

Pragmatics, Speech Act Theory, and Formalism: A Reading of Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants"

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Abstract

Using relevant concepts of pragmatics and speech act theory, together with a formalist literary approach, the authors analyze Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants." This analysis employs theories of presupposition, implicature, politeness, and irony to complement and clarify more traditional questions of literary form. The aim of this research is not only to provide a perspicuous interpretation of the story and an account of Hemingway's narrative art, but to offer examples of some points where the concerns of the literary critic merge with those of the linguist. The authors conclude that a working knowledge of the vocabulary and analytical complexities of pragmatics and speech act theory can provide a backdrop against which some kinds of inconsistencies in textual analysis and interpretation are more readily apparent, and suggest that literary texts, used as a body of collected speech for research purposes, may by virtue of their complexity help linguists formulate more useful accounts of language and its uses.

摘要

海明威「白象山」文本分析採用整合方式進行。作者之一應用「語用學」(pragmatics)的觀念和「語言行為」(speech acts)的理論作為分析之依據；另一作者則採用文學上形式主義之分析方法。整體而言，一些語用學的觀念，如「預先假設」(presupposition)、「暗示」(implicature)、「禮貌」(politeness)，和「反話」(irony)，確能補足和澄清文學形式主義諸多傳統問題。本篇論文的目地在於明白詮釋海明威的故事並呈現他的寫作技巧，它也提供例子說明，文學批評家和語言學家所探討的東西是可融合為一的。作者的結論是，有效地瞭解「語用學」和「語言行為理論」的詞彙及其分析之複雜性便能知悉文本分析在詮釋上的不一致性。作者並指出，文學作品乃言語之結晶，以其複雜性，將有助於語言學家在研究時更能有效地分析語言本身和它的應用。

Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" has been a lightning-rod for inattentive and poorly-reasoned criticism. While this paper is not meant to take separate issue with each of the questionable readings we have encountered in the relevant literature, our analysis and interpretation of the story runs against the grain of a number of them. It is our hope that the close attention we have devoted to the text, utilizing concepts of pragmatics such as implicature, presupposition, and speech act

theory to inform a text-centered approach, will offer a reasonable account of some of the story's issues and techniques. In any case, we hope to have shed a little light on the story, without the lightning.

In what follows, we make use of some terms specific to pragmatics and speech act theory. These terms are used in ways commonly (though not unanimously) accepted in their respective fields. Grice established the current pragmatics term "implicature" and formulated the "cooperative principle" and its attendant maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Leech added the "politeness principle" (79-84) and "irony principle" (142-149), as well as the "tact maxim" and the term "will incompatibility" (104-114). To the terms of speech act theory "locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary" acts introduced by Austin, Searle added "illocutionary force" ("What") and classified illocutionary acts into "assertives," "directives," "commissives," "expressives," and "declarations" ("Classification"). Although we give brief definitions of these terms when they first appear below, we direct those interested in further researching their application to the works of these four innovators listed at the end of this paper.

First, a summary of the story: an American man and a young woman, described as the girl with him" and later called "Jig", wait for a train. While they wait, they drink and have a polite row over the impending abortion the girl is to have. As the story progresses, the reader learns that they have been traveling together, and reads descriptions of their surroundings, including the station and the landscape around it.

As we hope will be illustrated by our reading, the story concerns a couple trapped by circumstances, albeit largely of their own making. It is a fact of the story that the two are trapped *together*, in the same trap, as it were; their very togetherness constitutes a large part of their difficulties, though certainly not their only ones. The pregnancy, for which both are responsible, has forced them up against the reality of their own lives, values, and character. They struggle most significantly not with each other, though the man favors abortion and the girl opposes it, but with their own honesty and dishonesty. The woman's pregnancy is the decisive condition in this struggle: the couple is faced with a choice between two courses of action, either one of which will irrevocably change their relationship and their conceptions of themselves and one another. Although they differ in their choice of action, and although the consequences of the pregnancy are not the same for them both, they hold their problem in common.

Is their problem the pregnancy? To be sure, the pressure it causes them is far from pleasant: the American identifies it as the only thing that bothers us, the only thing that made us unhappy. As we shall see, this characterization of the pregnancy is a lie, the master link in a chain of deception, both of themselves and of one another. The real problem is that the pressure of the pregnancy has made continued self-deception impossible for them. As the two become increasingly aware of the inadequacy of their views of themselves, they are less and less able to continue to deceive themselves and one another.

The dialogue between the two consists of a series of avoidances of realistic evaluation of their lives. Every time they approach a painful truth, they retreat. The first instance of this avoidance occurs after the girl, whose disappointment is obvious, observes that the drink that she had wanted to try, Anis del Toro, tastes like licorice.

"It tastes like licorice, the girl said and put the glass down.

"That's the way with everything.

"Yes, said the girl. Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all

the things you've waited so long for, like absinthe.

"Oh, cut it out.

"You started it, the girl said. I was being amused. I was having a fine time.

"Well, let's try and have a fine time.

In this passage, the American's generalization of the girl's observation reveals a dissatisfaction with their experience of the world, a dissatisfaction neither one of them is eager to admit, so they change the subject.

Immediately following, the girl explains her statement by saying, I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it look at things and try new drinks? The man replies half-heartedly: I guess so. Then the conversation goes back to the hills. Again, the vapidness of their lifestyle is not something the American wants to talk about, and the girl does not press the issue.

A sensitive issue may also elicit sarcasm. Here is an exchange over the impending abortion:

"You don't have to be afraid. I've known lots of people that have done it."

"So have I," said the girl. "And afterward they were all so happy."

The most convincing indication of the girl's ironic tone is the man's response: "Well," the man said, 'if you don't want to you don't have to. I wouldn't have you do it if you didn't want to."

The deception in the story begins at the first mention of the abortion: "It's really an awfully simple operation, Jig, the man said. It's not really an operation at all.

The girl's easy comprehension of the man's speech, despite the sudden deictic change of the pronoun it (in the previous sentence it referred to their beer), reveals that they are both thinking of the abortion. This is a significant instance of presupposition by the two characters which excludes the reader, who cannot be certain of the details of the operation, and it begins in earnest the kind of situation characterized by Leech (113) as "will incompatibility."

The implicature, or inferred meaning, of the American's first sentence referring to the abortion is that operations are by and large complex. From the American's next sentence, in which he claims that an abortion is not really an operation, we can see that he himself recognizes the contradiction between the entailment, the meaning that is held to be always present for a given expression, and the implicature of his first sentence. Although his tactics here might to some degree be accounted for by Leech's tact maxim (107), which explains the cost/benefit relationship between speaker and listener, we nevertheless feel that he is simply distorting what he perceives to be the truth of the matter, flouting the maxim of quality, which requires utterances to reflect the truth as understood by the speaker. The girl recognizes his slip, too. She looks at the ground beneath the table, unable to respond verbally to such facile nonsense. Her silence is meaningful, for her apparent flouting of the maxim of quantity, which requires a speaker to say enough (but not too much) to be understood, is seen as a response by the American. Apparently, even in the face of her silence, he takes for granted her adherence to the maxim of relation, which requires relevance to the conversation. He goes on: "I know you wouldn't mind it, Jig. It's not really anything. It's just to let the air in." With these words, the man

continues to betray the knowledge or intuition that Jig *does* in fact expect to mind the abortion, the weight of which she feels to be a bit more substantial than not anything. Why does the man continue on such thin ice? Part of the explanation may lie in the possible perlocutionary aspects, or results, of his statements: if the girl acknowledges the ease and simplicity of the operation, her determination to avoid it will appear less reasonable. Unable to marshal a convincing argument, she may abandon the attempt.

The man's assurance that he will stay with her throughout the procedure has the illocutionary force of a commissive, a promise, and it is that force, rather than the semantic content of the sentence, that he hopes will help sway her: "I'll go with you and I'll stay with you all the time." Does the American really think that the danger of the operation or her own insecurity is the girl's primary concern? It is hard to tell conclusively from the story, but it is equally hard to believe that anyone besides a cartoon character could be that insensitive. If we grant that he is not a complete blockhead, we must consider, with him, that his promise illustrates his care for the girl. It is meant to be as reassuring at this time as his actual presence will be later in the operating room.

We cannot, however, assume as charitable a disposition toward the American's honesty as we can toward his intelligence. His next statement seems to be as much an attempt to deceive himself as to deceive the girl: We'll be fine afterward. Just like we were before. The presupposition here is that, despite their present unhappiness, they were fine before. Were they? The girl's previous description of their life seems to belie this assumption: That's all we do, isn't it look at things and try new drinks? This is hardly a statement of satisfaction or enthusiasm. The girl has reached a point where she can no longer contain her dissatisfaction, although her questions that follow suggest an attempt to swallow the man's optimistic assertions of their bright future:

"And you think then (after the abortion) we'll be all right and be happy?"

And you really want to (have the abortion)?

And if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you'll like it?

If I do it you won't ever worry?

The girl's questions have an edge of desperate hope that she will get the assurances she wants to hear. The feeling of desperation is no doubt related to the implicatures of the questions: that the couple is at the moment neither all right nor happy; that the woman does not want to have the abortion and doubts that he does; that things are not nice between them; that he is worrying.

The man offers the assurances she is after, but no desire of hers to believe his answers can overcome the obvious kernel of hypocrisy at their center:

I wouldn't have you do it if you didn't want to. I don't want you to do it if you don't really want to.

The implicature of these statements is that the American does in fact want her to have the abortion. Their illocutionary force, described in terms of Searle's classification, approaches that of a declaration despite the fact that the statement seems to take the form of an expressive; i.e. it ostensibly expresses an inner state of the American while actually shifting responsibility for the abortion onto the girl. In other words, his pronouncements make the girl, at least rhetorically, sole proprietor of their unborn child.

The girl comprehends what the man is doing. Jain (35) notes, "She perceives all about her lover too correctly to find solace. No soothing balm of deception or misunderstanding alleviates her sharp awareness of her predicament." The gap between her needs and what the man is able to offer to fill them becomes unbearable, and the girl's response is to try to eradicate her needs:

Then I'll do it. Because I don't care about me.
 What do you mean?
 I don't care about me.
 Well, I care about you.
 Oh, yes. But I don't care about me. And I'll do it and then
 everything will be fine.
 I don't want you to do it if you feel that way.

These expressive speech acts on the girl's part seem to strive toward the illocutionary force of declarations; by speaking she wants to change the facts of her world. Needs are not so easily erased, however, and she is quickly brought back to the reality of the situation. The man's insistence that the abortion be her choice, despite the facts to the contrary, at last leaves the girl speechless, and she goes to gaze in silence at the fertile landscape on the other side of the station.

When their conversation begins again, the girl is able to give voice to a realization that the man refuses to accept.

And we could have all this, she said. And we could
 have everything and every day we make it more
 impossible.
 What did you say?
 I said we could have everything.
 We can have everything.
 No, we can't.
 We can have the whole world.
 No, we can't.
 We can go everywhere.
 No, we can't. It isn't ours any more.
 It's ours.
 No, it isn't. An once they take it away, you never get it
 back.
 But they haven't taken it away.
 We'll wait and see.

In this exchange the girl is beyond consolation, and therefore beyond the facile hypocrisy in which they both sought comfort. Unable to refute her, the man, by using

the verb "feel" rather than "think," tries to reduce her realization to mere emotion, but she will have none of it:

Come on back in the shade, he said. You mustn't feel that way.

I don't feel any way, the girl replied. I just know things.

Faced with the girl's utter certainty, the man retreats to his familiar but increasingly hollow refrain: I don't want you to do anything that you don't want to do. By this point, the girl has heard it too many times already, and she cuts him off:

Nor that isn't good for me, she said. I know. Could we have another beer?

All right. But you've got to realize

I realize, the girl said. Can't we maybe stop talking.

This directive (an order or request) by the girl shows their conversation is close to over. Between his final two reiterations that the decision is the girl's to make, the American manages to outdo himself with hypocrisy with the commissive, I'd do anything for you. Even if he finally agrees to go through with the birth of their child, there is an obvious limit to what he is willing to do for her; despite the knowledge that she will not bear their child without his consent, he is not willing to accept responsibility for the decision to have the abortion. In other words, he is unwilling to contain his reluctance for her sake, and by expressing it shrugs off all responsibility for the baby's fate while ensuring that it is aborted. Throughout their dialogue, the American consistently tries to use directives that are as indirect as possible under the circumstances. He appears to be trying to bend the girl to his will while representing himself as a caring and reasonable man. (The verbal tightrope-walking he undertakes to accomplish this feat constitutes a form of deception that is challenging to describe in the commonly-used terms of pragmatics, and more accurate terms and concepts are still being considered. See Reboul, as well as Castelfranchi and Poggi, and Searle ("What") for a clearer sense of the complexities of accounting for lies).

The deception between the two characters is not one-sided. Despite her moment of authoritative clarity about their situation, the girl eventually also takes refuge in deception. In fact, it is the discrepancy between their situation and her summation of it that makes the end of the story so jarring. After the American has taken their bags to the other side of the tracks in anticipation of the arrival of the train that is to take them to Madrid, where presumably she is to have the abortion, he returns to their table, and she smiles at him.

Do you feel better? he asked.

I feel fine, she said. There's nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.

The word "fine" seems too subtle for the irony principle outlined by Leech (142-149), but Barbour (104-105) notes the irony of the girl's use of this word. Other interpretations maintain these last words of the story indicate that she is drunk (Sipiora 50), that the couple have tacitly decided against the abortion (Renner 37), that Hemingway is punning on the Latin *finis* in a kind of thinking man's, That's all folks! (O'Brien 23). Against these last three readings we may advance the arguments that

there is no evidence of their intoxication, that only a person of sorely limited common sense would sincerely describe as fine the feeling of having successfully compelled a man to accept a child he does not want, and that the pun is of no import whatsoever. A more likely and perspicuous reading, supported by consideration of the previous occurrences of the word fine in the story, is that she prefers to call their unenviable situation fine rather than admit that something is wrong. It is as if, unable or unwilling to concede anything more, she changes her definition of the word to fit the circumstances.

The word fine has been used several times in the story; not once do we have a reason to assume it is said with conviction. The first time occurs when the girl, having been told to "cut it out," defends her comparisons of the hills with white elephants and of the Anis with absinthe:

You started it, the girl said. I was being amused. I was
having a fine time.
Well, let's try and have a fine time.

The girl's words reveal a rather uninspiring standard of quality for a fine time: I was being amused. The man's response comes after a string of comments by him that can only be meant to deflate any possibility of enjoyment for the girl. The American has been decidedly impolite up to this point. A good example is his response to the girl, who, describing the hills, introduces the title simile of the story:

They look like white elephants, she said.
I've never seen one, the man drank his beer.

Treating her statement literally rather than figuratively is a deliberate misinterpretation on the American's part, and his response flouts Grice's maxim of relation. Similarly, many of his responses, barely meeting the maxim of quantity, are easily seen for the snubs they are:

(Girl:) I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn't
that bright?
That was bright.
I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it
look at things and try new drinks?
I guess so.

In the context of their conversation, then, the girl's use of the word fine is a qualified one. We have already discussed the implicature of the next instance of the word, in the man's assertion that the couple will be fine afterward. Just like we were before. Clearly, they are not fine now, and it is reasonable to doubt that after the abortion they will quickly regain whatever happiness they may have had before the pregnancy. The third instance of fine occurs immediately after the girl agrees to the abortion:

"Then I'll do it. Because I don't care about me."
"What do you mean?"
"I don't care about me."

"Well, I care about you.

"Oh, yes. But I don't care about me. And I'll do it and then everything will be fine.

I don't want you to do it if you feel that way.

The American's final response shows how poorly he thinks the adjective fits the situation. He is not convinced she really feels fine. From his response, we may infer that he has understood the girl's "fine" in her final line above as ironic.

The repeated use of fine in situations that do not merit it suggests we read the word with overtones of resignation rather than of affirmation, especially in the girl's final lines of the story. Her fine edges close to suffering. This couple is not fine. In fact, taken as a whole, their conversation shows their predicament forcing them past the limits of their ability to be honest with themselves and with one another. Neither one of them can live up to their own ideals of character, behavior, or lifestyle, but they refuse to relinquish the terms with which their ideals can be described and affirmed. As a result, they conduct their conversation in terms neither one of them believes.

The performance of dialogue like this should illustrate the complexity of the realistic use of language, and put to rest interpretations of the story that assume a limited intellect or control of language on the part of one or both of the main characters (see Lanier 287, Sipiora 50, Organ 11, and Renner 29, for readings that seem to depend more or less on an implied intellectual superiority of the reader to the characters). Both the American and the girl deliberately try to manipulate their speech in an attempt to fashion a verbal relationship acceptable to them both. They seem to realize, and then ignore, the impossibility of a purely linguistic reconciliation, but this is an infirmity of the will, not the intellect. What makes it interesting to us is that we are all prone to it.

The resonance of the dialogue in the story, then, depends more on the complexity of the speech acts conducted within it and on the implicatures and presuppositions of its utterances than on any "meaningful" exchange of information between the characters. In fact, it is inaccurate to attribute the conflict between the two to problems in communication, since such an interpretation erroneously assumes that communication is the primary goal of the use of language. (For an illustration of the potential difficulties inherent in such a view of language, see Smiley's inappropriate application to this story of what, applied to other situations, may be perfectly useful concepts of gender-related problems in communication. Ellis has lucidly discussed the effects of this kind of misconception in linguistic theory.) In this story, the key information is that the girl is pregnant and wants to carry the child to term, while the American, the man responsible, wants her to have an abortion. As we noted above in our discussion of the presupposition marked by the man's use of the pronoun "it" without a referent (as well as by the girl's immediate comprehension of it), both of them know this before they arrive at the station. At that point, neither one has anything to express but pain and bewilderment.

Other, formal characteristics of the text suggest the couple's frustration. A feeling of the inevitability of their suffering is provoked by the strings of repeated words and phrases throughout the dialogue. These strings seem to stitch the narrative tight, making forward progress excruciatingly slow. As the couple order the Anis del Toro, for example, the words with water are said five times within six changes of speaker:

We want two Anis del Toro.
With water?
 Do you want it **with water**?
 I don't know, the girl said. Is it good **with water**?
 It's all right.
 You want them **with water**? asked the woman.
 Yes, **with water**.

(boldface added)

A more significant passage that utilizes this kind of echo is their can/cant argument about the availability of the whole world:

And **we could have** all this, she said. And **we could have everything** and every day we make it more impossible.
 What did you say?
 I said **we could have everything**.
We can have everything.
No, we can't.
We can have the whole world.
No, we can't.
"We can go everywhere."
"No, we can't. It isn't **ours** any more."
 It's **ours**.
No, it isn't. And once they **take it away**, you never get it back.
 But they haven't **taken it away**.

(boldface added)

Here we also see some variations on simple repetition. Besides the repetition of 'can and can't', there is the repetition of "we can have/go," which precedes the change in available opportunities from everything to the whole world to everywhere." Near the end of the exchange, the refrain becomes ours, and, later, take(n) it away. This shifting of repetition from one word to another is most noticeable in a passage in which the refrain changes from if I do it and love to "worry" to "care".

And **if I do it** you'll be happy and things will be like they were and you'll **love** me?
 I **love** you now. You know I **love** you.
 I know. But **if I do it**, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you'll like it?
 I'll **love** it. I **love** it now but I just can't think about it.
 You know how I get when I **worry**.
If I do it you won't ever **worry**?
 I won't **worry** about that because it's perfectly simple.
 Then I'll **do it**. Because I **don't care** about me.
 What do you mean?
 I **don't care** about me.

Well, **I care** about you.

Oh, yes. But **I don't care** about me.

(boldface added)

According to Rodrigues (108), "Hemingway uses dialogue as a composer uses melodic themes." If this is so, this piece moves ponderously, the repetition of these words underscoring the characters' resistance to change. For the couple, progress, even in their speech, seems continually impeded.

Likewise, a feeling of heaviness and resistance to change pervades the narration proper, the parts of the story in the voice of the third-person narrator, which begins the story and slips in and out of the dialogue. The background against which we see the characters and they judge themselves is carefully sketched, and though the details are relatively sparse their repetition gives them a certain persistent, nagging quality. The descriptions of the dry and fertile landscapes that surround the station, which, most critics allow, are emblematic of the two alternatives faced by the couple, act as connectives for segments of dialogue. A description of the dry, white hills opens the story, and the hills are spoken of and looked at significantly several times during the conversation. The fertile fields are introduced just as the girl begins to lament all they might have had. Later, her glance returns to the dry, white hills. She has, this return suggests, gotten nowhere.

Other details are repeated throughout. The bead curtain across the door of the bar appears in both the first and last scenes of the story, and four times during their conversation. Some critics (see, for example, Abdoo) have described the curtain as a symbol of the rosary, and suggested that it may imply the girl is a Catholic, hence her opposition to the abortion. This reading seems to us unlikely and reductive, implying as it does that the unattractive and bewildering nature of the abortion depends on something other than the girl's humanity and desire to keep her child. A more resonant reading of the strings of beads would be as traditional symbols of children or sexual intercourse (de Vries 37). In any case, the repetition of details of the landscape and the station contributes to the feeling of stagnation against which the couple must decide their future, returning us to the unchanging surroundings of the two hapless characters; no matter what they say to one another, their situation remains the same.

Since it is context that determines implicatures, we should not be surprised at the significance of the particular details of their surroundings foregrounded by the narration. Each detail is a token of the couple's lifeless world. Against their surroundings, the two seem to rattle on as if in they might achieve some ultimate speech act, one by which their representative, commissive, and expressive illocutionary acts would become declarations and change the facts of their world. Unfortunately for the couple, an attempt such as this is doomed to failure, and they know it; no amount of illocutionary force can solve their problem, which is a problem of whole lives and not of language alone. Indeed, for Trilling (149), the story shares with "The Waste Land"

the theme of sterility; the representation of the boredom and vacuity and desperateness of life; the sense of lost happiness not to be regained; the awareness of the failure of love; the parched, sun-dried stony land used as a symbol of emotional dessication, the water used as the symbol of refreshment and salvation,

and urges us to read it as a "comment... on the human condition in the modern Western world."

Despite the feeling of incompleteness in their lives, these two people have neither the will to change nor the honesty to admit to one another what they feel. An examination of their narrated world and the dialogue between them shows how they try to use language to camouflage the inadequacy of their own hopes, even if they could be fulfilled, to satisfy their needs. Their lives will be completed neither by words, nor by one another.

At this point, for a number of critics, a key question remains: does the girl go through with the abortion? Although the majority seems to allow that she does, several (notably Renner) have argued the opposite. Although we side with the majority, we submit that it does not much matter. As Jain (35) writes, "Either way it can end badly and there are no other ways." From what we are shown in the story, no matter what they choose to do, it is unlikely that things for them will be fine.

We hope that we have shown some of the possibilities of using concepts of pragmatics and speech act theory to clarify or temper a critical understanding of how language is working in a text. Although we realize that no conceptual framework can overcome inattentive reading or thinking, we feel that a working knowledge of the vocabulary and analytical complexities of pragmatics and speech act theory can provide a backdrop against which some kinds of inconsistencies in textual analysis and interpretation are more readily apparent. We also hope that we have demonstrated the usefulness of pragmatics and speech act theory to an analysis of style. In our analysis of "Hills Like White Elephants," a pragmatics-oriented approach helps explain the odd resonance of the story and uncover some of the subtleties of Hemingway's complex craft. We would like to suggest further that literary texts, used as a body of collected speech for research purposes, may by virtue of their complexity help linguists formulate more accurate and perspicuous accounts of language and its uses.

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Adultery as Writing and Language Games in John Updike's A Month of Sundays

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Abstract

Updike's A Month of Sundays tells the story of Thomas Marshfield, an adulterous minister that recalls Arthur Dimmesdale in The Scarlet Letter by Hawthorne. Marshfield writes playfully about his affairs with some female parishioners, trying to justify his extramarital sex on theological grounds. By contrast, Dimmesdale delivers speeches and agonizes over the sin of adultery. I will argue in this paper that Marshfield's embrace of adultery can be attributed to a Barthian thought consonant with the characteristics of writing while Dimmesdale's agony has something to do with the Puritan tenet continuous with the traits of speech. In Western tradition, speech is conceived as unified with truth while writing as risking the contamination of truth. The difference between speech and writing is significant when each is brought face to face with adultery, which is usually seen as a breach of the marriage contract. At another level, Puritanism and Barthianism can each be represented by the speaking subject and the pole of addressee in language games. The speaking subject is invested with the power of pronouncing what is the true being or the correct method. Hence, it is regarded as just to be brought into conformity with the true being. But the addressee can never emerge onto the status of the speaker since the former can never grasp the full meaning of the latter. Thus their ideas remain within the realm of opinions, unable to be made into the conclusions of a reasoning. This difference further explains the contrary attitudes held by the two priests toward adultery. This paper studies the literary representation of adultery in the two intertextual works to see how it responds to writing, speech, and language games.

摘要

鄂卜岱克的小說《避靜一月記》，以日記體方式敘述馬希菲爾德牧師的故事。這位因通姦而強制休息一個月的神職人員，讓人聯想到霍桑《猩紅字》的丁斯岱爾牧師。不同的是，前者用書寫方式論述自己的通姦始末，筆調戲謔詼諧，而且企圖從神學觀點為自己的婚外情辯護。丁斯岱爾牧師擅長演說，他的音調風靡無數信眾，但通姦罪行卻始終盤據他的心頭，終至讓他命喪演說台前。本論文從書寫與口說的差異，說明何以兩位牧師會對通姦有南轅北轍的態度。在西方形而上傳統裡，口說向被視為直接反應思維，因而契合真理，而書寫則有背離真理之虞。通姦是一種違背婚姻約定，另闢蹊徑尋求快感的作法。用口語與書寫來研究通姦，深具意義。自另一層次而言，語言遊戲裡的說話主體，有權宣佈何為正確方法，但受話者永遠無法成為說話主體，因為無法完全掌握言談的真正意義。受話者的觀念因而停留在意見的層次，無法成為推理的結論。兩者

的差異進一步說明清教思想何以痛惡通姦，而馬希菲爾德信服的巴斯神學，可以寬容通姦。本論文研究比較這兩本形成互文的作品，企圖從書寫、口說、語言遊戲三方面來探討通姦論述。

A Month of Sundays¹ (1974) tells the story of an adulterous minister that recalls the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale in The Scarlet Letter (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne. As John Updike states in an interview, "I gave Dimmesdale's version . . . in A Month of Sundays" (Burgin 10). Set in late 1973, the Rev. Thomas Marshfield has a month of enforced rest and recreation in an Arizona desert retreat after his adultery being reported to the bishopric. The manageress of the omega-shaped "motel" is a lady called Ms. Prynne. As if to suggest her association with Hester Prynne of The Scarlet Letter, it is so recorded in Marshfield's diary: "Named, if my ears, still plugged with jet-hum, deceived me not, Ms. Prynne" (MS 6). Among other signs of their association, Ms. Prynne has a "figure of perfect elegance on a large scale . . . dark and abundant hair."² This is precisely how Hester Prynne is depicted by Hawthorne: "The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair" (SL 60). Another linkage to Hawthorne's masterpiece can be found in the name of his wife, Jane Chillingworth, and his father-in-law, the Doctor Reverend Wesley Augustus Chillingworth, professor of ethics at the divinity school he attends. The name Chillingworth evokes the wronged husband in The Scarlet Letter, Roger Chillingworth. Coupled by other parallel signs, the two literary works invite an intertextual reading.

Made up of the diary the Rev. Marshfield keeps in the retreat, A Month of Sundays deals with the issue of adultery from the perspective of the priest. During the month of recuperation, he writes *ad libidum* in the mornings and plays games in the afternoons and evenings. In the writing, he "preaches, jokes, confesses, analyzes, criticizes, pleads, and puns" (Schiff 22). There are mistypings in the play of language. There are playful narratives trying to justify adultery on theological grounds. Writing, originally designed to remedy his "distraction," turns out to egg him on to more wanton lewdness. Beginning somewhere in his diary entries, he suspects that his manageress, Ms. Prynne, has been stealthily reading his manuscript. A game of seduction thus starts as Marshfield writes along. By contrast, in The Scarlet Letter, the Rev. Dimmesdale is known for delivering speeches, not for writing. The resonance of his speeches has moved a great number of listeners to tears and firmed up their faith in the Christian God. Unlike Marshfield, he feels profoundly guilty of the adultery he has committed. Even his sermons are informed by a sense of guilt. He even "longed to speak out from his own pulpit at the full height of his voice, and tell the people what he was" (SL 140). In Marshfield and Dimmesdale, we see a difference in views on adultery and a contrast between writing and speech.

Great portions of Dimmesdale's speeches go unreported, however. Even those which are listed are put in writing, not audibly recorded. It would pose an

¹ For the sake of distinction, A Month of Sundays will be abbreviated as MS in parenthetical pagination while The Scarlet Letter as SL.

² The passage, which is quoted from MS 213, may give the impression that Ms. Prynne is as charming as Hester Prynne. In fact, she does not have the good looks of her opposite number. This is pretty evident from a much earlier description: "Face of a large, white, inexplicably self-congratulating turtle. White neck extended as if to preen or ease a chafing" (MS 6). The point to be made here is that Updike's reinscription is not meant to be an exact equivalent of signs. Rather it is done in terms of intertextuality.

insurmountable difficulty to really bring his spoken language to a comparison with Marshfield's written language. Under such a condition, Marshfield's playful writing offers an invaluable help in that it deliberately plays on the distinguishing trait of writing, that is, a digression from norm.³ Speech, by contrast, is traditionally conceived as closer to truth because it directly reflects human consciousness. The difference between writing and speech may thus be compared to that between a playful use of language and a common use of language. This difference, though at the risk of oversimplification, holds a key that may explain the varying views held by the two priests on adultery.

Adultery is objectionable to some people because it undermines social order, law, and authority. But in transgressing the constraints of marriage, it promises passionate abandon which may awaken institutionally stifled impulses. To thinkers and writers alike, the appeal of adultery lies, as Georges Bataille asserts in *Eroticism*, precisely in the possibility of freeing up "full and limitless being" confined "within the trammels of separate personalities" (109, 21). Tony Tanner goes one step further in linking the 'chaos' of adultery to the 'chaos' of language. In his *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression*, he suggests that "[p]uns and ambiguities are to common language what adultery and perversion are to 'chaste' sexual relations" (53). By extension, in *The Pleasure of the Text*, Roland Barthes claims the relationship among writer, text and reader to be an erotic one. He clearly favors *jouissance*, the extreme and disconcerting enjoyment, over *plaisir*, a homely enough feeling, since the former "unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language" (14). *Plaisir* obviously is associated with marital sex while *jouissance* with adultery.

Issues surrounding adultery boil down to whether one should submit unconditionally to the dictate of a norm or a contract. The answer coming from language games⁴ is a definite no. In *Just Gaming*, Jean-Francois Lyotard insists that it is illusory to seek to ground prescriptive statements on descriptive, or theoretical, statements. As it is impossible to derive obligation, he suggests that people pattern themselves after a pagan,⁵ who "effects new moves" and "opens up the possibility of new efficacies in the games with their present rules" (62). This is similar to what

³ In Western metaphysical tradition, writing has been considered twice removed from truth because it does not have direct access to human mental activities. From the perspective of Jacques Derrida, writing is not secondary to speech, nor is it merely an instrument of the mind. Writing, according to Derrida, is rather a process of self discovery. These two viewpoints do not see writing as a faithful reflection of the image forming in the mind.

⁴ The term "language game," in the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein, "is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (Wittgenstein, sec. 23). This suggests the coexistence of innumerable language games, "without any one of them being able to claim that it can say all the others" (Lyotard, *Just* 58). As Lyotard points out in *The Postmodern Condition*, each of them is defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put" (10). Though no game is possible without rules, "rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but are the object of a contract, explicit or not, between players" (10). The gap between rules and legitimation is rephrased in *Just Gaming* as the relation between two language games: that of prescription and that of description.

⁵ A pagan is a person who believes in many gods. But as is used by Lyotard, it refers to a person who practices paganism. As he puts it in *Just Gaming*, "when I speak of paganism, I am not using a concept. It is a name . . . for the denomination of a situation in which one judges without criteria. And one judges not only in matters of truth, but also in matters of beauty (of aesthetic efficacy) and in matters of justice, that is, of politics and ethics, and all without criteria. That's what I mean by paganism." (16)

Lyotard calls maximization of concept: "A sort of field where one can run and let oneself go to see how far one can reach with a given concept" (75). The language games as elaborated on by Lyotard talk about freeing up new possibilities of rules by challenging the alleged link between prescription and description.

Bringing these ideas to bear on adultery as intertextually represented in the two works, I will argue in this paper that Marshfield's embrace of adultery can be attributed to the prevalence of a milieu consonant with the characteristics of writing and language games. I will also argue that Dimmesdale's profound sense of guilt has something to do with a setting continuous with speech. Treated in terms of intertextuality,⁶ Marshfield and Dimmesdale may each be seen as embodying a concept of adultery placed within varying systems of signs, thereby providing the forum for a dialogue between the present and the past.⁷ On the surface, adultery repeats itself in every society and every era. But a closer analysis will reveal difference behind every repetition. Each concept changes with the shift of frame. This paper uses The Scarlet Letter and A Month of Sundays as examples to study how discourses of adultery change in terms of speech, writing, and language games.

In The Scarlet Letter, Hester Prynne advises Dimmesdale to flee the New World and place himself "among the wisest and the most renowned of the cultivated world. Preach! Write! Act! Do anything, save 'to lie down and die!' Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale and make thyself another" (SL 188). This advice seems to be heeded. For in A Month of Sundays, the name of the priest is now Thomas Marshfield. And he is placed in America of 1970s, generally considered the most advanced in the world. He literally preaches, writes, and acts. There is ironically a Ms. Prynne who reviews his manuscript. At the end of his fourth written sermon, a comment scribbled by her runs, "Yes--at last, a sermon that could be preached" (MS 212). He acts, instead of bowing down to a sense of guilt born of adultery. Writing does help him shake off the fetters of a convention that forbids adultery.

By contrast, Arthur Dimmesdale is given prominence in his role as an eloquent speaker. The Puritan priest, "gnawed and tortured by some black trouble of the soul" (SL 138), has achieved a brilliant popularity by giving speeches. Speech appears to resonate with a mind that is bound by the norm, any violation of which evokes a profound sense of sin. Judging by his near-total submission to orthodoxy, it is appropriate that Dimmesdale is portrayed as a person who delivers speeches, instead of writing. For speech has traditionally been conceived of as giving access to truth through its proximity to a self-present consciousness while writing is dismissed as obstructing that access by replacing an ideal transparency with its opaque material inscriptions. The logocentric prejudice always identifies truth and reason with the instance of spoken language whereas truth, if put into writing, risks contamination. In a community where adultery is strictly prohibited, it is only natural that an effective

⁶ By intertextuality, I am referring to that originally introduced by Julia Kristeva and defined as the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position. This process comes about through a combination of displacement and condensation, and also involves the destruction of the old position and the formation of the new position. For more detail, please see Kristeva, Revolution in Poetic Language 59-60.

⁷ In "Esch Is Luther," Milan Kundera raises this idea. He declares: "I thought of the art of the novel, which, alone of all the arts, is capable of becoming that privileged place where humanity's distant past can converse with its present. To arrange this rendezvous seemed to me one of the three or four great tasks, one of the three or four great possibilities available to the future of the novel" (780).

orator like Dimmesdale is depicted as a person tormented by an act violating what is commonly taken as truth and reason.

To explore the cause or causes behind the formation of Dimmesdale's attitude, we may start with the sacred office he holds. As a clergyman, he is at the head of the social system then. In his capacity as a priest and at the top echelon of social ranks, he is "only the more trammelled by its regulations, its principles, and even its prejudices" (SL 190). Hence, he has "never gone through an experience calculated to lead him beyond the scope of generally received laws" (SL 190), as he is predisposed to fixity, orthodoxy, and restriction. "In no state of society would he have been what is called a man of liberal views" (SL 122). Faith gives him the spiritual anchor while confining him within its iron framework. In an emotional outpouring in the presence of Hester Prynne, he laments: "Were I an atheist--a man devoid of conscience--a wretch with coarse and brutal instincts--I might have found peace, long ere now" (SL 182). "Atheist" is a key word to notice. If he were an atheist, he might be a person who, as Lyotard suggests, "effects new moves" and "opens up the possibility of new efficacies in the games with their present rules," instead of believing in "the signified of what they are saying," or "stick[ing] to this signified," or "think[ing] that they are in the true" (Lyotard, *Just* 62). But as a Puritan priest, he cannot turn a blind eye to the contrast between what he seems and what he is after committing adultery. For he is bound by the conviction that "experience has a fixed meaning and moral significance" (Brodhead 156).

The source of this conviction can be found in Puritan theologies. In John Calvin's formulation, a "sense of divinity" or a "seed of religion" is engraved in the hearts of every human being.⁸ At the moment of conversion, the innate reason is elevated as grace realigns it "according to the laws of 'method'" (Miller 200). "Faith is but the lifting up of the understanding, by adding a new light to them" (Miller 200). It is the sight of existing truths, exactly as a telescope is the revelation of new stars. The real meaning of the Word of God "will be forthcoming if the Word of God is studied by the true method" (Miller 203). Put in this light, experience has a fixed meaning and moral significance. The lifting up of understanding, the elevation of reason, or the realignment according to the laws of method bespeaks the moment of conceptual *Aufhebung* --"the emergence of a logic or an order of meaning undreamt of previously" (Norris, *Derrida* 72). Speech is privileged over writing in conveying the moment of revelation. In the metaphysical tradition, speech thus unifies with truth and reason.

The union of speech with truth and reason finds a good example in the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. Speeches delivered by him are regarded by audiences as inspired by the Deity. The people "fancied him the mouthpiece of Heaven's messages of wisdom and rebuke and love" (SL 139). On the Election Sermon, his eloquent voice has carried the souls of the audience so aloft that it meets with universal praises. As people attending that speech report, never had inspiration "breathed through mortal lips more evidently than it did through his. Its influence could be seen . . . descending upon him, and possessing him . . . and filling him with ideas that must have been as marvellous to

⁸ In his highly influential writing, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), Calvin identifies two main grounds of a general knowledge of God. The first ground is a "sense of divinity" or a "seed of religion" implanted within every human being by God. It is as if something about God has been engraved in the hearts of every human being. The second ground lies in experience of and reflection upon the ordering of the world. The fact that God is creator may be gained from an inspection of the created order. The above information is indirectly quoted from Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 152-53.

himself as to his audience" (SL 231-32). To his audiences, the Holy Spirit reveals itself through the speeches of the priest. The Rev. Dimmesdale also looks upon himself as a medium of God's revelation. The sense of sin arising out of adultery appears to him to have tarnished this medium. That is why he resorts to self-flagellation in order "to purify the body and render it the fitter medium of celestial illumination" (SL 141). In the Puritan priest we see a "genuine impulse to adore the truth" (SL 139), and "a professional teacher of the truth" (SL 149). The apt tool he adopts to convey what is deemed the God-inspired truth is speech.

In our analysis of the union between speech and truth, we find it is the sense of sin that makes the preacher's sermons so effective and so forceful. At least twice after ravaging moments of deep remorse does Dimmesdale preach to a chorus of praises and warm responses. The awareness of sin brings him down to the level of his listeners so that he can sympathize with their sufferings and speak to them "in the heart's native language" (SL 138). Those with their purity of life, however, fail to have their speeches strike deep into the minds of the people for they do not speak the same language. Similar ideas can be found in Calvin's understanding of Christianity. Calvin argues that "God reveals himself verbally, in the form of words" (McGrath 130). In revelation, Calvin asserts, "God adjusts himself to the capacities of the human mind and heart. God paints a portrait of himself which we are capable of understanding" (McGrath 130). This idea of divine accommodation to human capacities in revelation points to God's design to "convince and convict us of our sin" just as "human rhetoric in a court of law is designed to secure a verdict" (McGrath 132). By lowering himself to the level of his listeners, Dimmesdale is made more aware of his own sin.

The sin of adultery does not dissipate because the preacher allows that awareness to color his speech. Instead, Dimmesdale is driven more and more desperately into the scene of unbosoming himself in public before meeting his death. It seems that the sense of sin is steadily tightening its grip over him as he sinks into the pattern of remorse and speech. From the earliest equivocation with which he addresses Prynne, "if thou feelest it to be for thy soul's peace . . . I charge you to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer" (SL 73), to the second scaffold scene where he responds at the prodding of Pearl, "Then, and there, before the judgment seat, thy mother, and thou, and I, must stand together. But the daylight of this world shall not see our meeting!" (SL 149), and finally to the last scaffold scene, "in the name of Him . . . to do what . . . I withheld myself from doing seven years ago" (SL 235). He is convinced and convicted of his own sin. Speech and its related factors conspire to imprison him within a framework of iron-clad belief which does not admit of any transgression without bringing the offender to see his own sin.

As adultery transgresses the contract of marriage, Dimmesdale can never bring himself to see this act as anything other than a deadly sin. It keeps his conscience "in an irritated state" and threatens "to disorganize and corrupt his spiritual being" (SL 184). But Hester Prynne sees adultery in a different light. She tells the guilt-ridden priest, "What we did had a consecration of its own" (SL 186). Their extramarital sex indeed can find a justification in it if its circumstances are taken into consideration. First of all, it occurs after a long period of separation from her husband who may most likely be at the bottom of the sea. Besides, it is unrealistic to expect a young and beautiful wife to persevere with a marriage arranged out of the possible consideration to help her poverty-stricken family. A marriage with an old and deformed scholar, unless strengthened by a keen love, can hardly fortify itself against the intrusion of a young, charming, and popular priest. As if to reflect the sacred picture she depicts of adultery,

the scarlet letter A she is condemned to wear on her chest is artistically embroidered. In her hands a sign of stigma is turned into a dazzling work of art. What the letter A stands for also undergoes a change from the intended "adultery" to "able" and finally to "angel." Refusing to be bound by the world's rule and guidance, she assumes "a freedom of speculation" (SL 159) not found on the part of Dimmesdale. It enables her to see new promises of adultery.

But to the Puritan priest, adultery does not mean new possibilities but rather an endless curse. It agonizes and tortures him. The three scaffold scenes testify to the intensity of his suffering. The source of this stinging infliction is, as indicated in our earlier discussion, his Christian faith. Its binding force can be detected from the distracted state Dimmesdale is in after leaving the forest where he has accepted Hester Prynne's advice to start a new life elsewhere. "What is it that haunts and tempts me thus?" cries the minister to himself. "Am I mad? or am I given over utterly to the fiend? . . . And does he now summon me to its fulfilment, by suggesting the performance of every wickedness which his most foul imagination can conceive?" (SL 208). Here we are given a glimpse of what a person will act when denied the accustomed guidance and rule. Unregulated behavior may reveal in each act new possibilities though it may violate existing laws. But the Puritan preacher, with his "natural piety," to borrow Chillingworth's observation of him, frowns upon it as a wicked performance. The reluctance or fear to transgress morally sanctioned codes explains why he can never overcome his perception of adultery as an unforgivable sin.

This suggests the burden of faith and moral codes. In the forest scene, Dimmesdale laments, "Were I an atheist--a man devoid of conscience--a wretch with coarse and brutal instincts--I might have found peace, long ere now" (SL 182). Were he an atheist or a pagan,⁹ Dimmesdale might be given a chance to rival Hester Prynne, who has "wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness" (SL 189). It is a state similar to what Lyotard calls paganism--"a name for the denomination of a situation in which one judges without criteria" (Lyotard, *Just* 16). Without the assurance of criteria, one is placed in a situation where it is necessary to keep inventing new criteria in order to make judgment. One works case by case. Instead of seeking for the basis of all statements, "one will realize that practice constitutes a new context for the statements of the constitution, and that this context requires that such and such a thing be prescribed" (Lyotard, *Just* 28). The emphasis on context-specific prescriptions precludes the possibility of a metalanguage.¹⁰ In other words, as every statement is in the same sphere of language games, no discourse can emerge from the realm of opinion into that of knowledge or theory. Hence, no theoretical discourse can be taken as the basis of its statements.

Christian faith has long been taken as a metalanguage. Christian God is allegedly the source of all truths. He is a master of the word and his word is performative. In the

⁹ An atheist, of course, is different from a pagan. A Marxist is technically an atheist but he or she is convinced of a society's justice if it models itself on a true and correct description. This is what distinguishes a Christian from a pagan. But there are many types of atheists. Here it is used in the sense of "a man devoid of conscience" and "a wretch with coarse and brutal instincts," instead of a person bound by a belief in a true being. In this way the two share the idea that prescriptions "are not derived from an ontology" (Lyotard, *Just* 59).

¹⁰ Lyotard uses the term metalanguage to refer to a descriptive or theoretical statement that serves as the basis of prescriptive statements. In formulating the concept of paganism, he argues against the grounding of prescription on description or cognition to drive home the idea of judging without criteria.

words of Martin Luther, "God reveals himself to us, as the Speaker, who has, in himself, an eternal uncreated Word, whereby he created the world and all things, with slight labour, namely, with speech, so that to God it is not more difficult to create than it is to us to name" (qtd. in Feuerbach 79). Here God is depicted as the Speaker who created the world and all things with speech. All the thought is centered on the speaking subject, a subject "that speaks, that does, and that causes to do" (Lyotard, *Just* 37). The relation of the addressee to this author of meaning, according to Lyotard, is that of servitude. It represents the deep conviction that one will be just if one is brought into conformity with this true being. We see in this command the source of what torments the pious Dimmesdale.

To the Puritan priest, the torture comes from a compulsive desire to conform to a God who is the paragon of perfection, the model of reason, and the source of ultimate truth. Hence, the Rev. Dimmesdale wonders "that Heaven should see fit to transmit the grand and solemn music of its oracles through so foul an organ-pipe as he" (SL 212). His puzzle arises from a perceived gap between God's grand perfection and his own debased foulness. In Puritan theologies in seventeenth-century New England, there were eager attempts to apply the correct method and there were also eager attempts to reveal the "seed of religion" engraved in the hearts of every human being. "Puritan theologians were ready . . . to interpret [the Bible] by deductions according to reason's laws articulated in dialectic" (Miller 202). What follows from these is, if put in the terms of language games, to ground prescriptive statements on descriptive or theoretical statements. In the case of the Rev. Dimmesdale, the sense of sin is derived from the failure to pattern his behavior after the source of all truths.

But if Dimmesdale were born in a different age and had a different version of faith, what would become of him? Would he still be tortured by the act of adultery? In the Rev. Thomas Marshfield we find a perfect case to examine the issue of adultery as it is embedded in a different circumstance. As mentioned near the beginning of the paper, *A Month of Sundays* is made up of the diary Marshfield keeps in the retreat. The medium used to express his views is writing, not speech, which is exactly the opposite of Dimmesdale's case. Writing, in fact, is intended to be a cure of adultery. In *A Month of Sundays*, as James Schiff argues, "there is undoubtedly a strong relationship between writing and adultery" (26). But as John T. Matthews suggests, "Marshfield comes to understand that writing repeats . . . adultery" as it tries "to cure it" (156). Besides, Marshfield is a Barthian. "[T]he central concept in Updike's utilization of Barthian theology is that God is 'Wholly Other,' that there is an abyss between the human and the divine that no bridge can cross."¹¹ Since God is Wholly Other, it is impossible to know for sure the divine plan. As a result, what is deemed ethically or morally good may not be so in the eyes of God. This idea holds the promise of weakening the Puritan tenet of conforming to the true method.

The impact of Barth's theological thoughts on the discourse of adultery will be dealt with in terms of language games. Writing, as mentioned in our earlier discussion, also has a close relationship with adultery. Before going further with the complicated issue of writing, I will begin by exploring the implications of the Barthian preaching,

¹¹ The passage is quoted from James A. Schiff, *Updike's Version: Rewriting The Scarlet Letter*, 30. But the information contained in it comes from George W. Hunt, S.J., *John Updike and the Three Great Secret Things: Sex, Religion, and Art*, 18; Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, 24. Barth is a very influential neoorthodox Swiss. His major ideas can be summed up as follows: Faith in divine revelation is central while ethics is insignificant.

specifically its effect on adultery. The Barthian conception of God as "Wholly Other" recalls the Jewish thought or Levinas's thought. Levinas's thought, according to Lyotard, privileges the pole of the addressee, which marks a significant shift from the idea of the Christian God as the speaking subject. The core of Levinas's thought on this is "that the one who speaks is always the other, without a capital o. It is always the one who is speaking to me, and inasmuch as he is issuing prescriptions to me or asking me something while talking to me, I cannot put myself in his place. . . . since his request cannot come from me" (Lyotard, *Just* 39). The unbridgeable difference between the speaking subject and the addressee is in a way similar to the irreducible gap between the word of God and the word of man, as the title of a book by Barth suggests.

In *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, Barth argues that God's will is discontinuous with man's. "His will is not a corrected continuation of our own. It approaches ours as a Wholly Other" (24). Even the righteousness of our morality, of the state, or of the law, as Barth contends, is far from the manifestation of God's will. He goes on to ridicule the Kantian ethics, which he considers the most significant of its kind, as founded on a presupposition which turns against all humanity. "Kant grounds the conception of the moral personality on the idea of the autonomous will, but he teaches that the only will that can be called good is one that governs itself according to a law . . . superior to any self, universally applicable, and capable of being accepted as a law for all humanity" (152-53). Since no personality has their will governed by the idea of humanity, no pure, autonomous human being with a good will, Barth asserts, ever lived or will live in our world. Thus, Barth calls on every individual to follow conscience, "in which God's righteousness is manifest" (10), instead of seeking freedom in things human, including church. The call for a direct communion with God via one's conscience is followed by an urged return to faith, which means "letting God speak within" (25).

The Barthian conception may raise serious doubt about its fundamental difference from Puritanism since both emphasize the seed of faith within us. But in *A Month of Sundays*, the Rev. Marshfield, an avowed Barthian, is not crushed down by adultery, but rather finds his own act justified on theological grounds. By contrast, the Rev. Dimmesdale, the Puritan priest, is tortured by adultery and finally succumbs to a keen sense of sin arising from it. There must be some significant difference between the tenets of these two theologies which accounts for the widely different results. I will attempt to clarify their difference in terms of language games. Puritanism is shown to privilege the speaking subject in our earlier discussion. I will argue that the Barthian thought valorizes the pole of the addressee, just like the Jewish or Levinas's thought.

The Barthian emphasis on the dictate of conscience, at the first glance, may give the impression that God is once again privileged as the speaking subject. But a closer analysis may reveal otherwise. To borrow Levinas's thought in our elaboration, the relation with God as the Wholly Other or, as he calls it, the Absolutely Other "is such that the request that is made of me by the other, by the simple fact that he speaks to me, is a request that can never be justified" (Lyotard, *Just* 22). The model here is the relation of God to the Jewish people, with God's initial statement to Moses: "Let them obey me!" But what should they obey? The content of the act of obedience is not immediately known. On the one hand, the Jewish God puts himself in a prescriptive position without describing what it is he is prescribing. On the other hand, one is put in a condition of listening to a discourse that does not describe anything. In both cases, the

addressee is unable to put himself in the position of the sender of the statement because he can never be sure of its meaning.¹²

As the privileging of the pole of the addressee suggests, no one can emerge from the position of listening and come to have a full grasp of the utterer's message. In other words, nobody has a totalized view of anything, nor can anyone synthesize it into a unifying meta-discourse. Prescription thus remains within the realm of opinions and can never find its grounding in a descriptive or theoretical discourse. With prescription left hanging in midair, to be just is no longer a matter of conforming to laws. It poses a sharp contrast to the entire ontological tradition, especially Puritanism, which teaches that one will be just if brought into conformity with the true being. The difference between Puritanism and Barthianism lies precisely in their attitude toward conformity.

The Barthian attitude is clearly a refusal to be bound by prescriptions. The dictate of conscience, which Barth takes as God speaking within, is never anything other than a discourse that describes nothing. The addressee thus cannot put himself or herself in the position of an utterer since its exact meaning can never be grasped. In other words, he or she can never emerge from the sphere of partial knowledge onto a vantage point which commands a full view. Put under this perspective, every prescription is no more than the statement of an opinion, one not pegged to a descriptive or theoretical discourse. Hence, Barthianism turns away from a conformist attitude and adopts a more flexible approach. It is a posture which can be aptly described as "the maximization of concepts."

Concept, according to Lyotard, has "the status of knowledge or rational politics" (Lyotard, *Just* 75). Related to it is Idea, which "is an almost unlimited use of the concept: one has concepts, and one maximizes them. . . . A sort of field where one can run and let oneself go to see how far one can reach with a given concept" (Lyotard, *Just* 75). Formulated in this way, Idea loosens up the restraint of concept because it does not stick to a fixed point, hence without a true being to conform to. But, unlike theories raised by some poststructuralists, it does not signal the reign of nihilism. The maximization of concept, instead, implies a finality or a horizon, within which we are allowed to make judgment.¹³ This finality or horizon is a vaguely defined field in which not one, but many options, can be found. The idea of having a distinguishing characteristic without being explicit about it is also seen in the Barthian conscience. It serves as a basis to regulate our judgment without handing out iron-clad rules. By giving a sense of being good or bad, right or wrong, it does not tell you exactly what to

¹² Here I would elaborate on this idea by quoting a passage from Lyotard's *Just Gaming*:

God commands. One does not know very well what he commands. He commands obedience, that is, that one place oneself in the position of the pragmatic genre of obligation. . . . God himself we know nothing about; there is nothing to say about it. . . . There is a law, but we do not know what this law says. . . . "Be just." But we do not know what it is to be just. (52)

¹³ In *Just Gaming*, Lyotard declares that although he cannot say what is just, he is certain of what is unjust. He proceeds to cite suppression of different views as a glaring case of injustice. From what is unjust, he argues, emerges a finality or a horizon, within which we can judge what is just. As a further elaboration, what is deemed unjust is a concept. To maximize this concept, we may derive a wide set of what is just. What is noteworthy, it does not impose on us the only rule of justice, nor does it fall into the realm of nihilism. To our discussion of adultery, these two points are particularly significant. Adultery is not something to be encouraged or promoted. But it is simply inhuman to honor the sanctity of marriage at whatever cost to either party of the married couple.

do. In an epigraph to A Month of Sundays, Paul Tillich is quoted as saying, "This principle of soul, universally and individually, is the principle of ambiguity." Just as it is ambiguous, a considerable latitude is thus allowed in choosing to do what the conscience prompts.

In A Month of Sundays, the leeway gives the Rev. Marshfield a chance to develop a perspective radically different from the Rev. Dimmesdale. As a Protestant minister "publicly pledged to goodness and fidelity," Marshfield, however, "evinces no distinct guilt" even when he "scorns his wife, betrays one mistress, is [i]mpotent with another, exploits the trust and unhappiness of some who come to him for guidance" (MS 202). Instead, he has "a sense of events as a field of rubble in which he is empowered to search for some mysterious treasure" (MS 202). In fact, he is looking for new possibilities in events happening to or around him. Worldly views cannot tie him down, nor can the church. This attitude is reflected in his hostility toward ethics and also in his skillful use of the Bible to defend acts of adultery. Compared with Dimmesdale's conformist attitude, Marshfield's refusal to be bound by prescriptions reveals a Barthian mindset.

As the Rev. Marshfield admits, "Reading Barth gives me air to breathe" (MS 90). Karl Barth's prose is categorized by him as among the few positive things in life. Wesley Chillingworth, professor of ethics, even goes so far as to ask him in some interviews: "What is it . . . that you find so heartening in Barth? Wherein lies this specificity that pleases you?" (MS 55). The old scholar's questioning may sum up the enmity existing between Barthianism and ethics. Ned Bork, Marshfield's assistant minister, is more explicit in his criticism: "It sets up a diastasis with nothing over against man except this exultant emptiness. This terrible absolute unknowable other. It panders to despair" (MS 90). But to Marshfield, "Doing right is, to too great an extent, a matter of details, of tinkering. That great gush of heavenly excessus runs dry in a desert of rivulet distinctions. . . . Ethics is plumbing, necessary but dingy. Ethical passion the hobgoblin of trivial minds" (MS 192). This statement partly explains why ethics never appeals to him.

In fact, ethics and social service represent everything he hates about academic religion and church work. As Marshfield preaches in his sermon, God's way is not ours. To him, it is an absolutely unknown other. What follows from this argument is that doing right is irrelevant to God's will. This distrust in morality can be traced to Karl Barth, who ridicules even the Kantian ethics as founded on a presupposition which turns against humanity. In A Month of Sundays, Dr. Chillingworth's course in ethics is satirized for "its safe and complacent faithlessness, its empty difficulty . . ." (MS 50). Kant's categorical imperatives and *Achtung*, or respect, are made comical when the intrusion of this portion coincides with Jane, the old professor's daughter, allowing the young Marshfield to caress her breast through her sweater. Hegel's identification of morality with the demands of the state is given a ironical twist by the arrangement that it occurs in synchrony with the free access of his hand to her breast. Ethics stands exposed as "slave virtues" and "herd virtues." The disparaging of ethics extends to social service of church work. The church's social service is caricatured as preposterous. The conception of ethics and social service as inadequate underlies the Barthian emphasis on the dictate of conscience, which is allegedly the voice of God speaking within.

Stripped of rigid restrictions, Marshfield follows the prodding of his mind and openly embraces adultery. In one of the sermons written during his one-month stay in the retreat, the priest cites the Bible to support his reading that Jesus and God do not

oppose adultery. His interpretation is an obvious departure from the orthodox reading, revealing ambiguity existing in written language. Put in the light of language games, biblical precepts are concepts which can be maximized to "see how far one can reach with a given concept" (Lyotard, *Just* 75), once the authority of the signified is dethroned. In other words, when the required conformity to a true method is ignored, a new horizon may emerge and unfold its various possibilities. In the case of Marshfield, since ethics is discredited, prescriptions can no longer find an anchor in theoretical discourses, thereby losing their claim to a true being. The return to conscience helps lift the lid of a rigidified, monolithic sense and makes possible a flexible, multifarious reading.

Marshfield's unorthodox construal of the Bible is particularly striking in a sermon entitled "Neither do I condemn thee." The title is borrowed from the words Jesus said to the woman caught in the act of adultery and brought to him for a trial. After introducing this episode, Marshfield goes on to argue that adultery is our inherent condition. To support this argument, he quotes a passage from the Bible: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (qtd. in MS 44). Biblical scholars usually take this passage as an admonition against lusting after women, even mentally. But Marshfield has a different reading. "But who that has eyes to see cannot so lust? Was not the First Divine Commandment received by human ears, 'Be fruitful, and multiply'? Adultery is not a choice to be avoided; it is a circumstance to be embraced. Thus I construe these texts" (MS 44-45). To a conventional Christian, Marshfield's construal obviously contravenes the correct interpretation sanctioned by the church.

To denounce it as a misreading, however, misses a significant point in our discussion of a flexible, multifarious reading. For the fashionable idea that every reading is a misreading rules out the possibility of a correct reading. This hermeneutic tenet aside, the explosion of a glittering array of interpretations signals the collapse of a dominant code, a correct method, and a fixed significance. Together, their demise finds an echo in ethics being discredited. Just like concepts being maximized, conscience cleared of the bondage of ethics opens up many new possibilities. Hence, the First Divine Commandment, "Be fruitful, and multiply," can be recontextualized into a support of adultery. And Jesus's admonition against lusting after women can be turned into a precept that champions extramarital sex. The horizon allowed for possible meanings is surprisingly wide when the cap of sanctioned ideas is removed.

A striking similarity suggests itself between this and adultery. To commit adultery is, in a way, to explore new possibilities in the current marriage, though at the expense of wedding vows. Transgression does not mean to abolish the marriage contract altogether, but rather to challenge its restrictions and to test how far one can reach with the act of violation. The whole process occurs within the horizon of marriage, though the vows of staying faithful are not observed. Since marriage is established on a contract that spells out chastity, sexual impulses are stifled and chances of passionate love deliberately shunned. Adultery means to grab at chances that arise and to wake up institutionally stifled potentials. "To [marriage] we bring token reverence, and wooden vows; to [adultery] a vivid reverence bred upon the carnal presence of the forbidden, and vows that rend our hearts as we stammer them" (MS 47). In marriage and adultery, we see reflected the relationship between concept and Idea as well as that between ethics and conscience.

A similar pattern is enacted in the case of Marshfield. A Protestant minister with a Barthian mindset, he finds himself surrounded by an ethical wife who emphasizes the right thing. As he puts it, "under my good wife's administration sex had been a solemn, once-a-week business, ritualized and worrisomely hushed" (MS 34). Thus his encounter with the church organist, Alicia, stokes a fire which has been sputtering along. The affair enlivens a life bored by a wooden marriage bed. "Life, that's what we seek in one another" (MS 28). Adultery becomes a means not only to revive stifled sexual impulses, but also to help "the modern American man recover his sense of worth, not as dogged breadwinner and economic integer, but as romantic minister and phallic knight, as personage, embodiment, and hero" (MS 46). In the adulterous minister's vision, what has been repressed or denied in marriage can be gratified in adultery.

Much like adultery, writing has the effect of waking up energy, which can lead to the creation of a new kind of expression. Adultery derives its creative force from the element of play which threatens the social order and law, while writing from its ambiguity which disrupts truth-claims. In the Western tradition, speech is adopted to communicate thoughts or ideas. But writing is seen as the secondary symbols, and so further removed from truth. Though, as Derrida argues, writing cannot be "totally inhabited by the voice,"¹⁴ it is "the 'free play' or element of undecidability within every system of communication" (Norris 28). That is why the element of play manifested in adultery can find its expression in writing. In its disruptive encounter with what is touted as truth, writing gains its force from the distance kept from mental activities. It is thus not a tool of the mind, nor an appendage of speech. "The metaphor of writing," as Derrida calls it, should be understood in this light. Since it is not transparent, writing problematizes the "pure and simple" presence, thereby promising to bring to surface what is called absence, or "the onto-theological exclusion of trace" (Derrida, *Writing* 197). Put in plain language, the ambiguity of writing may reveal a multiplicity of ideas behind a neat concept.

In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter J. Ong suggests that writing can greatly exceed the potentials of speech. As the first step out of the confines of oral utterance, he argues that "any semiotic mark, that is, any visible or sensible mark which an individual makes and assigns a meaning to" (84) can count as writing. Hence, a simple scratch on a rock, a notch on a stick, a footprint, or even a deposit of feces or urine can be writing to the person who sees a meaning in it. With writing in this full sense,

encoded visible markings engage words fully so that the exquisitely intricate structures and references evolved in sound can be visibly recorded exactly in their specific complexity and, because visibly recorded, can implement production of still more exquisite structures and references, far surpassing the potentials of oral utterance. (Ong 84-85)

Ong's idea about writing finds its predecessor in Plato's "Phaedo,"¹⁵ though it is stated in a different way. In the text, Plato has Socrates say that mind "is the cause of all" and it "places everything as it is best" (501). He complains that writing states "no valid causes of the arrangement of all things" (502). So, instead of relying on writing,

¹⁴ Derrida bases his argument on the reason that a necessary range of resources such as punctuations, spacing, diacritical marks exist only in the form of graphic inscription. To drive home his point, he even coins the word *différance*, which sounds exactly the same as *difference* but means differently. Besides, Derrida argues that writing can even exist separately from speech in such forms as sports and dance.

¹⁵ To have an idea of how Derrida reads this text, please refer to his "Plato's Pharmacy," *Dissemination*, 61-171.

"Socrates does by mind all he does" (502). The complaint about writing reflects an obsession with essence. Since writing may reveal intricate structures not conceived by mind, it is dismissed as confusing the essence of each thing. This is vividly seen in the following talk: "[I]f anyone tells me that anything is beautiful because it has a fine flowery colour or shape or anything like that, I thank him and let all that go; for I get confused in all those, but this one thing I hold to myself simply and completely . . . that what makes it beautiful is only that beauty" (504). Here is the abstract idea of beauty vs. the fleshed-out substance of "a fine flowery colour or shape or anything like that." As we can infer from it, Plato clearly has detected the potentials of writing to develop well beyond the control of the mind.

In *A Month of Sundays*, writing exhibits the power of discovering new aspects unknown to the mind. The opening up of new horizons may pose a serious challenge to existing regulations because new situations can knock the bottom out of their efficacy. As a result, the restraining force of law and order may be weakened, thereby facilitating the growth of unbridled, wanton spirit. Seen in this light, the use of writing as a means to wean the Rev. Marshfield off adultery, not surprisingly, winds up landing him in an even bolder seduction. Since adultery is an act of breach, a violation of the present order, it is hard to imagine that the errant party can be led back to the fold of bondage by a means that is subversive in nature. That is precisely the case of the adulterous minister. When moving into the retreat, Marshfield is given a sheaf of blank sheets, enough for him to write on for a month. Writing is designed by his keepers as a way to cure his "distraction." But as he writes along, he is egged on to the act of seducing Ms. Prynne, Manageress of the retreat. Indeed, writing adds fuel to the flames of adultery.

To further explore continuities between writing and adultery, we can turn to the mistypings on the diary which registers the feelings Marshfield experiences as he recounts acts of adultery. The playful effect of the slips of the pen,¹⁶ or to be more precise, the slips of the typewriter, destabilizes the common use of language. Its result is the waking up of energy, which in turn may lead to the creation of a new kind of expression. Some mistypings on chapters 10 and 11 may serve as examples to illustrate this point. At the end of chapter 10, the sentence does not come to a full stop but carries on until the next chapter. "Well how do you think I feel . . . having you run in and fuck and hop back into your clothes and traipse off to some adoring deaconess after you've had your" (MS 81), the complaint of his mistress Alicia spills over into the next chapter. So chapter 11 starts with "Fun"? "Way with me"? "Kicks for the week"? (MS 82), to show that the narrator forgets exactly how she has put it. The spanning of one sentence over two chapters is a new kind of expression. The creation of the spill-over sentence, which in a way mimics the act of transgressing the proper realm of marriage, has something to do with the preceding slips of the pen, which can be viewed as violating the proper form of words.

¹⁶ The term "slips of the pen," which is easily associated with Sigmund Freud, may evoke the term "slips of the tongue." The existence of the latter may be cited as a proof that the playful effect of language errors is not exclusive to writing. But there is a difference between their occurrences. As Sigmund Freud asserts in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, "we make slips of the pen more readily than slips of the tongue" (131). Freud quotes Wundt as giving an explanation of this phenomenon: "In the course of normal speaking the inhibitory function of the will is continuously directed to bringing the course of ideas and the articulatory movements into harmony with each other. If the expressive movement which follows the ideas is retarded through mechanical causes, as is the case in writing . . . such anticipations make their appearance with particular ease" (qtd. Freud 131-32).

The mistyping on chapter 10 gives the Protestant clergyman a glimpse undreamt of before, paving the way for the new style of expression. When Marshfield hears noises one wintry night, he leaves his heavily sleeping wife behind on the bed to find the black car of Alicia parking for the second time at the cottage of his assistant priest, Ned Bork. When he recalls the scene he has seen at the first time, he hopes it is an optical illusion. "The naked foot I had classified as a favered* hallucination" (MS 75). The slip of the pen reveals the combined meanings of "favored" and "fevered." It shows the effect of straying from the intended "favored" into the unintended "favered," which is lexically senseless. This act of revolt against the dictate of the mind, nevertheless, allows some impulses to break out of the confines of encoded signs. The mistyped "favered" thus is full of promises not seen in the intended word "favored."

As a way of concluding the paper, the mistyped "favered" hallucination, together with other slips of the pen, sensitizes Marshfield to the presence of boundless possibilities imprisoned behind coded systems. The awareness of this can explain why he leaves one sentence unfinished at the end of chapter 10 and only completes it at the beginning of the next chapter. The three possible ways of rounding out the sentence suggest his unwillingness to let the tyrannizing mind drown out the nuances of meanings. Of course, as mentioned earlier, the act of spilling over a chapter is in a way similar to straying from the confines of marriage. In transgressing the form of a word, which is the case of mistyped words, or the tight control of the mind, which is the case of writing, or the restriction of marriage, which is the case of adultery, new possibilities are dangling before every attempt.

Writing, speech, and language games each has different degrees of gaining access to what is touted as truth. This paper uses them to explore how adultery responds to them. Adultery is repeated from time to time. But with the change of context, discourses of adultery vary as well. In studying the issue of adultery in the two intertextual fictions, I find my approach extremely fruitful since it helps me gain an insight into the extremely complicated relationship between the perennial issue of adultery and its literary representation as a cultural memory.

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En-/Dis-abling Dialogism and Irish Nationalism in “Cyclops”

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Abstract

“Cyclops” is perhaps the most overtly political chapter in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. It is not surprising that critics have not failed to overstate the significance of the satire and critiques of the Irish literary revival movement Joyce makes in this chapter. While most critical attention is paid to Joyce’s disavowal of a parochial perimeter of Irish Nationalism on an ideological level, this paper will attempt to identify and locate Joyce’s politicization in the chapter’s structural dialogized form.

I will argue that the 33 interpolating sections in the chapter composed of pastiches—of epic discourse, gothic romance, legalese, journalese, and dramatization—parody and travesty the high models and discourses embodied in national myth-making. These mimicry discourses embody and yet parody a fundamental monological desire for the originary plenitude and scientific certainty valorized by the popular movement of rediscovering Irishness in the time of the novel. These various generic expressions inserted in the narrative provide great loopholes from which co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between different socio-ideological groups and circles in the present, can be configured and glimpsed.

My concern will be to show when the text crosses generic boundaries—from the first-person narrative to pastiche interpolations and vice versa—how such ensuing textual hybridity creates dialectological elasticity which spells out an “other-languagedness,” challenging and deforming the linguistic coordinates of the nation-building myth. Thus, instead of the epic-like, monochronic, and hierarchical perimeter of Irish national myth, this chapter, after all, enacts a realm of the novel in the most invigorating dialogical sense as defined and celebrated by Mikhail Bakhtin. Joyce’s act of politicizing may then be identified in his conjuring openended, indecisive, and indeterminate textual loopholes in this chapter heralding the entrance of heteroglossia, permanently destabilizing the official and authoritative mono-discourse of the nationalist kind.

摘要

本論文旨在分析《尤利西斯》第十二章〈獨眼巨人〉中為數多達三十三則的插入敘述。其多種仿擬文體——包括史詩、中古騎士風、法律文件、新聞體及戲劇體——穿插出入於主要的第一人稱敘述當中，製造文本的漏洞。從中各種互為齟齬的立場、意識型態、團體及時間觀等得以現身，因此成功地顛覆本章男性角色一致推