defining his identity. Stretching out his hands, he observes how he had lost in stature. As "there was no mirror" in his room, he is forced to trust the sight of his hands. Their smaller proportions serve as a reminder for his ongoing transformation.

Apart from their shrunken size, Jekyll's new hands are significant for their steady, non-trembling nature. Their small proportions reflect Jekyll's youthful state of existence. Jekyll's recognition of their size is a sign of his self-awareness as an author. He mentions the existence of a mirror standing "beside me, as I write". The mirror "was brought there later on and for the very purpose of these transformations." The self-awareness and the Hegelian recognition of his previous state coincide with his final role in the text as a first-person narrator.

Writing about the "inmates" of his Hegelian house, he describes them as being "locked in the most rigorous hours of slumber." Trying to reach his bedroom in this "new shape" he comes across his servants. Stealing through the corridors, he sees himself "a

stranger” in his” own house.”⁹⁹ When he comes to his room he finally sees the appearance of Edward Hyde. Identifying “the stamping efficacy” with which his “evil side” can shape his character, the author associates the shape-giving authority with the Hegelian movement. Compared to his previous life (“nine tenths a life of effort, virtue and control”) this masterly new life, and literary perspective, have the advantage of

being much less exercised and much less exhausted. And hence, as I think, it came about that Edward Hyde was so much smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll. Even as good shone upon the countenance of the one, evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other. Evil besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay.¹⁰⁰

Jekyll associates the signs of the transformation to various parts of his body. In his analysis, he examines two types of bodies. On the one hand he has the smaller, younger body with the evil face: it can move faster and is effective with its footwork. Jekyll also has the bigger, older body: the body with the face of a good man. The body of the Hegelian self is deformed and decayed—qualities often associated with the decadent movement. The irritating and fascinating image of the decayed body is part of a broader literary motif in English literature; it echoes Wilde’s point about “the nineteenth century dislike of realism” being “the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass.”¹⁰¹ Describing the moment of seeing “that ugly idol in the glass” and realizing “this, too, was myself” Jekyll comes face to face with this old, Shakespearean problem of literary representation.

⁹⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 51.

¹⁰⁰ **Ibid.**

¹⁰¹ Oscar Wilde, **The Picture of Dorian Gray**, New York and London, A Norton Critical Edition, 2007, p. 3.

Jekyll's countenance bears "a livelier image of the spirit" and seems "more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine". The author identifies the movement as a unifying force; rather than separating Jekyll's character into two parts, he brings them together, glueing them into a new subject which is neither Jekyll (thesis) nor Hyde (antithesis) but a third person (synthesis).

Jekyll's narrative presents identities as interchangeable things. This is what makes it possible for Jekyll to wear the "semblance of Edward Hyde" while retaining his previous identity for future use.¹⁰² Making a fine distinction between human beings who "are commingled out of good and evil" and Hyde who is "pure evil", he takes a final look at the mirror and begins his final experiment.

As the author hurries back to the cabinet and comes to himself with "the character, the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll" the Hegelian movement makes full circle. The movement had altered Jekyll; a new, revised version of his subjectivity replaces his old self. This altered character is neither Jekyll nor his opposite. It is a character that is neither.

The drug shakes "the doors of the prison house" of his disposition and the author associates his body with confinement, likening the movement of his "evil side" to the running forth of "the captives of Philippi"¹⁰³—an allusion to ancient Macedonian captives liberated by Roman generals Mark Antony and Octavius after they emerged triumphant from the power struggle with Brutus and Cassius.

Once his previous self is sold a slave to his new and "evil" side, the new creature runs outside the prison house. Having named Edward Hyde as a thing that was "projected" onto his self, the author admits to having "two characters as well as two appearances".

¹⁰² Stevenson, **op. cit.**, p. 51.

¹⁰³ **Ibid.**, p. 52.

He describes the thing he experienced as a "movement" directed wholly towards the worse. He is "old Henry Jekyll" again: the "incongruous compound" whose "reformation and improvement" he had learned to despair. As opposed to his old self which has a composite nature, the new character is monolithic and pure. Falling into the "slavery" of his monolithic side, Jekyll christens his old character as "the body" he can "doff" at will. His new self, on the other hand, is "like a thick cloak" wearable, changeable and disposable when he likes.

A new subjectivity brings with it a new house and Jekyll rents one in Soho. After furnishing it, he engages a housekeeper described as a silent and unscrupulous figure. Like Utterson before him, the housekeeper is a sly, silent and cunning character. Visiting his own house, Jekyll announces to his servants about Hyde's privileges. He will have "full liberty and power" about the house. He then makes a second visit, this time wearing the countenance of Hyde, making himself "a familiar object" for the household in his "second character".

In this late stage of the transformative process, Jekyll begins to identify Hyde as an evil servant seeking to get his hands on his inheritance. He likens him to "bravos" (villains hired by gentlemen with instructions to assassinate their adversaries). Identified as a servant fixated on assassinating his master, Hyde has the adversary and irrational desire of self-annihilation, similar to Sigmund Freud's *Todestrieb* (the death drive).

Jekyll strips off his clothes like a schoolboy and "spring headlong into the sea of liberty". He overcomes his subjectivity and experiences wish fulfillment to the full. He acts as if he "did not even exist"; with the assistance of the draught which is "always standing ready", he experiences seismic changes while retaining the unity of his subjectivity. When he drinks the draught, the new character passes away "like the stain of breath upon a mirror."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The author is firmly placed “in the hands of Edward Hyde”. Speaking of crimes committed by Hyde, he describes how “even now I can scarce grant that I committed it”. As the subject no longer has to deal with responsibilities that come with subjectivity, the author can go so far as to part with responsibilities that come with the use of a proper name. It becomes impossible to define the author as either Jekyll or Hyde: he is simply an author who can change his countenances and bodies at will.

The author tries to make distinctions between the servile and master parts of his subjectivity. Imagining the approach of his future by "successive steps", he is horrified by Hyde's trampling over the little girl. Following the incident, Hyde brings his captors “to the door, and pay them in cheque drawn in the name, of Henry Jekyll”.

He recounts how Jekyll had opened an account at a bank other than his accustomed one, under the name of Edward Hyde. The opening of the account coincides with Jekyll's discovery of his ability to write like Hyde (“when, by sloping my own hand backward, I had supplied my double with a signature”). Bank accounts require authors with specific handwritings and vice versa. The author's eye falls upon his hand and he makes a comparison in between his two hands.

Now the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bed clothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde.¹⁰⁵

The author's old hand is distinguished from the new one through its “professional” quality. This is but one sign of the irreversibly altered nature of his subjectivity. With his servants present in the house, the author had gone to bed as Jekyll

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

and awakened as Hyde. His need to reach the drugs from the cabinet has forced him to “cover” his face in order to escape the servile gaze.

But the author fails to conceal the alteration in his stature. His servants are already acquainted with his other self; they are used to his comings and goings into the cabinet with his “second self”. Approaching the cabinet, he meets Bradshaw who stares and draws back at seeing him “at such an hour and in such a strange array”. This confrontation unsettles him so dramatically that when he returns to his own “shape” the author immediately sits down “with a darkened brow”.

Reflecting on the meaning of the “reversal” to his old existence, he notes that the incident seemed to spell out the “letters” of his judgement “like the Babylonian finger on the wall.” He realizes that “the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature”. The prospect of ominous powers which might “overthrow” his balanced self is on the horizon.¹⁰⁶

The author becomes aware of having crossed a threshold. He had become more Hyde than Jekyll. Already a servant of his “evil side”, he is completely controlled by it. In the beginning “the difficulty had been to throw off the body of Jekyll” but now this state “decidedly transferred itself to the other side.” He loses hold of his “original and better self”, becoming slowly incorporated into his “second and worse” self. The author’s distinction between a better and a worse self fails to take into account the nature of dialectics: a constant movement in between oppositional positions.

Describing his old self as a cavern in which a “mountain bandit” can take refuge, the author defines the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde in parental terms. While Jekyll has “a father’s interest” in Hyde, the latter has “more than a son's indifference.” The author reject his “evil” side and decides to become good again. With this choice he bids “a resolute farewell” to his “light step.”

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

However resolute his farewell might have been, the author realizes that he had been transformed in an irreversible manner. He doesn't give up his Soho house or destroy Hyde's clothes. When Hyde makes an anticipated comeback, the author is tortured with "throes and longings". His reaching for the transformative draught approves the author's submission to the Hegelian movement. The "evil" influence have long been caged, it now comes out "roaring". It is in these aural terms that Hyde's character makes a comeback.

Following the "roaring" comeback, the author returns to the house in Soho in order to destroy his papers. He refers to himself as Hyde: as he brings the draught to his lips, "Hyde" sets into motion the process that tears him apart.

The pangs of transformation had not done tearing him, before Henry Jekyll, with streaming tears of gratitude and remorse, had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God. The veil of self-indulgence was rent from head to foot, I saw my life as a whole: I followed it up from the days of childhood, when I had walked with my father's hand, and through the self-denying toils of my professional life, to arrive again and again, with the same sense of unreality, at the damned horrors of the evening.¹⁰⁷

With this description of him falling upon his knees, the author externalizes Jekyll as an object. The narrative's sudden shift into a first-person perspective coincides with the feeling of self-indulgence taking control of the author's subjectivity from "head to foot". His hands now play a reassuring role and are employed to bring images of a settled, unchangeable, safe past in which a patriarchal figure still plays an influential role. Having inherited the patriarchal power from his father's hands, the author sees his power being taken from him by Hyde's revolutionary hands.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Meanwhile Jekyll had become a “city of refuge” for the author. When he lets Hyde peep out of this city for an instant, “the hands of all men would be raised to take and slay him”. The public hands represent the power of the public; they possess the much feared power to “take and slay” subjects and are externalized as harbingers of annihilation.

In the final parts of Jekyll’s statement, the difficulty of identifying the author increases significantly. The new subject can neither call himself Jekyll nor Hyde; he is not furnished with powers that come with a proper name. But it is his hand that holds the authorial pen. By authoring this confessional text, the nondescript narrator can exist as a separate being.

While the “lower” part of the author is chained down and growling for license, his “evil” side destorys the balance of his soul. The temper of his thoughts have changed dramatically; the greater boldness in his demeanor" becomes "a solution of the bonds of obligation."¹⁰⁸ Looking down at his body, the author sees how his clothes hung on his "shrunkn limbs”, noticing that “the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy”. The emergence of this corded and hairy hand announces Jekyll’s return.

After reaching the presses of his cabinet, the author fears being captured by his servants. Had he entered the house, his servants would consign him to the gallows. Therefore he "must employ another hand"; the name of Lanyon comes to his mind. Feeling necessary to make his “way into his presence”, he realizes that this presence would demand Jekyll’s disappearance.

He takes a careful look at his hands and his handwriting. His authorial power (“I could write my own hand”) approves his masterly position.¹⁰⁹ He looks about with "so black a countenance” that his “attendants tremble”, not daring to exchange a look in his “presence”. Instead the attendants take his orders, lead him to a private room “and

¹⁰⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 58.

¹⁰⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 58-59.

brought me wherewithal to write.” Once inside the private room the author makes a distinction in between what he calls his “I” and the character of Hyde.

In the final paragraphs of the text the author moves outside his subjectivity in an irreversible manner. Sitting in his private room and “gnawing his nails”, he describes this externalization with a strangely formulated sentence (“He I say—I cannot say, I”) which accommodates both servile and master parts of a subject.¹¹⁰

This is Stevenson’s solution to the problem of representing the Hegelian conflict through fiction. The grammar of the sentence reveals the existence of the previous, servile self with its use of the first-person perspective (“I say”); the sentence also shows the appearance of the new, master self by objectifying it with the singular, third-person personal pronoun (“he”). This is a writerly solution to the late-Victorian literary discussion about modern fiction. Employing techniques of both the realist, objective mode and the more subjective, impressionist style, Stevenson’s narrative offers an unlikely solution to a literary problem. The solution is also Hegelian as the author can employ Jekyll and Hyde while rising above them with a sentence that objectifies both of them.

Before his annihilation, the author ventures on foot, walking fast as a creature “hunted by his fears, chattering to himself.” Later when a woman speaks to him he smites her in the face. Admitting that “a change had come” over him, he comes “to himself” at Lanyon’s place. Finally, the author returns to his “own house”, gets into the bed and refers to Hyde as “the brute that slept within me.”¹¹¹ After breakfast he is “seized again with those indescribable sensations that heralded the change”. Taking a double dose of the draught is necessary to “recall me to myself” as more drugs are needed to “wear the countenance of Jekyll”. Becoming “weak both in body and mind”, the new “I” is obsessed with “the horror of my other self”.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Like Kurtz before him, he is "possessed" by horrific visions during his annihilation ("the powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll," he explains). Beholding "the full deformity of that creature" he considers him to be a "co-heir with him to death". He then describes Hyde as an "inorganic" thing, likening him to "the slime of the pit" which utters "cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life." Hyde is the representation of death; he embodies annihilation.¹¹²

Desperately trying to control Hyde's influence on his subjectivity, the author describes how the "insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye". Laying "caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born" he describes how the creature has a deep hatred for authority.¹¹³ Driven to "return to his subordinate station of a part instead of a person" the author seeks to escape the gallows—the lethal instrument that executes its subjects by hanging.

The fear of an instrument which executes its subjects by compressing their throats, results in apelike tricks. Scrawling blasphemies on the pages with his "own hand", the author is finally "severed" from his "own" face. He burns the letters and destroys the portrait of Jekyll's father.

A week later the author concludes the "statement under the influence of the last of the old powders". This is the last time when "Henry Jekyll can think his own thoughts or see his own face (now how sadly altered!) in the glass." Escaping the "throes of change" taking him "in the act of writing" the statement, he prevents Hyde from tearing the statement "in pieces".

But Hyde had already "changed and crushed" him. In his final moments, the author imagines Hyde "shuddering and weeping", continuing "with the most strained

¹¹² According Ronald Thomas, Jekyll is not fearful of the cry itself but of the fact that the cries and voices are in the plural. "They defy identity, definability, univocality. Jekyll's deepest fear about Hyde is that he will usurp his authority as the master and definer of his own identity—take from him the power he has wielded through his voice and pen." Thomas, p. 78.

¹¹³ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

and fear stuck ecstasy of listening, to pace up and down this room (my last earthly refuge) and give ear to every sound of menace."¹¹⁴ He wonders whether Hyde will have the "courage to release" his subjectivity at the final moment. The final sentence clarifies his role as the masterly author of a discourse which can annihilate its objects after transforming them into its grammatical inferiors.

It is only through this grammatical subjection of his older self can the author say: "Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end." With its final organ retiring, the process of mastery too can come to an end.

¹¹⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 62.

CHAPTER 3
IMAGE:
THE “CURIOSLY-CARVED MIRROR” AND THE LABURNUM:
REPRESENTING MASTERY AND TEMPORALITY IN THE PICTURE
OF DORIAN GRAY

“A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure.”

Oscar Wilde

3.1. A vision of temporal transformations: Wilde’s textual representation of the Hegelian process

Finding an artistic form for representing the Hegelian movement lies at the heart of **The Picture of Dorian Gray**. Unlike temporal art forms like music, drama, opera, film, and literature, a spatial form like painting is an unlikely candidate for representing a temporal phenomenon. Representing temporality in literature corresponds to phenomenology in philosophy: thanks to his experimentation with phenomenology, Oscar Wilde produces a modernist text.

The text questions whether the form of the novel can be used to represent the process of lordship and bondage. This intersects with many of Wilde’s aesthetic theories previously voiced in **The Intentions** in general and in “The Critic as Artist” in particular. The latter Socratic dialogue is a meditation on the importance of voice in literature. In its attack against realist literature, the text advocates a renaissance of Greek literary tradition. According to Wilde, the fascinating qualities of this tradition had been regretfully deserted in favour of a pedantically factual and unimaginative literary style. Gilbert, one protagonist of the dialogue, informs his friend Ernest about the importance of Milton’s blindness. Thanks to his loss of sight Milton was able to compose “with the

voice purely”, improving his earlier instrument (“the pipe or reed of earlier days”), replacing it with a more complicated musical device (“that mighty many-stopped organ whose rich reverberant music has all the stateliness of Homeric verse”).¹ Gilbert’s is a paradoxical proposition: in order to achieve his progressive ideal one has to regress to ancient times. His dialectical idea has a Hegelian shape: the move to the past is accompanied by a counter-move to the future, resulting in a literary style that is modern precisely because it refuses modernity.

Considered alongside cases of Stevenson, James and Conrad, Wilde’s proposition is unique. It echoes Stevenson’s interest in orality and his preference for Scottish dialect over written English; it also echoes the pre-modern position of the Conradian narrator who prefers a traditional mode of story telling over the Jamesian techniques of objective rendering.

Wilde’s call for a return to the temporal, aural essence of literature implies a refusal of its spatial qualities. Modern tendencies towards historicism, verbal veracity and journalistic relevance have a regressive effect on literature; it can be regenerated only by a return to earlier accomplishments. Regeneration requires degeneration: the movement should be directed towards the beginnings in order to move towards what is seen as new and modern.

If writing has done much to writers, as Gilbert proposes in “The Critic as Artist”, and if the late-Victorians need to “return to the voice”, it would be difficult to accomplish this using non-musical techniques. Wilde’s text incorporates discourses seen as alternative to the established literary taste in late-Victorian literature, like symbolist, impressionist and decadent works. He imports their features and discuss whether the form of the English novel can be pushed to its limits in order to include those continental influences.

¹ Oscar Wilde, **The Soul of Man under Socialism and Selected Critical Prose**, London, Penguin Classics, 2001, p. 223.

In order to dramatise those problems Wilde focuses on a painting and distinguishes various influences on its palimpsest surface. Wilde's proposition about the importance of literature being more temporal is also associated with a poisonous book placed at the centre of the process set into action by Basil's painting.

Widely agreed to represent Joris-Karl Huysmans's novel **Against Nature**, the poisonous book is an example of symbolist literature. The characteristics of this school of literature, intensely admired by Wilde, are experimentation with form and a break with conventions of contemporary realist representation.

Dorian Gray's portrait, and the literary form which represents it, operate in and around traditions of Victorian realism. They alter their forms through their alternative techniques. Dorian recognises the change of "expression" in the mouth of his representation; but it is not merely those lines that change, the artistic manner in which Dorian's temporality is represented changes as well.

Like the text that describes and defines it, the painting treats its subject matter using realist techniques. But this is undermined by the temporal element introduced by a transformative movement. This movement consists of two aspects. While every passing season alters Dorian's image, the painting becomes more "historical", resembling Dorian's grandfather with its alterations. Its alterations forces the image to move forwards and backwards in time in a manner similar to Wilde's proposition about contemporary English fiction. The picture thereby becomes a metonym of the proper form of English fiction.

In his childhood Dorian struggles against the hegemonic figure of his grandfather; in his adolescence he becomes a voluntary slave to a transformative movement. Thanks to this movement Dorian controls, dominates and overcomes the boundaries of his nature. The phenomenological representation of this struggle takes place on a painting which resembles the hegemonic figure of the grandfather.

3.2. The cracked looking glass of an Oxford Hegelian

Oscar Wilde's interest in Hegel is often ignored by scholars. While his interest in the ideas of English aestheticians like Walter Pater or those of French symbolists like Joris-Karl Huysmans and Stéphane Mallarmé are widely recognised, little acknowledgment is made of how Hegel's ideas influenced Wilde.

John Sloan is a notable exception to this. In his book, **Oscar Wilde**, written for Oxford Classics's "authors in context" series, Sloan describes Wilde as one of Hegel's Oxonian disciples.

Like other Oxford men of his generation, Wilde was attracted to Hegel. Hegel, who died in 1831, argued that true reality existed only in ideas in the mind of man, and that history was a continual unfolding of these ideas towards a far distant state of complete understanding. To Oxford Hegelians, such as William Wallace and Benjamin Jowett, Hegel provided a way of reconciling evolutionary thinking with traditional religious beliefs about man's divine soul or spirit. Wilde read and took notes from William Wallace's *Prolegomena to The Logic of Hegel* (1874), which presented Hegel's philosophy as a corrective to the idea of a purposeless universe encouraged by nineteenth-century scientific thought.²

According to Sloan, Wilde's account of the artistic struggle "between the West's 'imitative spirit' and 'Orientalism, with its frank rejection of imitation' is a playful annexation and adaption of Hegel's aesthetics." Elsewhere in his book, Sloan emphasises Hegel's importance for the Decadent movement.

The English aesthetic movement was not lacking in historical or social awareness; yet the tradition of English cultural criticism to which he had attached himself was effectively cut off from any genuinely political movement, and indeed often opposed 'mere politics' and theory. By contrast, the 'Symbolists', designated more broadly in their day as 'Decadents', formulated an artistic credo founded upon dreams and intense emotional states that united romantic symbolism with anarchist political aims. The Decadents regarded Charles Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier as the precursors of the movement. Philosophically, the guiding spirit of the movement was Hegel, but it was

² John Sloan, **Oscar Wilde**, Oxford and New York, Oxford World's Classics, 2003, p. 153-154.

Hegel reformulated to establish romantic art and individualism in a crucial critical and dialectical role in the onward march of mind. The circles with which Wilde associated were not simply attempting to establish an alternative to the dominance of French bourgeois realism; they were also aligning themselves with resistance to all systems and dogmas in the cause of human spiritual progress.³

Another discussion of Hegel's influence on Wilde appears in **Oscar's Books**, Thomas Wright's book-length study on Wilde's reading habits. In the book Wright describes how Wilde studied Greats at Oxford; his instructor Benjamin Jowett introduced ideas of Immanuel Kant and Hegel to the course. "The study of German philosophy, at least in its Hegelian strain, was, however, optional rather than compulsory in the 1870s - Kant features on Wilde's final paper, but Hegel does not."⁴

Wilde first came in contact with Hegel's ideas as a boy in the library of his Dublin home. His father William Wilde was an avid reader of German philosophers and his mother Speranza often discussed with him aspects of German philosophy. "The notoriously obscure and abstract character of Hegel's writing makes his ideas extremely difficult to grasp," Wright writes, "Wilde deciphered them with the aid of Jowett and Symonds, whose commentaries on the classics drew heavily on Hegel, and by reading William Wallace and T.H. Green's lucid introductory studies of the philosopher, which he purchased from Shrimpton's bookshop over the winter months of 1877-78."⁵ An early analysis of Swinburne's **Essays and Studies** was followed by German philosophers; the Commonplace Book he kept at Oxford attests to his readings of Hegel.⁶

Wilde's thoroughgoing interest in Hegel can also be seen through the mediacy of the "looking glass" which is often interpreted as a symbol of Irish art. Before recognising the alteration in his portrait, Dorian takes an object to assist him. "One of

³ **Ibid.**, p. 15.

⁴ Thomas Wright, **Oscar's Books**, London, Vintage Books, 2009, p. 95.

⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 98.

⁶ Richard Ellmann, **Oscar Wilde**, New York, Vintage Books, 2009, p. 41.

Lord Henry's many presents to him,"⁷ this object is an oval glass "framed in ivory Cupids". The oval glass presents an alternate image of Dorian's self; he compares this image to his painted one. Taking the oval glass at hand, he glances hurriedly into the "polished depths" of its surface. Thanks to the oval glass, he can see the contrast in between the reflected image of his lips ("no line like that warped his red lips") and the appearance of "a touch of cruelty" in the mouth of his painted self.⁸

The oval glass resurfaces at the finale of the text, moments before Dorian's self-annihilation. The description explains the merry nature of those Cupids ("the white-limbed Cupids laughed round it as of old") standing in stark contrast with the grimness of Dorian's discovery.⁹ The curiously-carved mirror reminds Dorian of an amorous letter. Written by one of his lovers, the letter speaks of how "the curves" of his lips "rewrite history". Taking the oval glass up "as he had done on that night of horror, when he had first noted the change in the fatal picture, and with wild tear-dimmed eyes looked into its polished shield" Dorian attacks the painting.

The amorous letter bears a resemblance to the original alteration to the painting. While an alteration made to the visual representation of Dorian's lips begins the transformation, a textual description of the same lips brings an end to it. The polished "depths" are replaced by a polished "shield" as Dorian's image is shielded against any alteration, losing its depth.

Holding the glass at his hand, Dorian remembers those phrases ("the phrases came back to his memory, and he repeated them over and over to himself").¹⁰ Loathing his own beauty he flings the mirror on the floor, crushing it "into silver splinters beneath

⁷ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, New York and London, A Norton Critical Edition, 2007, p. 77.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76-77.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

his heel.” The transference of the “expression” from the visual to the textual sphere brings about the final act of annihilation.

The introduction of the painting precedes that of its author; the painting prevails after the annihilation of its author and subject. In that sense the painting brackets the narrative: thanks to its continual presence, **The Picture of Dorian Gray** can discuss the problem of representing a temporal process on a spatial medium. The text makes a distinction between Dorian’s two images. While one of those images is reflected on the oval glass, the other emerges, alters and disappears on the surface of the painting. These are two modes of representation struggling to outdo one other.

An alternative mode of representation is needed to represent alterations in Dorian’s nature. The medium has to undergo a transformation that mirrors that of its protagonist. The realist narrative has to overcome its boundaries in order to represent Dorian’s transformation. After Dorian reads the poisonous book (again a gift from Henry) the oval glass and Basil’s painting become alternate mediums for the Hegelian struggle. The painting tries to record all the alterations its subject undergo. This is a realist attempt which ends up producing a tissue of transformations. Because of its struggle to record the phenomenological movement, the text deviates from the realist tradition in its final form.

Writing two decades after Wilde, James Joyce used a similar trope while discussing Irish fiction. In the “Telemachus” chapter of **Ulysses**, Stephen Dedalus declares that “the cracked looking-glass of a servant” is “a symbol of Irish art.” Buck Mulligan mocks Stephen for his interest in the looking-glass with a reference to Wilde (“the rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in a mirror, if Wilde were only alive to see you!”). He later admits to being “grown out of Wilde and paradoxes”. Towards the end of the chapter, Stephen reflects on “Wilde’s love that dare not speak its name” thinking of a “staunch friend, a brother soul”.¹¹ There are also references to Portrait of Mr W. H.

¹¹ James Joyce, **Ulysses**, London, Penguin Books, 2008, p. 62.

(“the most brilliant of all” stories about Shakespeare; it is in “that story of Wilde’s” that he “proves that the sonnets were written by a Willie Hughes, a man all hues.”¹²)

Beside Irish art, Joyce’s “cracked looking-glass of a servant” also describes Wilde’s fiction. Written at the heyday of late-Victorian aestheticism, **The Picture of Dorian Gray** provides a link in between decadent and modernist movements.

3.3. The bee and the laburnum: representing the oppressive nature of “stillness”

In order to represent the transformative process, Wilde’s text annexes fields as diverse as biology, physics, music, painting and literature. But the centrepiece of the text is an image from the natural world. Two biological images (“gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum”) are contrasted (“the sullen murmur of the bees”). As a result of this, not only the laburnum and Dorian are associated but also the bees and Lord Henry’s aesthetic theories.¹³ The opening scene is a microcosm of the transformations in the text. The opposition in between the still, passive and beautiful laburnum (Dorian) and the murmuring bee (Henry) foretells the struggle between stillness and movement, and between spatiality and temporality in the text.

The garden is located just outside Basil’s studio. It is “oppressive” because of its “stillness” (“the sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the straggling woodbine, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive”).¹⁴ The windows offer an artificial and liberating alternative to the oppressive image of the garden (“long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect”). These curtains make Henry think “of those pallid jade-faced painters of Tokio who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile,

¹² **Ibid.**, p. 254.

¹³ Wilde, **op. cit.**, p. 5.

¹⁴ **Ibid.**

seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion”. At the heart of **The Picture of Dorian Gray** lies this tension between an immobile medium and the mobile nature of its subject.

Henry Wotton observes the natural life of the garden from his comfortable location in the studio. Long tussore-silk curtains are placed in front of him, creating the impression of movement in relation to the natural scenery behind. The stillness of a laburnum is replaced by the movement of the murmuring bee. Dorian Gray appears only after this opposition is established.

The text offers a number of Dorians: i) first, there is Dorian’s “phenomenological image” created in Basil’s studio and annihilated with Dorian’s stabbing of the painting, ii) then there is the immobile version of Basil’s painting making a return at the end of the narrative, with its qualities carefully preserved, iii) there is also Dorian’s image on the oval glass, which is a reflection of his appearance and iv) finally there are alternate perceptions of Dorian, his image produced by his beholders.

The portrait of Gray substitutes the life of its subject. The painting has its own phenomenology which the text takes pains to describe in detail. The text represents the convergence of two layers (the internal lives of the painting and its subject), the first of which is expected to be a replica of the second. But contrary to expectations the painting refuses to be a simple replica of its subject. Because of this those two layers are cast into roles of mastery and servitude. While Dorian struggles to become a master of his subjectivity, the painting experiments with its own nature so as to overcome its limitations.

After Dorian reads the “poisonous book” the style of the narrative departs from the conventions of the realist novel, incorporating styles of different genres, like art scholarship, essay, historical writing and literary experimentation. Some of these alternate styles were influenced by Symbolist literature whose features Wilde wanted to import to English fiction.

The painting is initially located at the centre of Basil's studio. Clamped to "an upright easel" it stands as an active, energetic force, with the power to alter its subjects.¹⁵ Thanks to its masterly position the painting can dominate and substitute its subjects. The painting becomes part of the subject it represents, turning into its metonym. As it is not complete or signed, the painting is essentially a work in progress. As an object, it precedes the existence of its subject matter as well as its creator. "The artist himself" emerges only after the introduction of his painting; he stands "some little distance away" from his creation, being introduced as a character "whose disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement, and gave rise to so many strange conjectures."¹⁶

Basil's character is defined by his absence. The absence of the artist is a prerequisite for the emergence of the painting: the absence of the subject matter (Dorian) and the future absence of the author (Basil) emphasise the presence of the artifice (Basil's painting of Dorian).

From Henry's view of the garden and the curtains the narrative shifts to Basil's gaze at the "gracious and comely form" he had "so skilfully mirrored in his art". Because he sees the painting Basil cannot help a "smile of pleasure" passing across his face—a smile which "seemed about to linger there." It is not clear whether the smile lingers at his mouth or at the mouth of the subject of his painting. If the latter is the case, then the curious "expression" that causes the undoing of Dorian belongs to the author rather than the subject of the painting. In either case, Basil's position reflects the theoretical framework in the Preface: the art's aim is "to reveal art and conceal the artist." The Preface points to an opposition between realist and romantic art; the former creates dislike for the spectator, a feeling of displeasure compared to "Caliban seeing his own face in a glass". The displeasure produced by romantic art, on the other hand, is

¹⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 6.

¹⁶ **Ibid.**

compared to “Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.”¹⁷ Shakespeare’s Caliban is the proverbial servant character in English literature; his servile status leads him to anger. Wilde’s intention of discussing both the struggle for mastery and the struggle for altering an artistic medium is apparent from the outset, following Caliban’s introduction in the Preface.

After seeing the painting for the first time, Henry reminds Basil about the prospective uses of it: it can bring fame and reputation to its author. When Lord Henry asks Basil to send it to the Grosvenor gallery, the artist refuses the role assigned to him. Henry emphasises the importance of being talked about in order to have a good reputation as an artist.

What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.¹⁸

Having disappeared “some years” before the composition of the text, Basil’s name still retains its popularity. Henry’s remarks strike a particularly false note; Basil has given rise to “talks and conjectures”, not because of his paintings but because of his absence from society. The facts presented by the narrative refute Henry’s theory about the reputation of an artist. Although Henry emphasises popularity and fame, an artist becomes famous precisely through his absence.

Henry takes the opposite view, pressuring his friend into an artistic presence with his signature in the painting. According to Henry, “a portrait like this” is enough to set

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Basil “far above all the young men in England”¹⁹. The art world’s appreciation of the painting is enough to furnish Basil with the distinguished role of mastery.

When Henry mentions the prospect of a masterly new role, Basil considers mastering his “secret” passions as well. He fears their representation on a public sphere might lead to his downfall; the public nature of the painting has an inherent danger of revealing information necessary for the public persecutor to find him “out”. This opposition between their ideas about showing the painting to the public shows that Gray’s portrait has the potential to produce two opposing outcomes. The painting affirms the masterly position of its creator while also revealing his servile position under Dorian’s influence.

The painting is beautiful because of the untouched, servile quality of its subject while Dorian is beautiful because he is servile. The painting is successful in artistic terms because it dominates its subject. Dorian’s position is servile in both senses: he has to be dominated twice.

The production and appreciation of the painting have different outcomes for the artist and his subject. English law, which forbid same-sex intercourse, forces the master painter into a servile self-concealer.

Henry compares Basil’s “rugged strong face” and his “coal-black hair” to Dorian’s Adonis-like figure. This reflects the tension between the artist and the subject of his painting. Thanks to his ignorance of intellectual matters, Adonis, the mythical figure of youth and masculine beauty, possesses an extraordinarily harmonious face. According to Henry, “intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration”; it therefore “destroys the harmony of any face.”²⁰

In order to identify the cause for the alteration in the face, Henry focuses on the relationship between a subject and its parts. Without the influence of ideas, the subject is

¹⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 7.

²⁰ **Ibid.**

a unified whole. His parts are harmonious; they are in proportion with each other. Once the subject participates in the process of thinking, he “becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid.” The subject’s participation in a transformative process results in a disproportionate subjectivity lacking harmony. In order to preserve its beauty, the subject has to stay passive, keeping away from any influence that might transform him into something different.

Not knowing his name, Henry refers to Dorian as Basil’s “mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me”. He is assured that this young friend “never thinks”; he is “some brainless, beautiful creature, who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence.”²¹

Henry’s description of Dorian precedes the latter’s emergence in Basil’s studio. He casts him with a botanical role, an echo of the laburnum whose stillness was interrupted in the beginning of the narrative by the murmur of the neighbouring bee. Safe, secure and self-assured in the artificial sphere of the painting studio, Henry enjoys the roles of mastery and servitude. He makes it clear that Dorian, as a young disciple, will be mastered, dominated and educated by two master figures: the artist (Basil) and the orator (Henry).

While Henry is comfortable about the process of mastery, Basil has his reservations and anxieties. He talks about “a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the faltering steps of kings.” Those who distinguish themselves from their inferiors through a process of mastery do so at their own peril; the distinction brings a “fatality” whose history Basil describes in detail. One result of this fatal history is Basil’s desire to be no different from his fellows. He believes that “the ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world,” and the lives of servile characters (“undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet”) are

²¹ **Ibid.**

in fact the ideal ones, which neither bring “ruin upon others” nor receive it “from alien hands.”²²

Basil’s reluctance in exhibiting Dorian’s portrait results in his reluctance in participating in the movement. Had it been presented to the public, Basil’s painting would have become part of culture industry, where reputations are made or destroyed in relation to the art work. He chooses not to send the painting to the Grosvenor Gallery, which had then housed many of the works of the Aesthetic Movement in England. Although he keeps the painting to himself, Basil does not keep Dorian’s proper name as a secret. Once he pronounces the name, Dorian becomes subject to the Hegelian transformation.

Instantly regretting his decision to name Dorian to Henry, Basil acknowledges his act amounts to “surrendering a part” of him. Dorian has been surrendered; his confrontation with Henry had played a defining role for him.

As Henry and Basil leave the studio together and go out into the garden, they both see Dorian as part of their struggles for mastery. Basil had been mastered while Henry is ready to master.

During their stroll in the garden Henry questions Basil about his reluctance to exhibit the painting. Basil mentions his theory about “every portrait that is painted with feeling” being a “portrait of the artist, not of the sitter.”²³ This autobiographical interpretation of works of art binds together the authorial signature and the artwork to which it is applied: Basil implies that signature is the work and the work is the signature. Because he is anxious about his signature, Basil wants become an absence in his work. He fears being found out, blacklisted and imprisoned in a servile role.

In the Preface all art is described as being “at once surface and symbol”; those who choose to go beneath this surface “do so at their peril” just like those “who read the

²² **Ibid.**, p. 8.

²³ **Ibid.**, p. 9.

symbol” do at their turn. “It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors” and Basil in his role as spectator and creator of it, fears the mirroring quality of his painting. Because the painting bears his signature, it presents a number of dangers for his position.

Signs of his presence in the work bother him. His presence brings moral and juridical anxieties that threaten to interfere to the sphere of aesthetics. This is why Basil attempts to delete his own presence from the work. According to Basil’s aesthetic theory, the work of art should present an elaborate engagement with ideal forms. It should not be an autobiographical artifice.

But there is a problem with Basil’s theory: he has little faith in it. Instead, Basil acknowledges and denies the autobiographical nature of the artistic medium. He attempts to remove what he knows to be an unremovable part of the painting: the hand that paints it. The signature with which the work becomes authored cannot simply be removed. Basil’s acknowledgement of the autobiographical nature of the medium and his subsequent attempts at resisting it, assigns a role of mastery to that work’s signature. As a servant of his creative medium, the artist resists the domineering presence of the signature in his work but is eventually forced to accept it.

Basil’s first meets Dorian at Lady Brandon’s salon. Like his studio, the salon is a cultural space where the process of mastery can easily hail its subjects. Basil turns into a servile character, becoming subservient to an influence he cannot control. As his eyes meet those of Dorian, Basil grows pale and “a curious sensation of terror” comes over him.

I knew that I had come face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. I did not want any external influence in my life. You know yourself, Harry, how independent I am by nature. I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray.²⁴

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Basil has both sexual and artistic anxieties. He fears to become subservient to an artistic influence; he fears not being able to master it. This forces Basil into reticence and he attempts to escape from the cultural space. But when he finds himself “face to face with the young man whose personality had so strangely stirred” him, Basil accepts the challenge. He hopes to master this influence eventually.

During the initial phase of their relationship, Basil repeats Dorian’s influence on a regular, repetitive basis. This strategy of repetition is later understood to be the centrepiece of Henry’s aesthetic philosophy. It echoes Althusser’s concept of ideology as a repetitive process; it demands from its subjects the enunciation of its truth on a daily basis. The repetitious quality of the ideological hail (“I couldn’t be happy if I didn’t see him every day. He is absolutely necessary to me”)²⁵ is also associated with the self-discipline required by the artist to have a prolific career.

The influence is good for self-discipline but it also creates problems during the process of its representation. Describing the difficulties he has had while representing Dorian’s image, Basil mentions how the influence is inexpressible in essence. He is not “dissatisfied” with what he has “done of him”. He does not think that “beauty is such that Art cannot express it”;²⁶ as he believes art can express anything but “in some curious way—I wonder will you understand me?—his personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style.” Thanks to this influence Basil can “recreate life in a way” which was “hidden from” him before.

Thanks to Dorian’s influence Basil’s artistic style changes. This comes as a revelation for both the artist and his audience. The revelation is precious for the artist but troubling for the Victorian public. What Basil hides from the public has to remain hidden in order to continue the public’s code of secrecy.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Basil reflects on the alterations brought to him by Dorian, recognising he filled a void in his life and art. Through the “subtle influence” passing from Dorian to Basil, he can see “in the plain woodland the wonder” he had always looked for “and always missed.” Dorian’s influence blurs the boundaries between his artistic and personal needs. It emphasises the inescapably autobiographical nature of Basil’s artistic productions.

After hailing Basil, Dorian’s influence becomes irreversible. The painter accepts that Dorian “is never more present in my work than when no image of him is there.”²⁷ Like the artist who seeks to delete his signature from the painting, the subject deletes his subjectivity, trying to turn into a painterly mannerism or a new mode of artistic representation. After disseminating into its audiences, Dorian’s influence struggles to become unrecognisable.

It is similar to “the love that dare not speak its name”; the famous phrase used in Lord Alfred Douglas’s 1894 poem, “Two Loves” as well as by Wilde himself, during his trials in the following year. Basil describes Dorian as a “suggestion of a new manner” and obscures the exact nature of his attraction to him. His painting introduces a new form of expression which dares not speak its subject’s name. During his trials Wilde said the “love that dare not speak its name” is historically associated with the relationship between an older, knowledgeable master and his servile student demanding knowledge. The phenomenon “repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him.”²⁸ Basil’s painting is presented in the same context; not daring to speak its subject, it refers to the relationship between mastery and servitude.

Basil “finds” Dorian “in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours.” He historicises Dorian and finds him expressed in numerous artifices throughout history.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁸ Neil McKenna, *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde*, London, Basic Books, 2006, p. 391.

Basil fears committing artistic idolatry and acknowledges putting “too much of myself in the thing.” Substituting Dorian’s influence with his signature, Basil struggles to overcome this anxiety of influence (“the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me”).²⁹

The chapter begins with the disappearance of the artist and ends with the introduction of Dorian. Basil’s butler, who remains unnamed throughout the narrative, enters the garden to introduce the young man (“Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir”³⁰). Despite Basil’s warnings against influencing him (“Don’t try to influence him. Your influence would be bad”), Henry is determined to leave his mark on Dorian. Basil puts his “trust” in Henry and proposes to make a bond of sorts. But Henry dismisses Basil, calling his concerns “nonsense”. Taking him “by the arm,” Henry “almost” leads Basil back into the studio where Dorian finally emerges as a presence.³¹

The opening chapter is rendered through Henry’s perspective; in the second chapter two perspectives converge. The use of plural personal pronoun in the first sentence introduces plural perspectives (“As they entered they saw Dorian Gray”). Dorian is immediately associated with music. His first act in the text is turning over “the pages of a volume of Schumann’s ‘Forest Scenes’.” As a reader of musical notation, Dorian is a servile instrument seeking to be dominated by master players. Stepping forward and extending his hand, Henry looks at Dorian and realises his “unspotted” nature:

Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth

²⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 15.

³⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 16.

³¹ **Ibid.**

was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world.³²

Dorian strikes Henry with his pure unspotted outlook. Having remained unaffected by all influences he provides a spatial and temporal space for the Hegelian movement. His finely-curved scarlet lips inspire trust at his beholders. An unidentified quality in his face contains a suggestion for sexual and political domination. It is the purity that brings the curious curve and the strange expression to the lips of the painted subject.

While Basil fears being dominated by Dorian, Lord Henry does not even consider the possibility of playing a servile role in the relationship. Instead he decides to dominate Dorian without any fear of being dominated by him. In the studio Basil and Dorian are given roles of the painter and the painted. Their lack of conversation defines them both: Henry is a speaker, playing the role of a Socratic orator. Henry is a master because he masters the arts of rhetoric and oratory; he can influence anyone except Basil ("a very bad influence over all his friends, with the single exception of myself"). Being so "unlike Basil", Henry is the direct opposite of the painter ("They made a delightful contrast. And he had such a beautiful voice").³³

Once Henry becomes a master orator, the unnamed narrator of the text disappears beneath his monologue. Henry's monologue is similar to the famous final chapter of Walter Pater's **The Renaissance**. A favourite author and mentor of Wilde, Pater had used the conclusion of his book to emphasise the importance of external influences on human character. In his Pateresque role, Henry praises the influence of culture and arts, pointing to the central role they play in the formation of human character. According to Henry,

³² **Ibid.**, p. 17.

³³ **Ibid.**, p. 18.

“all influence is immoral” from “the scientific point of view” —a proposition followed by an even more Pateresque one: “to influence a person is to give him one’s own soul.”³⁴

Thanks to the influence the subject “becomes an echo of some one else’s music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him.” According to Henry, the aim of life is “self-development”; but this is rarely realised because “courage has gone out of our race.” He speaks about the “the terror of society” as the basis of morals; the “terror of God”, on the other hand, is the secret of religion.³⁵

The master has to submit a part of his subjectivity to the servile character. In his existence the master subsequently finds his own self. Having surrendered a part of his own subjectivity to a servant, the master pursues the difficult task of self-development. Thanks to the courage needed to accomplish this, the subject overcomes the terror of society, and of morality.

This is a Hegelian scheme. Without self-acknowledgement there is no meaningful development for the subject. The subject dominates a servile object only after the moment of recognition and acknowledgement. In this process he discovers the meaning of his action and his purpose.

Speaking in a “low, musical voice” and gracefully waving his hand, Henry describes the alternative to self-development: self-denial. It is the tragic survival of “the mutilation of the savage”; once we yield to its influence it “mars our lives”. According to Henry “we are punished for our refusals”; the only way to become a master is to yield to all influences. The subject’s refusal to participate in the process results in self-poisoning and annihilation (“every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us”).

In a stark contrast to the relationship between the bee and laburnum, the relationship between the poisoner and his victim results in annihilation. Requiring total

³⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 19.

³⁵ **Ibid.**

submission from its servant, Henry's philosophy promises an attractive life to Dorian. His solution to material and intellectual temptations is to yield to them ("the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it"³⁶). Resistance to the movement is a fatal mistake, bringing with it the horrid sight of one's soul growing sick "with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful."

The theoretical description of the movement between lordship and bondage is sufficient to transform a subject into one of its practitioners. Dorian listens to the monologue and gets a grip on how the movement works. Standing "motionless, with parted lips and eyes strangely bright" he is "dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him."

He locates the source of the influences in his subjectivity ("they seemed to him to have come really from himself") and becomes eager to accept Henry's theory. What seems to him to have come from inside is actually the part submitted to him by Henry: it is an "articulate" influence akin to music and closely associated with the art of oratory ("music had stirred him like that... But music was not articulate"). Henry's influence consists of "words! Mere words!" Those are "terrible", "clear", "vivid" and "cruel" words.

Henry remembers a book he read when he was sixteen ("a book which had revealed to him much that he had not known before"). For Dorian, Henry had shot an arrow into the air (which explains the Cupids on the oval glass he gives to Dorian as a gift).

The narrative shifts from Henry's perspective to that of Dorian. He is enthralled by his "low, languid voice" which he finds "absolutely fascinating." Even Henry's "cool, white, flower-like hands" have a curious charm for him ("they moved, as he

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

spoke, like music, and seemed to have a language of their own”³⁷). The fascination is mutual. Dorian’s friendship with Basil “had never altered” the young man. Their positions are illustrated in the figure below. The unalterable nature of Henry fails to influence Basil while dominating Dorian. In terms of his influence, Basil is impotent: he is a master of his artifices but has no effect on either Henry or Dorian.

Dorian is Basil’s artistic subject but for Henry he symbolises a bigger ideal. Henry glorifies beauty, speaking about its “divine right of sovereignty”. Beauty is a transformative power (“it makes princes of those who have it”) and one can achieve mastery by using it. As part of the world of appearances, beauty is linked to the phenomenological process Hegel describes in **Phenomenology of Spirit**. Henry agrees with Hegel that judging subjects by their appearances (“it is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances”) is essential to understand their subjectivities. The emphasis he puts on the visible world (“the true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible”) points to the importance of processes.³⁸

Henry’s theory is not limited by aesthetics, it extends to biology and natural science as well. He identifies Dorian as a symbol for a new Hedonism and draws a parallel in between botanical life and modern individualism (“the common hill-flowers wither, but they blossom again. The laburnum will be as yellow next June as it is now. In a month there will be purple stars on the clematis, and year after year the green night of its leaves will hold its purple stars”³⁹). Like a flower, the modern individualism is also doomed. Like the laburnum “we never get back our youth”; therefore we must enjoy periods of copulation before losing our capacity to be influenced by external forces.

The alternative to Henry’s philosophy of life is degeneration. Those who refuse the transformative process are sent outside history. They degenerate into “hideous

³⁷ **Ibid.**, p. 22.

³⁸ **Ibid.**

³⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 23.

puppets, haunted by the memory of the passions” of which they are “too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations” that they had not “the courage to yield to”. These ideas enchant Dorian; he shifts his perspective from Henry to the natural life that surround them in the garden outside.

The spray of lilac fell from his hand upon the gravel. A furry bee came and buzzed round it for a moment. Then it began to scramble all over the oval stellated globe of the tiny blossoms. He watched it with that strange interest in trivial things that we try to develop when things of high import make us afraid, or when we are stirred by some new emotion for which he cannot find expression, or when some thought that terrifies us lays sudden siege to the brain and calls on us to yield. After a time the bee flew away.⁴⁰

The furry bee arrives and buzzes around the stellated globe of the lilac which has the same oval shape of the looking glass Henry gives to Dorian as a gift. Dorian observes it with a sense of curiosity which equals his later analysis of his portrait. He thinks the natural scene is trivial compared to Henry’s theory of “high import”. Thanks to the natural scene, Dorian can compensate his failure to find an expression for the new emotion that inspired him. The natural world of the lilac and the bee provides an experimental space where Henry’s theory can be analysed and verified. Bee’s sudden siege of the lilac reminds Dorian of his own fate. The semen-like spray of the lilac exemplifies the sexual implications of his future relationship with Henry.

While these influences take place, the artist is absent from the scene. Moments later, having done with his painting, Basil appears. He stoops down to write “his name in long vermilion letters on the left-hand corner of the canvas”⁴¹.

⁴⁰ **Ibid.**

⁴¹ **Ibid.**, p. 24.

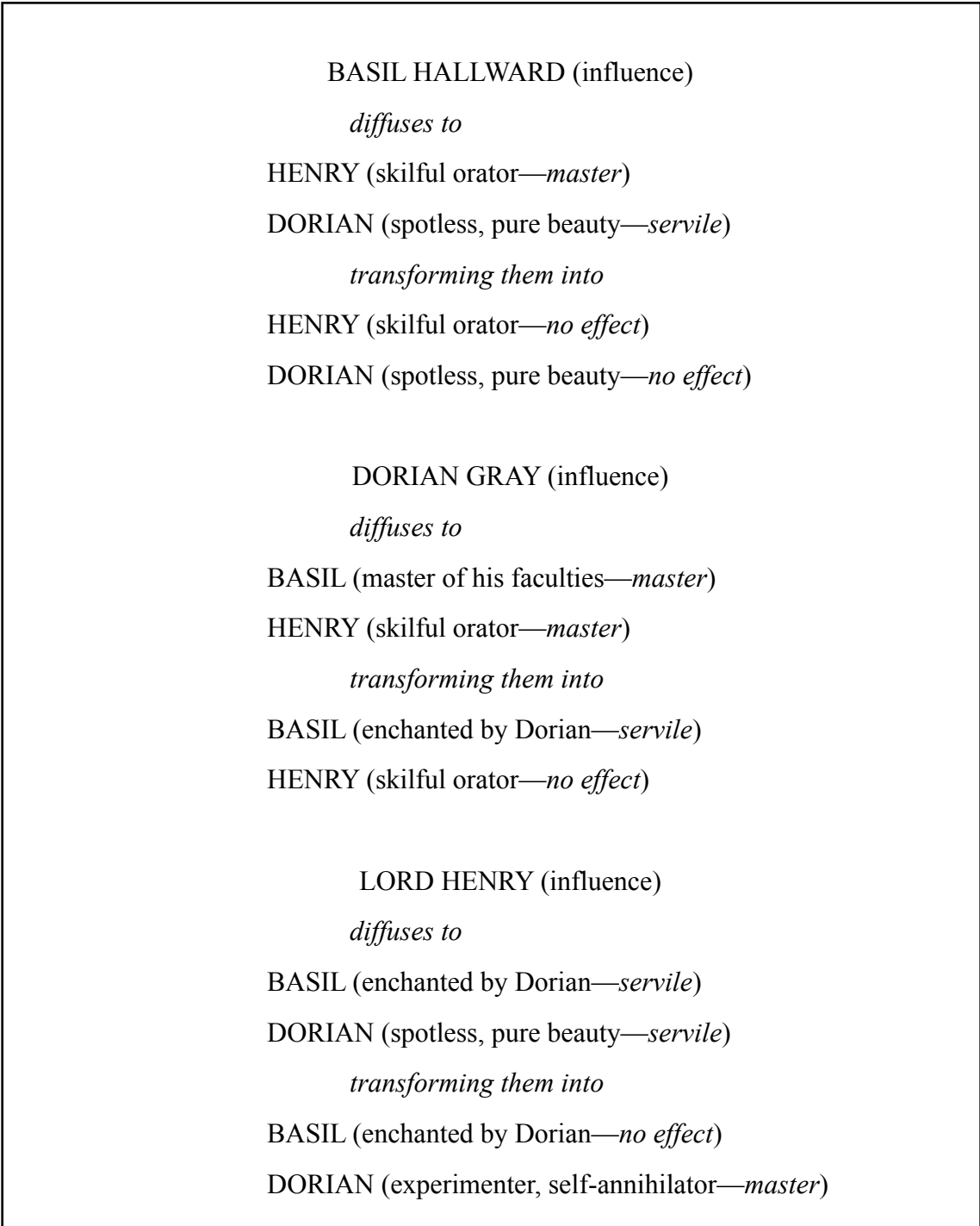


Figure 6: Phenomenology of personal influences in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Basil's signature appears on the canvas when Dorian feels the "sense of his own beauty" coming to him "like a revelation."⁴²

Basil decides to conceal this influence from the hostile gaze of the Victorian public. The painting leads Dorian to think of a future day "when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dim and colourless, the grace of his figure broken and deformed." Dorian wonders whether he can "be always young" while it is the picture that is "to grow old". He demands to replace his temporal existence with a spatial image. Once his image is paused in time, a temporal movement replaces the spatial nature of the canvas. This strange phenomena introduces the element of time into a static form.

In terms of morality Basil is conservative. As an artist, on the other hand, he is a progressive. He believes the painting poses a threat to the unspotted nature of Dorian Gray; so he decides to annihilate it. The idea of having a "temporal painting" (a modernist's dream with its fluid medium) is too great to put aside. Dorian announces he is "in love" with it ("it is part of myself. I feel that"). Dorian acknowledges his metonymic relationship with the artwork. He wants to preserve the painting as it becomes part of his personal heritage.

Basil's butler makes another entrance to the scene. Knocking the door first, he enters with "a laden tea-try," setting it "down upon a small Japanese table."⁴³ It was the butler who had first announced Dorian in the studio, making it possible for two master figures to consider him for domination. Thanks to the butler's second entrance, the servile torch is transferred from one servant to another.

The butler brings the beverage on a tray and does not serve it. It is Dorian who serves the beverage to the masters. Serving the tea is, in a sense, playing the mother; that

⁴² **Ibid.**, p. 25.

⁴³ **Ibid.**, p. 27.

is to be the master of the tea table. It is implied in this early scene that it is through his servitude to those men that Dorian will become a master.

In the ensuing scene Henry and Basil mention his name when he has already split into two different subjectivities. This is emphasised by his serving tea to Henry and Basil. Thanks to this split, Dorian's "unspotted" previous self becomes history. His new self, on the other hand, becomes susceptible to numerous desires. Henry's question makes this split in between a servile and a master character obvious ("Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?"⁴⁴). The painted Dorian is a figure of mastery which, according to Basil, "will never alter".

The split in Dorian's character is part of Wilde's aesthetic theory about realism and impressionism. Henry protests about the fuss "people make about fidelity" and opines that being unfaithful is in the nature of men (purely a question for physiology, "it has nothing to do with our own will.") The problem of Dorian's representation is about "fidelity" as well: the painting deserts its nature, struggling to become a temporal form. Deserting the demands of its medium, the painting shows alliance with the demands of its subject matter. It suppresses the limitations of its medium in order to remain true to the nature of its subject. According to Henry's theory the painting cannot help but desert its nature. A work of art does not have its "own will", will is only a question of physiology.

Dorian leaves Basil's studio with Henry; while his representation deserts its medium, the subject of the painting deserts the artist. The figure below illustrates this pattern of loyalties and infidelities which play a crucial role in the text.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

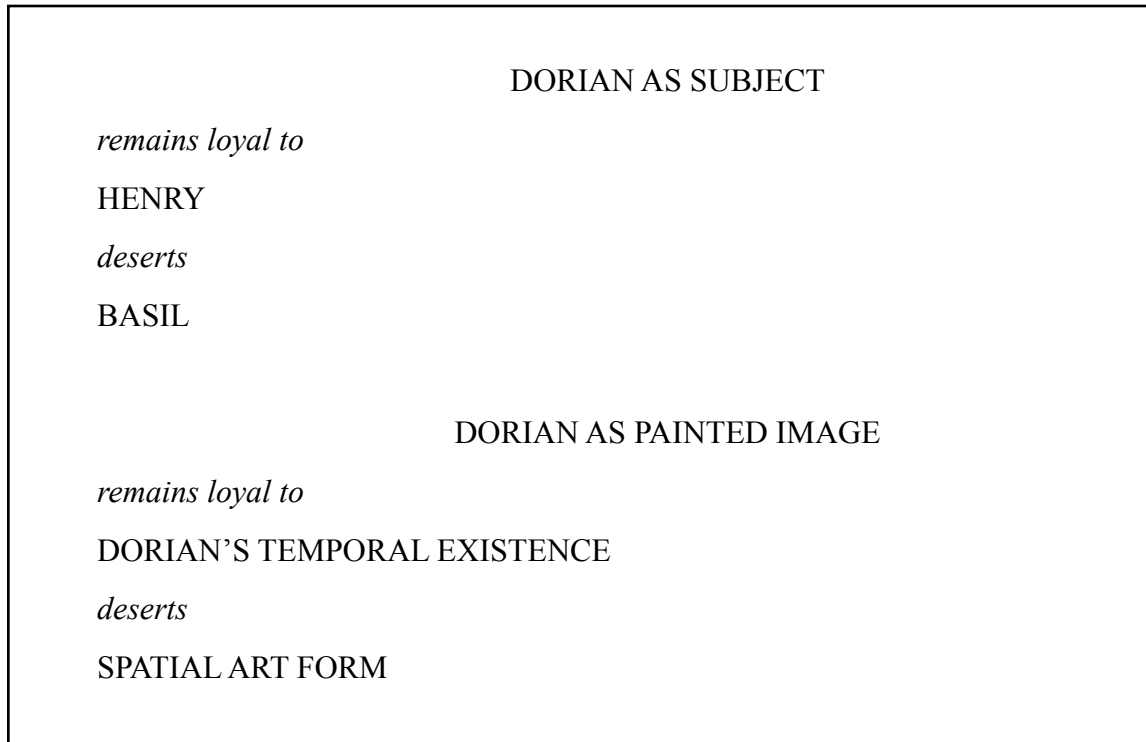


Figure 7: Loyalties and infidelities

Henry decides to explore Dorian's genealogy. He visits his uncle, familiarising the reader with the genealogy of a master orator. Lord Fermor, Henry's uncle, is a retiree from the Diplomatic Service and a capricious man. He had been subjected to the authority of his father throughout his career. He is portrayed as little more than an extension of his father. He is acknowledged among his peers for the "good English of his dispatches"⁴⁵. After his father's resignation from the Service, Fermor follows his

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

footsteps and also resigns. In order to explore Dorian's genealogy Henry visits this old diplomat. He is after "not useful information, of course" but "useless information."

In his role as inquisitor, Henry resembles Utterson. They both struggle to identify a servile subject's changes. Similar to the the role Lanyon had played for Utterson, Fermor provides crucial information to Henry. Thanks to this knowledge Henry can grasp the essence of Dorian. Unlike Lanyon's exclusively medical knowledge and expertise, Fermor is a man of diplomacy, well-versed in the English Blue-book where records of parliamentary sessions are kept ("well, I can tell you anything that is in an English Blue-book"⁴⁶).

Henry corrects his uncle and rejects the notion that Dorian can be a part of parliamentary politics ("Mr. Dorian Gray does not belong to Blue-books, Uncle George"). Fermor has attended the "christening" of Dorian's mother, Margaret Devereux. He tells how Dorian is grandson of the "last Lord Kelso." Fathered by a "penniless young fellow, a mere nobody" who is "a subaltern in a foot regiment", Dorian becomes an orphan when Kelso hires "some rascally adventurer, some Belgian brute" to assassinate his father.⁴⁷

Fermor's account of Dorian's family history features dangerous pieces of information. As a keeper of his family secrets Fermor worries about Dorian ("I hope he will fall into proper hands"). He fears that being dominated by Henry can be Dorian's undoing. As all the family property had come to his mother "through her grandfather", Dorian is in possession of a large sum of money inherited from grandparents against whom he holds a grudge. His grandfather had hated his father, considering him to be "a mean dog". Dorian had inherited from his family not only a large fortune but also a long tradition of hatred towards one's patriarchs.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Basil is the polar opposite of Kenso. A silent man, he never interferes with other people's lives. It is only on the canvas that he can imagine committing a crime. Contrary to his philosophy of disinterested self-development Henry does interfere with Dorian's life. He is an assassin figure; thanks to his ideas, the young protagonist is annihilated.

Henry thanks Fermor for providing him with the information he wanted. He always likes to "know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones," he says. Henry's siege of Dorian's character becomes a historical and familial process. As the latest "protégé" of his Aunt Agatha, Henry considers "the story of Dorian Gray's parentage" as a family matter.⁴⁸

He describes his fascination with Dorian; talking to him "was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch and thrill of the bow... There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence."⁴⁹ Their relationship of mastery and servitude is reflected in their speech; on the one end there is Henry, the active, domineering part, on the other is Dorian who is passive, subservient and responsive to every touch. He is an instrument for Henry to exercise his oral influence. Henry considers himself a musician, drawing a parallel between himself and Basil. Henry classifies them as artists: Dorian, on the other hand, is their instrument.

Henry decides "to be to Dorian Gray what, without knowing it, the lad was to the painter who had fashioned the wonderful portrait." He is determined: he "would seek to dominate him-had already, indeed, half done so."⁵⁰ The siege of Dorian continues during Lady Agatha's dinner where Henry charms him with his exquisite oratory skills. When asked to describe a way of becoming young again, Henry advises Agatha to repeat any great error she committed in her "early days." His solution for the riddle is simple: "To get back one's youth, one has merely to repeat one's follies." In terms of biology,

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Henry's theory seems in line with his "scientific" ideas on self-development and his understanding of the nature of influence. Henry believes repetition can be used as a method for self-development. In order to retain mastery, one has to experience influences repeatedly.

Henry charms the guests, playing with the idea and growing wilful, "tossed it into the air and transformed it; let it escape and recaptured it; made it iridescent with fancy, and winged it with paradox." Described as "an extraordinary improvisation," Henry's speech is "brilliant, fantastic, irresponsible." Charming "his listeners out of themselves" he leads them into following "his pipe laughing."⁵¹

The power of Henry's eloquent speech is similar to that of Kurtz who also fascinated his listeners with his speech. Like Marlow and his listeners, Dorian Gray is fascinated by the oratory; never being able to take "his gaze off him" he sits "like one under a spell."⁵² Dorian's fascination leads him into a servile role. The influence of Henry's speech is abruptly interrupted when "reality entered the room in the shape of a servant."

Butlers and servants are often associated with the material details of reality. They announce the arrivals of guests, bring morning papers and open letters for their employers. They also break the spells cast by master figures. The introduction of Basil's servant is an example of this pattern: bringing news about the arrival of Dorian, he interrupts Henry and Basil's moment of fantasy. The entrance of Lady Agatha's butler reminds Dorian of his servile status. Dorian experiences a similar thing when Basil's servant hands the tea tray to him in the studio.

Basil needs Dorian's influence on a regular basis. In order to sustain his servile position, Dorian has to listen to Henry's speeches continually. Before leaving the scene,

⁵¹ **Ibid.**, p. 39.

⁵² **Ibid.**

he asks Henry to promise to talk to him “all the time”. No one “talks so wonderfully” as Henry does. After this demand for repetition the narrative focus shifts to Dorian.

Inhabiting Dorian’s perspective the reader visits Henry’s Mayfair house. His library is separated from reality by “small leaded panes of the window”⁵³ from which “the apricot-coloured light of a summer day in London” streams inside. Dorian takes his place in Henry’s fantasy world of books where his servile role takes its inspiration. He meets Henry’s wife, Victoria, who identifies traces of her husband in Dorian’s speech. Other figures with similarly servile functions played their roles in Henry’s life. They adopted his views, became his apostles and spoke with his words.

Dorian voices his opinions about conversation and bad music (it is “one’s duty to drown” bad music “in conversation” during a concert, he believes⁵⁴); Victoria identifies these phrases as being part of “Harry’s views”. She always hears “Harry’s views from his friends.” The scene resembles the finale of **Heart of Darkness**, clarifying Dorian’s position. From the earlier, active role of a producer of influences, he beings to play a new, Marlow-like, passive role.

After being recognised by Dorian, Henry’s influence begins to produces new forms of knowledge. Their appreciation require intellectual mastery which can be obtained by self-discipline. Henry’s influence does not produce one kind of knowledge; it introduces a mechanism which self-produces knowledge. Dorian appreciates the power of Henry’s movement that fill him “with a wild desire to know everything about life.”⁵⁵ Many days after their meeting, “something seemed to throb” in Dorian’s veins.

New forms of knowledge, produced by Henry, cause this throbbing. Looking for adventure, Dorian walks on the streets of London; he “wandered eastward, soon losing my way in a labyrinth of grimy streets and black, grassless squares.” Like Enfield, Jekyll

⁵³ **Ibid.**, p. 41.

⁵⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 42.

⁵⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 44.

and Utterson in **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, the nightly stroll creates a space for the self-exploration of the Victorian gentleman. Passing by “an absurd little theatre” Dorian meets “a hideous Jew” guarding this door. Like the painter’s studio, the social salon and the library, the theatre is a place strongly defined by its cultural function. It is a space for one’s overcoming of his subjective limitations, a place for overcoming the self.

Taking off his hat “with an air of gorgeous servility” the manager is a disgusting figure in Dorian’s eyes. Henry, on the other hand, finds him fascinating. Dorian’s disgust is partly caused by his own servile status, which explains Henry’s interest in the servile manager. Once inside the theatre Dorian enjoys the voice of the actress Sibyl Vane (“I never heard such a voice”⁵⁶) who replaces Henry’s influence, being defined in similar, aural terms.

In the initial phase of his servitude Dorian had been dominated by Henry’s voice; when Sibyl replaces Henry’s influence, Dorian becomes a servant of her voice. From the beginning Dorian acknowledges the parallels between their voices. “You know how a voice can stir one,” he informs Henry: “Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget. When I close my eyes, I hear them, and each of them says something different. I don’t know which to follow.” Dorian makes frequent visits to the absurd theatre where Sibyl appears “in every age and in every costume”.

Seeing Sibyl as a “sacred” figure, Dorian compares her to Henry who has “a curious influence over him.” Like Basil who regrets mentioning Dorian’s name, Dorian regrets mentioning Sibyl to him (“I wish now I had not told you about Sibyl Vane”). The relationship between Dorian and Sibyl is defined by secrecy: Sibyl hides Dorian’s proper name from her relatives. Dorian keeps her as a secret before making the grave mistake of mentioning Sibyl’s name to Henry.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

After his conversation with Henry, however, Dorian spreads her name quite insistently. While his own proper name is kept as secret by Sibyl, he struggles to make hers known among his friends by furnishing it with various artistic qualities.

Dorian's courtship of Sibyl is reminiscent of Henry's courtship of Dorian. She can change her proper names and become Imogen, Juliet, or other Shakespeare heroines. When Basil puts the final touch on Dorian's portrait, the latter's character is multiplied. In the case of Sibyl, on the other hand, the performance on stage results in a similar multiplication of subjectivity. When Dorian describes her disguises to him Henry wonders "when is she Sibyl Vane," a question which Dorian replies by saying "never", because she is "more than an individual."⁵⁷

Dorian never informs Sibyl about his masterly position. When the Jewish manager insists on calling him "My Lord", Dorian assures her that he is "not anything of the kind." In the eyes of Sibyl he looks "more like a prince" and is christened as "Prince Charming." Dorian wants to rechristen Sibyl as well; that is why he wants Henry and Basil to see her on stage and acknowledge her "genius". Only after this moment of acknowledgement can they liberate Sibyl from her present master ("we must get her out of the Jew's hands. She is bound to him for three years").

Henry knows that Dorian's courtship of Sibyl is a duplicate of his own courtship of Dorian. He is aware "that it was through certain words of his, musical words said with musical utterance, that Dorian Gray's soul had turned to this white girl and bowed in worship before her." To his mind Dorian is "to a large extent" his "own creation." He had placed the Hegelian movement of self-development into him; later he is happy to be a disinterested spectator of the young man ("the pulse and passion of youth were in him, but he was becoming self-conscious. It was delightful to watch him.") He is not at all interested in "how it all ended, or was destined to end", owing the role of spectator to his

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

already established, masterly position. The mastery of Henry is partly due to the scientific methods he employs during his analysis of Dorian.

It was clear to him that the experimental method was the only method by which one could arrive at any scientific analysis of the passions; and certainly Dorian Gray was a subject made to his hand, and seemed to promise rich and fruitful results. His sudden mad love for Sibyl Vane was a psychological phenomenon of no small interest. There was no doubt that curiosity had much to do with it, curiosity and the desire for new experiences, yet it was not a simple, but rather a very complex passion. What there was in it of the purely sensuous instinct of boyhood had been transformed by the workings of the imagination, changed into something that seemed to the lad himself to be remote from sense, and was for that very reason all the more dangerous. (...) It often happened that when we thought we were experimenting on others we were really experimenting on ourselves.⁵⁸

Henry's method consists of a thorough observation of one's alterations: Hegel called this process phenomenology. The twist Henry introduces to the Hegelian experiment is the acknowledgement of the role played by the scientist. Henry can realise his fantasies on the experimental space provided by Dorian's character. He sees Sibyl as an invention of Dorian ("the purely sensuous instinct of boyhood had been transformed by the workings of the imagination"); Dorian, in his turn, had been an invention of his own mind.

Sibyl, who is an invention of one of Henry's inventions, is described as an unspotted, naive and servile *tabula rasa*. She is supposed to be a slate devoid of any preconception, prejudice or predetermination. To see her as a *tabula rasa* is Dorian's biggest mistake: contrary to his belief, the horrid text of reality is not simply erased and replaced Shakespeare's fictions.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

Dorian sees Sibyl as a caged woman (“the joy of a caged bird was in her voice”⁵⁹) waiting to be liberated by a master. Sibyl’s existence is far from ideal: sister of an illegitimate and occasionally violent younger brother, James, and daughter of a poor, widowed mother in need of financial support and protection, her life is stained with poverty.

Sibyl’s mother thinks Dorian is a romantic figure (“he has not yet revealed his real name. I think it is quite romantic of him”⁶⁰) precisely because he has concealed his proper name from her daughter. She believes Dorian is a member of the aristocracy: “he has all the appearance of it.”⁶¹ For Vane family, appearances are very important. The tensions in the family are described over the course of a stroll down the Euston road. During their walk “the passers-by glanced in wonder at the sullen, heavy youth, who, in coarse, ill-fitting clothes, was in the company of such a graceful, refined-looking girl” that “he as like a common gardener walking with a rose.” Sibyl is associated with a flower; Dorian himself was associated with the flowers in the opening chapter. Taking their seats “amidst a crowd of watchers,” Sibyl and James observe the world of appearances. Their conversation is accompanied by the image of “the tulip-beds across the road” which flame like “throbbing rings of fire.”

The popular floriography manuals of the Victorian era can help describe the symbolism of the flowers. Those manuals instructed their readers to use lilacs as symbols of youthful innocence and memories and to show the first emotion of love towards the beloved.⁶² The bed of tulips, lying opposite Sibyl and James, has a more tragic connotation, referring to the undying and hopeless nature of love. Apart from the more obvious connotations of true love, desire and passion, Sibyl’s identification with a

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶² “Language of flowers,” *Wikipedia*, 21 November. 2012, <Wikipedia.org http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_of_flowers>.

rose implies her secrecy, reverence, silence or innocence. Moments before catching a glance of Dorian, Sibyl sees that “a white dust, tremulous cloud of orris-root it seemed” had hung in the panting air while “the brightly-coloured parasols danced and dipped like monstrous butterflies.” Those botanical details unsettle Sibyl; she feels “oppressed”⁶³ by their existence, like Henry who in the opening scene of the novel was oppressed by the studio’s garden. Sibyl’s silence is an echo of the opening scene and is interrupted by Dorian’s appearance. Accompanied by two ladies he mounts on an open carriage. During the scene Sibyl describes her love for Dorian, saying “to be in love is to surpass one’s self”. When James protests that “he wants to enslave you,” she is adamant in her resolution to be a slave of the young man (“I shudder at the thought of being free”).

After Sibyl influences Dorian, the process of mastery undergoes a number of changes. Dorian distances himself from Basil and his influence fades; thanks to this absence the painter can focus on his paintings. Dorian’s replacement of Henry with Sibyl reconfigures their relationship too. Dorian becomes more masterly while Henry is reduced to the role of an observer of his transformations. Dorian’s newfound mastery becomes a source of anxiety for Basil. The next chapter is rendered through his perspective. Hearing news of Dorian’s prospective marriage with Sibyl, Basil protests that “it would be absurd for him to marry so much beneath him.”⁶⁴ He confesses to being afraid to see “Dorian tied to some vile creature, who might degrade his nature and ruin his intellect.” His efforts to preserve Dorian’s personality in the condition in which he found it fails.

Henry plays the role of a scientific observer of the experiment, identifying how Basil’s painting influenced Dorian’s engagement (“Your portrait of him has quickened his appreciation of the personal appearance of other people”⁶⁵). Thanks to his

⁶³ **Ibid.**, p. 60.

⁶⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 63.

⁶⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 64.

acquisition of painterly appreciation that Dorian becomes a master in judging appearances. As a result of his confrontation with Henry and his analysis of the painting, Dorian stops being a being-in-itself and becomes a being-for-itself.

Henry comments on their relationship, playing the role of an disinterested scientific observer (“I never approve, or disapprove, of anything now”). Describing married people as “unselfish” persons who “lack individuality”, Henry opines that “there are other and more interesting bonds between men and women”⁶⁶ outside the official bond of marriage.

Dorian wants to transform Sibyl and make her a master by placing her “on a pedestal of gold”, seeing “the world worship the woman who is mine.” Dorian wants to observe his own mastery through the intermediacy of her theatrical success. He reduces her to an object of his own self-transformative process. He idolises Sibyl’s effects, comparing them favourably to Henry’s influence (“the mere touch of Sibyl Vane’s hand makes me forget you and all your wrong, fascinating, poisonous, delightful theories”).

In the theatre they are welcomed by the house manager who escorts them while talking at the top of his voice. Dorian compares him to Caliban who made an earlier appearance in the Preface, being associated with servitude and representation. Henry, meanwhile, enjoys his company, insisting on “shaking him by the hand.” He is fascinated by the “discord” of the place; on the other hand, Dorian finds the heat in the theatre terribly oppressive. The audiences at the pit attract Henry’s attention. Like Kurtz, he has the ability to become a master in both familiar and strange places.

Dorian has to distinguish Sibyl from her poor surroundings represented by the pit with its voices “horribly shrill and discordant.” Sibyl enters the stage and begins to control her servile audiences by her performance (“they weep and laugh as she will them to do. She makes them as responsive as a violin. She spiritualises them...”⁶⁷).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

This way Sibyl makes Dorians out of her audience, playing a role similar to Henry. Henry is takes “his opera-glass” to scan “the occupants of the gallery”; his gaze rests upon his prospective servants. The encounter excites him as he peers “through his glasses”⁶⁸ at Sibyl. Dorian meanwhile sits “motionless, and as one in a dream.”

The master’s gaze at Sibyl through opera-glasses associates Henry with glasses for the second time. The oval glass, Henry’s gift to Dorian, is an instrument for self-analysis and self-recognition; the opera-glasses, on the other hand, are used to amplify the image of the source of influence and those who are influenced by it. The moment of Sibyl’s self-recognition is partly due to Henry’s masterly gaze, accompanied by those of the other spectators. Her failure at delivering her lines successfully annihilates her master position.

Self-recognition and self-consciousness have disastrous consequences for those who want sustain their role of mastery. The prerequisite for attaining mastery is the illusion of being a master. When one refuses the role of appearances his mastery is annihilated as one can one mastery only on the sphere of appearances. The stage is the ideal space where roles of master and servant can be reversed: poor and unassuming in real life, Sibyl can become an exquisite master figure on stage. Henry’s gaze, on the other hand, reverses the reversal. Her naturalness on stage is a result of her sophisticated artificiality. But it is reversed, turning into a negative, artificial mannerism. Sibyl loses the masterly, natural tone (“the voice was exquisite, but from the point of view of tone it was absolutely false”⁶⁹) and the “staginess of her acting” is described as being “unbearable”. The problem of her artificiality is associated with Sibyl’s failure to deliver her lines properly. A beautiful passage from the second act of **Romeo and Juliet** is “declaimed with the painful precision of a school-girl who has been taught to recite by some second-rate professor of elocution”; Sibyl’s enunciation destroys the synchronic

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

existence of words and their meanings. She delivers “the words as though they conveyed no meaning to her.”

The only word which conveys a meaning for Sibyl is Dorian’s proper name. Seeing him at backstage she lingers “over his name with long-drawn music in her voice, as though it were sweeter than honey to the red petals of her mouth.” Her success at pronouncing Dorian’s proper name is associated with her failure to deliver Shakespeare’s lines. “Transfigured” with joy “an ecstasy of happiness dominated her”; in the past she would live “only in the theatre” where the words she “had to speak were unreal, were not my words, were not what I wanted to say.”⁷⁰ Thanks to her submission to Dorian, she loses the ability to deliver other people’s lines. The illusion of being able to deliver lines of her own destroys her submission to English language and her presence on the performative stage of phenomenology.

Sibyl’s annihilation is a necessary step for Dorian’s self-mastery. Her death emancipates him from a strong influence (“You used to stir my imagination. Now you don’t even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect”⁷¹). When Sibyl loses her influence she also loses the privilege of Dorian’s interest in pronouncing her name (“I will never mention your name”). Because Dorian refuses Sibyl’s influence, she loses the prospect of inheriting his surname; had they been married “the world would have worshipped you, and you would have borne my name.”

Dorian destroys Sibyl through those words describing his fascination for her. Suffocated by Dorian’s phrases, Sibyl grows white and trembles (“she clenched her hands together, and her voice seemed to catch in her throat”). When she puts “her hand upon his arm” Dorian thrusts her back (“don’t touch me”). Before leaving the backstage Sibyl is likened to a flower once more (“A low moan broke from her, and she flung herself at his feet, and lay there like a trampled flower”).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

In the figure below I illustrate the outcomes of artificial influences on characters. After Sibyl's annihilation, Dorian experiences a series of artificial transformations. Dorian's analysis of his portrait and his examination of his face using Henry's oval glass intersect with Sibyl's annihilation.

When he examines it "in the dim arrested light that struggled through the cream-coloured silk blinds" the face in his portrait appears "a little changed". The artificial blinds make the diffusion of light difficult; Dorian sees the alteration in the face of his portrait through their intermediacy ("the expression looked different. One would have said that there was a touch of cruelty in the mouth. It was certainly strange"). Drawing up the blind he wants to reconsider the image

but the strange expression that he had noticed in the face of the portrait seemed to linger there, to be more intensified even. The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing.⁷²

Thanks to the natural light the alteration is intensified; the "quivering, ardent sunlight" clarifies the cruel lines of the portrait. Taking up from the table "an oval glass framed in ivory Cupids, one of Lord Henry's many presents to him" Dorian glances "hurriedly into its polished depths. No line like that warped his red lips." Although his lips stay the same there is "no doubt that the whole expression had altered"; this expression holds "the secret of his life, and told his story."⁷³

Sibyl is annihilated as a result of her failure to deliver Shakespeare's lines. Likewise, Dorian will be annihilated as a result of the painting's failure to properly represent Dorian's lines. The painting holds "the secret of his life", telling "his story":

⁷² **Ibid.**, p. 77.

⁷³ **Ibid.**, p. 78.

the dissonance between the realistic portraiture in the oval glass and Dorian's altered version on the canvas is the real secret of his life.

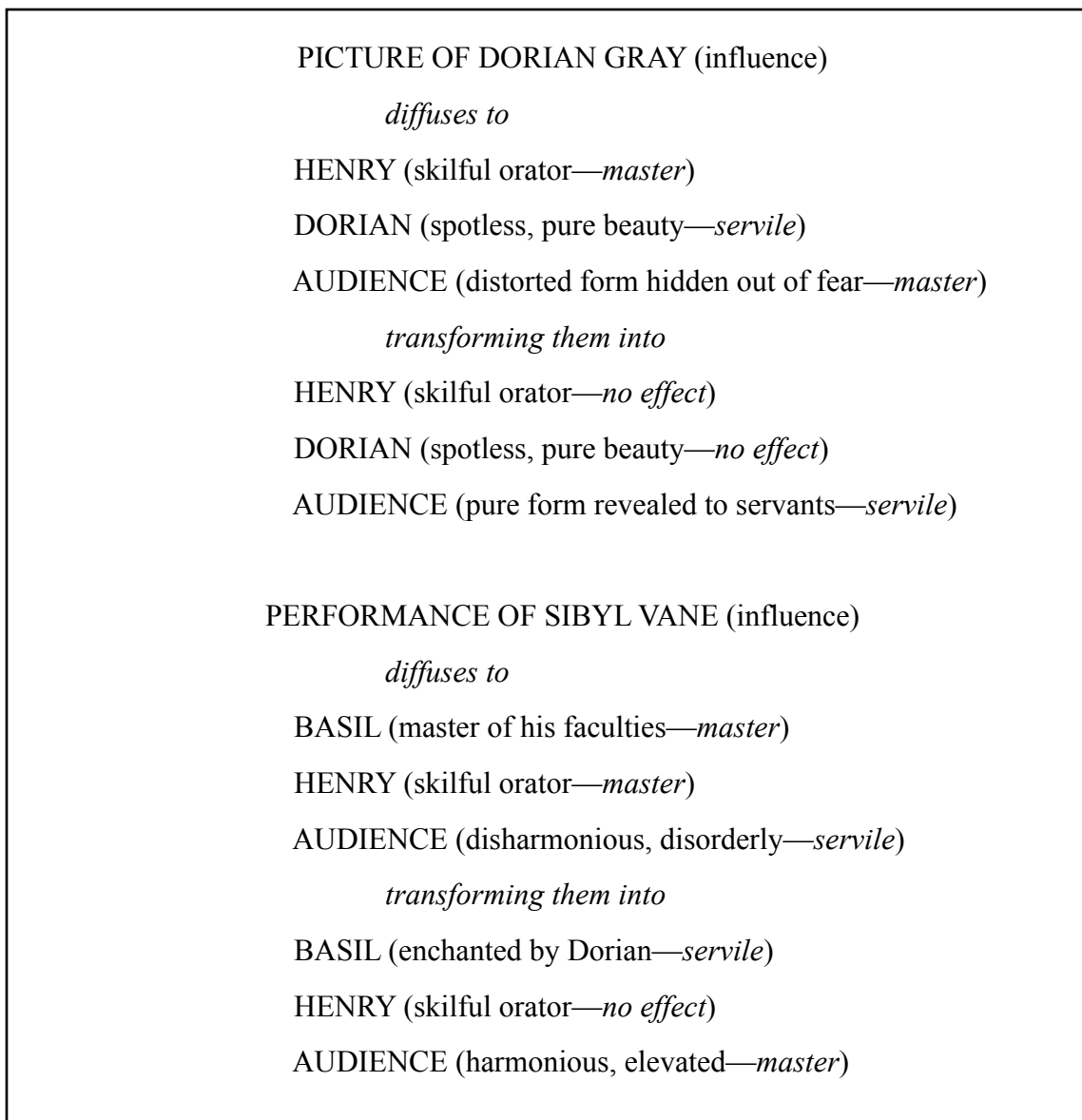


Figure 8: Phenomenology of artificial influences in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

3.4. Impressionism and temporality

Basil wants to exhibit his painting in a leading impressionist gallery in Paris. The painting keeping the secret of Dorian's life is part of the impressionist movement. Basil wants to exhibit it in George Petit's gallery, which was founded in 1882. Petit's gallery was famous for its association with French Impressionist painters. "Georges Petit is going to collect all my best pictures for a special exhibition in the Rue de Seze," Basil informs Dorian: "the portrait will only be away a month. I should think you could easily spare it for that time."

An important characteristic of impressionist paintings is their emphasis on movement. A similar emphasis defines Dorian's portrait as well. The first impressionist paintings were influenced by the unconventional frame compositions of Japanese artists; the first pages of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* mention Japanese artists as well. Impressionist paintings often focus on the perceptions of their subjects; Dorian's portrait becomes for him "the visible emblem of conscience".

It is Victor, his valet, who first sees Dorian's "altered" self. Creeping "several times on tiptoe into the room to see if he was stirring" Victor wonders "what made his young master sleep so late."⁷⁴ Victor's name is almost identical to Henry's wife, Victoria; Victor's influence on Dorian is also similar to that of a wife. As master of the house Dorian is suspicious of Victor but he also needs him.

The young master takes pleasure in the "warm air seemed laden with spices." As he enjoys the comfort of his library, "a bee flew in, and buzzed around the blue-dragon bowl that, filled with sulphur-yellow roses, stood before him." After the entrance of the

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

bee Dorian's eye falls "on the screen that he had placed in front of the portrait". This leads him to wonder whether "a painted canvas could" alter or not.⁷⁵

Dorian is afraid to be left alone (he "almost dreaded his valet leaving the room"). Had Victor left him Dorian "would have to examine the portrait"; his butler usurps his ability to view the painting concealing his secret. Nevertheless Dorian does not ask Victor (who stands "waiting for his orders") to remain in the room. Instead he becomes an absence: he wants Victor to announce his absence to the guests ("I am not at home to any one, Victor").

After Victor bows and retires from the room, Dorian draws the screen aside, seeing "himself face to face. It was perfectly true. The portrait had altered." He analyses the canvas "with a feeling of almost scientific interest". Henry had believed that analysing Dorian and his own subjectivity were interrelated acts and were scientific experiments. Dorian also becomes a scientific observer of his transformation. Dorian uses the artistic surface of his painting observe his alterations. In Henry's experiment Dorian had played the same role: for Dorian the painting replaces "the other".

He wonders whether there was some "subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into forms and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him".⁷⁶ Dorian eventually decides to accept the painting as a guide. He expects the painting to assist him throughout his life. The painting would be "what holiness is to some, and conscience to others, and the fear of God to us all." As a "visible symbol of the degradation of sin" the painting would be an "ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls". The canvas embodies the process of moral degradation inherent to the notion of Catholic sin.

Thanks to this religious turn, the text associates two seemingly different value systems with each other. The aesthetics of an impressionist painting is associated with

⁷⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 80.

⁷⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 81.

the religious process of sin and salvation. Analysing his subjectivity in religious terms Dorian experiences what the narrator describes as a “luxury” of the transformative progress: the luxury of self-reproach (“When we blame ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution”). The process of confession defines its form: likewise, the form of Dorian’s portrait alters in relation to the alterations of its subject. Dorian’s painting has a confessional form: it accommodates the processes of sin and confession.

After this religious experience Dorian locks himself up into his room. Henry’s voice comes from outside and is reminiscent of Utterson’s call to Jekyll. Nevertheless, Dorian’s self-annihilation takes place in a library rather than a laboratory. Henry knocks the door in order to be let in as he cannot bear him “shutting yourself up like this.” Drawing the screen “hastily across the picture” Dorian unlocks the door. Before he learns about Sibyl’s self-annihilation, Dorian mentions how Henry cuts “life to pieces” with his epigrams. Under Henry’s masterly grasp he tries imitating his speech and intonation. This moment comes to an abrupt end with Henry’s taking “both his hands in his own.”⁷⁷ Holding them tightly Henry informs him of Sibyl’s suicide. This causes “a cry of pain broke from the lad’s lips, and he leaped to his feet, tearing his hands away from Lord Henry’s grasp.”

Like Utterson before him, Henry is worried about the name of his friend being implicated in a court of law. Dorian “must not be mixed up” in the inquest and he has to be an absence (“I suppose they don’t know your name at the theatre?”).

After Dorian’s acknowledgment of Sibyl’s annihilation, Henry gives a lengthy sermon about women, describing them in terms of masters and slaves (“We have emancipated them, but they remain slaves looking for their masters, all the same”). Sibyl had been nothing but “a dream, a phantom that flitted through Shakespeare’s plays

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

and left them lovelier for its presence.” Neither male nor female “it” plays a genderless role on which a performer can subject his character.

Henry continues his pontifications, opining that Sibyl’s death actually provides the beginning point of their friendship. Having annihilated Sibyl, Dorian is ready to have his mastery affirmed. Because of this new role Dorian’s attitude towards Victor alters. Rather than needing his company Dorian waits “impatiently for him to go” but “the man seemed to take an interminable time over everything.” Dorian’s earlier solidarity with Victor, and the assurance and comfort provided by him, becomes history as Dorian turns paranoid and hateful in his presence.

Dorian identifies a “horrible sympathy” between “him and picture” and looks for ways to destroy this bond. Nevertheless he is confused about the cause of this bond that he plans to annihilate.

Besides, was it really under his control? Had it indeed been prayer that had produced the substitution? Might there not be some curious scientific reason for it all? If thought could exercise its influence upon a living organism, might not thought exercise an influence upon dead and inorganic things?

This partly explains the religious turn in Dorian’s self-analysis. Dorian’s prayer after seeing Basil’s painting had been accepted; Dorian wants to analyse the religious nature of this prayer. He questions whether it might actually be a scientific transformation and concludes that in either case influence lies at the heart of his alterations. He decides to be a master of his life, promising to live “like the gods of the Greeks”, being “strong, and fleet, and joyous.”

Dorian is empowered by his resolutions and talks to Basil as a different man. According to his new philosophy, appearances are superior to essences. Objects and subjects attain their properties as a result of the enunciation of their names (“if one

doesn't talk about a thing, it has never happened. It is simply expression, as Harry says, that gives reality to things"⁷⁸). Thanks to his self-assurance Dorian can master his faculties ("a man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure"⁷⁹). Rather than being "at the mercy of my emotions" he wants to "use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them."

With these resolutions Dorian removes the boundary in between reality and representation. Sibyl had merely "passed again into the sphere of art". In order to overcome the overbearing feeling of self-defeat, one has to see things "from a proper artistic point of view." Dorian mentions Théophile Gautier, reminding Basil of "la consolation des arts" which plays a vital role for him as the painting represents both his subjectivity and his "other".

Dorian believes that Basil failed to identify his transformations after completing his painting of him ("You have not realised how I have developed. I was a schoolboy when you knew me. I am a man now"⁸⁰). He had developed "new passions, new thoughts, new ideas" and became a different man. Basil must accept him as he is ("I am changed, but you must always be my friend"). But Basil is worried for Dorian's name which he fears might be associated with the terrible scandal surrounding Sibyl's death ("I only trust your name won't be mentioned in connection with it. The inquest is to take place this afternoon. Have they summoned you?") The pronouncement of the word "inquest" is enough to annoy Dorian. He distances himself from the incident, saying he has nothing worry about ("they don't know my name"⁸¹).

After their discussion Basil desires to see his painting. Because he decided to exhibit in Paris, Basil asks Dorian to take "the screen away". He scrutinises Dorian for

⁷⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 90.

⁷⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 91.

⁸⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 92.

⁸¹ **Ibid.**, p. 93.

concealing it with his servant (“It is simply disgraceful of your servant hiding my work like that”). But Dorian is infuriated: it is himself who concealed the picture, not his servant. He reminds Basil that he is the master of the house (“my servant has nothing to do with it, Basil. You don’t imagine I let him arrange my room for me? He settles my flowers for me sometimes—that is all”) and not one of its servants.

Basil’s moment of artistic “coming out” is interrupted by Dorian’s impersonation of Henry’s masterful rhetoric. In order to stop the circulation of his portrait in Petit’s gallery Dorian questions Basil about his previous reluctance to exhibit the painting. This is followed by Basil’s confession of his love for Dorian.

Dorian, from the moment I met you, your personality had the most extraordinary influence over me. I was dominated, soul, brain, and power, by you. You became to me the visible incarnation of that unseen ideal whose memory haunts us artists like an exquisite dream. I worshipped you. I grew jealous of every one to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself. I was only happy when I was with you. When you were away from me, you were still present in my art.⁸²

Basil confesses to being dominated by his subject. He accepts the co-existence of Dorian’s domination and presence in his work. Basil fears that being dominated by a presence on the canvas can be his undoing. He affirms his authorial presence in the painting by trying to hang it on the walls of one of the most prestigious galleries in Paris. Because he had “told too much” and “put too much of myself into it” Basil fears the painting to exhibit not only its subject but its author as well (“I had been foolish imagining that I had seen anything in it, more than that you were extremely-good looking and that I couldn’t paint”). Once the painting becomes an absence for its author (“the thing left my studio, and as soon as I had got rid of the intolerable fascination of its

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

presence”⁸³) the anxiety of authorial presence raised in the moment of composition dissolves into the subject of the painting. Basil had struggled to overcome the influence which dominated him; now he affirms the intermingling of beauty and its expression in the portrait. He decides to classify it as an object of art, rather than a confession bearing his signature.

Feeling pity for the “painter who had just made this strange confession to him,” Dorian wonders if he himself “would ever be so dominated by the personality of a friend.” He admits that “Lord Henry had the charm of being very dangerous” while also underplaying his role (“he was too clever and too cynical to be really fond of”). In fact, Henry had become part of Dorian: it is impossible to distinguish Dorian’s subjectivity from the discourse which defines, classifies and objectifies him.

Basil’s attitude towards Dorian’s beauty is a form of idolatry. Dorian’s attitude towards Victor, on the other hand, is far from idolatrous; during his encounters with his servant Dorian becomes increasingly more cautious.

When his servant entered, he looked at him steadfastly and wondered if he had thought of peering behind the screen. The man was quite impassive and waited for his orders. Dorian lit a cigarette and walked over to the glass and glanced into it. He could see the reflection of Victor's face perfectly. It was like a placid mask of servility. There was nothing to be afraid of, there. Yet he thought it best to be on his guard.⁸⁴

Dorian had succeeded in protecting the painting from its creator. Now he is worried about the servile gaze which can discern his own idolatry of Henry’s rhetoric. Seeing the reflection of Victor on the glass reminds Dorian of his servile position; wearing a “placid mask of servility” Victor is in fact Dorian’s double.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

Following this moment of intense self-scrutiny Dorian asks Mrs. Leaf, a maid in his house, for the key of the “old schoolroom”. Thanks to the genealogy of the room, crucial information about Dorian’s grandfather is revealed. The door had been locked following the death of the patriarchal master (“why, it hasn’t been opened for nearly five years, not since his lordship died”). In his new role as the master of the house Dorian wants to continue the tradition of patriarchy. The schoolroom had hitherto disguised Lord Kenso’s mastery; now it provides a stage for Dorian’s transformation (“what the worm was to the corpse, his sins would be to the painted image on the canvas”).

Thanks to the the historical quality of the schoolroom Dorian has a sense of historical inevitability. Basil could have “helped him to resist Lord Henry’s influence” but it is “too late now. The past could always be annihilated. Regret, denial, or forgetfulness could do that. But the future was inevitable.”⁸⁵ Having witnessed previous annihilations in his family, Dorian knows he cannot stop his transformation. He orders the painting to be removed to the schoolroom. He continues to be anxious about Victor (he “must be got rid of at once”).

He must not be allowed to know where the picture was being taken to. There was something sly about him, and he had thoughtful, treacherous eyes. Sitting down at the writing-table he scribbled a note to Lord Henry, asking him to send him round something to read and reminding him that they were to meet at eight-fifteen that evening.

The adjectives he uses to describe Victor (sly, treacherous) are in fact more suitable for Dorian. His profound distrust of Victor, whom he considers an inferior, resembles Lord Kelso’s distrust of his own character. Because of the distrustful gaze of the master the servant is led into treachery as Dorian knows only too well.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

The schoolroom where Dorian conceals the painting is a deeply private space. Dorian had not entered it for more than four years (“not, indeed, since he had used it first as a play-room when he was a child, and then as a study when he grew somewhat older”⁸⁶); when he opens its door memories associated with this space immediately return to his mind. It is a large and well-proportioned room “specially built by the last Lord Kelso for the use of the little grandson whom, for his strange likeness to his mother, and also for other reasons, he had always hated and desired to keep at a distance.”

The schoolroom where Dorian confines his portrait is specifically designed to creating distances between a master and a servant. The lord’s grudge against his grandson had resulted in the production of this space. The room features a “huge Italian cassone, with its fantastically painted panels and its tarnished gilt mouldings, in which he had so often hidden himself as a boy.” Dorian recalls moments of his lonely childhood, remembering the “stainless purity of his boyish life”.

The history of Dorian’s schoolroom clarifies its political function: it is a space where the underpowered servant can reinvent himself, participating in the struggle for mastery. This struggle demands the existence of such a space where the servant can conceal himself before taking part in the phenomenological movement.

Dorian inherits Henry’s role of mastery and externalises his previous servile role. Like Henry he now has the privilege role of an observer:

No; that was impossible. Hour by hour, and week by week, the thing upon the canvas was growing old. It might escape the hideousness of sin, but the hideousness of age was in store for it. The cheeks would become hollow or flaccid. Yellow crow’s feet would creep round the fading eyes and make them horrible. The hair would lose its brightness, the mouth would gape or droop, would be foolish or gross, as the mouths of old men are. There would be the wrinkled throat, the cold, blue-veined hands, the twisted body, that he

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

remembered in the grandfather who had been so stern to him in his boyhood. The picture had to be concealed. There was no help for it.⁸⁷

Dorian locks the door, making sure that “no eye but his would ever see his shame.” Once it is concealed the picture becomes an absence which Dorian fears Victor will recognise (“he would be sure to miss the picture—had no doubt missed it already, while he had been laying the tea-things”). Removed from the wall it is replaced by “a blank space” that is “visible on the wall.” Dorian imagines Victor creeping upstairs in order to try “to force the door of the room” and fears having

a spy in one’s house. He had heard of rich men who had been blackmailed all their lives by some servant who had read a letter, or overheard a conversation, or picked up a card with an address, or found beneath a pillow a withered flower or a shred of crumpled lace.⁸⁸

The withered flower resembles Sibyl’s annihilation, it is a composite image bringing Dorian’s fears together. Dorian had identified Victor as a sly character, with the potential of spying on and blackmailing him. When Henry sends him a clipping taken from a recent issue of *St. James’s Gazette*, Dorian fears being found out by Victor. Henry’s red pencil-mark points to an article about the inquest held on the body of Sibyl Vane and the post-mortem examination. Dorian knows that Victor’s language skills can lead to the recognition of his crimes (“Victor might have read it. The man knew more than enough English for that”).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Henry gives Dorian a number of artifices to assist him in achieving mastery. “The poisonous book” is his first gift and it reveals to Dorian things he had never dreamed of. A novel without a plot the book is

simply a psychological study of a certain young Parisian who spent his life trying to realise in the nineteenth century all the passions and modes of thought that belonged to every century except his own, and to sum up, as it were, in himself the various moods through which the world-spirit had ever passed, loving for their mere artificiality those renunciations that men have unwisely called virtue, as much as those natural rebellions that wise men still call sin.⁸⁹

The introduction of the poisonous book changes the style of the narrative. The impressionist style introduced by the book mimics the objects it describes: while adding them to Dorian’s character the impressionist style grasps the styles of the objects it describes. Anticipating the protean nature of Joyce’s **Ulysses**, the text mimics the style of its subject matter:

The style in which it was written was that curious jewelled style, vivid and obscure at once, full of argot and of archaisms, of technical expressions and of elaborate paraphrases, that characterises the work of some of the finest artists of the French school of Symbolistes.⁹⁰

The protagonist of **Against Nature** is Des Esseintes. In the course of the narrative he undergoes numerous transformations. At the hands of artifices he embodies numerous cultural influences, idolising objects in his collection. The poisonous book, which describes his adventures, becomes a substitute for the reality outside the borders

⁸⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 104.

⁹⁰ **Ibid.**

of Dorian's house. The book plays a consoling role, recreating the reality in its own image ("The mere cadence of the sentences, the subtle monotony of their music, so full as it was of complex refrains and movements elaborately repeated, produced in the mind of the lad, as he passed from chapter to chapter, a form of reverie, a malady of dreaming, that made him unconscious of the falling day and creeping shadows").

Dorian confesses that he was "fascinated" by the book. Thanks to its influence he loses control of his subjectivity ("the changing fancies of a nature over which he seemed, at times, to have almost entirely lost control"), becoming subservient to the transformations described in it. Dorian gradually achieves the role of a master ("For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he never sought to free himself from it"⁹¹). The protagonist of the poisonous book is described blending romantic and scientific temperaments in his character. He becomes for Dorian "a kind of prefiguring type of himself." His reading of the book produces an alternate, artificial representation of his own subjectivity. Because this new figure is placed on a temporal plane Dorian can discern his subjectivity on its surface.

To Dorian's mind the poisonous book illustrates his own life ("the whole book seemed to him to contain the story of his own life, written before he had lived it"). The book and the objects which he comes to appreciate because of it become substitutes of the process of mastery.

Dorian manages to preserve "the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world" but his name becomes an echo of the painting. It is disfigured, increasingly stained during the process of his transformation. Dorian's presence inspires silence while his absence inspires rumours ("Men who talked grossly became silent

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

when Dorian Gray entered the room... His mere presence seemed to recall to them the memory of the innocence that they had tarnished”⁹²).

When Dorian analyses the alterations in the painting he distinguishes two alternate visions of his subjectivity. There is the “portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and ageing face on the canvas” and a second image constituted by the mirror he holds in front of the painting. Thanks to the mirror he sees “the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass.”

Around the heavy sensual mouth he identifies “hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead”: he associates this with Basil’s servitude. His servitude must be replaced by the masterful image reflected on Henry’s oval glass.

The realm of the senses becomes Dorian’s interest. Senses have “remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain”; he wants to make them elements of a new spirituality “of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic.”⁹³ He subjects history to a detailed analysis, being haunted by a feeling of loss because of the sheer number of things surrendered (“there had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape”). Instead of self-denials Dorian believes in the importance of “a new Hedonism that was to recreate life.”

Passages that describe details of this new Hedonism imitate the style of Walter Pater’s **The Renaissance**. That book’s influence on **The Picture of Dorian Gray** is comparable to Henry’s influence on Dorian’s character.

Dorian’s considers new Hedonism as a system which never “accept(s) any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience”. This

⁹² **Ibid.**, p. 106.

⁹³ **Ibid.**, p. 108.

is a clear reference to Pater's famous comment about Hegelianism in his conclusion to **The Renaissance**. The aim of Dorian's new Hedonism is "to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be". Similarly, Pater writes about the importance of burning "always with this hard, gem-like flame", concluding that maintaining "this ecstasy, is success in life". What we have to do is

to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy, of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. "Philosophy is the microscope of thought." The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.⁹⁴

Pater had been identified as one of Oxford's Hegelian professors.⁹⁵ Nevertheless he perceives Hegelianism as an orthodoxy; in order to establish self-mastery one has to resist its influence. In Oxford "an impressive number of translations and commentaries on central German works, as well as British Idealist works themselves" were produced by Hegelians; Pater acknowledges the importance of Hegel's phenomenology as a struggle for public and private mastery. Nevertheless he is anxious about its turning into an orthodoxy. Dorian also opposes any theory or system that demands acts of sacrifice.

He begins to search for "sensations that would be at once new and delightful, and possess that element of strangeness that is so essential to romance." He admits that they were "really alien to his nature" but still adopts one "mode of thought" after another before finally abandoning "himself to their subtle influences." When he catches "their

⁹⁴ Walter Pater, **The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry : the 1893 Text**, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1980, p. 189.

⁹⁵ Kit Andrews, **Walter Pater as Oxford Hegelian: Plato and Platonism and T. H. Green's Prolegomena to Ethics**, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 72, Number 3, July 2011, p. 437-459.

colour”, satisfying his “intellectual curiosity”, Dorian “leaves them with that curious indifference that is not incompatible with a real ardour of temperament, and that, indeed, according to certain modern psychologists, is often a condition of it.”⁹⁶

Dorian leaves those influences with an indifference comparable to the one he employed while abandoning Sibyl. During his transformations Dorian is seen as submitting to perverse influences. This perception leads to rumours about Dorian joining “the Roman Catholic communion.” He takes pleasure in kneeling “down on the cold marble pavement”, watching “the priest, in his stiff flowered dalmatic, slowly and with white hands moving aside the veil of the tabernacle.” The role of a servile believer suits him.

All the influences Dorian experiences eventually leave him. They do not culminate in the production of a solid ideology. Dorian never falls

into the error of arresting his intellectual development by any formal acceptance of creed or system, or of mistaking, for a house in which to live an inn that is but suitable for the sojourn of a night, or for a few hours of a night in which there are no stars and the moon is in travail.⁹⁷

Dorian retains his mobility and never settling in for a definitive influence he sustains his mastery. In one season he inclines towards the “materialistic doctrines of the Darwinismus movement in Germany”; during another he is immersed in perfumes. In another season he devotes himself “entirely to music”; his soul is stirred by notes of Chopin and Schubert and with the “shrill discords” of their “barbaric music”.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Dorian imitates Lord Henry. He had dominated his subjects by reducing them to instruments on which he can exercise his influence; Dorian, too, finds “a curious delight in the thought that art, like Nature, has her monsters, things of bestial shape and with hideous voices.”

Dorian becomes notorious for his experiments; his general absence from society as well as his unexpected presences in prestigious clubs unsettle the class of Victorian gentlemen to which he belongs (“very nearly blackballed at a West End club of which his birth and social position fully entitled him to become a member”). Dorian’s notoriety is largely due to his unstable nature: it is difficult for his observers to understand whether he is absent or present in a given situation (“his extraordinary absences became notorious, and, when he used to reappear again in society, men would whisper to each other in corners, or pass him with a sneer, or look at him with cold searching eyes, as though they were determined to discover his secret”⁹⁹).

After the description of Dorian’s influences, the narrator uses the first-person singular nominative case personal pronoun for the first and only time in the narrative. Like Dorian, the narrator echoes the rhetoric of Henry (“is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which he can multiple our personalities”¹⁰⁰). The focus then shifts to Dorian (“such, at any rate, was Dorian Gray’s opinion”) but the trace of the personal pronoun had already unsettled the distance between the narrator and his subject.

Thanks to the narrator’s interference **The Picture of Dorian Gray** begins to imitate Basil’s painting. The ontological distance between the depicting and the depicted, between form and subject, are unsettled. The signature of the author diffuses into the subjects it depicts. During his trials Wilde had been questioned about passages from **The Picture of Dorian Gray** which the prosecutor believed revealed his sexuality.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Dorian is disturbed by "the shallow psychology of those who conceive the ego in man as a thing simple, permanent, reliable, and of one essence." According to the narrator human character is a construction "with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead." The narrative describes its subjects from a distance and this distance itself becomes an internal problem of the text. The subject unsettles the narrator that describes him, refuting the detached role of the narrator. Like Basil, the unnamed narrator fails to distinguish itself from its subject.

Dorian strolls through the picture-gallery of his country house, acknowledging his kinship with "various portraits of those whose blood flowed in his veins." The portraits of his ancestors attest to their privileged positions. Dorian contextualises his transformations, seeing it as a historical phenomenon. He acknowledges that he "had ancestors in literature as well as in one's own race". Thanks to this perspective the whole of history seems to him to be

merely the record of his own life, not as he had lived it in act and circumstance, but as his imagination had created it for him, as it had been in his brain and in his passions. He felt that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous and evil so full of subtlety. It seemed to him that in some mysterious way their lives had been his own.¹⁰¹

Like the painting, the poisonous book and other cultural artifices who assist Dorian in his struggle for mastery, history also gains a personal dimension.

Having moved away from his previous existence Dorian cannot recognise Basil who comes to visit him at his house. It is revealed that his previous servant Victor had

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

left his staff (“he was not at all a bad servant. I never liked him, but I had nothing to complain about”¹⁰²) perhaps because of Dorian’s irritating behaviour. Victor had been a servant “really very devoted” to Dorian. He is annihilated for his involvement in finding his master out. An absence in public life Dorian becomes invisible in the eyes of his servant. Basil struggles to keep his friend’s name out of rumours and notoriety (“I think it right that you should know that the most dreadful things are being said against you in London... They must interest you, Dorian. Every gentleman is interested in his good name”¹⁰³) and is shocked to see his name so disfigured that he can’t recognise (“Your name happened to come up in conversation, in connection with the miniatures you have lent to the exhibition at the Dudley... Your name was implicated in the most terrible confession I ever read”).¹⁰⁴

In an effort to save Dorian’s name from infamy, Basil demands to see his soul (“I wonder do I know you? Before I could answer that, I should have to see your soul”). But Dorian who had already destroyed Victor has to get rid of him: his decision is due to “the madness of pride in every word he uttered”. Stamping his foot “upon the ground in his boyish insolent manner” Dorian enjoys sharing his secret with the artist who produced it (“the man who had painted the portrait that was the origin of all his shame was to be burdened for the rest of his life with the hideous memory of what he had done”). Basil plays the role of an inquisitor (“You must give me some answer to these horrible charges that are made against you”) as well as a priest trying to exorcise his sins (“deny them, Dorian, deny them! Can't you see what I am going through? My God! don't tell me that you are bad, and corrupt, and shameful”).

¹⁰² **Ibid.**, p. 125.

¹⁰³ **Ibid.**, p. 126.

¹⁰⁴ **Ibid.**

Like Lanyon before him, Basil becomes a witness to the transformations that alter the object of his interest. When Dorian pushes away the curtain to reveal the painting

an exclamation of horror broke from the painter's lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing. Good heavens! it was Dorian Gray's own face that he was looking at!¹⁰⁵

Analysing the painting Basil realises the marvellous beauty of his subject matter had not been entirely spoiled (“there was still some gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth”). His sodden eyes kept “something of the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet completely passed away from chiselled nostrils and from plastic throat.” Although with difficulty he manages to identifying the subject as Dorian. Nevertheless he cannot identify the author (“But who had done it? He seemed to recognise his own brushwork, and the frame was his own design”). He seizes the candle, bringing it to the picture to study its lines. The picture bears his signature; the only name with which it can be associated is his (“in the left-hand corner was his own name, traced in long letters of bright vermilion”).

The painting seems to him like some “foul parody, some infamous ignoble satire”. He refuses to having authored it (“he had never done that”). Nevertheless it belongs to him (“still, it was his own picture. He knew it, and he felt as if his blood had changed in a moment from fire to sluggish ice. His own picture!”). It is the portrait of Dorian Gray and the picture of Basil Hallward.

Thanks to his mastery over Dorian’s portrait, Basil can produce the mysterious picture that represents temporality on a spatial medium. Basil finds it difficult to believe

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

in his achievement (“What did it mean? Why had it altered?”). His mouth twitches, “his parched tongue seemed unable to articulate”. He becomes a “sick man”.

Thanks to his observing role Basil becomes an actor while Dorian turns into his spectator (“the young man was leaning against the mantelshelf, watching him with that strange expression that one sees on the faces of those who are absorbed in a play when some great artist is acting”). Dorian has “a flicker of triumph” in his eyes. With “the passion of the spectator” he brings the flower out of his coat and smells it.¹⁰⁶

Basil had treated his painting as a relic. He asks Dorian to kneel and pray with him in front of his work (“it is never too late, Dorian. Let us kneel down and try if we cannot remember a prayer”¹⁰⁷). His push for a confession from Dorian is also a call for self-recognition. Dorian shows little interest in accepting the responsibility which comes with acknowledging his involvement in practices recorded in the painting.

After stabbing Basil, Dorian becomes a slave of his fears about being found out. He is worried about both public (“he looked down and saw the policeman going his rounds and flashing the long beam of his lantern on the doors of the silent houses”¹⁰⁸) and private threats posed to his security (“he remembered the lamp. It was a rather curious one of Moorish workmanship, made of dull silver inlaid with arabesques of burnished steel, and studded with coarse turquoises. Perhaps it might be missed by his servant, and questions would be asked”). Like a police inspector Dorian considers the facts of the case, realising that the servants had been absent from the scene. Basil’s supposed absence from England is also a factor that works to his advantage. The sole evidence that might implicate him in the case would be his presence. In the absence of Basil and the servants, however, Dorian’s presence is impossible to prove:

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

what evidence was there against him? Basil Hallward had left the house at eleven. No one had seen him come in again. Most of the servants were at Selby Royal. His valet had gone to bed.... Paris! Yes. It was to Paris that Basil had gone, and by the midnight train, as he had intended.¹⁰⁹

Like Jekyll before him, Dorian writes two letters after his transformations. He motioning to his valet to wait while he writes those letters, putting one of them in his pocket while “the other he handed to the valet.” Once he is alone, Dorian begins to sketch “upon a piece of paper, drawing first flowers, and bits of architecture, and then human faces. Suddenly he remarked that every face that he drew seemed to have a fantastic likeness to Basil Hallward.”

Shortly after murdering Basil, Dorian becomes a painter. Although he does not possess the power necessary to destroy Henry, he kills Basil, an inferior figure. Dorian’s drawings of flowers and the face of the painter point to a change of roles in the text: it is now the subject who dictates the terms. Dorian is so empowered that he goes so far as to annihilate the author who represented him.

Dorian owns a Japanese-paper edition of Gautier’s **Emaux et Camées (Enamels and Cameos)**. While reading the book his eye falls “on the poem about the hand of Lacenaire, the cold yellow hand ‘du supplice encore mal lavée,’¹¹⁰ with its downy red hairs and its ‘doigts de faune’”. He glances “at his own white taper fingers” and shudders¹¹¹. In the poem, Gautier reflects on the hand of the murderer Lacenaire; Gautier’s reflections on the murderous hand leads to his interest in his own hands and Dorian begins to paint images of Basil and flowers.

¹⁰⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 134.

¹¹⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 136.

¹¹¹ **Ibid.**, p. 137.

Dorian needs assistance from a scientist whose skills and expertise are necessary to destroy Basil's body. He calls an old friend, Alan Campbell: a man whose "dominant intellectual passion was for science". Despite the wishes of his mother, who wanted him to stand for Parliament, Campbell had become a chemist. He is "an excellent musician" who plays "both the violin and the piano better than most amateurs." Campbell represents a slightly altered, more servile, earnest and scientific-minded version of Dorian ("it was music that had first brought him and Dorian Gray together—music and that indefinable attraction that Dorian seemed to be able to exercise whenever he wished"). Like Dorian, Campbell is also a man of experiments ("Every day he seemed to become more interested in biology, and his name appeared once or twice in some of the scientific reviews in connection with certain curious experiments"¹¹²). Since their falling out some time ago (as Lanyon and Jekyll did over a disagreement on the proper method of scientific experimentation) Campbell had never entered Dorian's house. When Dorian instructs him to participate in a scientific experiment ("destroy the thing that is upstairs"¹¹³) Campbell considers it to be a murderous act. But one man's murder is another's scientific experiment. Refusing to comply with Dorian's requests Campbell becomes subject to blackmail. His old friend stretches "out his hand, took a piece of paper, and wrote something on it. He read it over twice, folded it carefully, and pushed it across the table."

The undisclosed piece of information on the paper might associate Campbell with acts that "dare not speak its name". As a result of his blackmailing, Dorian begins to dictate his terms to Campbell ("You were stern, harsh, offensive. You treated me as no man has ever dared to treat me—no living man, at any rate. I bore it all. Now it is for me to dictate terms"¹¹⁴). He takes so much pleasure from dictating terms that Dorian repeats the phrase a second time ("Yes, it is my turn to dictate terms, Alan"). Having forced both

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

Campbell and his servants into surrender to his influence, Dorian receives their assistance (“the servant entered, carrying a large mahogany chest of chemicals”¹¹⁵).

The name of the new servant, Francis, is finally revealed when Dorian sends him away to buy some orchids. His absence is necessary for Campbell to irreversibly turn the painter into an absence (“you must go down to Richmond at once, see Harden personally, and tell him to send twice as many orchids as I ordered, and to have as few white ones as possible”). Once Francis is gone, Dorian becomes an even more domineering figure, beginning to speak “rapidly, and in an authoritative manner. Campbell felt dominated by him.”

Moments after turning Basil into an absence (“the thing that had been sitting at the table was gone”¹¹⁶) Dorian appears in an evening matinee in Lady Narborough’s mansion where his presence is seen as as something of a curiosity. To those who surround him Dorian seems very comfortable. Having grasped Basil’s role of a performer, he is no longer a spectator (“perhaps one never seems so much at one’s ease as when one has to play a part. . . He himself could not help wondering at the calm of his demeanour, and for a moment felt keenly the terrible pleasure of a double life”¹¹⁷). Because his mastery is confirmed after Basil’s annihilation, Dorian can enjoy the kind of excessive lifestyle praised by Henry (“enough is as bad as a meal. More than enough is as good as a feast”¹¹⁸).

When questioned by Henry about how he spent the previous evening Dorian becomes anxious, offering unnecessary and unasked details about his absence (“I had left my latch-key at home, and my servant had to let me in. If you want any corroborative evidence on the subject, you can ask him”¹¹⁹). Henry shows no interest in those details:

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

he finds them tiresome, instead speaking about his failure to recognize Dorian (“tell me what it is. You are not yourself to-night”). Attempting to come to terms with his actions, Dorian likens Basil to an “adder” which needs to be crushed because of its disastrous influence (“to forget, to stamp the thing out, to crush it as one would crush the adder that had stung one”). Dorian is offended by Basil’s juridical role (“indeed, what right had Basil to have spoken to him as he had done? Who had made him a judge over others?”) but thanks to its findings also identifies the circular shape of passion.

It is said that passion makes one think in a circle. Certainly with hideous iteration the bitten lips of Dorian Gray shaped and reshaped those subtle words that dealt with soul and sense, till he had found in them the full expression, as it were, of his mood, and justified, by intellectual approval, passions that without such justification would still have dominated his temper.¹²⁰

Dorian’s painting is locked up in the schoolroom and continues to record his temporality. Unlike his earlier demand for oratory from Henry, Dorian demands nothing besides silence in his new role. Talking to a woman with a “crooked smile, like a Malay crease, writhed across the face”, he stamps “his foot on the ground,” demanding her to never talk to him again. Silence helps Dorian focus on the nature of his transformations.

There are moments, psychologists tell us, when the passion for sin, or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with fearful impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automatons move. Choice is taken from them, and conscience is either killed, or, if it lives at all, lives but to give rebellion its fascination and disobedience its charm. For all sins, as theologians weary not of reminding us, are sins of disobedience. When that high spirit, that morning star of evil, fell from heaven, it was as a rebel that he fell.¹²¹

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

The narrator cites “psychologists” as the source for his observations. Considered alongside what he previously described as the circular nature of passion (“it is said that passion makes one think in a circle”), the definition brings together religion and science. As a result of his passion for sin, Dorian loses the freedom of his will. Without his freedom he is led into disobedience. At the centre of his alterations lies the pleasure Dorian gathers from disobedience.

Dorian obeys the influence of Henry while at the same time disobeying it. Dorian interprets the Hegelian interaction in between disobedience (mastery) and obedience (servitude) as part of a circular motion.

“Seized from behind” by Sibyl’s brother James, Dorian turns into a defenceless man who is unable to utter a word. James recognises him by the pet name Sibyl had used to call him; it is Dorian’s name, and not visual appearance, which leads James into recognising him. James cannot force him into confessing his sins, recognising that Dorian has the face of a sixteen year old. Nevertheless a prostitute informs him about Dorian’s condition (“they say he has sold himself to the devil for a pretty face. It's nigh on eighteen years since I met him. He hasn't changed much since then. I have, though”¹²²). Dorian is a temporal phenomenon unidentifiable by those insufficiently acquainted with its manifestations.

The power to dominate subjects brings with it the privilege of naming things. In the seventeenth chapter, for example, Henry jokes about his plan “for rechristening everything”¹²³. Hearing of these plans, the Duchess of Monmouth demands to keep her name (“I am quite satisfied with my own name, and I am sure Mr. Gray should be satisfied with his”). Henry protests about being misunderstood: he does not want to change the name of humans, but only of flowers.

¹²² **Ibid.**, p. 160.

¹²³ **Ibid.**

My dear Gladys, I would not alter either name for the world. They are both perfect. I was thinking chiefly of flowers. Yesterday I cut an orchid, for my button-hole. It was a marvellous spotted thing, as effective as the seven deadly sins. In a thoughtless moment I asked one of the gardeners what it was called. He told me it was a fine specimen of Robinsoniana, or something dreadful of that kind. It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words. That is the reason I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for.¹²⁴

According to Henry's theory, literature must exercise a masterly role in its relationship with reality. One needs to acknowledge his passions by being obedient to them; likewise impressionism in literature demands from its practitioner a certain irreverence about refusing to name the thing that dares not speak its name. Instead it should be embraced as part of a new literary style. Through obedience to the demands of a complicated reality, impressionist literature can dominate its texture.

Henry refuses to label things but he also retains the privilege of renaming them. He refuses Dorian's suggestion to rename him as "Prince Paradox", categorically denying the idea of labelling one's character ("From a label there is no escape! I refuse the title"). He argues that respectability is a nominal matter: all good reputations are like "good hats"—"made out of nothing" and easily disposable.¹²⁵ Life is only a collection of repetitions; provided that it is repeated one can enjoy anything. This is Henry's solution to suffering. The secret of life is to reproduce the one great experience in one's life "as often as possible".

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Dorian has a difficult time mastering the anxiety of being captured (“the consciousness of being hunted, snared, tracked down, had begun to dominate him”¹²⁶) which remains as the one inalterable threat to his security. Dorian tries to overcome it by subjecting morality to intellectual scrutiny (“in the common world of fact the wicked were not punished, nor the good rewarded. Success was given to the strong, failure thrust upon the weak. That was all”). He hopes to halt the disfigurement brought by the temporality of his transformation. By pure coincidence, James Vane gets shot during a hunt party. Thanks to this Dorian believes himself to be safe from all the threats to his security.

Henry believes Dorian still has a privileged status (“there is no one who would not be delighted to change places with you”¹²⁷) while Dorian is in fact annoyed by his infamy (“there is no one with whom I would not change places, Harry”). His concentration on self-development and self-mastery had become burdensome (“I am too much concentrated on myself. My own personality has become a burden to me. I want to escape, to go away, to forget”¹²⁸). The attempt to undo his self-mastery is a component of his subjectivity. Fleeing from any form of solid identity, Dorian constantly gathers new influences.

Dorian loses his ability to stand up and fails to retain his composure. He asks his friends to let him “lie down”, and writes notes to Lord Henry, asking “him to entertain his guests in his absence.” When he learns the identity of the visitor who had been shot, he goes to the Home Farm where “a spotted handkerchief had been placed over the face” of James. The moment of recognition is mediated by the presence of a servant taking the “spotted handkerchief” away from the face (“he felt that his could not be the hand to

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

take the handkerchief away, and called out to one of the farm-servants to come to him”¹²⁹).

Henry prays him to preserve his current self (“you are quite perfect. Pray, don’t change”) but Dorian knows this is an impossible demand. He had known “something of both” culture and corruption. He accepts that it is impossible to put an end to his alterations (“I am going to alter. I think I have altered”¹³⁰).

Henry reminds him of how “people are still discussing poor Basil’s disappearance.” Six weeks had passed (“my dear boy, they have only been talking about it for six weeks, and the British public are really not equal to the mental strain of having more than one topic every three months”¹³¹) during which time Victoria and Campbell both turned into absences (“they have been very fortunate lately, however. They have had my own divorce-case and Alan Campbell's suicide”). But it is the “mysterious disappearance of an artist” that keeps the society busiest. Annihilated by Dorian, Basil became a figure of absence for both English and French societies. As a French influenced English artist (“Scotland Yard still insists that the man in the grey ulster who left for Paris by the midnight train on the ninth of November was poor Basil, and the French police declare that Basil never arrived in Paris at all”) he had been a presence in both cultures where he turns into an absence.

Henry asks Dorian to play a nocturne for him. Like Campbell and Dorian, the man with whom his wife ran away is a musician who “played Chopin exquisitely.” Henry’s mastery is affirmed through the absence of Victoria (“Poor Victoria! I was very fond of her. The house is rather lonely without her”). Although Henry seems to finally acknowledge Dorian’s alterations (who has “changed, of course, but not in appearance”) his complete ignorance of it is shortly revealed.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Henry takes great delight in the music of Chopin. After all, his romanticism and “non-imitative” music correspond to Henry’s artistic theories (“it is marvellously romantic. What a blessing it is that there is one art left to us that is not imitative!”). Like a painting’s ability to bring together temporal influences on a spatial form, a piece of music can bind the spatial form of musical notation to its temporal execution by musicians.

During his final confrontation with Henry, Dorian listens to compliments about his passivity (“I am so glad that you have never done anything, never carved a statue, or painted a picture, or produced anything outside of yourself! Life has been your art”¹³²), surmising that throughout their relationship he has played the part of music for Henry (“you have set yourself to music. Your days are your sonnets”). Although Henry had defined him initially as an instrument, Dorian seems to have promoted to the role of music. Repeatedly stirred with Henry’s influence, he can be nothing but music.

Dorian continues to scold Henry for his role in poisoning him with a book. Heading to the schoolroom he becomes aware of his instrumental role. As an instrument of ideology he is indistinguishable from the music he involuntarily plays. Tired of “hearing his own name” Dorian doesn’t take pleasure in being “pointed out, or stared at, or talked about”. He takes refuge in the schoolroom where the “curiously carved mirror that Lord Henry had given to him, so many years ago now, was standing on the table, and the white-limbed Cupids laughed round it as of old”.

Dorian had initially identified a change in the lips of the painted subject. He identified this as the beginning of his alterations. Nevertheless, Dorian’s decision to put an end to the process is not caused by the painting. A phrase that appears in a letter he has received (“the curves of your lips rewrite history”) is the real cause of Dorian’s annihilation. Repeating it “over and over to himself” he begins to loathe his own beauty. He flings the mirror on the floor, crushing it “into silver splinters beneath his heel”. The

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

mirror had produced a representation of Dorian's subjectivity; after destroying it Dorian realizes that it "was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain".

Until his self-annihilation, Dorian remains a beautiful figure free of stain. His beauty is in fact a spatial mask concealing a temporal process beneath it. It is a fanciful, imaginative representation of reality; in contrast to , the truth the realist tradition aspires to represent is ugly and undesirable. Wilde's solution to this aesthetic problem is to reveal the tensions between two traditions whose demands for modernity are equally incomplete without the recognition of the other tradition.

Sibyl Vane, Basil Hallward, James Vane and Alan Campbell have been annihilated as an extension of Dorian's struggle for mastery. Dorian understands that their demise is an inevitable outcome of his engagement with the movement.

It was better not to think of the past. Nothing could alter that. It was of himself, and of his own future, that he had to think. James Vane was hidden in a nameless grave in Selby churchyard. Alan Campbell had shot himself one night in his laboratory, but had not revealed the secret that he had been forced to know. The excitement, such as it was, over Basil Hallward's disappearance would soon pass away. It was already waning. He was perfectly safe there. Nor, indeed, was it the death of Basil Hallward that weighed most upon his mind. It was the living death of his own soul that troubled him. Basil had painted the portrait that had marred his life. He could not forgive him that. It was the portrait that had done everything. Basil had said things to him that were unbearable, and that he had yet borne with patience. The murder had been simply the madness of a moment. As for Alan Campbell, his suicide had been his own act. He had chosen to do it. It was nothing to him.¹³³

He believes their deaths were nothing more than self-induced acts, completely unrelated to his agency. With Dorian's act of self-annihilation, the painting can also turn into an absence. By stabbing the painting, Dorian turns into an absence while the image emerges as a presence to those who did not previously have access to it. Dorian's death

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 181-182.

is accompanied by the emergence of a servant, similar to his introduction which had been announced by a butler.

Follows the stabbing a cry is heard which is “so horrible in its agony that the frightened servants woke and crept out of their rooms”. Two gentlemen siege Dorian’s now darkened house and they bring a police constable to the scene.

Inside, in the servants' part of the house, the half-clad domestics were talking in low whispers to each other. Old Mrs. Leaf was crying and wringing her hands. Francis was as pale as death. After about a quarter of an hour, he got the coachman and one of the footmen and crept upstairs. They knocked, but there was no reply. They called out. Everything was still. Finally, after vainly trying to force the door, they got on the roof and dropped down on to the balcony. The windows yielded easily—their bolts were old. When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognised who it was.¹³⁴

In the finale of the text, the emergence of servants are associated with the presentation of the portrait. The siege of the schoolroom creates tensions between masters and servants. Thanks to a collaboration between constables, gentlemen and servants, the schoolroom opens its doors to members of the public to whose point of view the focus of the narrative shifts. When viewed with this new perspective, the annihilated master is in an unrecognisable state. He bears no resemblance to the image associated with him, which, we assume the painting now mirrors on its spatial medium. When the painting regresses to its initial, unspotted state, the impressionistic qualities which has defined it throughout the text regain their physical presence on the canvas. The subject’s temporal representation is reset; with the painting’s regression to its

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

original state, the struggle between mastery and servitude is also reset to begin anew for its next subject.

The figure below illustrates the transmission of mastery between subjects. The struggle for mastery begins in speech, and in words. **Heart of Darkness** and **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** both represent speech as a repetitious act which is used to inherit a political position. The act first takes the form of servitude as subject imitates the speech of his master. In Marlow's case, the masterly rhetoric of Kurtz reaches its subjects through the act of speech. Speech is a musical and temporal phenomenon, just like movement, which Hyde uses to interpolate his subjects. Kurtz dominates Congo as an extension of his mastery while Hyde uses his laboratory for the experiments. In the case of Dorian, however, the struggle takes a decisively artistic shape. It occurs between spatial and temporal qualities of a work of art. The temporality of painting struggles to conquer its spatial medium, resulting in an alteration of the artistic form.

The figure above illustrates this process: (1) First, ideology is transported through speech; (2) it inspires a movement which is inscribed on the spatial medium of a painting; (3) there it begins its temporal progression, despite the limitations of its medium; (4) the subject begins to experiment with self-development; (5) finally he is annihilated by a movement that displaces him before returning to its spatial medium where it becomes ready to hail its next subject.

CONCLUSION

Hegel's phenomenology did not provide easy answers to late-Victorian novelists. Instead, it gave them a way to formulate new questions about power, identity, class, and aesthetics. Phenomenology is foremost of all a temporal process. Its central concerns are time and its effects on human character. Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde were well-placed to appreciate those features and their works share a focus on transformations and temporality. In the course of their transformations, images of Kurtz, Hyde and Dorian are altered beyond recognition. All three texts discuss the meaning of those transformations as well as their outcomes. Hegel's phenomenology is used as an instrument that gives shape to texts. It is also a reflection of certain cultural phenomena of the era, such as the literary debate about the future of the English novel and the recognition of continental philosophies which advocate the empowerment of the individual. Hegel's ideas also reflected the centrality of the effort to dominate English language for those writers who come from the peripheries. Mastery is not a one-sided, one-dimensional phenomenon: it occurs in texts as well as in the cultural identities of those texts' authors. It is a central principle on which literary texts and cultural identities are constructed.

The centrality of the Hegelian idea in Victorian culture reveals problems that were inherent to it. Social mobility had been encouraged, and promised by many Victorian politicians. Nevertheless, the process of social ascension remained as something of a mystery for many. Financial inheritance had been the Victorian way of transferring money from one generation to the other. The new, aggressive capitalism of the late-Victorian era operated with different rules. Inheritance became not only a family matter but also a way to interact with the public sphere. As opposed to the old-fashioned

culture of familial respect towards one's elders and superiors, the new era demanded irreverence and a thirst for financial gain.¹ Hegel's explanation of the struggle between the master and his bondsman not only described this process but also became a guide for those who wanted to exploit its potentials.

Although it seems to be built on binary oppositions itself, Hegel's phenomenology also focuses on the interchangeability of oppositional positions, offering a way to reconcile, and exceed the antagonisms it describes. But exceeding antagonism is an act that requires antagonism. Violence is destroyed only after submitting to potentials offered by violence. All three texts reflect problems inherent to the Hegelian project as well as to late-Victorian literary culture.

As I showed in my Introduction, Hegel's ideas provoked contrary reactions from different parts of English society. Conrad was no stranger to the master-and-servant dichotomy, partly due to his experiences as a master sailor and a servant of English language which he mastered only later in life. Similarly, Stevenson and Wilde used the structure of binary oppositions in order to discuss central and peripheral cultures or to make distinctions between nature and artifice. Although the Hegelian submission to a master figure is dramatised in all three texts, the representational techniques they use could not have been more different. While **Heart of Darkness**, an ostensibly oral narrative, uses the dichotomy in order to emphasise the discrepancies between the spheres of vision and sound, **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** employs multiple points of view, incorporating a series of textual discourses. **The Picture of Dorian Gray**, on the other hand, discusses the Hegelian problem of mastery by focusing on its own artificiality.

In Hegel's phenomenology, and in those three texts, self-development and over-sophistication are idolised but once the subject achieves them, the process through which he realises his potentials leads to his self-destruction. This is a problem as well as a

¹ Mark Girouard, **The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman**, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1981.

paradox: suppression of one's self is both necessary and fatal. Creativity leads to destruction while regeneration ends up in degeneration. Those are insights which are useful when viewed as parts of a critique of political ideology. But when seen as part of a critique of late-Victorian literature and its struggles to overcome its boundaries and limitations, the Hegelian phenomenology gains an additional, literary aspect. Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde contributed to the effort of reconfiguring modern literature. The modern struggle to overcome one's medium and its limitations were seen as not only necessary but also illusive. Tradition and innovation were recognised as complimenting parts, it was impossible to prefer one over the other. This stance is best exemplified in Wilde's paradoxical understanding of a progressive literature. In order to go forward, it had to go to its beginnings.

In his 1921 essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", T.S. Eliot proposed a similar programme for the modernist movement. Tradition and innovation were integral parts, and not antagonistic poles of cultural history:

Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.²

Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde had realised what Eliot later described as the centrality of the historical sense for the modern writer. What would become the

² T.S. Eliot, **The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism**, London, Faber and Faber, 1997, p. 40.

modernist texts of twentieth century's first decades had their ancestors in late-Victorian authors. Although he lived in the first half of the nineteenth century, Hegel's ideas were instrumental in giving shape to modernism's ontology. In Eliot's essay, inheriting the past is a sign of modernist strength and mastery; reflecting the presence of the past is therefore the centrepiece of the modernist project. The literary strategies of impressionist and decadent writers had a similar attitude towards literary traditions that preceded them. Overcoming the limitations of the establishment was a concern shared by both the protagonists and the texts that described them.

Eliot's "historical sense" demanded the kind of master and servant relationship Hegel had described in **Phenomenology**. The traditional writer had to be timeless and temporal, beyond his day and in it because those elements were essential for his contemporaneity. Published in the course of a thirteen year period between 1886 and 1899, **Heart of Darkness**, **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** and **The Picture of Dorian Gray** share Eliot's views about the pastness of the present as well as the contemporaneity of history. Impressionist and decadent literary movements both focused on ancient, old-fashioned techniques. Impressionist aesthetics favoured oral narrators, local dialects, a sense of ambiguity about reality and the subjectiveness of the act of storytelling. Decadent aesthetics were similarly interested in ancient rhetorical techniques which they used to illustrate the decadence of the modern individual. With its emphasis on the formation of subjectivity, Hegel's phenomenology shared important parts of these literary traditions. By describing the individual's struggle for political, scientific and artistic mastery during a period that was devoid of a dominant philosophical tradition, Conrad, Stevenson and Wilde laid the foundations of the modernist era in masterly fashion.

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