Timescapes

The Production of Temporality in Literature and Museums

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Abstract

Timescapes: The production of temporality in museums and literature seeks to partially resolve a significant gap in the literature concerning museums and time. Certain temporal qualities of museums, such as their roles as sites of memory and history, have indeed been explored, and their temporal oddities have been obliquely expressed by thinkers including Foucault. However, direct investigation of the temporal ontology of the museum is seriously lacking; the explorations above focus on the relationship between museums and the past, and certain Foucauldian descriptions of the temporality of museums have been taken on without being subjected to in depth, critical analysis. In order to counter this lack, this thesis aims to directly investigate temporal production by developing and deploying a new critical framework based on tools taken from the creation and analysis of literary works and concepts from academic literary theory, in a physical setting and written analysis. It asks how temporality is manipulated within museums and how that temporality, in turn, affects certain ontological characteristics of the constituents and interlocutors of those museums. As a result, it shows museum temporality to be manipulated and manipulative, paradoxically porous and bounded, and inherently relational, stemming from everything which constitutes a museum. Temporal investigation also reveals questions regarding the ontological and representational natures of museums; this thesis indicates the ways in which they represent others, how they approach, display and build relationships between themselves and their visitors, and something of their own ontological self-awareness. It suggests that cross fertilization between museum and literary studies could prove productive for both the analytical investigation and practical creation of museum spaces. *Timescapes* seeks to be a thesis powerfully conceptual, one able to highlight the philosophical and ethical dimensions of museums as media, and yet also be demonstrably, productively, of use in the physical, practical world.

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During the course of this PhD I have encountered many wonderful people, each and every one of whom has coloured and shaped my experience; without them, no matter how brief our encounter, this thesis would not be what it is. There are some people, however, whose impact has been profound, and who I want to thank.

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Introduction

Time will reveal everything. It is a babbler, and speaks even when not asked.

Euripides, Aeolus, *fragment 38*

Time must be brought to light and genuinely conceived as the horizon of all understanding of being and every interpretation of being.

Martin Heidegger, Being and Time

A Preface

There is a widespread assumption that the nature of museum time is special somehow, peculiar and unique. This thesis shows that in many ways this assumption is well founded, but that this is due to the manipulation of the space and contents of institutions and the less deliberate emergent effects that arise from the arrangements and interpretations enacted within their walls. Using literature as a focalising lens, the research which follows shows who and what are responsible for the temporal character of museum landscapes and what tools and effects are and might be employed or come to pass in their manifestation. Whilst it focusses on the actions taken or events created by those in a curatorial and design role, it does not fail to consider the actively interpretive roles of the visitor. It shows who the temporal characteristics of objects and environments are relational, built from the interaction of contents, the shape size and aesthetics of the display space, and the qualities of those observing them.

This thesis also points to wider philosophical issues of significance to museum sites; how museums relate to notions of reality and authenticity, how they present and represent cultures and individuals, how they reflect upon themselves as institutions, how they interact with the wider social world and how they are paradoxically both open and isolated. As the conclusion will reveal in more detail, it also has future implications both practical and intellectual which may prove valuable to the museum practitioner and academic.

It should be acknowledged at the beginning that this thesis might be accused of Eurocentrism. It is certainly the case that both its literary and museological examples stem from Europe and its diaspora. However, this is a product of the intellectual context of this project and its author, a privileged, white, British woman. But this fact does not diminish the value of the thesis, for it is not the precise examples chosen which are its central focus, but the notion of using literature, its theoretical debates and creative techniques – in whatever manifestation they might arise in cultures very different across the world – to illuminate the space of the museum. It should also be noted that there are certain topics upon which this thesis touches, but into the literature of which it does not delve with too much depth. In particular, the reader might note the brief sections which relate to touch (p.206), photographic theory and digital media (pp.238-9). These discussions were included not with the purpose of revisiting the existing topical literature, the extent of which the author is aware, but to explore how the circumstantial application of literary thinking in particular might be used to illuminate specific objects and situations, and extend these topics of examination still further.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to examine the nature and production of museum and exhibition temporalities and timescapes. Secondly, it aims to assess the value of literary tools as a means by which to analyse and describe these temporalities – and, by implication, other aspects of the physical museum environment. To achieve these goals, the thesis needs to explore and answer various research questions. There are, to begin with, two foundational questions from which all other parts of the thesis follow.

> What tools does literature deploy for the description and manipulation of temporality in the case of its own products?
>
> What, if any, of these tools can be applied in a museum setting, and how can they be successfully applied?

These are dealt with within the methodological section of this introduction and the first four chapters of the thesis proper, which are grouped together within 'Part One: Literary Temporalities'. The answers to these first two questions are then deployed in the investigation of the following questions:

> How is temporality manipulated and organised in the space of the museum?
>
> What effect does this temporal manipulation have upon the sense of presence, reality and auracity engendered by and around the constituent parts of the museum?

These questions are dealt with in the second half of the thesis, 'Temporality in the Museum'.

Finally, in the conclusion, the thesis will aim to emphasise its concrete, real world aspects, and reflect upon its dual contribution to the museum world. For it seeks to extend both the academic, ontological understanding of the museum as a philosophical object, and future discourse regarding practical museum and exhibition production and design.

Intellectual Context: Temporality in General

Temporality is fundamental and pervasive, manifesting in various ways and colouring the perception of every part of human existence. Time behaves and is apprehended uniquely in every moment and every place; these unique configurations might be termed 'timescapes' – temporary temporal landscapes built, according to Barbara Adam, from the 'rhythmicities…timing and tempos…changes and contingencies' of the activities and interactions of organisms and matter.[1] As a necessary constituent of existence, time has been a central subject of philosophy and science since the writing of Aristotle's *Physics*, the first surviving philosophical attempt to provide a full account of time.[2] From then on, questions regarding its nature, shape, behaviour, interpretation and even its reality have been raised across the disciplinary spectrum. In the twentieth century the subject of time was of immense interest, with scientific discoveries changing the understanding of time and its role in existence, and

[1]Barbara Adam, *Timescapes of Modernity: The Environment and Invisible Hazards,* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.10
[2]Robin Le Poidevin, *Travels in Four Dimensions: The Enigmas of Space and Time,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.14

technological developments altering human interactions and operations with and within time.[3] Art and literature responded to these changes and interests in their own way, examining and manipulating time to produce innovative works, as Habermas' lecture,' Modernity's Consciousness of Time', emphasised.[4]

Time has also been discussed in terms of politics and control. In 'The French Republican Calendar: A Case Study in the Sociology of Time', Eviatar Zerubavel noted how important the management of time was for the ecumenical and governmental control of society.[5] As institutions which have had, and continue to have, a large role in the education and leisure of the population and in which governmental forces have a large stake, museums are not exempt from the context of temporality and power. Temporality also has social and moral dimensions; the ethnographer Evans-Pritchard found it difficult to communicate with the Nuer people whom he studied, in part due to their different perceptions of time, and his investigation serves as a prime example of the way in which temporality can colour representations of and relationships between different cultural groups.[6]

All these engagements with temporality indicate some aspect of its importance in artistic, social and political life, and they form the broadest of justifications and contexts for this present work. They do not, however, deal directly with the particular, and peculiar, temporality of the museum.

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[3]John Urry, *Global Complexity,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p.1
[4]Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity's Consciousness of Time', in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures,* trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990), pp.1 - 22
[5]Eviatar Zerubavel, 'The French Republican Calendar: A Case Study in the Sociology of Time', *American Sociological Review,* 42(6), 1977, 868-877
[6]E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Nuer Time-Reckoning', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 12(2), April 1939, 189-216

Intellectual Context: Museums and Strange Time

Museums might be characterised as pieces of 'temporal art' – something, according to Lessing, experienced sequentially over a period of time and not restricted to any singular moment.[7] They are certainly sites of temporal complexity, and if their nature as philosophical objects is to be in any way understood, this complexity should be investigated and questioned; such is the purpose of this thesis. Some limited explorations in this vein have been attempted and, before beginning this particular investigation, these explorations, and the temporal qualities of the museum which they uncover and exhibit, should be briefly presented and assessed. For not only do they express some of the reasons for embarking upon this study by explicitly foregrounding the temporal oddities of the museum, they also show how existing literature is limited and lacking.

Museums, bounded and distinguished in some way either physical or conceptual from the everyday, have often been thought of as alternatives to its quotidian, chronological timescape. David Carr's exploration of museums and libraries, *A Place Not a Place* makes this disjunction very explicit.[8] He speaks of the 'tension of consciousness' which enfolds the visitor on the edge of a museum threshold; the moment in which they become aware of the manifold possibilities to be encountered, and to be realised by

[7]Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: As Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry,* trans. Ellen Frothingham, (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2005 (1898)) p.21
[8]David Carr, *A Place Not A Place: Reflection and Possibility in Museums and Libraries* (Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2006), p.25-6

them in a cogent, personal, extended experience. Here, the emphasis is on difference, the break which separates the everyday from the museum-space.[9]

Perhaps the most influential expression of this removed temporality of museums, however, is to be found in the work of Michel Foucault. He designated museums as forms of heterotopia - as places outside of and different from all other places in which, despite their difference, all real sites might be 'simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.'[10] This designation had a temporal basis, for he defined both museums and heterotopias partly in relation to their temporal behaviour. Foucault's heterotopias were linked to 'heterochronies' – specific 'slices of time' – which were only arrived at when a conscious being broke from everyday temporality and closed themselves within an isolated, heterochronic space.[11] Similarly museums, he claimed, were built upon the principle of creating a site in which items and ideas can be placed so as to be immune from the ravages of time.[12] Though many canonical museum texts, such as Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum,* have taken on this notion, they have not really interrogated or investigated what it means for the museum as an ontological being, and neither have they really recognised its limits.[13] Both of Foucault's definitions are problematic, and when his version of the heterotopia is applied to the museum in particular, issues certainly arise. For Foucault, a heterotopic site was genuinely real; yet if, as he also suggested, it is linked to a heterochrony existing beyond a complete break with the everyday, it cannot exist within the framework of

[9]Ibid., p.5
[10]Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics,* 16(1), 1986, 22-27, p.24
[11]Ibid., p.26
[12]Ibid.
[13]Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: history, theory, politics,* (London: Routledge, 1995)

reality consciously perceived and socially agreed upon. For it is time as well as space which constitutes experience in the comprehensible world and which provides connections between different kinds of site and experiences within it. A heterotopia, therefore, might be different in its tone and manipulation of time within its own bounds; but it can never be wholly separate from the timescapes of the everyday. Shared, social, chronological time may behave and be treated strangely in the museum, but it is never entirely absent.

Museums can provoke profound personal and collective recollections. In *Dream Spaces,* Gaynor Kavanagh writes of the anarchic nature of personal remembrance and imagination which occurs within the context of the physical museum visit or object encounter; the dream space which might be likened to an individual's own, internal and objectively unknowable heterotopia.[14] In *Museums and Memory,* Susan M. Crane gathered together a selection of essays centred upon the idea that the museum is an archive of artefacts able to provoke memories both individual and cultural. Here, museums are presented as storehouses with consequences for the ways in which individuals and cultures are represented and historically located, and as places in which personal identities and academic interpretations can interact; again, memory is related to issues of power and knowledge when the two come into collision and conflict.[15]

[14]Gaynor Kavanagh, *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum,* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp.2-3
[15]Susan A. Crane, *Museums and Memory,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.4, p.7

Museums also have a significant role in social memory, as Huyssen, for instance, has shown.[16] In *Twilight Memories,* he noted that, as a reaction to a world rapidly changing in terms of its spatial and geographical relationships, the temporal anchoring produced by memory and memorial acts is ever more important.[17] In Eviatar Zerubavel's words, they are useful in manufacturing any 'sociomental topography of the past', the fundamental shared history upon which any society bases itself.[18] They have been called 'storehouses of memory', 'mirrors of the past in the present', and such phrases illuminate the historical elements of museum temporality. However, as this thesis seeks to emphasise, the relationship between museums and time is not one based solely around 'the past', but about temporal confluence and the staged comingling of different points in time and space. Huyssen stated that memory is mutable and changeable; that it has a dawn and a twilight, and that museums can be sites for the potential resurrection of a memory almost lost.[19] To understand museums simply as 'temporally retroactive'[20] is to ignore the rich complexity of their relationship to chronological time, the way in which, through memory, they create places in which the past, present and future, real and imagined, come together. This thesis seeks to resolve and eliminate this lack.

Explorations of spatial and conceptual removal, memory and history such as these are the most extensive writings to be found in the literature regarding museum

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[16]Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in A Culture of Amnesia,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p.15
[17]Ibid., p.7
[18]Eviatar Zerubavel, *Timemaps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p.1
[19]Huyssen, p.3, p.15
[20]Jean-Louis Deotte, 'Rome, the Archetypal Museum, and the Louvre, the Negation of Division', in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum,* ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp.51-65, p.59

temporality. Yet none of these works really investigate the basic ontological questions or characteristics of the temporal museum: they investigate memory, history, the past, removal, perhaps, but these are engagements with an aspect of existence influenced by time rather than a direct questioning of the fundamental nature of temporality itself. They do not extend their examination into the other, equally temporal, aspects of the museum as a site of phenomenological human experience. It is these lacks that this thesis seeks to address. For to understand the self, Heidegger said, time must be 'brought to light', and the same is true in the case of museums.[21]

Intellectual Context: Literature and the 'Reading' of Culture

The methods used in this thesis to bring temporality to light are those of literature; the methodology and the section entitled 'Literary Temporalities' will illuminate more precisely how this is to be done. However, it is necessary that a context for such an approach is established, for the combination of museology and the study of literature is not one which immediately springs to mind. Yet there are many ways in which they are alike, and, as shall be shown in this section, a number of significant precedents, historic and contemporary, for the appropriation of literary thinking in other fields of study.

Like every museum, every work of literature is a piece of 'temporal art', revealing itself sequentially over a period of time.[22] Like museums, literary works play with the order, speed, rhythm and meaning of objects, characters and events. Many of the techniques

[21]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (London: SCM Press, Ltd, 1962), p.39
[22]Lessing, 2005 (1898), p.91

used to study literary works emphasise temporality, from the plotting and organization of events which is the focus of narratology, to the poetic analysis of rhythm and pre-semantic meaning. The methods of literary analysis are both diverse and inherently temporal, and thus might be usefully used in the analysis of museum timescapes.

This thesis does not claim that the spaces of literature and of the museum are wholly analogous; indeed, it is crucial to acknowledge the distinctions as well as the similarities if one is to be usefully deployed to inform the other. Yet as products of shared culture, both have been subject in some form or another to the vicissitudes of theoretical change, from structuralism to poststructuralism, modernism to postmodernism, and both have been heavily influenced by, or associated with, such artistic movements as surrealism and futurism. The museum and the literary work are not exclusive items segregated from each other or from other cultural forms, but should instead be thought of as boundary objects, possible to think and theorize across the vast panorama of philosophy and culture.

Literature has long driven the production of theory far beyond the confines of its own disciplinary bounds and it has done so in a manifold of different ways which are crucial for the contextualisation and justification of this thesis and its processes. In order to successfully situate this thesis within a theoretical family, this section will explore in brief how literature has been applied in cultural thought ranging from the most abstract echelons of philosophy to the most concrete objects of material culture studies.

In his posthumously published work *Philosophical Investigations,* Ludwig Wittgenstein alleged that many of the puzzles that arise in philosophy are attributable to a misconception regarding the nature of language – a misconception which suggests that the meanings of words are inviolable and eternal.[23] Instead, Wittgenstein claims that language is relational, that meaning is made in the context in which the words are used. Such thinking is easily applied to the creation of literature, or in museums, where words and objects are made to mean through processes of estrangement and rearrangement. Wittgenstein called these changing contextual situations 'language games'; a concept which would prove highly influential in wider cultural thought.[24]

Jean Francois Lyotard, for example, was to use this concept in his 1984 text *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.*[25] In this report, Lyotard suggested that theories of existence and history should not be understood in terms of the grand narratives which postmodernism scorned, but instead in terms of smaller, localised and contingent events and social bonds which can themselves be understood as language games with visible boundaries and borders.[26] To the linguistic and logical basis of Wittgenstein, Lyotard added *narrative,* and would as a result construct concepts of history, theory and interpretation far more literary in tone.

Narrative is a concept which has extensively permeated philosophical debates regarding how human beings perceive and represent the world around them. In *On*

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[23]'For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday',* wrote Wittgenstein. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G.E. M. Anscombe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p.19
[24]Wittgenstein, pp.31-39
[25]Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)
[26]Ibid., p.15

Narrative, for example, W.J.T. Mitchell collected together essays exploring how stories and narratives are used to make sense of the world.[27] Jerome Bruner extended the power of narrative still further in 'The Narrative Construction of Reality'; because it is a form of representing and explaining existence and history, and because humans are able to understand and communicate that existence only through representation, his arguments suggest that narrative can, in fact, be said to constitute reality.[28] Here, the methods of constructing literature are deemed analogous, if not identical, to the construction of existence itself.

The *Course in General Linguistics,* collated from the lectures of Ferdinand de Saussure, was a book with impact far beyond the typical expectations of its discipline.[29] As the starting point for structural linguistics and central to semiotics, it was to position language as more than simply a way of communicating existence. As with Bruner's concept of narrative, Saussure's work elevated language to a position central to reality. In *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein,* Roy Harris argued that both men incited a reassessment of language; one in which words were understood as 'collective products of social interaction, essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their world.'[30] Harris goes on to state that the influence of these individuals and their concepts regarding the fundamental nature of language are particularly marked in the development of disciplines including philosophy, psychology, and

[27]W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative,* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981)
[28]Jerome Bruner, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry,* 18(1), Autumn 1991, 1-21
[29]Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* trans. Roy Harris, (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1983)
[30]Roy Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein: How to Play Games with Words,* (London: Routledge, 1990 (1988)), p. ix

sociology.[31] The structures of Saussure were also taken on by other disciplines which have particular pertinence for this thesis, anthropology and material culture studies in particular, but they also continued to influence language and literature. In Tzvetan Todorov's 'Structural Analysis of Narrative' can be found a mirror of this present thesis; an attempt to apply the theories of psychology and linguistics to the study of literature with the purposes of countering those who deemed it a subjective and unscientific discipline.[32]

Saussure's work produced terms such as *langue* and *parole,* the basic building blocks of semiology, *signifier* and *signified* which make up the arbitrary and relational *sign,* and, particularly worthy of note here, the temporal concepts of synchronic and diachronic analysis.[33] His work has certainly been criticized and superseded, but that is not the focus here. What *is* crucial is how and by whom it was taken on.

Levi-Strauss, as is well known, applied Saussurian concepts to the study of myth. Like Saussure he sought out *langue* – the underlying system or set of options – rather than *parole* – the specific acts or utterances arising from it – though he did use instances of *parole* to reach that fundamental layer. In 'The Structural Study of Myth' he also appropriated Saussure's combinatorial theory of meaning making, substituting the smallest meaningful unit of language – the morpheme – with the 'gross constituent units' of sentences, in order to analyse the relationships and meanings that coalesce around myth. He thereby suggested that linguistic theory might be used for historical

[31]Ibid.
[32]Tzvetan Todorov and Arnold Weinstein, 'Structural Analysis of Narrative', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction,* 3(1), Autumn 1969, 70-76, p.72
[33]Saussure, 1983. For definitions, see the Glossary.

as well as mythological comment and that through Saussure's diachronic and synchronic modes of analysis, forms of communication other than language – in this essay a musical score – could be deciphered by those unfamiliar with them.[34]

In material culture and museum studies too, the work of these early structuralists gained an influential following. Sue Pearce provides many exemplary examples. In the essay 'Objects as meaning: or, narrating the past', she adapted and combined Saussurian linguistics and Wolfgang Iser's notions of Konkretisation, virtuality and the active reader to express how multiple discourses might be constructed around an event or object and create a meaningful past.[35] Crucially, she argued in the same paper that primacy of meaning does not reside in either the polysemantic object or the interpreting observer, but mutually, within both.[36] This argument forms a crucial basis for this thesis, which itself takes a very personal, yet theoretically grounded, approach to the multiply meaningful museum space and the things which exist, objectively, within it.

Barthes and Derrida, too, built on the work of Saussure. They were to take these concepts into and beyond the study of literature. Barthes would build on the work of Todorov and Levi-Strauss in 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', a paper concerned with the functions and units that constitute narrative, and which echoed the work of Todorov in its title.[37] In it, he would develop the notions of cardinal

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[34]Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth', *The Journal of American Folklore,* 68(270), Myth: A Symposium, Oct-Dec., 1955, 428-444

[35]Susan M. Pearce, 'Objects as meaning; or narrating the past', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections,* ed. Susan M. Pearce, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.19-29, p.19

[36]Ibid., p.26

[37]Roland Barthes, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', *New Literary History,* 6(2), 'On Narrative and Narrative', 1975, 237-272

and catalystic events which were hinted at by Levi-Strauss into his own analysis of narrative structures[38] and was to align the signified with *langue* and the signifier with *parole.*[39] As a scholar he would move on, into disciplines outside of literature and outside the theoretical confines of structuralism, but he would remain influenced by such modes of thinking; this can be seen in the concepts of *studium* and *punctum,* which characterise his later work, *Camera Lucida.*[40]

It was Derrida, however, who turned Saussurian linguistics on its head. He believed that his predecessor's concept that writing existed solely for the purposes of representing language as far too limited.[41] He did, however, note how Saussure considered writing to be a 'veil' for language and objects – that it disguised them rather than actually *being* or *directly representing* them,[42] and he would go on to take this further. In deconstruction, he decentred the centre: in other words, he disrupted the solid and incontrovertible nature of the signified, suggesting that the transcendental structure which held up Levi-Strauss' approach to myth did not exist or that if it did, it could never be found. He took up the arbitrary nature of the sign and the notion of différance in particular, pushing them to the extreme in *Of Grammatology* and *Specters of Marx* – one linguistic, the other socially and politically philosophical in tone.[43] The latter, indeed, would spawn its own strangely post-modern

[38]Barthes, 1975, p.248
[39]Ibid., p.245
[40]Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* trans. Richard Howard, (London: Vintage, 2000), pp.25-27
[41]Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997 (1976)), p.30
[42]Ibid., p.35
[43]Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International,* trans. Peggy Kamuf, (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p.11

academic field – hauntology.[44] His work would influence vast swathes of cultural life, from sociology and politics, to art and architecture.

Derrida, whose work is so much about absences and spaces between, brings literary and linguistic thought through into deeply abstract investigations of politics, ontological existence, and reality. There are those, however, who have combined the concrete and ineffable concepts and effects of these fields of study into the analysis of physical space, and its material, communicative, and conceptual qualities.

In the early twentieth century, Walter Benjamin began *The Arcades Project,* an almost literary work in its own right which used strategies of the commonplace book and encyclopaedia to document the disappearing life and architecture of the Parisian arcades.[45] Like a museum collector, he assembled his own writings and those of his contemporaries – including Proust and Breton – in topically arranged sections which now constitute a dreamlike, historical paratext for these lost spaces of nineteenth century life, real and imagined.[46] In 1958, Gaston Bachelard was to turn from the philosophy of science to verse, and produce a canonical text for the literatures of aesthetics, phenomenology and architecture. *The Poetics of Space* was to take the concept of poetic resonance – the 'brilliance', 'novelty' and 'dynamism' of the poetic image – to gain a deeper insight into the ontological nature of spatial experience.[47] Blanchot's earlier work *The Space of Literature* is perhaps another dark reflection –

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[44]Colin Davis '*Ét at present:* Hauntology, spectres and phantoms', *French Studies,* LIX(3), 373- 379, p.376
[45]Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge, MA., and London: Harvard University Press, 2002)
[46]Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, 'Translator's Foreword', in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge, MA., and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp.xi - xiv, p.x
[47]Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space,* trans. Maria Jolas, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p.xvi

instead of sonorous, resonant being, its author observed the void in literature that had been uncovered by Derrida.[48] Reflecting on the experience of literature – both writing and reading – he talks of the 'fascination' which arises when gazing at a text, a text which is image alone, which brings to the temporal and spatial Now something which can only ever be a spectral, absent presence.[49] In the reverse of Bachelard, Blanchot used notions of space and distance to poeticise and ask ontological and epistemological questions about the nature of literature itself.

By the 1970s, Henri Lefebvre had combined philosophical and sociological thinking with a criticism of the limitations of purely semiological and literary approaches to space to imagine a multiplicitous, mutually dependent and relational coterie of imagined spaces which could co-exist in a singular geographical site; there are echoes, here, of the manifold meanings of things upon which Pearce commented.[50] For Lefebvre, spaces could not be reduced to singular, generalised and transcendental codes, but were products of interaction, practice and life.

Today, there are still those who apply literary notions to the concept of space. In *Site Writing*, Jane Rendell argues for a more site specific, creative form of art criticism situated directly within the intellectual consciousness.[51] The body of her text is made up from examples of this approach and these are at times somewhat oblique. As inspiration, Rendell cites Mieke Bal; a cultural critic whose semiological and

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[48]Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature,* trans. Ann Smock, (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p.10
[49]Ibid., p.32
[50]Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicolson-Smith, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991 (1974)), p.8
[51]Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism,* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), p.2

narratological approaches to museum exhibitions and artworks can be similarly arcane, but which have provided evidence of the enduring and continually developing influence of literary approaches upon wider academic life.[52] In 'Telling, Showing, Showing Off' and 'The Discourse of the Museum', Bal provided readings of museum space based on narratology, semiotics and discourse.[53] In referring to discourse, her work may also be related to that of Elizabeth Weiser, whose study of the rhetoric of national museums transposes concepts directly from the study of language and literature.[54] In 'Who are We? Museums Telling the Nation's Story', Weiser attempted to use concepts of rhetoric politically, to read the 'texts' of three American museums as 'rhetorical landscapes' – a term gleaned from the rhetorician Greg Clark – by means of which nations, societies and individuals build and take part in their 'imagined communities'.[55] The present thesis takes on the notion of the museum as a rhetorical site, but seeks to read it in a much more diverse and rigorous manner. In her 2009 article, Weiser's literary tools seem few, and appear lost amidst description and politics; this thesis, on the other hand, seeks to more obviously foreground them, using description as a base for their extension, and speaking of politics only when necessary.

Narrative and narratology have, of late, been of especial interest to those who shape spaces and museums. In *Architecture and Narrative,* Sophia Psarra uses them as intellectual frameworks within which to present a 'more complex theoretical and

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[52]Ibid., p.1
[53]Mieke Bal, 'Telling, Showing, Showing Off', *Critical Inquiry,* 18(3), 1992, 556-594 and 'The Discourse of the Museum', in *Thinking About Exhibitions,* ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp201-218
[54]Elizabeth Weiser, 'Who are We? Museums Telling the Nation's Story', *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum,* 2(2), 2009, 29-38
[55]Ibid., p.29

analytical description' of the perceptual fields of architectural and exhibitionary spaces.[56] The recently published collection *Museum Making: Architectures, Narratives, Exhibitions,* stems from a similar source and brings the concepts directly into museology. It seeks to reclaim narrative from the negative associations which have gathered around it, and explore it as a tool for creating meaningful experiences within the museum.[57] Whether this escapes all the negative and didactic connotations appended to narrative is, however, debatable; in it, narrative is frequently limited to a linear, historical mode of telling, and does not really outline in any detail the possibilities which other plotted forms might offer to the museum. Such work does exist, however; Paul Basu's earlier paper, 'The Labyrinthine Aesthetic in Contemporary Museum Design' is a technically astute and intricate application of literary forms to the museum environment, which highlights the uncanny and disturbing aspects of museological uses of narrative structures – both the disorienting qualities of the labyrinth, and the didactic teleology of the Grand Narrative.[58] This thesis intends to demonstrate that if narrative structures are to be appropriated into the museum context they need to be understood with a greater sense of nuance regarding their manifold forms, and with a clearer awareness of their implications.

None of the precedents outlined above are unproblematic. Most have been previously criticised in some form or another – it is not the role of this thesis to do so. However, it will attempt to obviate some of their problems; indeed, it seeks to steer a course

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[56]Sophia Psarra, *Architecture and Narrative: The Formation of Space and Cultural Meaning,* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p.3

[57]Suzanne Macleod, Laura Hourston Hanks, Jonathan Hale, eds., *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions,* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.xx

[58]Paul Basu, 'The Labyrinthine Aesthetic in Contemporary Museum Design', in *Exhibition Experiments,* ed. Paul Basu and Sharon Macdonald, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp.47 - 70

between the absolutism of Levi-Strauss and semiology and the unremitting arbitrary relativity of Derrida and postmodernism, and position itself as a thesis which recognises the objective natures of things, but which also recognises that these can only be seen through the limited lenses of human vision. If it is to do so and still remain successful as a piece, it needs a concrete theoretical frame, and a solid, embodied, grounded research methodology.

Methodology

The development of a methodology was an extended process. The initial concept of the project was to explore temporality in the museum from a wide variety of disciplinary contexts; but this approach soon revealed far too many facets to be comfortably accommodated without compromising the integrity or depth of understanding of the thesis. The aims were therefore narrowed, and focused around an analysis of the nature and production of temporality within museum and exhibition spaces. A framework for this assessment did not, as yet, exist, and so a new theoretical strategy was required. This strategy needed to be descriptive and analytical, needed to offer both an expressive language and a rigorous interpretive toolkit. Literature was selected as a parallel form of cultural production and representation, particularly because it is enriched with numerous, precise and diverse methods for the control and description of temporal experience.

The research began with literary readings, with the intention of uncovering textual productions of temporality, the terminology and tools associated with their creation and analysis, and some key exemplars. There remained, however, a need to develop a

stable and concrete approach for the reading of the physical environment; thus, inspired in part by Bachelard, the project turned to phenomenology.

The reading of a book is a sensual as well as conceptual experience. Clearly the same can be said of the museum visit, though in this case the experience is more physically immersive. Indeed, the experience of the timescape itself is only possible through embodied dwelling and engagement. Bearing this in mind, the research fieldwork itself needed to be of a sensory, phenomenological cast. In this, The Poetics of Space proved inspirational for its sensory, phenomenological mode. Despite its heavily sensual tone, however, it was very abstract in its realisation; the house in which it was set was as much airy dream as it was a building of brick and stone. For the purposes of this project, something much more concrete was required.

Initially, the concept of a 'phenomenological walk', a research methodology and analytical tool becoming increasingly deployed in ethnography and social geography, seemed appropriate.[59] It provided that embodiment so 'integral to our perception of the environment', a multiply sensorial experience of temporality and, through movement and rhythm, enabled the participant to be active in the generation of museum timescapes.[60] Phenomenological walks were conducted during the summer of 2010 at New Walk Museum's exhibitions 'Space Age: Exploration, Design and Popular Culture' and 'Contemporary Arts Society: Gifts of Art' and its World Arts gallery, and at Newarke Houses Museum. The pilots revealed that phenomenological walks, on their own, provided no rigorous conceptual framework and no clear overarching analytical

[59]Sarah Pink, Phil Hubbard, Maggie O'Neill, Alan Radley, 'Walking across disciplines: from ethnography to arts practice', *Visual Studies,* 25(1), 2010, 1-7
[60]Ibid., p.3

process and structure. They did, however, indicate that there was value in an immersed, embodied research process and that there were a number of museum elements – architecture, display devices, and specific objects – which would be crucial to consider in any future, more literary reading of the space.

These less structured pilot studies demonstrated a need to return to the literary approaches to temporality which had shaped the initial perspective of the research, and a need to develop more rigorous and concrete tools. Four sets of questions were thereby established, centring on the main areas of temporal production emphasised in the literary review. The basis for these four sets is outlined in the section of the thesis called 'Literary Temporalities', in four chapters which focus on plot, perspective, semantics and prosody. The framework itself is displayed in Appendix 1 at the back of this thesis. These questions and tools gave the phenomenological walks a conceptual structure, transforming them from unstructured wanderings to far more managed and effective 'interviews' with the museum space, interviews recorded with field notes and observational photographs – which have been used as the basis and illustrative material of the second half of the thesis; 'Temporalities in the Museum'. Further pilot studies were conducted at New Walk and Newarke Houses in the last quarter of 2010 to ratify the effectiveness of this framework.

The Leicester museums were ideal technical testing grounds. However, to gain the most out of the analytical method more comparison, depth, variety and indeed iconicity were required. Case study museums were needed that exhibited a richness of material content, historical and iconic value, diverse exhibition spaces and complex

relationships with the outside world. In Oxford there are three museums which have precisely these qualities; thus it was that the Ashmolean, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum came to be the central case studies for the literary museum readings conducted in order to produce this thesis

Oxford Case Studies

Oxford is renowned for its numerous museums, many of which are historically important or recently newsworthy. It is also an ancient and iconic settlement. As a result, its temporal layering is varied and intricate; not only has it accrued connotations of historicity and scholarship, it has also been involved in the production of fictional timescapes, such as the fantastical worlds of Wonderland and Middle Earth, or has been directly represented in them, as in television productions such as *Inspector Morse.* These museological and literary associations made Oxford a rather apposite environment in which to situate this project.

In order to marry depth of reading with comparison and variety, the three case studies were identified and selected quite deliberately. They were chosen based upon their individual qualities, but also upon the value that they could offer to the project as a group. They all fall under the overall operational aegis of the University itself, giving them an overall unity as well as tying them into the life of the city itself. Partly as a result of this, their institutional and collection histories are deeply entangled, and to this day they collaborate on research and loan parts of their collection to each other. In the case of the Pitt Rivers and the OUMNH, the connection is a physical one; the

buildings back onto each other and the public entrance to the former is only accessible through the Great Court of the latter.

With a claim to being the world's oldest public museum the Ashmolean holds inherent temporal and historic interest.[61] It plays upon this history in certain parts of its display, referencing its founding fathers Elias Ashmole and the Johns Tradescant, and the 'Ark' which was the founding collection's original home. That collection has seen much change over the institution's four hundred year history and many of the original items have been dispersed. Some, it is interesting to note, now reside in the Pitt Rivers and the OUMNH. The porosity between these institutions heightens their relevance to this project's temporal analysis.

The Ashmolean has also seen significant physical change to its buildings. It was originally housed on Broad Street in the building now home to the Museum of the History of Science, but is now situated on Beaumont Street behind the iconic frontage designed by Charles Robert Cockerall and built between 1839 and 1845. Later, under the Keepership of Arthur Evans, the Fortnum bequest was used to build new display space behind the University Galleries. The two institutions finally merged in 1922 to create the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology as it exists today.

Of perhaps most immediate relevance here, however, is the redevelopment undertaken by Rick Mather and Metaphor in 2009. The recent nature of this transformation and the high level of publicity it engendered also make the Ashmolean a suitable case study. It is a perfect time to question the new displays and design, both

[61]Christopher Brown, *Ashmolean: Britain's First Museum,* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum Publications Department, 2009), p.9

on their own terms, and in how they relate to the older parts of the museum still accessible to the public. How could a museum with four centuries behind it, visibly palimpsestual and evolutionary display spaces and a new and unique display strategy entitled *Crossing Cultures Crossing Time* fail to excite intrigue as a temporal site?

The Pitt Rivers is significantly different from the Ashmolean. Far younger, but now with a much older aesthetic feel, it provides an interesting stylistic and architectural comparison. Its subjects of ethnography and anthropology are distinctive enough from the art and archaeology of the Ashmolean to provide a comparative temporal landscape for this project.

But it is, like the Ashmolean, a hugely historic and time-bound space; its reputation, in fact, is based in part upon a hugely temporal notion – that it is a fossil, a fly in amber, a Victorian Museum preserved for the present.[62] But this is not the case – its collections have been updated throughout its history, added to and rearranged, and architectural renovations are continually occurring; in 2010, the Upper Gallery was reopened after a redesign[63]. Thus the Pitt Rivers, a museum of anthropology, is a complex nexus of temporalities, a visible palimpsest of display styles and curatorial hands from the handwritten tables of the late nineteenth century to the work and interpretations of the current artist in residence.

The Pitt Rivers Museum is also hugely self-reflective, and has as a result a strange historical position in regard to itself. As *Knowing Things,* the book born out of the

[62]Chris Gosden, Frances Larson, with Alison Petch, *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884-1945,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.xvii
[63]Pitt Rivers Museum, 'News: Shields, Spears and Samurai……Upper Gallery reopening 1st May 2010', http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/news.html, accessed 29 November 2012

Relational Museum project, shows, it is an institution happy to perform the same anthropological acts upon itself as it users and makers have, and continue to, upon others.[64] It is, therefore, an institution open to the kind of deep exploration for which this thesis aims.

Often thought of as a-temporal, and yet in actuality deeply mutable and self-aware, an institution famed in poetry, and in many ways just as iconic as the Ashmolean, if for very different reasons, the Pitt Rivers cannot help but be an attractive proposition for our literary readings and our temporal excavations.

The final museum in which the thesis is set is also intensely iconic and imbued with literary intricacies and scientific intrigue. Officially accepted by University Convocation in 1853, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History had had support within Oxford academia since the 1840s.[65] Its building, controversially gothic and ecclesiastical,[66] was completed in an area formerly belonging to the University Parks in 1860.[67]

In its current name and content, this museum speaks of history – but this is a history far longer than that of human thought and culture. The subject of the OUMNH is a history of the earth and all things which have existed upon it. It is a deeply secular museum – it played host to the 'Great Debate' on Darwin's *Origin of Species* in the year of its founding – and yet its architecture is that of a cathedral.[68] Neither does its temporal complexity end there, for it is very visibly a scholarly institution, containing

[64]Gosden *et al,* p.7
[65]H. M. Vernon, *A History of the Oxford Museum,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), p.55
[66]Ibid.
[67]Ibid., p.88
[68]Ibid.

timescapes outside the display area – its research rooms and uses as an active teaching space much more obvious that those of the Pitt Rivers or the Ashmolean. This is a museum in which spaces of study and spaces of spectacle meet and are confused.

It is also a massively transtextual space. Not only are the histories of its collections entangled with those of the Ashmolean and the Pitt Rivers, it is physically connected to the latter. Of all the museums under study here, it is arguably the one which holds the closes link to the fictional worlds of Lewis Carroll. In a case entitled 'The Real Alice' the background to Wonderland is illuminated with text and taxidermy, and in a neighbouring case casts of the remains of the original 'Oxford Dodo' are on display. The Ashmolean and the Pitt Rivers use quotes images, and references; the OUMNH has a physical, intrusive link to that fictive, nonsensical timescape.

On the Page: The Structure of the Thesis

In order to give the thesis clarity, and give the sometimes nebulous concepts which it seeks to express greater solidity, it has been divided into two halves, each made up of shorter chapters based around specific concepts. Its composition is not arbitrary; it is designed in order that its form enhances its content, but also reflects the methodological processes undertaken in the fieldwork research itself. The first half, 'Literary Temporalities', provides the conceptual ground and theoretical sustenance for the second, 'Temporalities in the Museum'. It explores the temporal performances of literature and some of the devices by means of which these performances might be expressed and analysed. The first chapter of this section, 'Plotting Time' investigates dramatic structures and the arrangement of events in narratives. The second, 'Looking

at Time', seeks to examine the nature of perspectives on and in timescapes and temporally located events, and the third 'Words and Times', the ways in which words, in their meanings and arrangements, can affect the temporal qualities of a piece of literature. Finally, 'The Rhythm of Time' showcases some of the prosodic characteristics of poetry, and how these characteristics are responsible for the non-linguistic undulations of literary timescapes. It was on such thematic divisions that the process of reading the museum timescapes in Oxford was based, the final structure of the thesis and the process of its production closely aligned.

The second half of the thesis moves away from these divisions, and recasts the readings of the case study institutions as five excursions into various aspects of museum temporality. The first two chapters of this half, 'Time's Arrow' and 'Disrupting the Arrow', consider the direction of time in the museum. The final three chapters, 'Manifesting in Time', 'In Real Time' and 'Unique Things in Time and Space' discuss more abstract ontological questions concerning presence, authenticity, and auracity; all of which are fundamental to the museum, and all of which have a distinctly temporal patina. Throughout, the tools taken from 'Literary Temporalities' are deployed in order to extend, enhance and alter the current understanding of these concepts – and indeed, to highlight concepts hitherto undemonstrated. This second, museological part of the thesis brings the tools of literature into the museum environment without repetition, and without succumbing to the idea that museums and literature are directly analogous and built upon the same systematic codes. Thus it gives the analysis of the museum spaces more conceptual freedom, and does not force

the author or reader of this text to look for and argue for, commonalities which are not necessarily there.

The reader may come across unfamiliar words and concepts in the pages which follow. Where possible, these are defined on their first occurrence within the text. There is also a glossary at the back, (see appendix 2) should further, or later, elucidation be required. Though 'Literary Temporalities', which follows next, may seem somewhat abstract, the reader should bear with its reasoning. As Euripides knew, all will be revealed – in time. [69]

[69]Euripides, *Fragments: Aegeus – Meleager,* ed. and trans. Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp, (Cambridge, MA., and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), p.31

Part One: Literary Temporalities

Introduction

...I began then to think of time as having a shape, something you could see, like a series of liquid transparencies, one laid on top of another.

Margaret Attwood, Cat's Eye

Literature, like the museum, curates space and time, and thus offers both advice and example for the production of truly varied, remarkable and affective experiences. It is a formally diverse art encompassing novels, poetry, drama and the comic book in all their manifold iterations. Literature, being so diverse, therefore has much to offer the museum in terms of strategies of production, but importantly it is able to offer a methodological approach and a corpus of language with which to analyse various elements of the museum. It is richly endowed, too, with a temporal aspect, for by its very nature it generates controlled forms of the spatial and the temporal. In the chapter below, some of these aspects and potentialities will be examined.

Theorists of literature have long been engaged with the representation of time, whether as the subject of the text, as a landscape in which the piece is sited, or through a specialised study of the tools which writers may use in their curation of temporal experience. It is the latter with which this thesis is predominantly concerned, primarily in terms of the methods by which the timescapes – the temporal environments and landscapes of literary works, plotted, semantic, and rhythmical - are

produced. Many studies, including those of Mikhail Bakhtin,[70] Erich Auerbach,[71] and Hans Meyerhoff,[72] have concentrated their efforts upon a description of temporal landscapes in literature, and the relationship which these have with their contemporary and historical contexts. Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope has previously been appropriated in the museal context by Pascal Gielen, who explored the notion in relation to the representation of the past in terms of local, global and glocal time.[73] Gielen's usage and definition of the term, however, does not do justice to its complexity or its literariness, for it concentrates, broadly, upon its definitively spatial elements, most specifically relational connections across geographic space. Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope was far more complex, for it also depended upon plotted shape, stylistic expression and diegetic positioning to which Gielen's relational focus relates, but fails to fully express.

For Bakhtin, the chronotope was an expression of the 'intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature,' and it is the artistic element which Gielen's appropriation does not account for.[74] For Bakhtin, the 'generic significance' of the chronotope was fundamental, and therefore each and every element, structural and relational, but also stylistic and contentual, which come together to coalesce into a conventionally recognised genre, should always be born in

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[70]M. M. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin,* ed. Michael Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas, 1981), pp.84-258
[71]Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* trans. Willard R. Transk, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953)
[72]Hans Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature,* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960)
[73]Pascal Gielen, 'Museumchronotopics: on the representation of the past in museums', *museum and society,* 2(3), 2004, 147-160
[74]Bakhtin, 1981, p.84

mind.[75]

The chronotope is a useful term with which to explore the museal timescape. Bakhtin refers to literary works as 'treasure houses of images'; the readers should need no help to make that particular association.[76] Like literary works, museums are chronotopically diverse, and rarely are they at the mercy of one particular set of chronotopic conventions, as Bakhtin himself suggests. This statement begins to evoke the problems to which a purely chronotopic study of literary or museum works would fall victim. To merely give a catalogue of generic literary or museum temporalities would add little to our understanding of how they are constructed; this descriptive approach is covered in the works of Bakhtin, Auerbach, and others, and would offer limited methodological advancement. It might also risk fixing museum and literary temporalities into excessively intractable forms. For genre are never transcendental or eternal, but the product of dialogue and discourse in which their conventions and their features mutate in meaning and form over the progression of history.

To focus on the chronotope would, therefore, be an activity of limited value. The exploration of the 'timescape' offers something far less hidebound by generic conventions; a timescape is far more unique, contingent, and temporary. Every timescape is a language game, a set of mutable rules which have been socially agreed upon, and it is these rules and the modes and strategies of their relation, which are of interest here. To understand the temporal diversity of literature, and thereby of museums, it is crucial to look to the rules which contribute to the realisation of their

[75]Ibid., p.89
[76]Ibid., p.251

timescapes. So it is to some of the fundamental elements of literary works – their topologies, perspectival relationships, their semantics, grammar and prosody - to which this part turns, questioning how their use and combination engineers the characteristics of the timescape and the experiences which may be had within it. In the following four chapters, this thesis seeks to explicitly emphasise the richness and diversity of the relationships between time and literature, and to more implicitly introduce some of the techniques and concepts with which, in Part Two, museum temporalities will be explored.

Chapter One

Plotting Time

And since [in drama] agents accomplish the imitation by acting the story out, it follows, first of all, that the arrangement of the spectacle should be, of necessity, some part of the tragedy as would be melody and diction, also; for these are the means through which the agents accomplish the imitation...For this reason we say that tragic plot is an imitation of action.

Aristotle*, Poetics*

All literary works, no matter their form, are constituted through the arrangement of events into a particular sequence or order. In other words, they all depend upon plotting; the particular and selective manipulation of events for reasons of affect or convention. When plot is spoken of, it is typically applied to the content of the story itself, but as this section intends to make plain, the literary work is comprised of many levels both diegetic and material, and plotting, or at least ordering and shape, is critical to every one of these. Once we have defined and described the constituent elements of plot, we will explore how these can and have been directionally arranged to specific effect. Thereafter, we will examine the depths of literary shaping and arrangement, to expose how the different operative levels which comprise a single work are related.

At their most basic, contentual topographies of literary works are comprised of events and the absence of events, this latter known as elisions. The nature of the works is

dependent upon the direction and shape in which these events are ordered and, further, upon where they arise and receive their impetus. Events may be the product of the world and derive their origin from a non-human, perhaps unknowable source. On the other hand, however, they may issue clearly from the activities and manipulations of a character, or be firmly located within the character's mind. These various manipulations of event are crucial to the specific iteration of each and every literary work, but before we explore them in more detail, we must consider the characteristics and forms of that basic constituent of the literary timescape; the event itself.

In any given work there are some events which are necessary and some which are rather more tangential. In 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', written in 1975, Roland Barthes termed these 'cardinal' and 'catalystic' events respectively.[77] Also known as nuclei, the former are the crucial 'hinge' functions upon which continuation of the story relies. Beginnings and endings are, of course, significant cardinal events on every level of the literary work, but as the thesis will come to show, they are not philosophically unproblematic notions, for they are the products of editing and human choice, end-stopping life and experience and thereby showing the fictional, curated nature of the world displayed between them. More specifically in terms of story, Aristotle's moments of 'reversal' and 'recognition' are also crucial, for not only do they enable a character or narrator to shift their opinion on or comprehension of something, they change the content of the plot thereafter, and

[77]Roland Barthes, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,' *New Literary History,* 6(2), 'On Narrative and Narratives,' 1975, 237-272, p.248

potentially the reader's holistic interpretation of the work and the story it sets out to tell.[78] Reversal signals the arrival of a new situation, 'the change in fortune in the action of the play to the opposite state of affairs.'[79] Recognition is a change based more in the interior of a character, a change from 'ignorance to knowledge' which opens up realizations hitherto unknown.[80] Unlike these structurally critical occurrences, the 'supplementary' catalystic events of a plot may be removed without direct impact upon the nature of the story itself, but their inclusion or elision has a significant effect upon its discourse; in other words, the nature of the story's telling. More on this later.

How can these events be ordered and shaped such that they create for their interlocutor a unique literary experience? Whilst we must recognize that the experience of reading – the human encounter with and interpretation of a text – is an experience caught up in *dureé,* and thus invariably linear,[81] at the level of story itself chronological structures can be manipulated to create a variety of plotted shapes and different sets of causal relationship. A multiplicity of these, or merely one, may be applied in the construction of any literary work. It is to a discussion of these shapes and their causal linkages which this chapter must now turn.

It would make some kind of logical sense to begin with the notion of the linear plot, that structure, seemingly simple, in which chronology and the apparently natural order

[78]Aristotle, 1968, p.19
[79]Ibid.
[80]Ibid.
[81]Laurent Jenny, 'The strategy of form,' in Tzvetan Todorov, ed., *French Literary Theory Today: A reader,* trans. R. Carter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.34-63, p.52

of events take precedence. It is a dominant form in prose fiction, particularly in those works where action – the occurrence of events and their resolution – dominates character. It can also occur in character driven texts where the personal progress of the protagonist or focalisor is central to the telling; in the picaresque for example, where the events of the novel may (or may not) occur in historical order, but are linked only by the presence of a single protagonist known as the picaro.[82] But the movements of the focalising mind need not accord with the rules of linear history in the world in which the story is set, as can be seen in Proust's cycle of novels *In Search of Lost Time*.

Aristotle emphasized the distinction between action and character – a distinction not entirely tenable – and his approval was geared towards the former.[83] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that he also favored linear causal plots, which he deemed the most beautiful by virtue of their relation of a whole and complete action.[84] Such constructions permit the establishment of relationships between past, present and future; actions in the past can be used to account for the present state of affairs, and may also be used as a tool for speculation upon the future course of events. The timescape here is at once progressive and directed; effect follows cause in a movement towards a particular end point. Such a construction permits the establishment of relationships between past, present and future; actions in the past can be used to account for the present state of affairs, and may also be used as a tool for speculation upon the future course of events. The timescape here is at once

[82]Ulrich Wicks, 'The Nature of Picaresque Narrative: A Modal Approach,' *PMLA,* 89(2), 1974, 240-249, p.240
[83]Aristotle, 1968, pp.15-16
[84]Ibid., p.16

progressive and directed; effect follows cause in a movement towards a particular end point. In these timescapes, it is beginnings and endings which provide major cruxes, demarcating the boundaries of the textual and temporal landscape. As Mendilow puts it, there is a balanced 'symmetry' in these plots, for they provide both an explanation and purpose to existence in time,[85] satisfying a need for meaning which is made very apparent in the teleological and eschatological literature of Western Christendom.[86]

> It is the simple sequence of events in which the overwhelmingly manifold nature of things is represented in a unidimensional order, as a mathematician would say, stringing all that has occurred in space and time on a single thread, which calms us; that celebrated "thread of the story" which is, it seems, the thread of life itself. Lucky the man who can say "when", "before" and "after"! Terrible things may have happened to him, he may have writhed in pain, but as soon as he can tell what happened in chronological order, he feels as contented as if the sun were warming his belly.[87]

There is a certain comfort in the causal plot. It permits the organization of aspects of existence into a clear, explicable temporal structure in which the role and purpose of the agents is validated. The anticipation of an expected result, or the emotion engendered by a surprise or coincidence which is cleverly tied into the logical whole

[85]A.A.M Mendilow, *Time and the Novel,* (London: Peter Nevill Ltd, 1952), p.58
[86]Jean Delumeu, 'Back to the Apocalypse,' in *Conversations About the End of Time,* ed. by Catherine David, Frédéric Lenoir and Jean-Philippe de Tonnac, trans. Ian Maclean and Roger Pearson, (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1999), pp.45-94, p.88
[87]Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities,* trans. Sophie Wilkins, (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.709

are, for Aristotle, factors which make this form of plot 'marvelous', and 'superior' to others.[88]

The linear plot, however, has a number of implications and can be subject to a certain amount of criticism. Because its chronological form often suggests causal relationships, the reader of a text may fall into the *propter hoc* fallacy, the creation of cause-effect relationships where there are none.[89] This simulation of reality and cause and effect may well be part of the intention behind a piece. Value judgments as to the ethics of this aside, this suggestion shows just how subject to manipulation the linear narrative, so naturalized in the West, can be. For life is neither simple nor unilinear, and the linear plot is as selective as any other.

The purely linear plot is rare, for even within a holistically chronological narrative there are to be found certain disruptive features. The French narratologist Gerard Genette called these disruptions 'anachronies'.[90] For Genette, anachronies are the result of a disjuncture between the temporality of the world from which the story comes – the always historical erzählte Zeit – and the temporality of the plot – Erzählzeit. The Russian Formalists knew these two temporalities as 'fabula' and 'sjuzet' respectively, and it is their terminology which this thesis will adopt.[91] There are a number of different kinds of anachrony which may be used to very particular effect within narratives with an overall linear chronology – even if that effect is simply expository or

[88]Aristotle, 1968, p.18
[89]H. Porter-Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.39
[90]Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse,* trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980, (1972)), p.36
[91]Porter-Abbott, p.18

to create narrative interest. 'Prolepsis' is the term used to describe a narrative flash-forward, 'analepsis' to describe the flashback.[92] Both of these, typically, come to an end, and return the reader back to the point at which they departed from the main thread of the story. In the anachronic form known as ellipsis, however, chronology breaks and leaps forward without any kind of return. Finally, in 'paralipsis', a moment interpenetrates into a coterminous neighboring narrative. It might also be argued that the *in medias res* construction noted by Auerbach as a feature of classical narrative might be seen as an anachrony – perhaps as a combination of the first two forms.[93]

According to Genette, the most common of these forms is analepsis. Genette makes a number of distinctions between various kinds of analepsis, distinguished by their relationship to the main narrative, which are too complex to be fully examined here. It must suffice to raise awareness of the characteristics and impacts of analepsis more generally. Analepsis can be used to add information to, to contextualize, explain and perhaps legitimate, a given present situation. Analepsis frequently arises in the reveals at the end of a detective story. In 'Death and the Compass' for instance, Red Scharlach, the perpetrator of a series of murders, describes how and why they were designed,

> 'No,' said Scharlach, 'I am seeking something more ephemeral and perishable, I am seeking Erik Lönnrot. Three years ago, in a gambling house on the rue de Toulon, you arrested my brother and had him sent to jail. My men slipped me away in a coupé from the gun battle with a policeman's bullet in my stomach...On those nights I swore by the God who sees with two faces and by

[92]Genette, 1980, p.40
[93]Auerbach, p.4

> all the gods of fever and of the mirrors to weave a labyrinth around the man who had imprisoned my brother. I have woven it and it is firm: the ingredients are a dead heresiologist, a compass, an eighteenth-century sect, a Greek word, a dagger, the diamonds of a paint shop.[94]

Thus does Scharlach, and thereby Borges, explain elements of the narrative which have, until now, remained oblique, even to the protagonist Lönnrot, giving them a place into a designed, pre-planned sequence. Such direct causal relationships are particularly clear if the analepsis is, as Genette phrased it 'complete'; that is, completely resolved with a return to the present moment, the starting point from which the analepsis originally sprang.[95]

Genette also defined a form of analepsis which he termed repeating or recollective.[96] *In Search of Lost Time*, Genette's exemplary text, uses this famously in the 'madeleine moment' so known to museum practitioners.

> As soon as I had recognised the taste of the piece of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like a stage set...[97]

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[94]Jorge Luis Borges, 'Death and the Compass, ' *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings,* ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, (London: Penguin Classics, 1970 (2000)) pp.106-117, p.115
[95]Genette, 1980, p.62
[96]Ibid., p.54
[97]Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time Volume 1: Swann's Way,* trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. by D. J. Enright, (London: Vintage Books, 2005), p.54

For Proust it is objects, situations, and sensory experiences which provide the memorial linkages that govern his associative, personal temporality, rather than historical destiny. His texts, rather than explaining the present moment, use the protagonist-focalisor's mental structures and knowledge to enrich and thicken it.

According to Houston, this is also the case with Proust's use of prolepsis,[98] particularly in the scene of the Princesse de Guermantes's *soiree* in volume four of *Sodom and Gomorrah,* the fourth volume of *In Search of Lost Time*. Less frequent in literature than their past-oriented counterparts, prolepsies are nonetheless significant temporal tools for the production of affective literature.[99] As soon as he enters the party concerned, the narrator knows – or predicts – almost precisely what will happen, and the use of the modal verb 'would' in the English translation lends the whole scene a sense of certainty.

> And the Princess would draw forward a chair for herself, having in fact addressed Mme de Villemur only in order to have an excuse for leaving the first group, in which she had spent the statutory ten minutes, and bestow a similar allowance of her time upon the second. In three quarters of an hour, all the groups would have received a visit from her...But now the guests for the

[98]J. P. Houston, 'Temporal Patterns in *A La Recherché du Temps Perdu,' French Studies,* XVI(1), 1962, 33-44, p.33

[99]Genette, 1980, p.67

> reception were beginning to arrive and the lady of the house was seated not far from the door... [100]

The protagonist has seen this, or heard of this occurring, many times before, and this prolepsis might almost be termed reflective, or even recollective. There is a sense of melancholy in this scene as a whole, for the use of prolepsis creates poignant sense of futural nostalgia by providing the foresight that the party is likely to be the last 'great appearance' of the Guermantes in a society whose decadence cannot last. When predestination becomes personal, the sadness and sense of fate becomes heightened and traumatic, as happens in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,*

> On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on.[101]

Our central character is introduced to us, and at once we know that he will not survive the story. Once again, there is a sense of the inevitable, for causality is also a significant consideration in prolepsis. The ability to anticipate something suggests not only presumption and futural thinking but, as Todorov noted in *The Poetics of Prose,* it also suggests fate – a 'plot of predestination' which he applied to the Homeric narrative.[102] There is certainly some atmosphere of the preordained around this concept. Certainly it is prophetic when it appears in perhaps its most famous instance; the story of Oedipus, who spends much of his life attempting to avoid his fate only, in

[100]Marcel Proust, *In Search of lost Time Volume 4: Sodom and Gomorrah,* trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. D.J. Enright, (London: Vintage Books, 2000), p.41-42
[101]Gabriel Garcia Márquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p.1
[102]Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose,* trans. Richard Howard, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p.65

the end, to discover that he has fulfilled it. As any reading of *The Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* will illustrate, this notion of predestination is powerful in the Biblical tradition; and it has serious implications for free will and the moral interpretation of human behavior.[103] Once again, we can turn to 'Death and the Compass' for a profound illustration of this sense of the inevitable. In the first paragraph of the story, Borges writes 'It is true that Erik Lönnrot failed to prevent the last murder, but that he foresaw it is indisputable.'[104] In the final paragraph preceding his death, Lönnrot states,

> 'I know of one Greek labyrinth which is a single straight line. Along that line so many philosophers have lost themselves that a mere detective might well do so too. Scharlach, when in some other incarnation you hunt me, pretend to commit (or do commit) a crime at A, then a second crime at B, eight kilometres from A, then a third crime at C, four kilometres from A and B, half-way between the two. Wait for me afterwards at D. Two kilometres from A and C, again halfway between both. Kill me at D, as you are now going to kill me at Triste-le-Roy.'
>
> 'The next time I kill you,' replied Scharlach, 'I promise you that labyrinth, consisting of a single line which is invisible and unceasing.'[105]

Both of these anachronies, then, can in fact be used to strengthen certain linear aspects of the plot, particularly causal relationships. However, there are two other

[103]James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner,* (London: Penguin, 2006)
[104]Borges, 2000, p.106
[105]Ibid., p.117

forms which we have yet to describe in which these kinds of relationship are far less necessary, or at least clear, and which quite clearly involve omission.

Linear plots, particularly teleological forms, naturally involve elision, as Erich Auerbach's study of reality in Western literature showed.[106] According to Genette, in ellipsis time leaps forward without returning to the point of departure, entirely eliding sections of fabulaic history which the reader must fill in – either through allusions to the lost time within the text, or through intimation and perhaps speculation.[107] Such ellipsis serve to push the plot forward; Sterne's deliberate over-packing of supplementary events into Tristram Shandy highlights how, in a normal fictional structure, ellipsis almost constantly occurs.[108] Paralipsis, too, is far more common than might be supposed. Genette calls this a kind of lateral ellipsis, for whilst the omission it concerns does nothing to affect the temporal continuity of the main thread, once it is made apparent through a retrospective filling in it may concern a very significant event, such as a death. The nature of the revelation is changed by its recalled status within the text.[109] It can be made to seem unimportant, or arise suddenly as something of a shock.

In examining the ultimate in causality which is the Biblical narrative, as well as the structures of classical epic, Eirich Auerbach highlighted how the temporal landscapes

[106]Auerbach, p.8
[107]Genette, 1980, p.43
[108]Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983 (1759))
[109]Genette, 1980, p.52

of causal plots in particular are riddled with lacunae.[110] A strict adherence to a causal plot restricts events to only those cardinal events relevant to the perpetuation of that narrative thread. This narrowing of the timescape has great impact upon the perception of characters and the world which they inhabit, for events outside of the scope of the text are irrelevant, and character becomes secondary, participants more a mechanical device in the movement of events than a human personality. Thus the reader is left either to ignore these gaps, or to speculate upon what lies within them.

Auerbach's work suggests two kinds of gap within the Biblical and Classical texts. In the former, there is a certain lack of historical and geographical specificity.[111] Here, it is the external timescape within which events occur that is undefined, and the present moment becomes less important than the context of the overarching whole.[112] This lack of particularity in terms of the timescape means that the story becomes more universally applicable, able to mould itself into a variety of contexts and times which are geographically and historically separated.

Conversely, in the Classical narrative, particularly tragedy, Auerbach argues that 'fate means nothing by the given tragic complex, the present network of events in which a particular person is enmeshed at a particular moment.'[113] Nothing else of this person's life matters, and psychological specificity is sacrificed for the deployment of the action. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that elision brings with it particular benefits. In the interminable biography of *Tristram Shandy* the narrative is filled with

[110]Auerbach, 1953, p.11
[111]Ibid.
[112]Ibid., p.17
[113]Ibid., p.319

every event related to the life of the eponymous Tristram, halting the progression of the ostensible, and titular, story, through the deliberately excessive use of supplementary events.

Anachronies such as these enable the plots which they tell to be enriched, thickened, and thereby is the fictional nature of the work made apparent. But it is also brought close to human experience by virtue of the fact that they allow plots to follow the vicissitudes of the mind, rather than any artificial historicisation of time. Anachronies, as Houston said, reject the 'thin' plots of the naturalist writers and the 'plodding, unimaginative' telling which such simply linear structures would offer.[114]

It is clear how linear plots can be disrupted by effects which occur within them. These effects, however, may also be used in other kinds of plotted structure, which overtly shape themselves very differently to the linear, chronological structure. Written in the nascent days of the novel as a form, Sterne's work was already questioning the structure and implications of the linear plot. Many, we shall see, have also explicitly questioned it since, attempting to create demonstrably different structures, cyclical, inverted or fragmented, to greater or lesser degrees of success. It is to this more explicit reshaping of plot, to which whole texts are subject, which the thesis shall now turn.

Chronological reversal, such as found in *Time's Arrow,* or Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5*, can disrupt the singularity of narrative direction, and can create particularly disorienting effects. In *Time's Arrow,* in which the life of the protagonist is

[114]Houston, p.34, 41

lived backwards, it is the disjunction which exists between the narrator's expectation of the order of events and their actual course which creates the disturbing quality of the text. Like a film running backwards, the reversal is peculiar, and sometimes nauseating. It runs counter to normal temporal perception, throws open the black-box of forward-moving time. But the narrator, needing to express his experience in the terms of the shared world, cannot immerse himself fully in the inverted motion. If he is to express himself to the reader intelligibly, his language cannot run backwards, nor can his trains of thought. Even at the end, he differentiates himself from the body in which he resides. 'When Odilo closes his eyes I see an arrow fly – but wrongly.'[115] He remains to the last in thrall to onward progression. It is, indeed, the foregrounding of this disjoint which engenders sympathy in the reader, for were it to be written on the basis of the reversed world, the timescape would be so disorienting that it would be unlikely that it would sustain itself over the course of the novel. Disorientation can be used to successful effect in certain, limited cases; there is a discomforting nature to the scene in *Slaughterhouse 5*, where Billy Pilgrim watches a film in reverse, and a somewhat tragic comment upon our inability to undo the catastrophic effects of war.

> When the bombers got back to their base, the steel cylinders were taken from the racks and shipped back to the United States of America, where factories were operating night and day, dismantling the cylinders, separating the dangerous contents into minerals. Touchingly it was mainly women who did this work. The minerals were then shipped to specialists in remote areas. It was

[115]Martin Amis, *Time's Arrow, or, The Nature of the Offence,* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1991), p.173

> their business to put them into the ground, to hide them cleverly so they would never hurt anybody ever again.
>
> The American fliers turned in their uniforms, became high school kids. And Hitler turned into a baby, Billy Pilgrim supposed.[116]

Whilst this event makes us question the reliability and mental state of our protagonist, it does not truly undermine the linearity with which time is seen to pass in wider society, and its inclusion as an episode rather than comprising the majority of the text brings limits to the discomfort which is experienced. Rather than denying the existence of causal linearity, these works simply rotate it, and highlight our reliance on its expected direction for comfort, practicality, and indeed mental stability. The experience of Pilgrim, in particular, is a distinct meditation on our inability to withstand change, entropy and, ultimately, death.

A cyclical temporal structure might be thought to provide some sense of escape from this progressive motion, or at least a different temporal topology. This form of time has been the subject of much speculation, cultural and philosophical. Many writers of the early twentieth century, including James Joyce, became interested in cyclical theories, using Vico[117] and Nietzsche[118] as models for theoretical examinations of the structure of time in their poems and plots. *Finnegan's Wake* runs in a circle, a 'commodius vicus of recirculation' from end to beginning, using the open-ended

[116]Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5, or, The Children's Crusade, A Duty-Dance With Death,* (London: Vintage, 2003 (1970)), p.53
[117]Giambattista Vico, *The First New Science,* ed. Leon Pompa, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p.xxxiv
[118]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None,* trans. Thomas Common, rev. Oscar Levy and John L. Beevers, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1967 (1909))

sentences which bookend the narrative to do so.[119] David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* ties together six lives in a cycle that spans centuries, but though seemingly cyclical in its construction, the book in fact provides an argument for the enduring power of past actions upon later history, not that a former state is a place to which we shall inevitably, and identically, return.[120] Whilst basic elements, occurrences and forms are repeated, neither the parties involved nor the environment in which they are sited are precisely the same as they were before. This kind of Viconian cyclicity, indicative of echoic recurrence rather than identical repetition, is famously to be found in Joyce's *Ulysses,* a book in which the Homeric epic of Odysseus is recalled in a day in the life of Leopold Bloom.[121] The Viconian model is, perhaps, rather less sinister than the identical repetition of Nietzsche's Eternal Return.

This eternal return is both appealing and terrifying. Underlying positive attitudes towards cyclicity are notions of rebirth and renewal, that nothing is ever truly over and that those we love always exist sometime, somewhere. The idea that we may remain in a place of constant bliss is one which is found in children's literature, often as a strategy by which the inevitability of onward progression can be halted. Peter Pan avoids growing up by recoursing to Neverland, and the eponymous hero of *Tom's Midnight Garden* seeks to remain forever in the thirteenth hour outside the normal

[119]James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake,* (London: Penguin Books, 1999, (1939)), p.3
[120]David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas,* (London: Hodder & Staughton Ltd, 2004)
[121]James Joyce, *Ulysses,* (London: Penguin, 1992 (1922))

entropic run of history.[122] But he cannot, and he comes to realize that there is a terror in stasis. As Milan Kundera wrote in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being,*

> If every second of our lives recurs an infinite number of times, we are nailed to eternity as Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross. It is a terrifying prospect. In the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move we make. That is why Nietzsche called the idea of the eternal return the heaviest of burdens (*das schwerste Gewicht*).[123]

Recurrence can become a prison, frustrating in both comic and frightening ways. By creating a *mise-en-abyme*,[124] it may be used to retard onward progression, and indeed can completely prevent a story beginning,

> Or sometimes, plagued by his children for yet another story, my father would appear to yield, and begin, It was a stormy night in the Bay of Biscay, and the Captain and his sailors were seated around the fire. Suddenly, one of the sailors said, Tell us a story, Captain. And the Captain began, It was a stormy night in the Bay of Biscay...[125]

Characters can experience not only repeated joys, but repeated trauma, over and over again. Whilst it would be easy to elide recurring activities as unnecessary, skillfully handled, the repetitive plot can intensify these emotional states in the reader,

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[122]Phillipa Pearce, *Tom's Midnight Garden,* (London: Puffin Books, Penguin Group, 2005 (1958))
[123]Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being,* trans. Michael Henry Heim, (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p.5
[124]André Gide, *The Journals of Andre Gide, Volume 1: 1889-1913,* trans. Justin O'Brien, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1947), p.29-30
[125]Ciaran Carson, *Fishing for Amber,* (London: Granta Books, 1999), p.2

enabling them to experience the same frustrations and monotony as the characters. But it may also be used to retard the development of these characters, as is the case with Billy Pilgrim in *Slaughterhouse V.*[126] Because of his temporal dislocation, his character ceases to change and his consciousness does not develop in any significant way. He becomes a remote character, impersonal and removed, and it can become difficult to engage with him on a human level, as indeed, the other characters in the text find out.

There are, however, texts which deny, not linearity *per se*, but the singularity with which it is often presented and the location of authority from whence it arises. Hence there are those texts which present a selection of ordering options, such as Julio Cortezar's *Rayulea,* which is known in English as *Hopscotch.* The latter can be read in two ways, as a linear narrative, and using 'a radically non-linear itinerary that begins with Chapter 73, leaps back and forth and ends with either Chapter 58 or 131, covering the entirety of the text.'[127] Thus it can be thought of as a kind of 'writerly text' – one which calls for the active participation of the reader in the construction of the work and its timescape.[128] But it is not completely free in this regard – there remain instructions which the reader must follow and limits within which they must work.[129] The same is true of hypertext narratives. Multiple possibilities there may be, but their existence need not disrupt the 'continuous, heterogeneous medium' in which

[126]Vonnegut, 2003
[127]Ursula K. Heise, *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative and Postmodernism,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.77
[128]Roland Barthes, *S/Z,* trans. Richard Miller, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974), p.4
[129]Heise, p.80

individuals and humanity as a whole, are enmeshed, the 'non-numerical flow' of Bergsonian *durée*.[130]

There are works, too, which rely for their construction of plot and timescape upon this very notion of *durée*, the fluctuating landscape of the interior. Using ideas such as free association, writers have produced stream of consciousness texts, interior monologues, imagist and symbolist poetry, often using sleep or dream-states to relate this experience.[131] Altered states of consciousness bring with them an extension of the temporal individualization experienced within all interior landscapes, rendering the clock almost entirely obsolete. Mrs. Ramsay, in her abstraction and dissociation from the world around her, can fill the time it takes to measure a stocking with thoughts ranging from the misbehavior of her children, to the dilapidated state of the house, the books she will never read, and the serving girl's dying father, none of which thoughts have any impact upon the progression of the storyline which is occurring outside her mind and merely arrest the readers' movement through the plot.[132] The laws of psychological focus are diverse, embedded deeply within the mental world of each particular being, and thus are subject to the personal histories and modes of thinking of those characters. Association, not cause, becomes the primary agent. When the narrator of *Swann's Way* tastes his tea-dipped madeleine, he is transported in full physical awareness to his time at Combray. In such an extreme mode of recollection 'It is as though something fluid had collected in our memories and we ourselves were

[130]Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* trans. R. L. Pogson, (New York: Macmillan, 1910), p.94
[131]Meyerhoff, p.24
[132]Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse,* (London: Penguin Group, 1996, (1927)), pp.42-45

dissolved in this fluid of the past,'[133] and thus do the narrators of *The Sound and the Fury* mingle past, present and future,

> If it had been cloudy I could have looked at the window, thinking what he said about idle habits. Thinking it would be nice for them down at New London if the weather held up like this. Why shouldn't it? The month of brides, the voice that breathed *She ran right out of the mirror, out of the banked scent. Roses. Roses. Mr and Mrs Jason Richmond Compson announce the marriage of.* Roses. Not virgins like dogwood, milkweed. I said I have committed incest, Father I said. Roses. Cunning and serene. If you attend Harvard one year but don't see the boat-race, there should be a refund. Let Jason have it. Give Jason a year at Harvard.[134]

Here, chronology dissolves. The narrator flows from one time period to another, his thoughts less subject to the outside world than to the vicissitudes of his mind. Like Proust's hero, the interior landscape is the more powerful, the past returning and intruding upon the present in full and glorious Technicolor.[135] The persistent moment, and the temporal co-presence of past and present is hugely disorienting. The reader is not familiar with the pathways through which the thoughts come into the character's consciousness, does not know the events of their past, their habits and their modes of thought, and this proximity to unfamiliar and sometimes unpleasant characters and

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[133]Bachelard, p.57

[134]William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury & As I Lay Dying,* (New York: The Modern Library, 1929), p.96

[135]Eugene Minkowski, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies,* trans. Nancy Metzel, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p.152

feelings can become uncomfortable to read. There is, in such texts, an openness of character which engenders a sense of realism. It is possible to sympathize with the characters, to engage with them on a level which is often extremely personal, for the reader is aware that these characters follow associative processes not unlike themselves, that all are bound to flow and flux. However, although the reader may come to a closer understanding of the character, the mind-scape of others, filled with such particular events and associations, will always be uncanny; discomfortingly familiar, and yet alien and other.[136] Reading Molly Bloom's unedited interior timescape pushes the boundaries of what is considered personal,

> yes Ill sing Winds that blow from the south that he gave after the choirstairs performance Ill change that lace on my black dress to show off my bubs and Ill yes by God Ill get that big fan mended make them burst with envy my hole is always itching me always when I think of him I feel I want to[137]

The reader at once recognizes similarities with their own processes of interior temporality, but by the events and associations which are made apparent, they know themselves to be viewing the mind of another. Temporal experience is deeply personal, always unique. This is especially the case with those interior landscapes which are most internalized, with our dream-worlds and hallucinations, the oneiric spaces within which an altered consciousness distorts a sense of shared, universal time. And when these interior landscapes collide and invade each other, the effect is deeply disturbing to standard senses of character identity. Virginia Woolf's *To the*

[136]Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny: An Introduction,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.1
[137]Joyce, 1922, p.906

Lighthouse segues between different viewpoints almost unnoticeably, and though the major focus of the book as a whole is the life and character of Mrs Ramsay, the narrator's immersion in multiple characters precludes any notion of a singular, static personality. At points it feels voyeuristic to be watching, as if the reader were invading a timescape never intended for public view. In both *Ulysses* and *To the Lighthouse,* the author has committed a kind of temporal evisceration, opening up the private timescape to the public realm, in order that the reader may use it to construct their own temporal map of events from these partial pieces of evidence. So here, even in these stream of consciousness texts, the desire for order makes itself known, for a goal and purpose, which may or may not be attained, remain apparent.

It should at this point be becoming apparent that the shape of a text is dependent not necessarily upon a singular plot, but may be filled with alternative options, as *Hopscotch* indicates. There is yet more complexity to the structure of a literary text than this, however, which the *mise-en-abyme,* a technique mentioned above, can be used to illuminate. In his journal of 1893, André Gide wrote,

> In a work of art I rather like to find transposed, on the scale of the characters, the very subject of that work..../Thus, in certain paintings of Memling or Quentin Metzys a small convex and dark mirror reflects the interior of the room in which the scene of the painting is taking place.[138]

He used such techniques within his own work. In *The Counterfeiters,* one of his protagonists, Edouard, is attempting to write his own novel, which is also called *The*

[138]Gide, 1947, p.29-30

Counterfeiters.[139] *Abymes* such as this are useful illustrations regarding the multi-layered functioning of any given text. We have come across something of this layering already in our brief discussion of fabula and sjuzet. The sjuzet can be said to refer to the style or form of the telling; a definition once belonging to diegesis, which is, as the following section will show, more concerned with levels and involvement, or relational position in regard to a story-world.[140] Any given text, however, is interpreted within a number of frames, some stemming from its material form, some from the surrounding contexts in which it resides and is encountered.

Both of these kinds of frame are illuminated in Genette's seminal work of narrative analysis *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. In this work, he talks about the various kinds of relationship a text constructs with other elements of the world – those elements to which it is similar, and those to which it relates. He defines this as 'transtextuality', and identifies, tentatively, five forms of textual relationship, which he himself admits are fluid.[141] In the first chapter, he gives us a breakdown of the various levels of transtextual relation. The first, 'intertextuality,' is, for Genette, the occurrence of co-presence between two or a number of texts, in which at least one is present in another or the others. Quotations, for instance, are intertextual forms.[142] Secondly comes the 'paratext,' defined in his later work of the same name as something which 'surrounds' and 'extends' the text, that which contextualizes it and makes it present in the world *as a text* – it is the 'undefined zone' between its inside and the outside

[139]Andre Gide, *The Counterfeiters,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Modern classics, 1966), p.70
[140]Porter-Abbott, p.75
[141]Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p.1
[142]Ibid.

world, including such things as book covers, prefaces, and introductions.[143] The third distinction of the 'metatext' is one of critique and commentary, in which one text may speak of or refer to another, formally or in terms of its content without necessarily quoting directly from it.[144] The fourth relation is that of 'hypertextuality,' which is, in its varying degrees and features the subject of *Palimpsests*. It is worth giving the definition here in Genette's own phrasing, for the term has, in the world of the internet – and in literary studies in general – something of an ambiguous and contested meaning. 'By hypertextuality,' writes Genette,

> I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*) upon which it is grafted in a manner which is not that of commentary.[145]

In other words, a hypertext derives itself from another text, either by explicitly 'speaking' about it, or being unable to exist without it, generated from it through a process of transformation.

The fifth and final of the transtextual relationships is that of the architext – that is, the groupings of categories, such as modes of discourse, enunciation and generic convention, which surround a single literary work and from which it emerges.[146] It is not vital to our discussion here, except in that it serves as a useful reminder that,

[143]Ibid., p.2
[144]Ibid., p.4
[145]Ibid., p.5
[146]Ibid., p.1

anywhere and 'anywhen', a text is always part of a broader relational context, and its interpretation will always be colored by that which sits around it.

The temporal relevance of this discussion might not be immediately apparent. However, knowledge that such levels might exist within a text are crucial for the way in which the authorial and readerly scriptors, the characters and the events of each text, are related to each other, and these relationships invariably contain a very temporal element. For we must be able to position ourselves some*when,* as well as some*where.*

Management of plot, shape, and structure, then, is crucial to an understanding of literary time. The temporal geographies which plot describes, whether linear and purposive, repetitive and static, or personal, and seemingly chaotic, showcase the diverse manners in which the behavior of time can be conceptualized, but they also highlight a certain sense that there is a shared linearity to which all may conform, and that the reader remolds presented plot structures in order that they can make sense of it themselves. Emplotment can alter the speed with which the reader progresses through the text, can create within them particular emotional responses. At the same time as describing the timescape's appearance, plot also impacts upon the manner in which it is perceived and how the author and audience work in interaction with it. It is crucial, but it is not the only determining factor in the characterization of a timescape. Literature's ability to express the multiplicity of temporal experience extends beyond the limitations of plot. This discussion of layers and textual or diegetic levels shows how vital the relative position of a plot and its various interlocutors, scriptors and

characters, can be. It is time, therefore, to turn to a crucial definitive element of literary temporality; perspective.

Chapter Two

Looking at Time

Stand on this hill. This is Llaregyb Hill, old as the hills, high, cool, and green, and from this small circle of stones, made not by druids but by Mrs Beynon's Billy, you can see all the town below you sleeping in the first of the dawn.

Dylan Thomas, Under Milk Wood

Engagement with a timescape requires a location in relation to it, a perspective upon it. Who and what is positioned where and when are critical in the form and manipulation of temporal features. These positions or their effects are neither singular nor simple, and they use multiple devices to engineer their ends. There are a number of questions which must be addressed here, related to who has a perspective, where and when they are located, how perspectives are related to each other, and how they change.

In the apprehension of even the simplest of literature, there are at least two participants with two different positions. There is always an observer, the audience, and always a speaker.[147] That the particular observer, and their particular context, is almost infinitely variable is a given, and for this reason it would be imprudent to speculate too much upon their precise impact upon a text. What should be focussed upon, however, are the possible perspectives which a text may materially present. In

[147]Barthes, 1975, p.260

the following section we shall define such terms as author, scriptor, narrator and focalisor, identify and illuminate some of the critical issues surrounding these terms and their veracity, discuss the various degrees to which they might be immersed or involved with the various textual layers outlined above, and the ways in which these might shift, change and be otherwise manipulated to affect the reader's experience.

Barthes once wrote that 'The one *who speaks* (in the narrative) is not the one *who writes* (in real life) and the one *who writes* is not the one *who is.*'[148] In a later article, 'The Death of the Author',[149] he would go on to question the singular and defined identity that is associated with an authorial name as the central node through which a text is shaped initially and interpreted thereafter. The ontological investigation of authorial functions and activity, which theorists such as Foucault would tackle,[150] are not sufficiently relevant to the question of temporality to be examined in detail here. However it is vital that we raise the issue, in order that we may be able to distinguish certain terms which will arise throughout this chapter, and this thesis as a whole. Those terms are 'scriptor' and 'narrator'.

For Barthes, the 'scriptor' was an entity which shaped and interpreted a text, and was 'born simultaneously with' it.[151] Thus, there is a scriptor who puts pen to paper and creates the material text, but they are a temporary and contingent being, extant only for the period of writing and distinct from, though related to, the named 'personality'

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[148]Ibid., p.261
[149]Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' in *Image-Music-Text,* trans. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp.142-148
[150]Michel Foucault, 'What is An Author' in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow, (London: Penguin Books, 1984), pp.101-120
[151]Barthes, 1977, p.145

of the Author. The scriptoral identity, however, may also be attributed to the reader of a text, who interprets and colours it in each encounter. To appropriate another of Barthes phrases, they take on a 'writerly' function.[152] This notion will form the basis of many of our discussions of the power of museum visitor and their ability to manipulate the temporality of the gallery space. For now, though, we must turn to literary texts and, removing such paratextual concerns as author and reader, consider the kind of identities and positions which might be constructed within them, and how these identities and positions are temporally affective. We turn, then, to the narrator and the focalisor.

The narrator, writes Barthes, is a 'paper being';[153] that is, they are an extant created in the body of the text itself, which have no position outside it, but which significantly affect the tone and character of that text and its temporality. Traditionally, approaches to the role of the narrator have given distinct importance to the grammatical concept of 'voice,' that is, the question of *who* is narrating.[154] Whether a text is narrated in the first, second or third person has a distinct impact upon how that text is perceived, and more importantly for us, when its content is perceived to be in relation to the reader, their time of reading, and the time in which the narrator is relating the text to them.

Mendilow argued that the use of the first person positions the story in a more remote past. This argument is based upon the supposition that such writing is very often

[152]Roland Barthes, *S/Z,* trans. Richard Miller, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974), p.4
[153]Barthes, 1975, p.261
[154]Porter-Abbott, p.64

written 'backward from the present.' [155] But this is a rather problematic concept. Mendilow himself noted that the retrospective nature of the writing was important.[156] It is this retrospectivity, rather than the voice of the text, which is the predominant factor in the temporal location of the story-world, for the use of the first person can also be used in situations where there is a strong sense of immediacy, certainly in terms of engagement with the presented narrator, as found here in Coleridge's *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner,*

> I closed my lids, and kept them close,
>
> And the balls like pulses beat;
>
> For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
>
> Lay like a load upon my weary eye,
>
> And the dead were at my feet.[157]

The Mariner relates a scene which, though in the past, he recalls in all its vivid detail. His direct relation of his experience to us, using the first person, gives the poem an immediacy which transcends the historical distance of the events from our own time. If they are to give an actual historicised location to the events being related, the analyst would do better to utilize tense rather than perspective or grammatical person. Personhood cannot locate that intense feeling or situation upon a chronologically demarcated timeline, but it can express a level of involvement or immediacy of relationship with the timescape being communicated in the content of the text.

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[155]Mendilow, p.107
[156]Ibid., p.106
[157]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Part IV,' in *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* ed. Morchard Bishop, (London: Macdonald & Co., 1954), p.225

Narration in the third person is most often told by a narrator located outside the world of the story.[158] The absence of personal pronouns such as 'I' and 'me' tends to create a sense of non-involvement, of removal, from the events which are being described, and has sometimes led to the designation of the third person narrator as omniscient. However, it is a mistake to take this as meaning that the narration will make plain the entire timescape, as Porter-Abbott clarifies. [159] For whilst the narrator themselves may appear as some all-knowing being, that which is narrated, as has been noted in the preceding study of structure, is naturally made up of selections and gaps. Third person narration need not be remote, either, for as Mendilow noted, it can create the notion that the action is taking place, watched by an entity present at, but outside of, the direct action.[160] Such positioning of the narrator means that it is possible to render the detail of a scene from a position which can present an overall, detailed, and sometimes dispassionate, view of the action, rather than be restricted to a singular point of view.

Less common is narration in the second person, which uses the 'you' pronoun to directly engage with the audience.[161] Such narration press-gangs the reader into participation in the text, making them a character in their own right. It can be used to very subtle effect. In *Under Milk Wood,* the reader is placed in that position so often occupied by the third person narrator, the being who seemingly sees all,

[158]Porter-Abbott, p.65
[159]Ibid., p.66
[160]Mendilow, p.107
[161]Porter-Abbott, p.64

> Only you can hear and see, behind the eyes of the sleepers, the movements and countries and mazes and colours and dismays and rainbows and tunes and wishes and flight and fall and despairs and big seas of their dreams.
>
> From where you are, you can hear their dreams.[162]

From where the reader is situated, they can hear the dreams of the whole town. They can invade the interiors of the characters, are the explicit lens through which these characters are viewed. But they are, too, subject to a puppet-master, the other narrator of the text, who is controlling what they see and what they feel. The temporality which they experience is not of their own choosing and in fact, here, the use of the second person foregrounds the managed nature of the experience in a way that first and third person narration do not.

It is clear that each grammatical person may be used in constructions which engender completely opposing temporal effects. It is also the case that most often, a work of literature is not related exclusively from one of these standpoints. Frequently, one voice segues into another, as Porter-Abbott notes in the case of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, where on occasion the narrator slips away from the impersonal voice to refer to himself as 'I.'[163] He does so very obviously at the beginning of Chapter 6 of Book 4, which is subtitled 'An Apology for the Insensibility of Mr Jones, to all the Charms of the lovely Sophia', and begins thus,

[162]Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood,* (London: J. M. Dent & Son's Ltd, 1954), p.3
[163]Porter-Abbott, p.65

> There are two sorts of people, who, I am afraid, have already conceived some contempt for my heroe, on account of his behaviour to Sophia.[164]

In this case, the interjection of the personal 'I' of the narrator jolts the reader out of their involvement in the story-world, highlighting once more that the timescape which they are experiencing is a constructed and managed one, one which is different from that of their own experience. However, the sympathy which the Fielding-narrator professes for Sophia need not be related through the personal pronoun alone. Simply though choice of words and tone of voice, a narrator may present personality in the text without ever explicitly referring to themselves.[165] The narration of *To The Lighthouse* is consistently in the third person, but Woolf does not make herself apparent as either author or narrator, so completely absorbed is she in the inner worlds of her characters. The events are related through their eyes, and their eyes alone.[166]

The narrator, then, may engage with the story through many lenses. Porter-Abbott calls these lenses focalisors, in contrast to the debated term 'point of view'.[167] Though the narrator is often the focalisor, this need not always be the case. Indeed, the narrator may remain in the third person, yet relate the story from the perspective of a character involved within it, as Woolf does,

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[164]Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1966, (1749)), p.167
[165]Porter-Abbott, p.65
[166]Woolf
[167]Porter-Abbott, p.66

> She had a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything, as she helped the soup, as if there was an eddy – there – and one could be in it, or one could be out of it, and she was out of it. It's all come to an end, she thought, while they came in one after another, Charles Tansley – "Sit there, please," she said – Augustus Carmichael – and sat down. And meanwhile she waited, passively, for something to happen. But this is not a thing, she thought, ladling out soup, that one says.[168]

Despite the fact that this is related in the third person, Mrs Ramsay and her interior mind are clearly the focalising devices through which the world of *To The Lighthouse* is displayed to the reader. The grammatical position of the narrator in this regard, then, does not serve to remove either themselves or the reader from the emotional time of Mrs Ramsay's experience.

Texts in the second person use the reader themselves as the focalising device, as in Italo Calvino's short novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller,*

> You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveller.* Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade. Best to close the door; the TV is always on in the next room. Tell the others right away, "No, I don't want to watch TV!" Raise your voice – they won't here you otherwise – "I'm reading! I don't want to be disturbed!" Maybe they haven't heard you, with all that racket; speak louder, yell: I'm beginning to

[168]Woolf, pp.125-126

> read Italo Calvino's new novel!" Or if you prefer, don't say anything; just hope they'll leave you alone.[169]

The use of the second person here does not only heighten the readers' sense of involvement; in fact, if anything, it indicates the engineered nature of the processes of reading and writing, and in so doing its oddity forces the reader into an awareness of their own actions, thereby removing them from tacit, non-analytical, involvement.

The grammatical person is clearly problematic in its application to literary works, particularly in relation to their evocation of temporality, and in relating the reader to the different timescapes which are involved. No one grammatical position creates one effect; it is merely one part of a confluence of grammatical and tonal occurrences which form a literary effect. A different approach was posited by Gerard Genette, which rather than focussing on *who* was doing the narrating, gave greater power to the position from which they were doing so. The grammatical voice, he argued, is simply a product of the choice of narrative 'posture', related to whether the narrator is situated outside of or within the world of the story. As an alternative which could be used to more subtle ends, he posited two kinds of involvement, each of which might be of a different degree of intensity. 'I call the first type, for obvious reasons, *heterodiegetic* and the second type *homodiegetic*.'[170] The first type of narratorial position lies outside the story-world, the second lies within it.

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[169]Italo Calvino, *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller,* trans. William Weaver, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1981), p.3

[170]Genette, 1980, p.244

The homodiegetic narrator can be used to express the temporal experience in a manner very close to that of human perception. This is clearly apparent in stream of consciousness texts, obviously so in the oft cited *In Search of Lost Time* series by Proust, and the strange interior worlds of the narrators of *The Sound and the Fury*,

> They held me. It was hot on my chin and on my shirt. "Drink." Quentin said. They held my head. It was hot inside me, and I began again. It was crying now, and something was happening inside me and I cried more, and they held me until it stopped happening. Then I hushed. It was still going around and then the shapes began.[171]

Because he is so childlike, Benjamin is perhaps the most natural of the narrators of *The Sound and the Fury*. His mind segues around in a manner less stable than many of the other characters. However, throughout the text, Faulkner manipulates the butterfly nature of human consciousness in a way that showcases the subjectivity of temporal perception and destabilizes the idea of narrative continuity. The multiple internalisations of perspective force the reader, if they want to reconstruct a fuller picture, to actively take upon themselves the position of the heterodiegetic narrator: in other words, to remove themselves from the lived timescape and take a panoptical approach to a historical event.

To say that the heterodiegetic narrator removes themselves from *lived* time is not tantamount to accusing them of unreal perception. The heterodiegetic narrator is not restricted to the perspective of a single character, a fact which permits them to create

[171]Faulkner, p.41

a great sense of historical detail which might well be absent from a point of view more deeply enmeshed in the action. The use of such contextual minutiae is characteristic of the naturalistic school of writing which, according to Auerbach, found its French apogee in Emile Zola.[172] Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle, subtitled as 'The Natural and Social History of a Family Under the Second Empire,' was based upon such painstaking research, that the level of detail in its twenty books is such that it is possible to follow the course of every event on a contemporary street map of Paris.[173] The level of information is so thick at times that the reader cannot help but be almost completely immersed in the timescape of the moment, such is the graphic realism with which the now chronologically distant Paris of the nineteenth century is rendered.

There are other, more structural means by which the perception of the timescape and the relationships which exist between itself, its readers, and its various focalisors might be manipulated. Framing, according to Porter-Abbott, is just such a device.[174] Echoing its counterparts in the visual arts and cinema, it is perhaps most obvious in graphic novels, which use pages and panel frames to position the viewer in regard to a particular scene. However, it need not be merely graphically rendered, for the manipulation of frames is contributory to the character of every work of fiction. As Mendilow notes, the 'Aristotelian canons of the beginning, middle and end' clearly delimit the outer bounds of the work, and the physical qualities of a piece of literature, the covers of a book, the ends of the page, and the start and end points of the text

[172]Auerbach, p.515
[173]Robin Buss, 'Introduction,' in Emile Zola, *The Drinking Den,* (London: Penguin Books, 2000, (1897)), p.xvii
[174]Porter-Abbott, p.25

itself, all serve to form a frame of sorts.[175] Such framing marks the outer limits of a timescape, giving it a definitive beginning and end. However the frame need not be so certain, for there are certain literary forms such as haiku, in which the outer limits of the subject are less clearly defined. In these cases the temporal scope is immeasurably wider because it is so undefined and thus haiku, for all their brevity, can encompass a vast perspective upon space and time.[176]

Frames may also be multiple. An enveloping narrative within which there are multiple frames and sometimes multiple levels of inner frames is sometimes known as the 'Chinese boxes technique.'[177] This is a familiar device, perhaps most famously found in the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights,*[178] but also in Boccaccio's *Decameron*[179] and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*[180] Theoretically, the level of complexity which this can reach is never-ending, but if the infinite recursion of Carson's Captain's tale is to be avoided, strong relationships between the inner and outer frames must be maintained. These kind of frames, once again, present the audience with multiple chronological sites, and as in the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights,* the interior tales told by a teller whose own tale is told by the text, foreground the temporal dichotomy between discourse and story-world, between sjuzet and fabula.

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[175]Mendilow, p.57
[176]British Haiku Society, 'Occasional Papers: (E) Poetic Taste, Sense of Proportion, Structure,' http://www.britishhaikusociety.org.uk/2011/02/english-haiku-a-composite-view/#taste, accessed 14th November 2012
[177]Mendilow, p.57
[178]Ibid.
[179]Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron,* trans. G. H. McWilliam, (London: Penguin, 1995)
[180]Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd edn.,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

The story-world, narrator, author, the various focalisors and the reader are located upon a temporal frame of reference. As these various 'time loci' combine and recombine in different ways, different and varied temporal experiences are formed, particularly in terms of the intervening distances between them.[181] Mendilow argues that the emotional engagement between loci is often high if the historical distance between them is small, for they have common concepts and reference points which make them mutually understandable.[182] Likewise, he argues, a historical distance between the reader and narrative position and again between the narrative position and the events related can create a 'doubly historical' quality to a text.[183] In certain cases the historical location of a text is left somewhat undefined, as Auerbach notes in the case of Biblical narratives, rendering the story in an almost mythic location which is at once related to all times generally and none specifically.[184] These are valid points to make, although emotional sympathy with a character or situation is not merely based upon chronological proximity, but upon other factors including social milieu and ideological position. Neither are situations and beings remote in time and space from their observer necessarily emotionally ineffectual. Now more than a century distant, the sad fate of Zola's Gervaise is still deeply troubling, though the scandalous and shocking nature of the book held at the time of its initial publication has been somewhat mitigated by time and social change.[185]

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[181]Mendilow, p.86
[182]Ibid.
[183]Ibid.
[184]Auerbach, p.11
[185]Emile Zola, *The Drinking Den,* trans. Robin Buss, (London: Penguin Books, 2000 (1876))

The framing of perspective is vital in giving character to a piece. If a single point of view, or focalisor, is used throughout the text, this can serve to create a sense of unity and wholeness of perception.[186] The timescape presented in these cases may be conceptualised as the preserve of a singular mind. In such cases, a sense of continuity in character must be maintained, if the singularity of self and perception is to be maintained. Meyerhoff argued that in the works of writers such as Proust, which move around in chronology, the continuity of perception is maintained by an organising principle, a 'will to order' of habitual and unique memories.[187] Thus, he argues, the self is made up in the process of 'artistic creation' using contents of the mind which in some way 'belong together.'[188] However, it is rare to find literary works which are engineered from a singular, unchanging perspective, or which do not break to allow their reader some respite. Dramatic works without scenes are rare, though some do exist, such as John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation*, in which temporal and physical shifts are engineered without once breaking scene over more than one hundred pages of script.[189] As is found in lengthy prose narratives, or poems which do not break, this can create a sense of continued momentum and fluidity,[190] which in the case of stichic poetry lends itself to meditative subjects. But if extended for too long, boredom and tiredness, if not confusion, on the part of the audience can be a result. Unbroken perception, it seems, is best left to shorter works such as haiku, in which relief from the point of view is not required.

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[186]Meyerhoff, p.29
[187]Ibid., p.47
[188]Ibid., pp.48-49
[189]John Guare, *Six Degrees of Separation: A Play,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990)
[190]Porter-Abbott, p.114

There are a plethora of ways in which perspectival shifts may be engineered, incorporating formal, thematic and plot devices, as well as the more subtle changes possible with the use of voice, focalisor, tone, frame and mode of discourse. The nature and intensity of their effects are likewise varied, and often depend upon how explicitly the device is articulated.

Formal breaks very often signal a change in perspective. The end of a chapter, or the end of scenes and acts in dramatic works and the end of verses in a poem, are obvious points at which to end one mode of perception and switch to another.[191] Likewise do formal phrases, such as 'and now let us stop telling this and let us turn to that' make plain the intent to change either the subject, or the focalisor, and thus the situation of the text with regard to its various timescapes.[192]

Take, for example, shifts created using character perspectives or voices. In his analysis of the *Chanson de Roland*, Auerbach notes how the same scene may be consecutively related more than once.[193] This usage of different focalisors and frames clearly marks a changed point of view, but can engender confusion in the reader as to whether this is a new situation, or the previous one being retold.[194] In *Alice in Sunderland,* this sort of shift is made clear graphically (Fig 2.1),

[191]Ibid.
[192]Auerbach, p.243
[193]Auerbach, p.103
[194]Ibid.

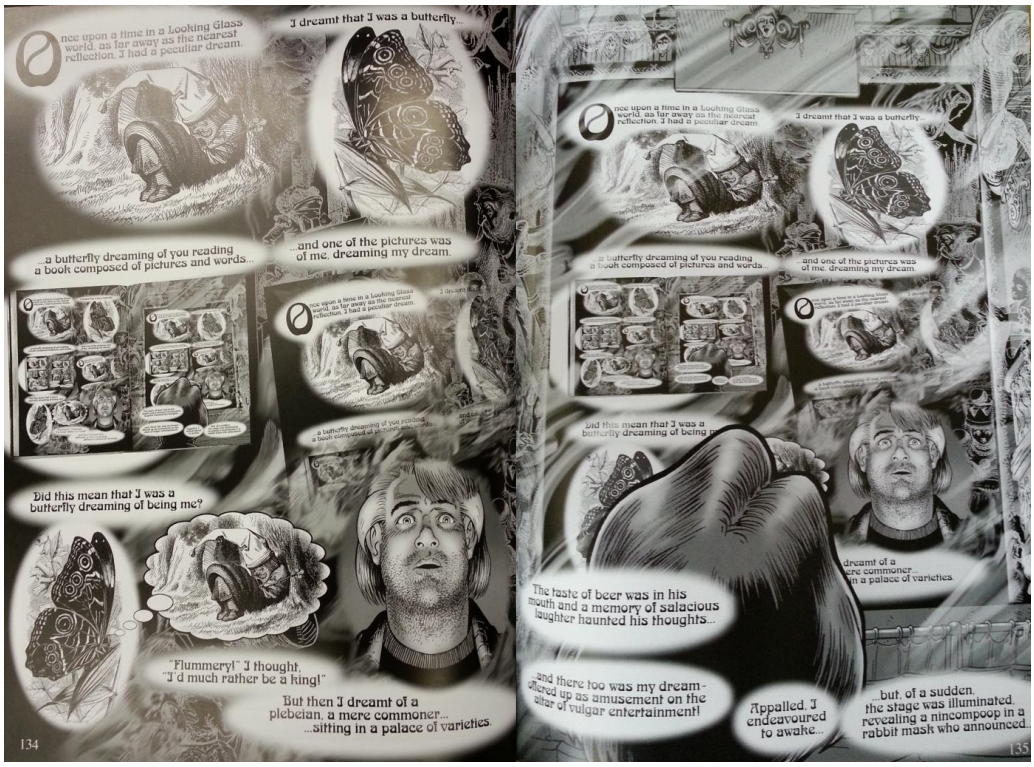

Fig.2.1: Shifting Perspectives On Wonderland. From *Alice in Sunderland: An Entertainment*, by Bryan Talbot.

Simply by using a different focalisor and frame, Talbot has thrown the fallacy of objective perception into sharp relief, creating the same sense of confusion and disorientation which characterises the response to the repeated laisses of the *Chansons*.[195]

On the other hand, in *To The Lighthouse,* Woolf is continually seguing between her characters, and yet the story rarely loses its momentum, breaks or repeats itself. How such a result might be achieved is also clear in the works of Zola. He was one of the first authors to use a style known as *indirect libre,* a form of narrative somewhere between direct and indirect speech,

[195]Bryan Talbot, *Alice in Sunderland: An Entertainment,* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp.134-135

> Gervaise didn't want a big wedding. What was the sense in spending all that money?[196]

Here, the perspective and timescapes shift without explicit change in the grammatical person. The reader is moved from the external to the internal world of Gervaise smoothly, with no sense of disturbance to the grammatical voice. The smoothness of transition is partly down to the fact that no linguistic conventions which signal direct speech are present here, even though the nature of the second sentence suggests that there should be. Their absence means that the narrative voice is maintained overall, if momentarily overtaken by Gervaise, and gives a sense of the depth to which Zola was immersed in her world. Furthermore, this passage from *The Drinking Den* points out how the interspersion of a different 'mode of discourse', such as those of argumentation or description as posited by Chatman, or an alternative mode of relation such as direct speech, can be used to change the vantage point from which the text and timescape are experienced.[197]

The shift need not, however, be so external. Though one character or participant may be used to create a sense of unitary perception within a text, this does not mean that they must retain a singular perspective throughout. The main run of a text can be interrupted by a change in the train of thought of a character, as can be seen regularly in *To The Lighthouse*,

[196]Zola, p.xxiii, p.63

[197]Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), p.9

> "And even if it isn't fine tomorrow," said Mrs Ramsay, raising her eyes to glance at William Bankes and Lily Briscoe as they passed, "it will be another day. And now," she said, thinking that Lily's charm was her Chinese eyes, aslant in her white, puckered little face, but it would take a clever man to see it, "and now stand up, and let me measure your leg," for they might go to the Lighthouse after all, and she must see if the stocking did not need to be an inch or two longer in the leg.[198]

Here, it is the subject of observation, not the agent of viewing, which is altered. This form of shift, where the change is deliberately made within the focalisor, is common in much poetry too, especially apparent in sonnets. No matter which variant of the form is used, more often than not they include a turn in perception towards the end which is known as a *volta*.[199]

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
> And in some perfumes is there more delight
> Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
> I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

[198]Woolf, p.42
[199]Lennard, p.42

That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

As any she belied with false compare.[200]

Having just spent the majority of the poem talking of his mistress in somewhat derisive terms, in the last couplet Shakespeare shifts his tone and opinion, bringing the reader forcibly back to concrete reality which, while it is not eternal and immeasurably sublime, has a truer, more tangible, kind of beauty. Such poetic shifts in modes of thought or emotional state are often accompanied by a formal alteration of size, rhythm or rhyme, which may either support or belie the sentiment which it ostensibly expressing.[201] In the sonnet above, the final two lines are individualised as a rhyming couplet, separated from the rest of the poem's rhyme scheme. Rhythmically too, the lines are very different, much shorter and more concrete than those which have preceded it.

In discussing plot and perspective, the focus has mainly been on states of being in which the overall character of the temporal situation is made manifest. These conditions are, however, subject to linguistic and rhythmical tools, with which the

[200]William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet CXXX: My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun,' *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Comprising His Plays and Poems,* (Middlesex: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., 1958), pp.1058-1059

[201]Paul Fussel, *Poetic Rhythm and Poetic Metre,* (London and New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979 (1965)), p.115

timescape may be manipulated on a very subtle level, and it is to these which the perspective must now shift.

Chapter Three

Words and Times

'When I *use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'*

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can *make words mean so many different things.'*

Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass

Literature forces 'a dramatic awareness of language,' language which generates particular experiences and perceptions of temporality.[202] Words, individually and in combination, generate meaning on many levels, upon the surface, but also upon deeper levels of allusion and connotation. As one of the most explicitly apparent communication devices, their deployment is a crucial part of how a text presents its own timescape, how it generates its voice and tone, and how it modifies the interior temporality of the being which is experiencing it. No exploration of the literary timescape would be complete without an understanding of the multiplicity of ways in which words are made to mean.

The choice of word class, or part of speech, enables the writer to manipulate the journey through the timescape. Each word type, characterised by semantic, morphological and syntactic differences, acts out a particular role in the understanding of the text.[203] Whether lexical or functional, every word matters. Understanding the roles of the constructive

[202]Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction,* 2nd edn., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996 (1983)), p.3

[203]Andrew Radford *et al., Linguistics: An Introduction,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.149

elements, the nouns, pronouns, determiners, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and other classes, is therefore fundamental for an overall picture of the literary timescape; and hopefully, it will point out certain useful possibilities for the design of museum space. It should be made clear at this point that English is the basis for this analysis, and it should be noted that the diversity of languages across the world precludes any fixed definition of word forms and behaviours. This approach works only here, and only now; but for all that, it remains useful.

Because time is so deeply entangled with motion and progress, it is perhaps not surprising that the words which at first glance appear the most temporally relevant are verbs. Verbs are used to relate actions, and thus characterise the sense of *dureé* which the text presents,

> I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
> I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
> 'Good speed!' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
> 'Speed!' echoed the wall to us galloping through;
> Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
> And into the midnight we galloped abreast.[204]

The plethora of verbs in this stanza impels the reader forward. 'Sprang', 'galloped', 'cried', 'undrew', 'echoed', 'shut' and 'sank' make the piece literally gallop, at times the pace of events becoming almost uncontrolled. The verbs locate the reader within the action, their density rendering the experience of swift motion explicitly apparent. The urgent

[204]Robert Browning, 'How they Bought the Good News From Ghent to Aix,' *The Collins Book of Best-Loved Verse,* ed. Charles Osborne, (London: William Collins, Sons & Co., Ltd., 1986), pp.33-34, p.33

atmosphere of this timescape is rendered vividly before the eyes of the reader by the sheer density of the verbs and their associations with speedy motion.

Conversely, verbs may also slow down the motion of a text, either through their absence, or more directly through their semantic meanings,

> I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom
>
> With horrid warning gaped wide,
>
> And I awoke, and found me here
>
> On the cold hill side.
>
> And this is why I sojourn here
>
> Alone and palely loitering
>
> Through the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
>
> And no birds sing.[205]

Here, 'sojourn', 'loitering' and 'wither'd' evoke a world which has almost stopped. The actions and timescape related are lethargic almost to the point of listlessness. Macbeth's inexorable tomorrows 'creep', and the actors in Pope's 'Dunciad' are 'yawn'd' to sleep in a world where dullness has triumphed.[206]

But this word class acts upon time in more subtle ways. Verbs do not only represent actions, but also states of being such as 'seems,' which tend to appear less transient and which may seem fixed at a specific point in time, unlike those actions with which verbs are traditionally

[205]John Keats, 'La Belle Dame sans Merci. A Ballad,' in *The New Penguin Book of English Verse,* ed. Paul Keegan, (London: Penguin Books, 2001), pp.640-642, p.641

[206]William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act Five, Scene Five, (London: Penguin Books, 1937), p.101; Alexander Pope, 'The Dunciad,' in Keegan, pp.469-472, p.472

associated.[207] The inflection of verbs, or the addition of auxiliary verbs, corresponds to the ways in which situations can be located in time.[208]

The connotative meanings of verb inflections are very subtle indeed, providing finely tuned linguistic compasses with which to negotiate the textual timescape. Verbs are indicative of the tense and aspect of a piece of text, locating timescapes in positions relative to each other and thus articulating the 'doubly temporal' nature of text which is based around the relationship between fabula and sjuzet, but also that between the world of the written, and the world of the reading.[209] These may both be manipulated in order to engineer particular experiences in time.

The present tense articulates a vivid reality, the world of the story expressed immediately and intensely to the reader,[210]

> It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black, the cobblestreets silent and the hunched courters-and-rabbits-wood limping invisible down to the sloe-black, slow, black, crow-black, fishing-boat-bobbing sea.[211]

Thomas' employment of tense renders the village of Llaregyb and its sleeping inhabitants almost sensorially present. The reader is catapulted into a world which demands participation, the present tense acting as an agent of involvement. Here, the difference between the textual and outer timescapes is lessened, the reader becoming an actor in, or

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[207]Gerald Nelson, 'Verbs' in *The Internet Grammar of English,* (University College London: Survey of English Usage, 1998), p.1, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/verbs/verbs.htm, accessed 17th May 2010
[208]Renaat Declerck, *The Grammar of the English Tense System: A Comprehensive Analysis,* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmBH&Co., 2006), p.94
[209]Chatman, p.9
[210]Deborah Schiffrin, 'Tense Variation in Narrative,' *Language,* 57(1) (March 1981), 45-62, p.46
[211]Thomas, p.1

direct observer of, the events related. This closeness of association can be used to good effect in the generation of emotional responses, especially when the present tense is juxtaposed with the past,

> A slumber did my spirit seal,
> I had no human fears:
> She seemed a thing that could not feel
> The touch of earthly years.
>
> No motion has she now, no force
> She neither hears nor sees
> Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
> With rocks and stones and trees![212]

In the first stanza, the use of the past tense creates a sense of distance, an idealised place now forever encased in memory. It delays the truth of the current situation until the second stanza, which, related in the more tangible 'fictive' present in which the poet's love is dead, suddenly becomes more melancholy. Whilst the first stanza contains no explicit statement of temporal geography, the appearance of 'now' in line five gives a certainty to the location of the writer and audience, movingly recognising the transience of human life and the impossibility of attaining a sense of stability and permanence in the mortal world. The temporality of the poem thus invites an emotional engagement which in another tense might be less intense.

[212]William Wordsworth, 'A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal,' in Keegan, p.566

Relating something in the past tense can distance it from the current situation of the reader. Because of this, it is a useful tense to use when dealing with violence and trauma,

> *born 19.6.32—deported 24.9.42*
>
> Undesirable you may have been, untouchable
>
> you were not. Not forgotten
>
> or passed over at the proper time.
>
>
> As estimated, you died. Things marched,
>
> sufficient, to that end.
>
> Just so much Zyklon and leather, patented
>
> terror, so many routine cries.
>
>
> (I have made
>
> an elegy for myself it
>
> is true)
>
>
> September fattens on vines. Roses
>
> flake from the wall. The smoke
>
> of harmless fires drifts to my eyes.
>
>
> This is plenty. This is more than enough.[213]

[213]Geoffrey Hill, 'September Song,' in Keegan, pp.1011-1012

The huge poignancy of 'September Song' is partly due to the use of tense. The unfortunate 'you' of the first stanzas is contrasted with the first person narrator, distanced in both identity and time. The past tense removes the horror of the Holocaust far from the present September, bracketing the pain and making it safe. By contrast, the present is calm, lulling and drifting like the smoke. Conversely, the past can also present an idealised vision of Arcadia, as is the case with much pastoral and elegiac poetry such as 'Thyrsis', by Matthew Arnold.[214] The past tense can also be used to narrate that which is fantastical, or removed from the quotidian course of life. Thus it can be used to relate the visions which are had in dreams or hallucinations, as does Coleridge in 'Kubla Kahn.'[215]

Though our language cannot express 'all the possible shapes that time can take,' it can illustrate complex degrees of past and present.[216] In English the present need not be simply a finite passive expression, such as 'he is', which expresses a generalised situation, but may venture into the realms of the non-finite progressive verb 'he is being', which describes a present and on-going action. Likewise, the past has finite and non-finite forms, the former locating the action in a set and separate period from the now, the latter giving that past continued relevance in the present.[217] The different forms of these tenses mean that they are received very differently, as this example from Van Frassen shows,

[214]Matthew Arnold, 'Thyrsis: A Monody, to Commemorate the Author's Friend, Arthur Hugh Clough,' from The Poetry Foundation, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=172864, accessed 17th May 2010
[215]Coleridge, 'Kubla Kahn,' in *The Complete Poems,* p.212-213
[216]Jean-Claude Carrière, 'Answering the Sphinx,' in David, Lenoir and de Tonnac, pp.95-170, p.97
[217]Nelson, 'Verbs,' p.2, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/verbs/tense.htm, accessed 17th May 2010

(7) Elizabeth was crowned at Westminster Abbey in 1952.

(8) The coronation of Elizabeth occurred at Westminster Abbey in 1952[218]

Though both are written in the past tense, they are written in different forms, making the reception of them very different. The first sentence, written in the passive form using 'was', locates the event more firmly in the past than does the second, in which the use of the perfective form relates the action as having occurred in the past and yet retaining a current relevance.

The future tense is equally tricky, if not more so. Although humanity is aware that the future will come, precise details of what that will mean are unavailable. Thus, the future tense, which in English is indicated through the use of the infinitive form augmented with modal verbs, must express differing degrees of certainty. These modal verbs – can/could; may/might; shall/should; will/would - express different kinds of relationships with future action. They may give permission to act in a particular way, may express different degrees of possibility and prediction, or express obligation to act in a particular way.[219] The future tense may also, as in Tennyson's *Ulysses,* depict a yearning for something that may never come to be.[220]

There are many degrees of pastness, the future holds many possibilities, and the present is constantly moving. In terms of life experience too, these modes of time do not sit in isolation. Temporal co-presence, as found in Faulkner and Proust, shows how slippery

[218]Bas. C. VanFrassen, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Time and Space,* (New York: Random House Inc., 1970), p.33
[219]Nelson, p.4, accessed 17 May 2010
[220]Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson: Second Edition,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p.116

tenses are. They merge one into the other, are unclear and shifting, their clausal relationships manufacturing differing levels of certainty and realism. But though they seem on the surface the most temporally active categories of word, it is not only verbs which express the timescape's nature. Stories are made up not just of states and actions, but of objects and descriptions. The other lexical categories express meaning in different ways, and a study of them can through yet more light upon the characteristics of the timescape.

Nouns, as the other major lexical class, cannot be ignored in any study of literature. As words denoting experiential *things*, they relate to the lived timescape, the timescape of the text, and the timescape of the thing itself. On a very basic level, because nouns are an 'open class' which permit the inclusion of new words as concepts and objects change and grow, the nouns which occur in a text can be used to identify the historical period in which the story is set.[221] But the noun operates within the text in a more complex way, for they may be employed to retard action,

> Not the labile units of memory nor the dry transparence, but the charring of burned lives that forms a scab on the city, the sponge swollen with vital matter that no longer flows, the jam of past, present, future that blocks existences calcified in the illusion of movement: this is what you would find at the end of your journey.[222]

Here, 'jam', 'scab' and 'sponge' retard movement, their semantic connotations bringing a sluggish motion to the text, and an unpleasant sensual quality to the experience of 'the end.' Contrasted with the more ephemeral 'memory' and 'transparence', the turgid

[221]Radford *et al,* pp.254-255
[222]Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities,* trans. William Weaver, (London: Vintage, Random House, 1997), p.99

physicality of the objects which these nouns represent builds a timescape which is at once sensorially imaginable and repellent.

As is apparent from this quote, nouns do not merely represent physical objects. They can be both concrete and abstract, that is, relating either to the tangible world, or to intangible concepts such as 'justice', which are harder to pin down to a set spatio-temporal location.[223] A text made up of concrete nouns can have a far more immediate and sensory reality than one made up of abstractions. The timescape of the abstract noun is far less specific, for concepts are far more elusive in their manifestation than the 'transitory hardenings' of the material world.[224] Likewise, the specificity which is created by the use of proper, rather than common, nouns gives a determinate focus in time and space to the text which is deeply individualised and personal.

However, the spatio-temporal particularity of nouns is not just based upon their inherent qualities, but upon the words with which they are associated. Determiners, which limit the referent of a noun phrase, come in definite and indefinite forms, and therefore extend the solitary noun along a spectrum ranging from 'any' to 'that'.[225] It is not just the specific spatio-temporal referent which the addition of other words can alter, therefore, but the overall timescape of the text. And yet more parts of language remain crucial too.

Adjectives and adverbs, as modifying linguistic forms, are 'those doors of language through which the ideological and the imaginary come flowing in.'[226] It is these words which make

[223]Radford *et al.,* p.149
[224]Urry, p.77
[225]Nelson, 'Determiners,' http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/verbs/tense.htm, as of 17 May 2010, p.1
[226]Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text,* trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p.14

vivid the concepts and actions of which the nouns and verbs are the bare bones. They describe attributes, states of being, and the spatio-temporal locations and qualities of occurrences. These are the building blocks of metaphor, and are fundamental in how temporal experience is related. For that which under technical description would be quotidian can through description speak to humanity on a deeply embedded, emotional level of association and desire. To relate that which can seem ineffable, literature recourses to imagery and symbolism; thereby it is able to render the incorporeal in physical terms.

Enmeshed so deeply in relationships with space, it is unsurprising that the descriptions of the material and sensual world which literature provides allow a glimpse, however fleeting, into the underlying timescape. Whilst verbs give action a temporal location, and nouns give objects being in time, it is the adverbs and adjectives which extend the qualities of the related events and beings, giving literature its special power and distinctiveness from the speech of the everyday. These words can relate the manner, reality, and duration of a being or event, and they create specific qualities in the text itself which influence its reception.

Those adverbs which denote the speed of the event or being are perhaps the most obvious evidence of the qualities of the underlying timescapes of literature. The swiftness or slowness of a being in the story builds particular characteristics for the story timescape, but they can also be used to create that same sense in the manner in which the story is related,

When Ajax strives, some Rock's vast Weight to throw,

The Line too labours, and the Words move slow;

Not so, when swift Camilla scours the Plain,[227]

Here, Pope has both presented and described this phenomenon. The middle line does indeed labour, its rhythmic qualities heightened and highlighted by the inclusion of the corresponding adverb 'slow'. But when Camilla appears, the quality of the line changes entirely, the speed of her motion made explicit in 'swift', and echoed by the qualities of the line itself.

The choice of descriptive word determines where control of the timescape lies. Those stative adjectives which denote the condition of a noun, such as 'red' or 'small', give those states a kind of permanence less apparent in the dynamic adjectives, such as 'brave' or 'calm', which describe qualities more under the control of the thing or person with which they are associated, and which may not always be apparent.[228] Thus the use of statives presents elements more inherent and perceivable than the transient dynamic.

Adjectives can also be manipulated to accord levels of reality to a text,

Prospero You do look, my son, in a moved sort

As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir:

Our revels are now ended: these our actors,

Are melted into air, into thin air:

[227]Alexander Pope 'Essay on Criticism,' *The Major Works,* ed. Pat Rogers, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 (1993)), pp.17-39, p.29

[228]Nelson, 'Adjectives,' http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/verbs/tense.htm, accessed 17 May 2010,p.3

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a rack behind: We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.[229]

The 'cloud-capp'd towers' and 'gorgeous palaces' are blown away, shown to be 'thin' and 'baseless' by this final speech of Prospero's. Not only is the fantastical story-world shown to be little more than a dream, but the manner in which it is related, the 'insubstantial pageant' of the theatre, and, indeed, human life itself, are shown to be equally as ephemeral. Three different timescapes are evoked, but each is fleeting to a different degree.

Exotic metaphors may also be employed to present timescapes which are removed from that of the reader, the description of spaces and environmental qualities beyond the mundane. Bakhtin's chronotopic sites of adventure time and the Rabelaisian festival use physical removal and environmental strangeness to place the actions which occur within them in a place outside the normal run of events.[230] The forest of Broceliande, of Arden, the world of holiday and Faerie take their inhabitants from the established timescape to places in which responsibility is removed, or places within which issues are resolved and worked

[229]Shakespeare, 'The Tempest,' Act IV, Scene I, in *The Complete Works,* p.16
[230]Bakhtin, 1981, pp.84-258

through without the worry of consequences in the external world. For the characters of 'As You Like It', the Forest of Arden serves as a foil for the world of the court, a place 'more free from peril' in which they can resolve romantic and diplomatic entanglements safely, and in which they can abdicate their normal responsibilities.[231] They are also places of becoming, the liminal status of the Knight Errant during his sojourn in Broceliande leading finally to his further development as a knight of good character and righteousness.[232] In the Rabelaisian marketplace and carnival, the world becomes chaotic, seemingly arbitrary and open to chance, but this is, Bakhtin argues, all illusory.[233] Even these most disrupted environments are saturated with time; but it is not the aristocratic, measured time of Newton. It is time which is rollercoastered and anarchic, closer to the time which the calendar does not tell, time which is terrifying, yet also a form of renewal. '...this is the world which continually grows and multiplies, becomes ever greater and better, ever more abundant. Gay matter is ambivalent, it is the grave and the generating womb, the receding past and the advancing future, the becoming.'[234] These 'extratemporal' landscapes are not, in fact, a-temporal; it is rather that they do not conform to a strict, singular and objective rule.

On the other hand, realistic descriptions bring the timescape of the text closer to the reader's own, allowing, perhaps, a more direct association with the characters within them. As Auerbach notes, Biblical plays, such as the *Mystère d'Adam* and the Corpus Christi Cycles aimed to attract a popular audience, and thus whilst the subjects which are treated are

[231]Shakespeare, 'As You Like It,' Act II, Scene I in *The Complete Works,* pp.209-233, p.214
[232]Auerbach, p.130
[233]Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* trans. Helene Iswolsky, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984 (1968)), p.149
[234]Ibid., p.195

extraordinary, the language is that of common life.[235] The language of the profane is used to lessen the distance between the world of the everyday and that of the Divine. Taking this a step further, Naturalist writers of the nineteenth century, such as Zola, used precise descriptive language to convey life as lived with a vivacity and immediacy that was received with much condemnation.[236]

> With redoubled strength she grasped Virginie round the waist and bent her double, her face pressed against the stone floor and her bottom in the air. And, despite the other's struggles, she pulled her skirts right up. Underneath, she was wearing bloomers.[237]

Zola's language renders its subject in gritty realism, giving the cat fight an immediate presence which would be impossible for more metaphorical or allusive language. Yet this does not debase or lessen the people with whom the story is populated. For so long, as Auerbach notes, the lower orders had been permitted appearance in literature only as generalised background fodder or if described in any realistic detail, as 'grotesque or comic'.[238] Not so with Zola. This was not an exaggerated Othering of the poor by the bourgeois, but a plea for their redemption.[239] Indeed, he even put words directly in their mouths, for it is not simply the language which the writer uses, but that of their characters which determines the temporal characteristics of the text. The slang which Zola employed in

[235]Auerbach, p.151
[236]Zola, p.xvii
[237]Ibid., p.30
[238]Auerbach, p.519, p.510
[239]Zola, p.xxii

conveying speech was that of the everyday, at least at the time he was writing.[240] In his work, the world and characters are given a quality of humanity almost unprecedented in his time, but much imitated since by writers such as Irvine Welsh. It is the appearance of such squalid reality in a form usually reserved for the sublime which so offended Emile Zola's contemporaries.[241]

The fact that language inevitability changes over time highlights yet another manner in which textual timescapes are made manifest.[242] Archaic word forms can be used by poets in order to evoke lost and distant times, or to accord objects qualities which lie beyond the contemporary,

> Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
>
> Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
>
> Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
>
> A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
>
> What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
>
> Of deities or mortals, or of both,
>
> In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
>
> What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
>
> What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
>
> What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?[243]

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[240]Ibid., p.xxv
[241]Ibid., p.3
[242]Lyle Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction,* 2nd edn., (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004 (1998)), p.3
[243]John Keats, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,' in Keegan, pp.637-638, p.637

The use of 'Thou', archaic for Keats as well as the reader, immediately transports this vase into a temporal state far removed from our own. Throughout the poem, the recurrence of such words maintains this illusion, but as yet, a specific temporal location remains unidentified. Perhaps more explicitly referential to a particular time, 'Sylvan', 'Tempe' and 'Arcady' call up images of the attic past, and yet the reader remain uncertain as to whether, in fact, this is the realm of history or myth, or a realm in which the two intermingle. Whilst the poem explicitly asks whether the urn depicts men or gods, either way it has entered a temporality which transcends the everyday. This is only increased by the final two lines of the stanza, their allusion to Bacchantile rites further associating them with ancient myth. Even were the figures depicted to be those of mortals, their chronological removal from the reader is enough to elevate them to this other, extra-reality. And yet, in these final lines, a crazed physicality, a 'wild ecstasy', makes itself known, complicating the Arcadian romanticism of the preceding lines, and suggesting the extraordinary temporal landscapes of the fair and festival. The creation of new and strange words using basic morphological understandings can also imbue a timescape with a certain extraordinary quality. Lewis Carroll was a master of this skill, 'The Jabberwocky' a joyously grotesque manifestation of art,

> Twas brillig, and the slithy toves,
>
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
>
> All mimsey were the borogroves,
>
> And the momeraths outgrabe...[244]

[244]Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass,* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2003 (1865)), p.209

The relation of the timescape of Wonderland to the timescape of the 'real' world is very subtle. While the bizarre words allow us to locate this poem in the realms of the fantastic, they also accord to the accepted rules of word formation. The timescape of Alice's fantasy world is thus not chronologically distanced from the reader's own, but parallel to it. The landscape is exotic, yet related to that of the world of shared understanding.

When words are combined, they build timescapes. As verbs, they denote forms and qualities of motion, as description, states of being graded from the permanent to the momentary. They build concrete and irreal landscapes, relate multiple timescapes one to the other. Placed together in specific ways, they form the mental substance through which those timescapes are presented to a reader. Writers choose specific words for specific reasons, and the importance and complexity of these reasons should not be underestimated. The lexicon is a powerful and present agent with which we describe and create the world in which we live. To answer Alice, there are many ways in which words can mean. But the fullness of time cannot be expressed in words alone. Language is not life, it is the symbol, not the thing itself. There is a deeper level which has already been alluded to – the level of rhythm, that base point to which temporality must always return. It is on this base which words sit, alluding to or belying their underlying plane.

Chapter Four

The Rhythm of Time

...we should never realize these images so strongly without the regular movement of the rhythm on which our soul is lulled into self-forgetfulness, and as in a dream, thinks and sees with the poet.

Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will

Time as lived exists in a place beyond words. At the point where conscious thought becomes pure sensation, we are enthralled by rhythm, that most basic of phenomena to which all temporal existence falls subject. Whilst we have been educated to understand what concepts, words, and structures mean, at the base of our being there is an instinctive, untaught understanding of rhythm. Yet as intuitive as the experience of rhythm can be, the skilled can wield its power with astonishing subtlety. Beyond semantics and intellectual connotation, there is an experiential level to language. Words and phrases are the hills and ravines of the literary timescape, the existence, behaviour and meaning of which is subject to the tectonic forces of rhythm.

The description of rhythm and its impact is no easy task. In many ways it is a fallacy to assume that it can be done, for it is largely through subjective experience that the effects of rhythm come to be felt. Yet some form of explication is necessary if the individual experiences of rhythm are to be shared. Therefore here prosodic analysis will serve to highlight the importance of certain rhythmic features which contribute to the geography of

the literary timescape.[245] Punctuation and lineation, in their physical, visual inscription, make themselves plain textually, but other rhythmical agents act more obliquely, the effects of repetition, rhyme and stress less apparent on the page than in the mind.

Punctuation can be manipulated to very particular and nuanced temporal effect and is a complex subject in and of itself. John Lennard argued that in English punctuation has no *rules* as such; simply conventional and unconventional use.[246] In his analysis of poetic punctuation, he incorporated not only conventional *marks*, such as stops, tonal indicators, dis/aggregators, signs of omission, rules and *signes de renvoi*, but also stanzaic structure, lineation, pagination and interword spacing.[247] If the notion of punctuation is extended further, into the artwork of comic books, then it is clear that its varied effects may also be rendered through forms not considered in classical analysis, including panels, frames, gutters, captions and speech balloons (Fig.4.1).[248]

[245]Lennard, John, *The Poetry Handbook, 2nd edn.,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 (1996)), p.1
[246]Ibid., p.106
[247]Ibid., pp.105-152
[248]Talbot, p.88

Fig.4.1: Punctuation by Means of Towers. From Alice in Sunderland: An Entertainment, by Bryan Talbot.

The possibilities which punctuation presents in terms of constructing a timescape are thus immensely varied, and include temporal frame shifts, pauses, incitement, cessation, continuance, flow and recursion.

The units into which text is moulded - its paragraphs and stanzas - contribute greatly to its appearance as a rhythmic entity and its unity, or otherwise, as a rhythmic whole. Lengthy portions of text, long paragraphs, and unbroken, stichic verses run with a certain sense of fluidity, well suited to meditative and narrative text.[249] If extended for too long, however, they can result in boredom and confusion. Conversely, shorter blocks of text and stanzaic poems provide less room for an enduring rhythm to develop. These shorter blocks can be used to represent momentary visions or moods, sudden epiphanies or fleeting thoughts.

[249]Fussel, p.110

They can seem evanescent, fragmentary, disruptive jolts in the continuous flow of life which shake the reader out of dullness into life once more. By juxtaposing lines of differing metrical length, the poet can foreground and emphasise the impact of the words, making the images or actions conveyed by the shorter lines significantly more vivid. Coleridge was a master of this. Throughout 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', he periodically extends the metrical line, and when it is shortened once more, the images are given sudden and vivid presence,

> I closed my lids, and kept them close,
> And the balls like pulses beat;
> For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
> Lay like a load upon my weary eye,
> And the dead were at my feet.[250]

Combined with the final full stop, the shorter final line imbues the picture of the dead sailors with a horrific, gory reality. The picture becomes vivid before our eyes, sudden and shocking. This poem too, makes it plain how the deployment of punctuation maintains or disrupts the motion of a piece. Stops come in various degrees of intensity, from the full period to the comma, each form distinctly sensitive to the effect required. They can be used to signal a conceptual, geographic or temporal shift,

> I was watching the woman that bore me
> Stretched in the brindled darkness
> Of the sick room, rigid with will

[250]Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Part IV,' in *The Complete Works,* p.225

> To die: and the quick leaf tore me
>
> Back to this rainy swill
>
> Of leaves and lamps and the city street mingled before me[251]

In the fourth line of Lawrence's stanza the power of the caesura, or rhythmic pause which comes in the middle of the line, is bolstered through the inclusion of a colon. Unlike a full stop, the colon does not suggest a complete end but a certain sense of continuance, whilst still building a defined boundary between the two parts of the phrase. It is used here to allow the thought of the narrator to turn, to change both temporal and thematic focus, and yet helps that narrator to retain a sense of sustained identity. This is also increased in this case by the use of enjambment, the continuance of the phrase over the line break without the use of a full stop. In the first part of Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind', this runs distinctly counter to the overall stanzaic structure of the piece, the lengthy sentence with its swirling clauses running over five short stanzas, and creating within the formal space a distinct temporal motion which echoes the unruly behaviour of the wind itself.[252] Such flouting of convention is also used in stream of consciousness writing, where the ebb and flow of the narrator's thought is mirrored in the continuity of the text,

> Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the *City Arms* hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting to that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he thought he had a great leg of and she never left us a

[251]D. H. Lawrence, *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence,* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), p.76

[252]Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ode to the West Wind,' in Keegan, pp.642-644

> farthing all for masses for herself and her soul greatest miser ever was actually afraid to lay out 4d for her methylated spirit telling me all her ailments she had too much old chat in her...[253]

This word-fall continues completely unbroken for the next forty pages, sliding through thoughts not usually on public view. The landscape of Molly Bloom's mind is, for the reader, uncharted territory, there are no markers by which the space can be navigated, no wayfinders or indicators by which the process might be controlled. It is fast flowing, disorienting, confusing, yet absorbing and powerful, and when it finally comes to an end it is a profound shock.

Writing, however, need not be at the mercy of the final closure of the full stop. Haiku, in their English translations, often do away with the formal conventions of beginnings and endings, lacking in the standard punctuation which usually defines the outer limits of a block of text.[254] As short as they apparently are, their boundaries have been left undefined and fluid, allowing projection in all directions for an infinite length, and thus their meaning can be made to reverberate across distance and across time. This reverberative delicacy is clearly apparent in the works of e e cummings,

> it is more sane and sunly
>
> and more it cannot die
>
> than all the sky which only

[253]Joyce, 1992, p.871

[254]British Haiku Society, 'Occasional papers (E)' http://www.britishhaikusociety.org.uk/2011/02/english-haiku-a-composite-view/#taste, accessed 27 May 2010

is higher than the sky[255]

Love, here, becomes unbounded and infinite. It cannot be chopped up or 'end-stopped', and the absence of punctuation beyond the line breaks underlies and supports the message of love unending which the poem is trying to convey.[256] Here, we are in the realm of a magnitude of feeling too large to contain, which is at the same time safe and certain because it is written down and placed within defined, material stanzas.

[255]e e Cummings '[love is more thicker than forget],' The Poetry Foundation, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=11427, accessed 28 April 2010
[256]Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Limited, 2007), p.131

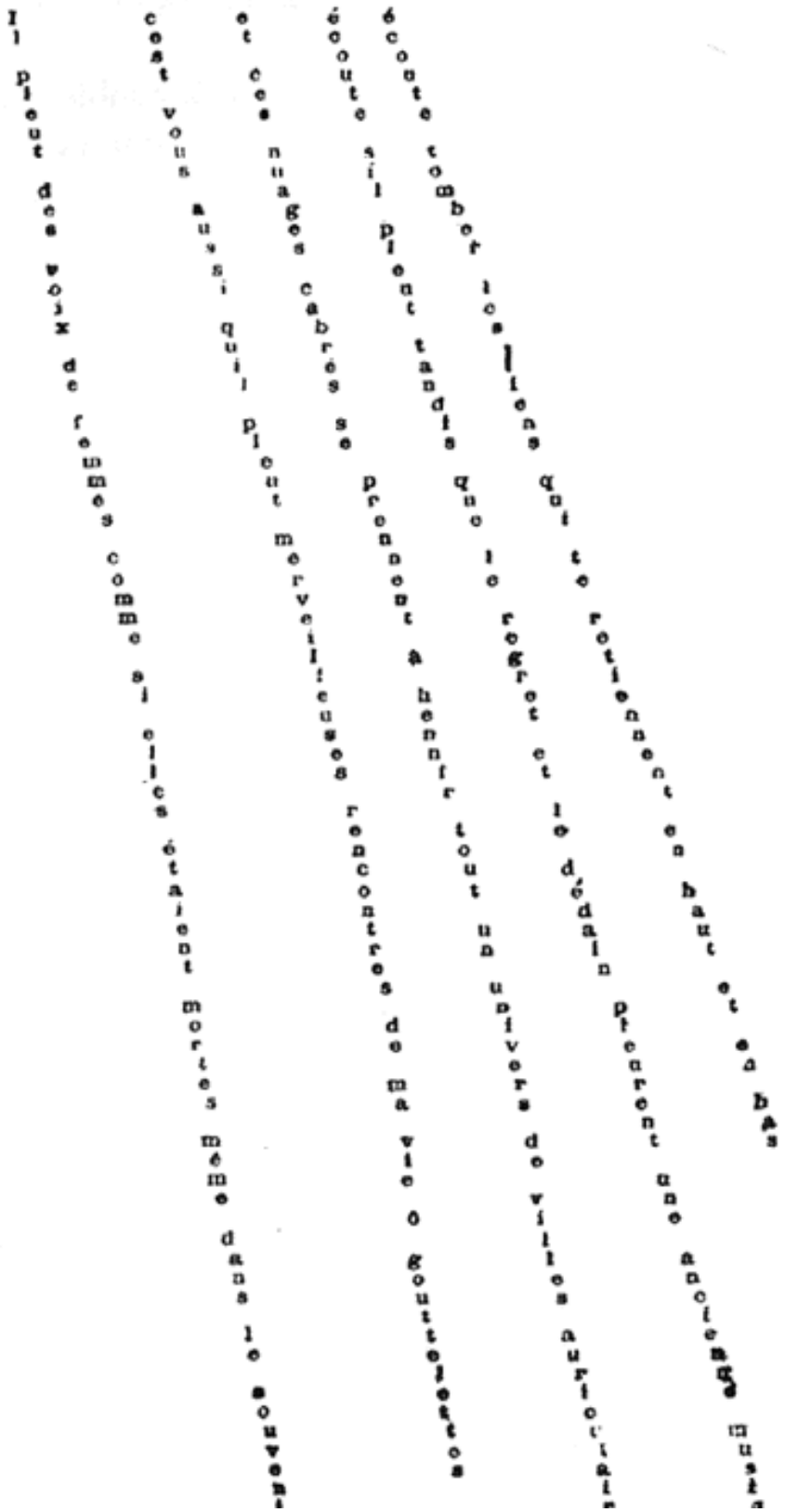

Fig. 4.2: 'Il Pleut,' by Guillaume Apollinaire

Punctuation and form, then, can end and perpetuate modes of thought. Their usage can indicate digression, create suspense, inhibit and increase speed. They are forms of visual message which the writer uses to convey the basic rhythm. Thus can comic books create punctuation points in the form of panel frames, and undermine their separation by using imagery which bleeds over interstitial gutters and pages.

Shaped poetry too, which 'displays itself as a metaphor,' can be used to undermine, or emphasise, the rhythmic qualities of that which it describes.[257] Apollinaire's 'Il Pleut' (Fig.4.2) is performative, visibly mimicking the rain running down a window pane, but also recalls the uncontrolled and seemingly unending tears of grief.[258] As with the comic book, semantics and imagery combine to orchestrate a symphony of sensory and intellectual experience, a symphony which can be heard as well as read.

The aural qualities of sounds and phrases, their repetition or singularity, are accorded huge prominence in the realm of poetry. This soundscape may be harmonious or discordant, and like music anywhere, its qualities are hugely important in the characteristics of the timescape. They might smooth the terrain to come, throw up unexpected outcrops of language, divert the wanderer or send them back to their start.

Echoic devices come in many forms, each having its own varied results. Rhyme, along with assonance, consonance and alliteration may be managed to produce timescapes of very

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[257]Edward Hirsh, 'Winged Type,' The Poetry Foundation, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/print.html?id=177216, accessed 9 April 2010

[258]As cited in Hirsh. The translation by Roger Shattuck reads thus:

> It's raining women's voices as if they had died even in memory
> And it's raining you as well marvellous encounters of my life O little drops
> Those rearing clouds begin to neigh a whole universe of auricular cities
> Listen if it rains while regret and disdain weep to an ancient music
> Listen to the bonds fall off which hold you above and below.

different kinds.[259] Full rhyme, including its variant *rime riche*, in which the pair of words agree entirely, and alliteration, the repetition of the initial sounds of words, are perhaps the most commonly used, and certainly the most overtly demonstrative, of the echoic relations. They can create a sense of unity within a text, relating parts to each other and giving a defined identity to the piece as a whole.[260] The others are somewhat harder to find, their impact more subtle and subject to individual interpretation, lending a less defined, more uncertain quality to a verse. Where they are located in a block of text, beginning, middle, or end, is concomitant with their resultant temporal effect. Many forms of poetry are in fact strictly controlled, both in their rhyme schemes and stanzaic characteristics. In a four-line quatrain, for instance, a scheme which interlaces rhymes thus, *abab*, forces the rhymes to look both forward and back, tying itself together as a unified whole more certainly than the equivalent stanza rhymed in couplets, *aabb,* which stands as two distinct and independent units.[261]

Rhyme can lengthen and shorten the text, can be used to speed up its motion, perpetuating the search for the matching rhyme, as it is in 'How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix'. Here, the need for the resolution is immediately satisfied, encouraging the movement towards the next pair, and in combination with the other features of the piece, increasing its movement towards the satisfactory end. Subject, semantics and rhythm work in accord, creating a memorable literary experience. However, those poems which are the most emotionally affecting are often those which are perhaps less easy to recite, but which undermine the standard expectations of a text and which retard its motion.

[259]Alison Chisholm, *The Craft of Writing Poetry,* (London: Allison & Busby Limited, 1997), p.42
[260]Lennard, p.190
[261]Derek Attridge, *The Rhythms of English Poetry,* (London and New York: Longman, 1982), p.84

Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' quatrains, for instance, are a complicated form in which the first and fourth lines rhyme to envelope the middle two, and this both delays the resolution of the quatrain and orients the text towards it. It also contributes to a sense of enclosure and ending for the quatrain, not unlike a closed couplet,[262]

> Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
>
> That name the underlying dead,
>
> Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
>
> Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.[263]

There is a definitive sense of finality about the end of this stanza, which happens to fit in well with the semantic qualities of the words. But 'In Memoriam' is inconsistent. A later part of the piece shows how the rhyme scheme of the poem can undermine the message overtly conveyed in words,

> That God, which ever lives and loves,
>
> One God, one law, one element,
>
> And one far off divine event
>
> To which the whole creation moves.[264]

This stanza takes as its subject the linear motion towards the end of time itself and the bliss of eternity. Yet the stanza, and the poem as a whole, are suffused with the idea of cyclicity, turning the rhymes back and back upon themselves, the second taking a backwards glance

[262]Fussel, p.135
[263]Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'In Memoriam A. H. H.,' in *The Major Works,* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2009), pp.203-292, p.205
[264]Ibid., p.292

towards the first. Poems which use this regular repetition, such as 'The Lady of Shallot' or 'The Tyger', may develop a haunting quality, and can become almost distressingly ritualistic and compulsive, recalling ancient incantations and their role in evoking the supernatural, and placing the poem in a temporal space somewhere separated from ourselves, a place which seems static and unable to progress.[265]

Rhyme becomes more complicated when it is employed in stanzas of uneven numbers of lines. The cohesion of five-line stanzas, sometimes known as quintains, can be difficult to achieve. They can be given a sense of unity through the use of the enveloping style of the 'In Memoriam' scheme, but those which do not ascribe to this such as Wordsworth's 'Peter Bell', which rhymes *abccb* instead, can result in a fragmentation of identity. As the expected *a* rhyme cannot be found, the first line tends to drift away from the rest, leaving the stanza with an uneasy sense of incompletion.[266] If a rhyme is left thus unsatisfied, closure is prevented and the poem is left open ended. However, in certain situations, the use of sequential repetition can actually serve to create a similar effect,

> Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me[267]

The forlorn echo slowly fades away into a oneiric space filled with longing. The unfinished quality of the line results in a melancholic, almost unreal landscape, which is sharply undercut by the final line of the poem,

> And the woman calling.[268]

[265]Chisholm, p.28
[266]Fussel, p.140
[267]Thomas Hardy, 'The Voice,' in Keegan, pp.834-835, p.834

Though this repeats the idea of the calling woman, re-evoking the earlier space, its occurrence as a full-stopped and stand-alone line which is not repeated accords it a concrete reality, and this brings the mind of the author and reader into the immediate physical and mental present.

Haunting these uses of rhyme and repetition certainly are. However, should the writer desire to create a particularly disturbing effect, then they might use *free* rhyme. This does not mean that the verse is unrhymed; rather, it is that rhyme occurs, but in an unregulated, irregular form which forces the reader to concentrate, constantly disrupting their expectations and preventing the maintenance of a steady pace,

> You do not do, you do not do
> Any more, black shoe
> In which I have lived like a foot
> For thirty years, poor and white,
> Barely daring to breathe or Achoo
>
> Daddy I have had to kill you.
> You died before I had time -
> Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,
> Ghastly statue with one gray toe
> Big as a Frisco seal[269]

[268]Ibid., p.835
[269]Sylvia Plath 'Daddy,' *Collected Poems,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p.222

This disorders any standardised rhyme scheme, its disturbing theme echoed in the seemingly random repetition of sound. Equally as unconventional and disturbing is the anaphoric, or initial word, repetition used in *Howl,*

> angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,
> who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high say up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,
> who bared their brains to Haven under the El and saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated,
> who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,
> who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull,
> who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall,
> who got busted in their public beards returning through Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York,
> who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their torsos night after night[270]

[270]Allen Ginsberg, 'Howl' in *Howl, Kaddish and Other Poems,* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2009), pp.1-13, p.1

This constant return to who and who and who gives the poem the quality of a list. It is almost as if the poet is reading out a liturgy or an early chronicle. Unlike the fast-paced, jumbled, yet self-perpetuating interior monologue of Molly Bloom, this poem moves backward. The characters become part of the ever accumulating past, tumbling away as they are lost to an insanity which removes them from shared time.

Deeply affective poetry, then, need not be restricted to strictly prescribed forms, and it is not simply the order but the amount and intensity of rhyme which is important in the temporal landscape. For the strength of rhyme is spread along a large spectrum. From full rhyme to the less aurally demonstrative sight rhyme, the degree of impulsion which rhymes can evoke range from the brazen to the haunting. If those rhymes are not comfortable, if they are wrenched, forced, and do not conform with the expected patternation of a text, or if the sounds which the collocation of letters produces are discordant and cacophonous, the effect can be one of distancing, pulling the reader out of the steady motion of the poem, and highlighting the managed nature of its construction. Neither need rhymes occur at the end of a line; in fact, those poems which *do* are often reminiscent of childhood nursery rhymes. More nuanced use of rhyme, absorbed within the body of a text, subsumes the agents of motion, hiding the processes by which the poem is constructed to create a text which seems more natural. Likewise, the hidden stresses and phonetic features of pronunciation frequently go unnoticed, but like the microscopic elements in an ecosystem, have a direct impact upon the overall lie of the land.

One such microscopic element, metre, has been used, through means of scansions of individual pieces, to describe and sometimes define the rhythmic character of poems. In

English, metrical analysis is based upon accentual-syllabic patternation, the combination of stressed and unstressed beats in a line.[271] The clever manipulation of metre can be used to shape language, to create expectations and unexpected disruptions in a textual experience, a fact which is most expressly manifest in the construction of regular verse, where rules of rhythmic form are most extensively obeyed.[272] Rhythm, once established, creates the expectation of its continuance, and changes and pauses in the rhythmic structure alter the temporal character and experience of a text, can create tension and discomfort, or signal a new train or character of thought, temporal orientation, tempo, or subject of attention.[273] A succession of stressed syllables, one after the other, without the relief afforded by an unstressed interruption, can make a piece hard to vocalise, and thus create an effect of slowness and difficulty. The reverse can also be the case, constant unstressed syllables creating rapid, light movement.[274] Therefore the location of stressed and unstressed syllables in relation to each other is also generative of the character of motion which a text possesses. To take one example, falling rhythm, the placement of unstressed after stressed beats, creates a steady motion, almost marching, stress highlighted by the bold letters in this passage from 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

[271]Lennard, pp.1-2
[272]Attridge, p.74
[273]Ibid., p.78
[274]Fussel, p.35

H**a**lf a l**e**ague, h**a**lf a l**e**ague

H**a**lf a l**e**ague **o**n**w**ard,

All **i**n the v**a**lley of D**e**ath

R**o**de the s**i**x h**u**ndr**e**d[275]

Read as straight pose, this text is distant from the action in both space and time. But the falling rhythm of the verse recalls the beat of the horses' hooves, putting the reader into the centre of the action, making the charge itself a shadowy, spectral presence in the now, bringing two distant timescapes into close proximity. It becomes chant like.

Falling rhythm is relatively uncommon and used to excess it can become monotonous.[276] However, used in conjunction with its opposite, its chant-like and evocative character can be stunning,

Honour, r**i**ches, m**a**rriage bl**e**ssing,

L**o**ng cont**i**nuance, **a**nd incr**e**asing,

Hourl**y** joys b**e** still **u**pon **y**ou!

Jun**o** sings h**e**r bless**i**ngs on **y**ou.[277]

Whilst the rhythm of the first two lines risks generating boredom, this is reversed and relieved by the rising rhythm of the second couplet, which also serves to highlight the beauty of the ritualistic space of falling stress. Metre also has an impact upon how this space is entered or exited. When heavily stressed and ictic, beginnings and endings become

[275]Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', in *Selected Poems,* ed. Aidan Day, (London: Penguin, 1991), pp.289-290, p.289
[276]Attridge, p.114
[277]Shakespeare, 'The Tempest,' Act IV, Scene I, in *The Complete Works,* pp.1-20, p.16

demonstrative and powerful, but if left unstressed, the line works its way in or out of consciousness insidiously and quietly. The differing effects of stressed and unstressed beats are dependent, too, upon their location within a piece, whether at the final point or located within the interior. Whilst unstressed beats, wherever their location, create a sense of continuance, the *meaning* of this continuance is conditioned by the expectation of what follows. When there is something to follow, there is also purpose and meaning. But when the certainty of resolution is left unsatisfied, when the ending is unstressed...

Any consistently repeated patternation can incite boredom if it is not mitigated by juxtaposition with an alternative, or which is undercut by some other feature of language. The metrical line is classically based upon the foot, made up from a combination of stressed and unstressed syllables.[278] It is harder to formulate stanzas with lines of uneven length, such as the pentameter, or five line stanza. Although it can operate in stanzaic units, if tightly controlled with rhyme, because the pentameter does not break up into equal parts, its stress is less regularly grouped, and thus it is used more regularly by poets who wish to escape the constraints of stanzaic forms of verse altogether.[279] The lines are more likely to be individualised, the rhythm increasingly flexible, and the syntax has a more powerful voice. Through a fusion with enjambment, the pentameter can express a sense of continuous movement very close to that of normal speech, which can be manipulated to create a sense of natural reality in a verse.[280] The properties of the metrical lines are not inherent in themselves, however, and neither do they conform to a singular pattern of stress,

[278]Chisholm, p.33
[279]Ibid., p.126
[280]Ibid., p.133

I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scúttlĭng/ across the floors of silent seas[281]

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,

The holy time is quiet as a Nun

Bréathlĕss/ with adoration;[282]

In both of these extracts, a trochee, that is, a two beat foot made up of stressed followed by unstressed syllables, which I have marked here thus, ´˘ is used to create a completely different effect. Whilst Eliot's trochee mimics the scuttling, hurried motion of the crab, Wordsworth's tails away, thereby creating a dream-like quietness. The same foot and stress pattern is used here to create two very different timescapes, one of rapidity and one of calm stillness. The expected construction of the metrical line can also be undermined by the elision and addition of syllables, syncope and hyperbeat, which in the first case shorten or lighten the line, and in the second lengthen and weigh it down. Metrical lines are diverse, and their use is limited only in the imagination and skill of the poet.

To an extent the desire to define the metrical patternation of poetry is a laudable aim. But it is also deeply problematic. The prescribed metrical line is subject to language differences and individual interpretation, to form, content and context. The failing of the classical study of meter is that it makes arbitrary divisions and frameworks into which not all poems fit.[283]

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[281]T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock,' in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot,* ed. Valerie Eliot, (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp.13-17, p.15

[282]William Wordsworth, 'It is a beauteous evening,' in *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth,* ed., Henry Reed, (Philadelphia: Troutman & Hayes, 1854), p.220

[283]Attridge, p.11; Fussel, p.17

The foot is a particularly problematic issue, being subject to pronunciation and individual interpretation. The development of free verse, with its tendency to eschew both rhyme and regular rhythm, neglecting standard punctuation and occasionally using symbols and abbreviations rather than words shows the possibilities which breaking free of the metrical rule can offer.[284] But the misjudged use of metrical form in the past should not preclude its use in the present. The stress and patternation of poetry is fundamental to its character, is part of what makes it different from everyday speech. Complete ignorance of its power would render a poet completely chaotic. Distinctions may be arbitrary and subjective, but this does not mean that that which they attempt to describe does not exist. For free verse to exist there must be verse which is managed. As Eliot wrote, 'freedom is only truly freedom when it appears against the background of an artificial limitation.'[285]

[284]Fussel, p.77

[285]T. S. Eliot, 'Reflections on *vers libre,'* in *To Criticise the Critic,* (London: Faber, 1965), p.187

Conclusion: Words Enough On Time?

The chronotopic craft is complex. To create a literary timescape the writer has to understand and wield tools, knowledge of which the everyday use of language does not require. Literature twists and dips language, sometimes forcing it to accord with fixed patterns, sometimes allowing its free flow. It is powerfully evocative of states of mind, of place, of speed, and of time, can create a plethora of concomitant time-frames, timescapes which bump and collide, which conform to or question expected reality and which deny the singularity of perception. Through the careful management of plot, perspective, linguistics and rhythm, literary artists craft symphonic chronotopic landscapes, which are both internally diverse and externally whole.

Plots shape the literary experience, organise, control and disrupt progression. They show or deny causality, manifest gaps and fill them in, push time forward and move it back. Whilst plots shape literary experience, perspectives are taken upon that topology, determining and altering the elements which can be seen and the position of the viewer in relation to these. Likewise do the more interior devices of linguistics and rhythm accord textual experience a character, affecting responses to literature on subtle levels of semantics and deep sensory perception. Each of these levels of experience is so deeply intertwined with the others that they cannot be separated. Together, these elements build individual works which are every time unique. The ways in which literary tools can be used to create and manipulate timescapes are built upon their relationships with each other and the skills with which they are deployed. It is possible to learn much about the creation of museum timescapes from an examination of these elements, for the makers of both museums and literature use such

tools to construct material objects, and physical and conceptual experiences. Both are a deliberate contrivance. They intentionally make language and objects strange, building multiple and distinctive timescapes which exist along with that of the everyday. They show the arbitrary nature of axiomatic time, provide some sense of time as lived, and are two of the most diverse ways in which humanity expresses itself as a temporal being. They both establish a relationship of trust with their audience. For literature, that trust is based not on hard, evidential truth so much as it is about *alethia,* or unconcealment; sincerity of subjective expression rather than interpretable and changeable 'facts' – however much they claim to be solid. The 'alethic privilege[286] of fiction is that it reveals to us that defined truth is a slippery construct, potentially always changeable with the movement of historical time. For precisely these reasons, literature has much to teach the museum.

[286]Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods,* (Cambridge, MA.,: Harvard University Press, 1994), p.90

Part Two: Temporalities in the Museum

Introduction

It is within space that time consumes or devours living beings, thus giving reality to sacrifice, pleasure, and pain.

Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space

The Shape of Things To Come

It would be easy to argue that the study of literature is the study of something too abstract and incorporeal to have any relevance to the production and manipulation of temporality within a physical environment such as a museum. Yet Literary Temporalities should have indicated how fertile a ground literature is for researching time and its habits; and how some of the concepts and strategies it explored are, by inference at least, germane for the study of museum time.

The five chapters which follow take on the tools contemplated in Part One, and deploy them in an examination and analysis of various aspects of museum time. 'Time's Arrow', the first chapter, will investigate the nature of linear temporal movement, both plotted and rhythmic, in the museum, seeking to understand how and by what means it is produced. The second chapter, 'Disrupting the Arrow', will act as a counterpoint to this, utilizing more disorderly literary temporal features to suggest the limitations of linearity and how its boundaries might be broken to create affective forms of experience. After these two chapters, the thesis will become more philosophical in tone, turning towards more

immaterial concepts pertinent to the temporal museum. Chapter Seven, 'Manifesting in Time', explores presence and absence within the museum, using concepts drawn from investigations into authorship and focalisation, and questions which have been raised about the limits of linguistic representation to ask how manifestations and lacunae impact upon the museum timescape. In Chapter Eight, 'In Real Time', tools such as metafiction and transtextuality, which affect the verisimilitude of the literary timescape, will be deployed to consider the role of reality and authenticity - and indeed the nature and value of these concepts. The final chapter, 'Unique Things in Time and Space' investigates the concept of aura, and in employing focalization, style and generic conventions seeks to uncover some of the connections it has with the museum timescape.

Each of these chapters will enlist the concrete elements of the museum - the architectures, exhibition layouts, texts and material objects - and at times the philosophies and design strategies which underpin these three very different institutions - the Ashmolean, Oxford University Museum and the Pitt Rivers. In so doing they should give solidity to that which might, until this point, have seem somewhat ethereal and insubstantial. At this point, therefore, it is worth reintroducing them, with more practical detail than was possible in the overall introduction.

The Cast of Characters: A Detailed Spatial Introduction to the Three Museums

The Ashmolean contains sixty-seven galleries, permanent and temporary, a cafe and restaurant, storage areas and research and administration offices, all split across six floors.

-1

1 Exploring the Past
This orientation gallery introduces the key themes and story-trails to follow throughout this floor.

2 Human Image
3–4 Conservation
5 Textiles
6 Reading and Writing
7 Money
8 Ark to Ashmolean

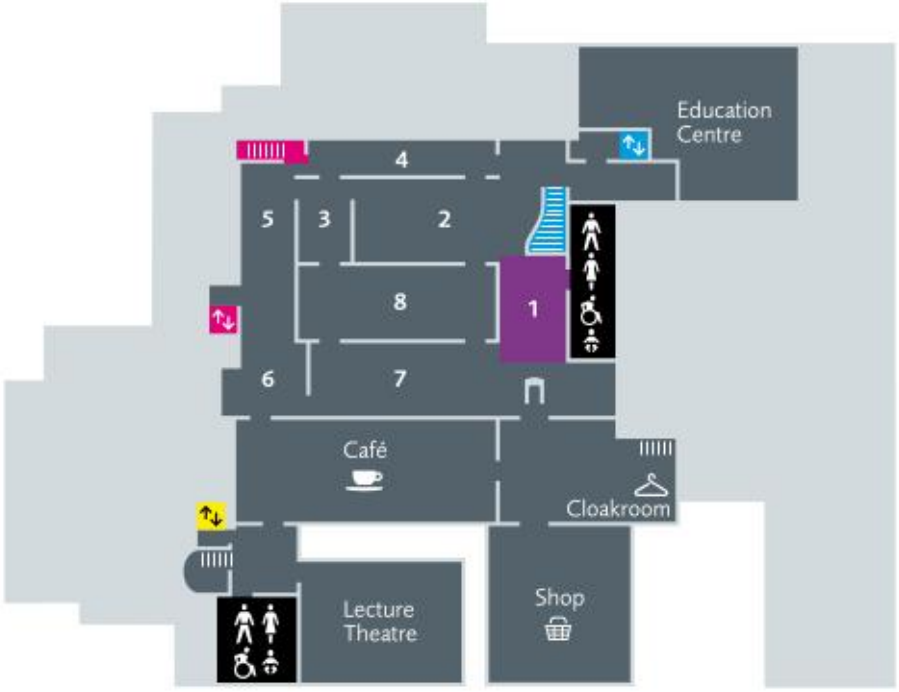
Education Centre
Lecture Theatre

SHOPPING

Find mementos of your visit and unique gifts inspired by the collections in the Ashmolean Shop.
www.ashmolean.org/shop
Open: Tues–Sun 10am–6pm

ASHMOLEAN CAFE

Take a break from it all in the cozy setting of the vaulted café.
www.ashmolean.org/café
Open: Tues–Sun 10am–6pm



Lift to all floors **except** 3M
Stairs to all floors **except** 3M
Lift to all floors **except** 4
Stairs to all floors **except** 4

Fig.II.1: Basement Floorplan, Ashmolean Museum. Image Ashmolean.

G

9 Ancient World
This orientation gallery introduces the key themes and story-trails to follow throughout this floor.

10 China to AD 800
11 Chinese Paintings
12 India to AD 600
13 Rome
14 Cast Gallery
15 Italy before Rome
16 Greece
17 European Prehistory
18 Ancient Cyprus
19 Ancient Near East
20 Aegean World
21 Greek and Roman Sculpture
22 Egypt at its Origins
23 Dynastic Egypt and Nubia
24 Life after Death in Ancient Egypt
25 The Amarna 'Revolution'
26 Egypt in the Age of Empires
27 Egypt meets Greece and Rome

Lift to -1, G, 2 and 3M **only** | Stairs | Toilets | Information | Wheelchair access to 14

Fig.II.2: Ground Floor Floorplan, Ashmolean Museum. Image Ashmolean.

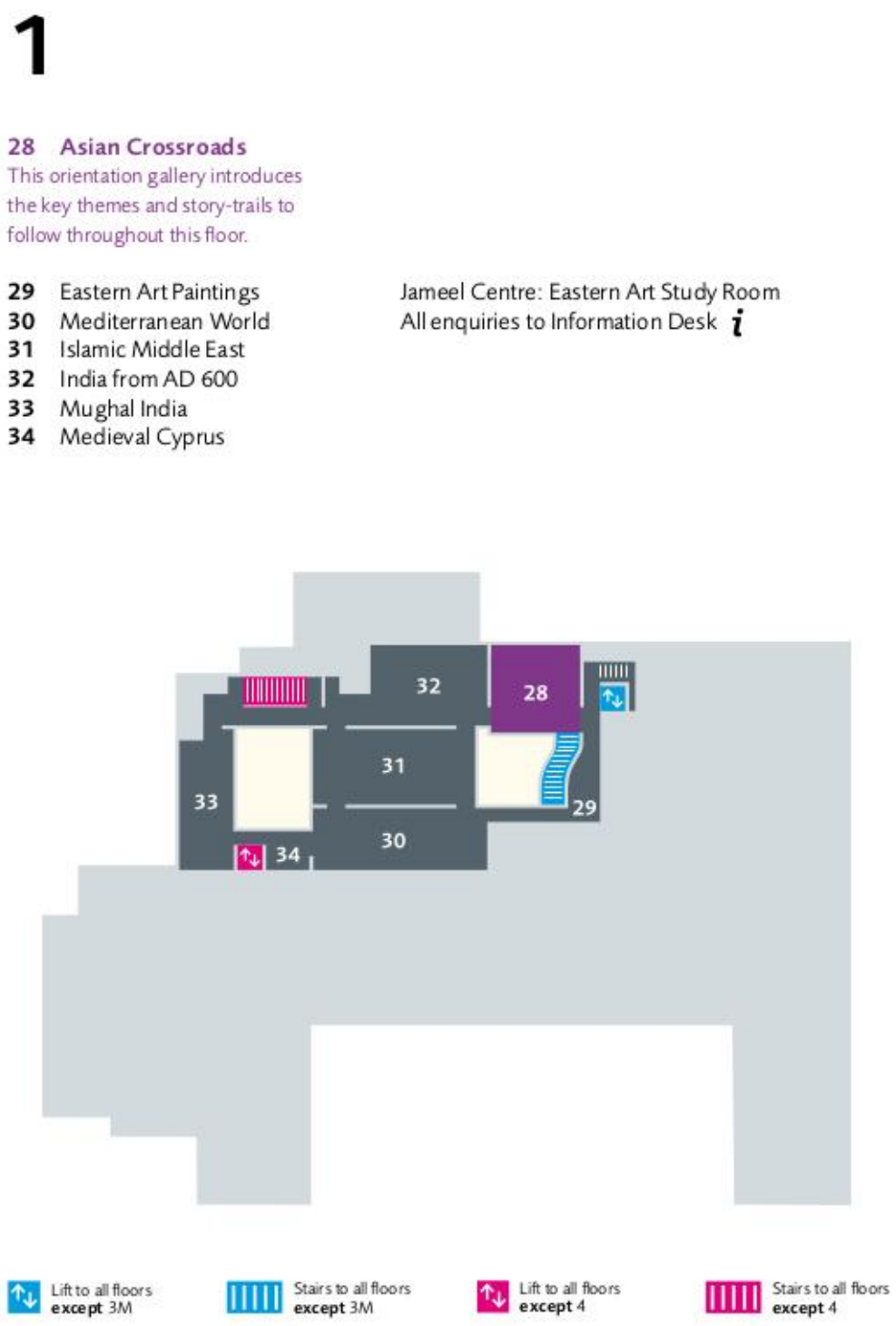


Fig.II.3: First Floor Floorplan, Ashmolean Museum. Image Ashmolean.

2

35 West meets East
This orientation gallery introduces the key themes and story-trails to follow throughout this floor.

36 Japan from 1850
37 Japan 1600–1850
38 China from AD 800
39 Music and Tapestry
40 European Ceramics
41 England 400–1600
42 Early Italian Art
43 Italian Renaissance
44 European Art
45 Dutch Art
46 Baroque Art
47 German and Flemish Art
48 Still-life Paintings
49 Britain and Italy
50–51 Landscape Oil Sketches
52 Arts of the 18th century
53 Russian Art
54 Delftware
55 Silver
56 Arts of the Renaissance

European Prints and Drawings
All enquires to Information Desk *i*

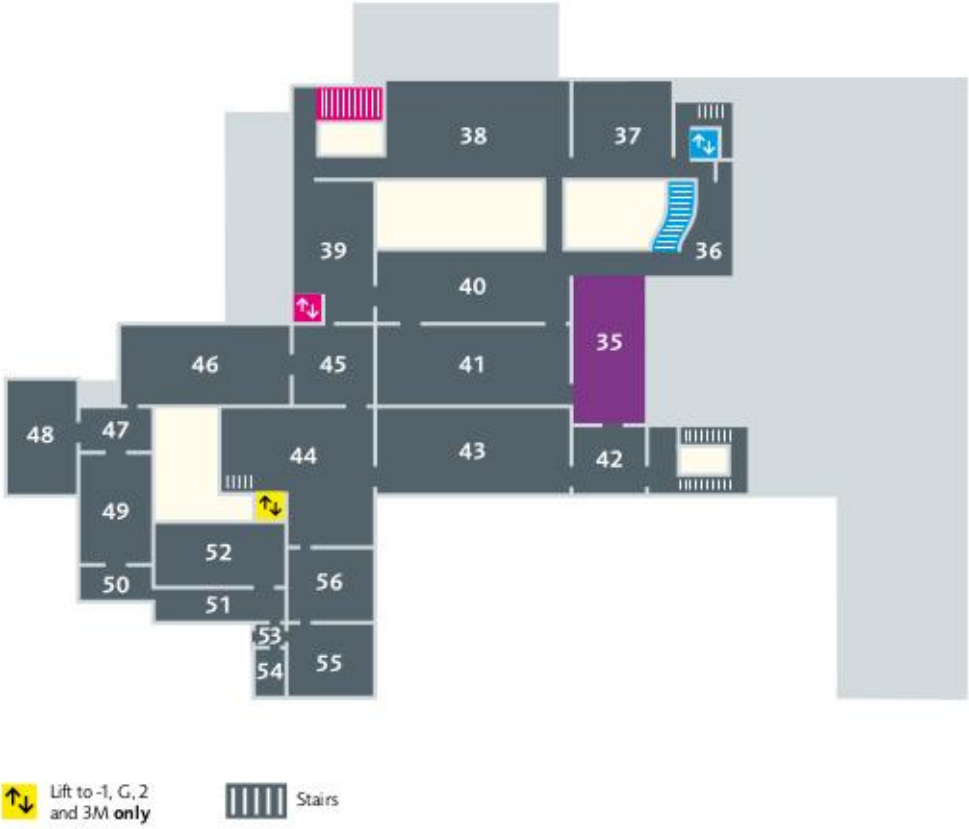


Fig.II.4: Second Floor Floorplan, Ashmolean Museum. Image Ashmolean.

3

Special Exhibitions Galleries

57–61 A changing programme of major international exhibitions, and displays from the Museum's own reserve collections.

Access only via:

62 Modern Art

Access only via:

3M

European Art 1800–present day

63 Sickert and his Contemporaries
64 Glass
65 Pissarro
66 19th-century Art
67 Pre-Raphaelites

Access only via:

Lift to all floors **except** 3M

Stairs to all floors **except** 3M

Lift to all floors **except** 4

Stairs to all floors **except** 4

Fig.II.5: Third Floor and Mezzanine Floorplan, Ashmolean Museum. Image Ashmolean.

It is the galleries which are most of concern to this thesis and, as the reader will find, these are located on five of the floors, from the basement to the main and mezzanine levels of Floor 3. They are arranged in such a way as to produce and fit within the display rationale designed in collaboration with Metaphor – Crossing Cultures Crossing Time (C3T). The idea behind this display strategy is that it shows civilisations not as isolated beings, 'but as cultures that share a connected history that stretched from Europe in the West, through the Near East and Asia to the Far East, from ancient times until the present day.'287 This rationale is deliberately made manifest in the building, with open interconnections between galleries and strong visual axes with key objects, often over large distances.288 Each floor is characterised by a theme which adds to this strategy, which is introduced each time in an 'Orientation Gallery'. The order in which a visitor views the galleries and floors, however, is not enforced. The contextualising basement, 'Exploring the Past', may be visited at any point during the visit, and is not the first floor which most people enter. Instead, the main entrance from Beaumont Street opens onto the Ground Floor, known as 'Ancient Worlds', and it is this floor upon which the C3T strategy really begins. On this floor, we are introduced to the major civilisations which will feature in the rest of the institution – China, India, Rome/Italy, Greece, Europe, Cyprus, the Middle and Near East – and Egypt, which features, tellingly, only as an ancient civilisation and only on this floor.

The floor above, 'Asian Crossroads', has fewer galleries, which concentrate on Eastern Art, the Mediterranean World, the Islamic Middle East, India and Cyprus. Much of the rest of this floor is taken up with the Jameel Centre for the study of Eastern Art.

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[287]Brown, p.25
[288]Ibid.

On Floor 2, 'West Meets East', the architectural situation becomes more complex, as, for the first time, the new Mather extension meets the older galleries of Western Art. As the floor plan shows, the interconnections between these halves of the institution are complex and numerous, but in simple terms it is galleries 35 – 41 which comprise the C3T segment of the floor, and 42 – 56 which comprise that of Western Art. As shall be discussed later in the thesis, there are two ambiguously positioned galleries – 39, Music and Tapestry, and 40, European Ceramics – which might fit into either side, and which might serve as conduits between. It is on this floor that the C3T rationale begins to break down, and by the time the visitor reaches the floor above, 3 and 3M, the design strategy has been pushed aside for the Special Exhibitions Galleries and a small section of six galleries entitled 'European Art 1800-present day.' It is not the function of this thesis to critique the success or otherwise of this display rationale, merely to show the complexities which arise in the attempt to combine it with an existing set of galleries and the limitations of representation which the structure provides.

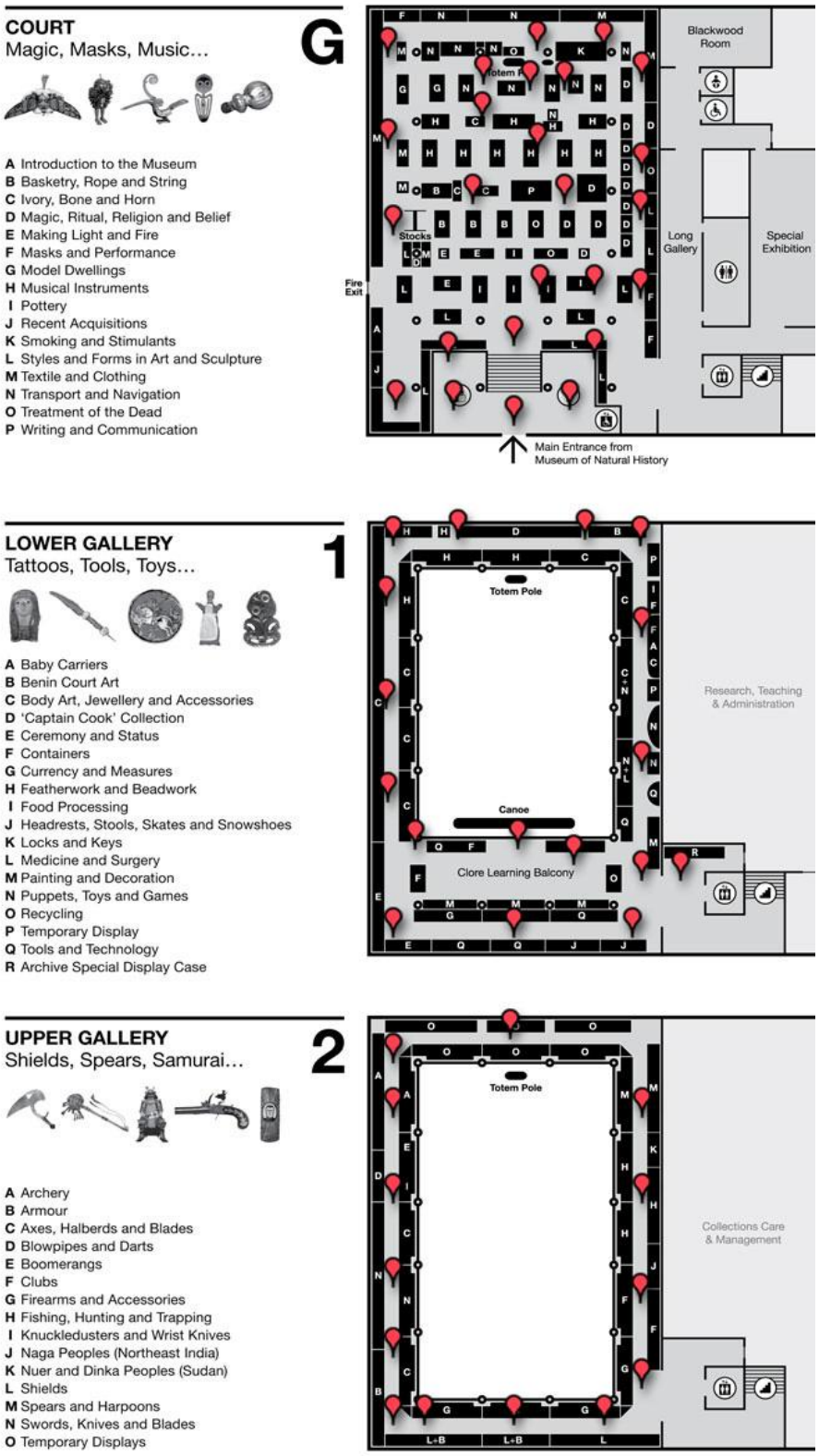


Fig.II.6: Floorplan, Pitt Rivers Museum. Image Pitt Rivers.

Fortunately, perhaps, the second two museums are less complex in their gallery arrangements than the Ashmolean, being somewhat smaller in comparison. The Pitt Rivers, as the floorplan shows (Fig.II.6), is divided into three floors, with the ground floor Great Court being the initial and largest display area, directly above which the Lower and Upper Galleries are located. Each floor is accessed through a staircase, positioned in the southeastern corner of the museum.

Each floor is given a rather poetic alliterative title that describes the themes and contents it contains. The Great Court displays 'Magic, Masks, Music...', but also, as the floor plan shows, a wide variety of other craft, artistic and cultural objects. The Lower Gallery is entitled 'Tattoos, Tools, Toys...' and houses both games and practical items, as well as certain special displays such as 'Benin Court Art' and the 'Captain Cook Collection'. This floor also houses the temporary displays, often brought in by artists in response to the collections. During the period of fieldwork conducted for this thesis, that artist was Sue Johnson. The Upper Gallery is perhaps the clearest in its topical focus – known as 'Shields, Spears, Samurai', it houses predominantly weapons. Perhaps tellingly, however, it also plays host to displays specifically discussing the Naga of India, and the Nuer and Dinka Peoples of Sudan. The placement of these cultural displays within the context of what is largely a weaponry gallery suggests certain, perhaps unthought-of, prejudices held within the museum at some point in the past, and reinforces them in the present.

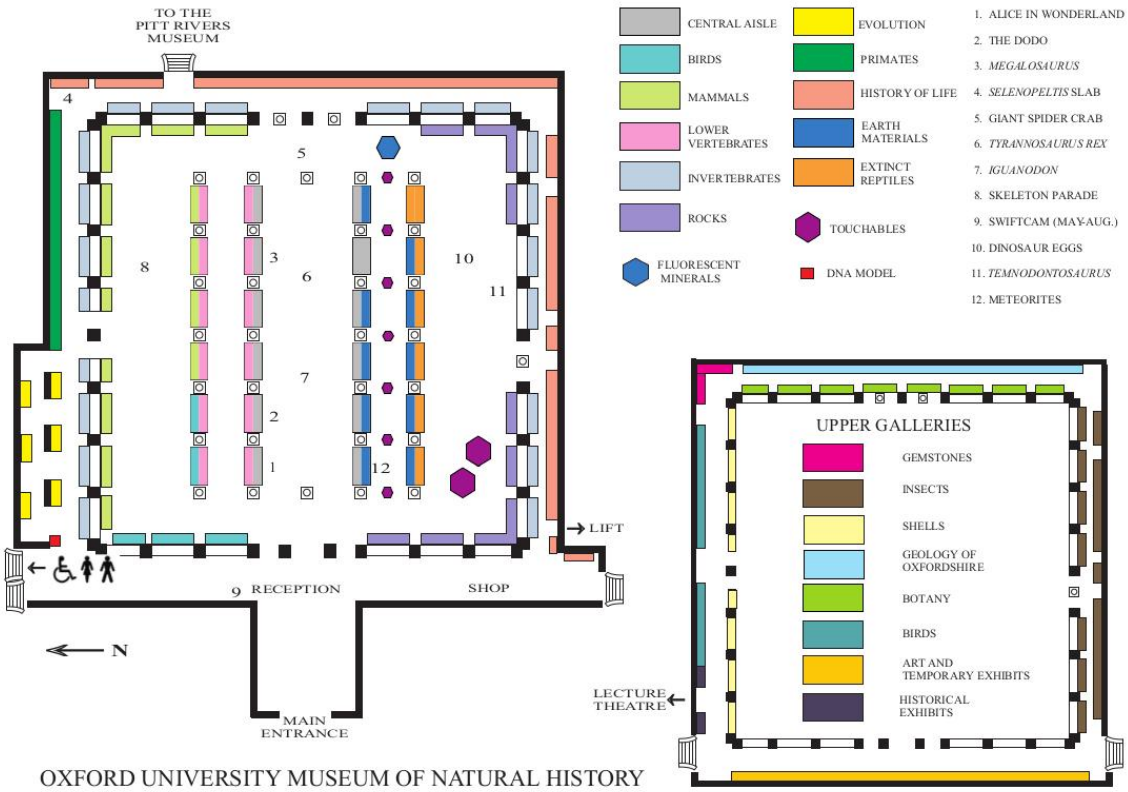


Fig.II.7: Floorplan, Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Image Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History is, in many ways, even simpler in its spatial arrangement than the Pitt Rivers. The floor plan (Fig.II.7) shows a Great Court, like that of the Pitt Rivers, situated underneath an Upper Gallery, and its coloured key shows the clear sections into which the contents of the museum are divided for the purposes of display. The Central Aisle, marked in grey, and the numbered areas, contain and show the key points and highlights towards which the visitor's attention is particularly directed. Although the sections are clearly divided, there is no grouping of these sections in terms of the scientific disciplines in which they might be studied, making for a melange of natural history information. Rather than placing all animal life together, all plant life together, and then more geological and astronomical objects together, the museum arranges for a

mixture in which all life and its environments might be seen side by side – Gemstones sits between Birds and Geology of Oxfordshire, which itself sits next to the Insects displays.

A Brief Disclaimer

It should from the outset be stated that the timescapes and their details that are described here are not intended to be seen as eternal, transcendental forms to be slavishly accepted by all, nor to be seen as immovable features fixed and absolute for all time. Rather, like pieces of literature, these museums and the timescape features to be found within them are the products of interactions between the way in which physical materials have been moulded and the conditions of mind and hermeneutic actions of the beings which encounter them. The writings below are perceptions, interpretations, and it is less about the statements that are made than the way in which they are made; the point of this thesis is not to uncover concrete facts, but to develop a framework which allows a researcher to venture into the shifting contingencies of museum timescapes.

Chapter Five

Time's Arrow - Linearity in the Museum

"Well, we think that time 'passes', flows past us; but what if it is we who move forward, from past to future, always discovering the new? It would be a little like reading a book, you see. The book is all there, all at once, between its covers. But if you want to read the story and understand it, you must begin with the first page and go forward, always in order. So the universe would be a very great book, and we would be very small readers."

Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

Introduction

Temporal passage has often been conceptualized in the form of an arrow in flight: linear and unidirectional.[289] Standard Western historical chronology, in which events are arranged in causal orders running from earlier to later, is an iteration of this concept which is widely recognized and accepted, useful as it is for creating structured and cohesive expressions of history and for organizing and relating everyday experiences both communal and personal. The division of this chronology into dates and periods, however, is arbitrary, and linear temporality need not be restricted to its framework. More abstract and phenomenological conceptions of temporal movement have also found some form of linearity crucial. For Heidegger, even the most abstract and personal experiences were bound within a linear flow; all human consciousnesses - all Dasein - no matter how far their psychological

[289]Le Poidevin, p.202-203

timeline, like those of certain modernist writers, strays from defined causal order and periodization, are always moving forward into their potential, into the future.

> It is essential to the basic constitution of Dasein that there is *constantly something still to be settled* [*eine ständige Unabgeschlossenheit*]. Such a lack of totality signifies that there is still something outstanding in one's potentiality-for-Being.[290]

Literature permits such distinctions between the shared and the private, the defined and abstract, for there are many literary ways in which linear experiences can be engendered. As Plotting Time indicated, the arrangement of events in a piece of prose can be used to give a sense of order and progression. However, literature can also express and provoke linear experiences and understandings of more abstract and intangible forms, using tense and rhythm to create notions of temporal positions and manage the movement between them. The purpose of this chapter is to use such literary notions and tools to examine the nature of linearity in the museum space, exploring how, by whom, and to what purpose it is produced, and highlighting the implications of linear forms for visitors to museums, and for the status of museums as moral, political beings. In six sections, Time's Arrow will explore the concepts suited to the linear form, the expression and enhancement of linearity through architecture, graphical devices, language and object arrangement, and finally, how the museum as a material artifact itself is not immune from the ravages of chronological time, but concrete evidence for the linear progression of temporality in the world outside its walls.

[290]Martin Heidegger, 'The Seeming Impossibility of Getting Dasein's Being-a-whole into our Grasp Ontologically and Determining its Character', 1962, pp.279-281, p279

Telling Stories: Concepts, Topics, and Linear Ordering

Linear narrative structures are useful for telling a cohesive and lucid story, and are particularly valuable for expressing an educational message.[291] In some instances, as later sections of this chapter will show, Newtonian linearity is used in a confined space, a single case or series of cases, to tell one specific story in an easily comprehensible way. It can, however, permeate a whole section of a museum and in some cases, the entire institution itself.

A linear structure dominates Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time, the display strategy used in the Ashmolean's Mather extension, in concept if not in exact iteration. The floors are arranged chronologically from ground up, beginning with the Ancient World, and finishing with European Art from 1800 to the Present Day in a merging of the new building and the old galleries of Western Art. The galleries on each of the floors are also, with the occasional disparity, largely arranged in a chronological fashion. Whilst there are occasional chronological disruptions, such as Arts of the Eighteenth Century (gallery 52) preceding Arts of the Renaissance (gallery 56) in the numerical ordering of the galleries, and despite the visitor not being compelled to strictly follow the route suggested by the gallery numbering, the implied notion of a connected, causal, universal history ranging from ancient times to the present pervades the building. It is an idea expressed not just in plotted structures, but connotatively in the building itself. The visitor who looks up from the ground floor may look through the space created by the lightwell to a world future, already designed and laid out in front of them. From each of the upper floors, the progressing visitor may look down

[291]Gielen, 2004, p.153; Ravelli, 2006, p.17

through the almost archaeological layers of the displays below and imagine the history that they have already traversed (Fig 5.1). There is something almost fated about this structure, this causally based history which seeks to connect as many parts of the world together as possible in a universal history running from the ancient past to the present day, which makes the current state of affairs seem almost inevitable.

Fig.5.1: Looking Upwards to the Future, from the basement of the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Any structure in which history seems so pre-ordained and unilinear is one open to question. As noted in Plotting Time, linear narratives such as this are riddled with elisions. The Ashmolean cannot display all the cultural and economic connections which have influenced world history and indeed its displays are heavily focused upon European and Oriental histories with little account of the Americas or the Antipodes. To assume Crossing Cultures to be comprehensive would be to deny those other histories and to place Greco-Roman and

Oriental cultures at the fulcrum of global events. Crossing Cultures presents a Grand Narrative, a form of story which legitimates itself and which is, thereby, too easily mistaken for knowledge,[292] an almost teleological tale in which the agency of individual human participants seems lessened in the face of the tectonic forces of world history and fate. Any visitor to a museum whose conceptual structure is as totalizing as this should remain aware of the implications that the Grand Narrative has for their personal free will and control over their own future, as well as for humanity more widely.

Yet linearity, as the introduction to this chapter explained, is not wholly the preserve of periodised expressions of historical movement, nor is it connoted only by certain chronotopic environments such as Arcadia. It is also a product of personal development and 'becoming'. Given this, it would be possible to argue that the Pitt Rivers relies upon the linearizing mindset of the visitors - that is, the human ability to plan, shape and remember events and organize their own experience in order to create meaning out of their own futural movement – because it asks them to construct their own narrative, to explore the museum as they like. Because it is a picaresque form, as will be further expanded upon in the following chapters, the Pitt Rivers transfers the role of ordering moments in time to the visitor, rather than presenting them with a path already laid out. This is a museum in which there is no Grand Narrative, a museum in which, as Bruner phrased it, the messy domain of human interaction comes closer to being represented than in any Newtonian display.[293]

[292]Lyotard, 'The Pragmatics of Narrative Knowledge', 1984, pp. 18-23
[293]Jerome Bruner, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality,' in *Critical Inquiry,* 18(1), (Autumn 1991), 1-21, p.4

Perpendicular Building: Architecture, Environmental Features and the Arrow

The realization of an organizational strategy is dependent upon dialogue between the concept and the physical environment which surrounds it. In each of the Oxford Museums, various environmental factors determine how linear forms of temporality arise, from the shape of the rooms and corridors to the layout of cases and the organization of the liminal, functional architectural spaces which exist between display areas. In this section, these aspects will be explored through literary concepts arising from the studies of semantics, narrative and prosody, examining how linearity arises in the built environment of the Oxford Museums, and the effect this manifestation has upon the character of the museum timescape.

There are certain chronotopic environments in literature and museums which perpetuate the dominance of linearity through their stylistic and generic forms. In *Mimesis,* Auerbach used the Bible as an exemplar for a linear and teleological Grand Narrative.[294] It is therefore unsurprising that one environment in the Oxford Museums which connotes the influences of a linear mode of thinking is based precisely upon such an ecclesiastical form. The OUMNH deliberately models the form and style of a gothic cathedral. In his architectural profile of the institution, Trevor Garnham uses the terms 'nave' and 'cloister' to refer to the central aisle and the colonnades or arcades which surround the Great Court. Seven sets of columns and six cases describe the nave and transept of this space, and above it the arcades of the Lower and Upper Galleries evoke the cloistered spaces of a monastery (Fig.5.2).

[294]Auerbach, 'Odysseus' Scar', 1953, p.3-23

Fig.5.2: Cathedral of Science. The OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

> In fact the overall dimension of the covered court, 112ft, is exactly the same as the cloister at Westminster Abbey and is divided into eight bays like its south side...The number eight may have been used for its relationship to the octagon, suggesting the transition from the square, which represents terrestrial order, to the circle which represents the aspiration to eternal order.[295]

These sacral framings suggest that the building was created in a cultural milieu driven by an eschatological urge to reach some future apotheosis: whether that was religious or scientific is, from the architecture alone, difficult to judge. If, as Lyotard suggests, one of the purposes of the Grand Narrative is to legitimate narrators and the cultures from which they come, then perhaps it is not surprising that, in order to validate the new discipline of natural science against those who would decry it, the builders of the Oxford University Museum appealed to the physical environments and connotations of the religious meta-narrative which, at the time, held sway in the University, but which its own scientific sjuzet would eventually supplant.[296]

Environments do more than connote linearity: using architectural features and other spatial elements such as cases and plinths, those who build museums can create surroundings that express forward progression both chronological and phenomenological. In this regard the arrangement of rooms and the connections between them are crucial. How galleries are placed in relation to each other can have significant implications for the way the objects within those galleries are viewed in the context of an overarching story. The Ashmolean's

[295]Trevor Garnham, *Architecture in Detail: Oxford Museum, Deane and Woodward,* (London and New York: Phaidon Press, 2010 (1992)), p.8
[296]Lyotard, 1984, p.23

creators have arranged the Egyptian Galleries in such a chronological fashion, telling the history of Egypt from its early origins through to its convergence with the Hellenic and Roman worlds in the 3rd century BC. This is a historic story, a part of the past with marked boundaries at its beginning and end; thus it sits well in this plotted structure, its chronological and causal linkages emphasized by the layout of the rooms.

The shape of the display space can also facilitate linear expression. When deployed as functional spaces - that is, spaces which have little lexical or contentual meaning, but a vital grammatical role in the structure of a museum as a whole - corridors can certainly incite progressive forward movement by linking disparate rooms into an overall narrative structure. However, it is its role as a space of display in its own right which is of more interest here. In the OUMNH, the ecclesiastical cloisters which characterize the space are deployed in a way which enhances the linear character of the displays contained therein. The corridors which house the History of Life displays are visual analogues of the unidirectional story the cases tell. Enclosing the narrative conceptually and physically, the cloisters admit little questioning of its validity and few opportunities for digression from it. In this instance, the presentation is well supported by scientific knowledge, but the architectures which enhance it may also be deployed for purposes far less evidenced and far more ideologically manipulative. The display of stories in such enclosed and directive ways enhances their status as fact, and thereby the authority of the institution displaying them; even if representing the views of only one group of people or one individual. The truth of the story of evolution, as told in the History of Life cases in the OUMNH, is given certainty;

the order of time, history, and the pattern of causal connections is known, for all time, and is non-negotiable (Fig.5.3).

Fig.5.3: The Line of History. Corridors in the OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

Corridors can also be used to create stability and continuity in the personal experience of the museum visitor. In the Ashmolean, Italy Before Rome is a bridge between the galleries of Greece and Rome, with a wall opening onto the Human Image room on the floor below (Fig 5.4). Yet it is also a display space in its own right. Allowing the display space to bleed out into the functional areas of the building means that visitors are able to proceed with their phenomenological museum encounter without breaking the continuity of the plot and without changing their diegetic position. The corridor as display space perpetuates the illusion of the totalizing narrative, because, unlike its more overtly functional form, it does not alert visitors to the constructed, manipulated nature of the museum.

***Fig*.5.4:** The Corridor as Display Space. Italy Before Rome, Ashmolean. Photograph the *Author.*

When acting as connective 'grammatical' tissue in the museum's structure, corridors and staircases are still able to evoke linear movement - particularly upon this phenomenological level. The simple presence of a staircase or corridor suggests that there is more to come, a future into which to progress. Often this is a future akin - for the visitor at least - to that which is experienced every day: something unknown. It is this lack of knowledge which can spur a visitor to continue exploring the museum, as the desire for dénouement drives the reader to continue. Both the visitor to a museum and the reader of a mystery novel are lured by the prospect of unmasking that which is yet to come.

Display cases have a fundamental role in creating linear temporal movement in both narratological and prosodic senses. The ceramics cases of Islamic Middle East, a gallery on

the Ashmolean's Asian Crossroads floor, are arranged in a long line down the centre of the room (Fig.5.5). These three long cases enable the objects to be displayed in one long chronological line, enhancing the unidirectionality of the historic narrative of Islamic ceramics through their form.

Fig.5.5: The Linear Narrative of Ceramics. Islamic Middle East, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

A similar visual and physical deployment, as can be found in the Ashmolean's Textiles gallery, can provide the regular continuous rhythmic structures that facilitate phenomenological linearity. Arranged in unbroken rows down the sides of the Ashmolean's narrow Textiles gallery, repetitive, smooth wall cases collaborate to enhance the visual orientation created by the 'Fragments' table case and the deliberately directive manikin in the upright costume display, pointing and encouraging, the visitor down through the space. As stable metrical structure and the expectation of resolution draws a reader through the

lines of a piece of rhymed poetry, so too do the aligned cases of Textiles pull the visitor through from beginning to end, and into the next gallery, Reading and Writing (Fig.5.6).

Fig.5.6: Directing the Gaze to Reading and Writing. Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Lines of Communication: Using Text and Graphics to Perpetuate the Arrow's Flight

The graphical and textual communication devices of a museum also have a significant role to play in establishing and perpetuating a linear notion of temporality, particularly that of shared, datable chronology. In this part of the chapter, concepts of narrative drawn in particular from Erich Auerbach and grammatical notions of tense and aspect will be used to analyze the temporal function of timelines and text panels and explore their overall significance in the museum's expression of unidirectional time.

One of the most powerful examples of linearity is the timeline, a graphical device which usually visually implies the movement of history down a strong, singular and causal route. Even within the already selective space of a museum, a timeline is a very exacting and strictly ordered form of sjuzet. Reduced to a schematic diagram, the events a timeline can tell and the order in which it can tell them is highly limited, bound into a unilinear form. Running along the base of every case in the History of Life display, the timeline keeps the visitor within a defined chronological frame and like the corridors around it, suggests that the fabula of life of earth may be ordered and historicized in only one way (Fig.5.7).

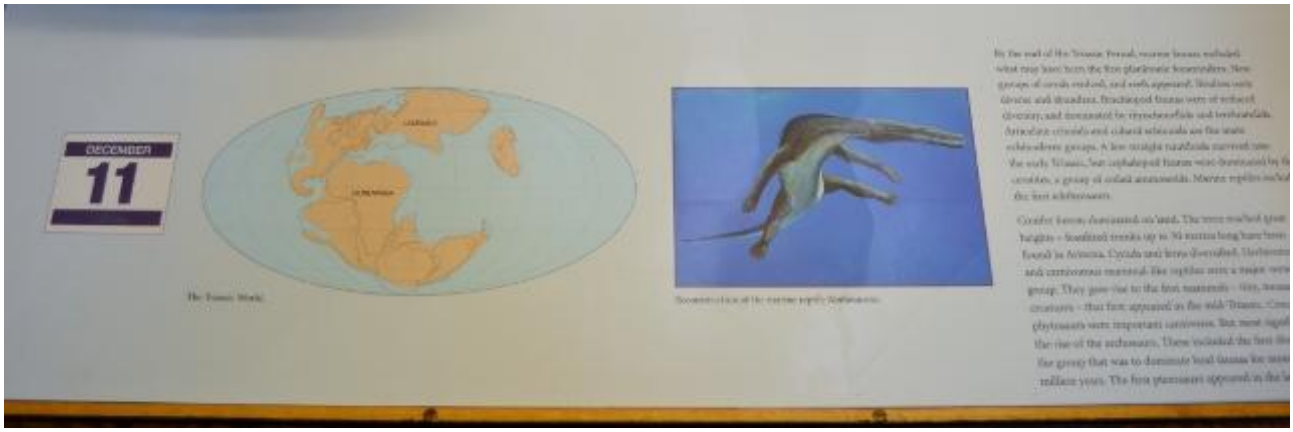


Fig.5.7: A Calendar of Life. History of Life Display, OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

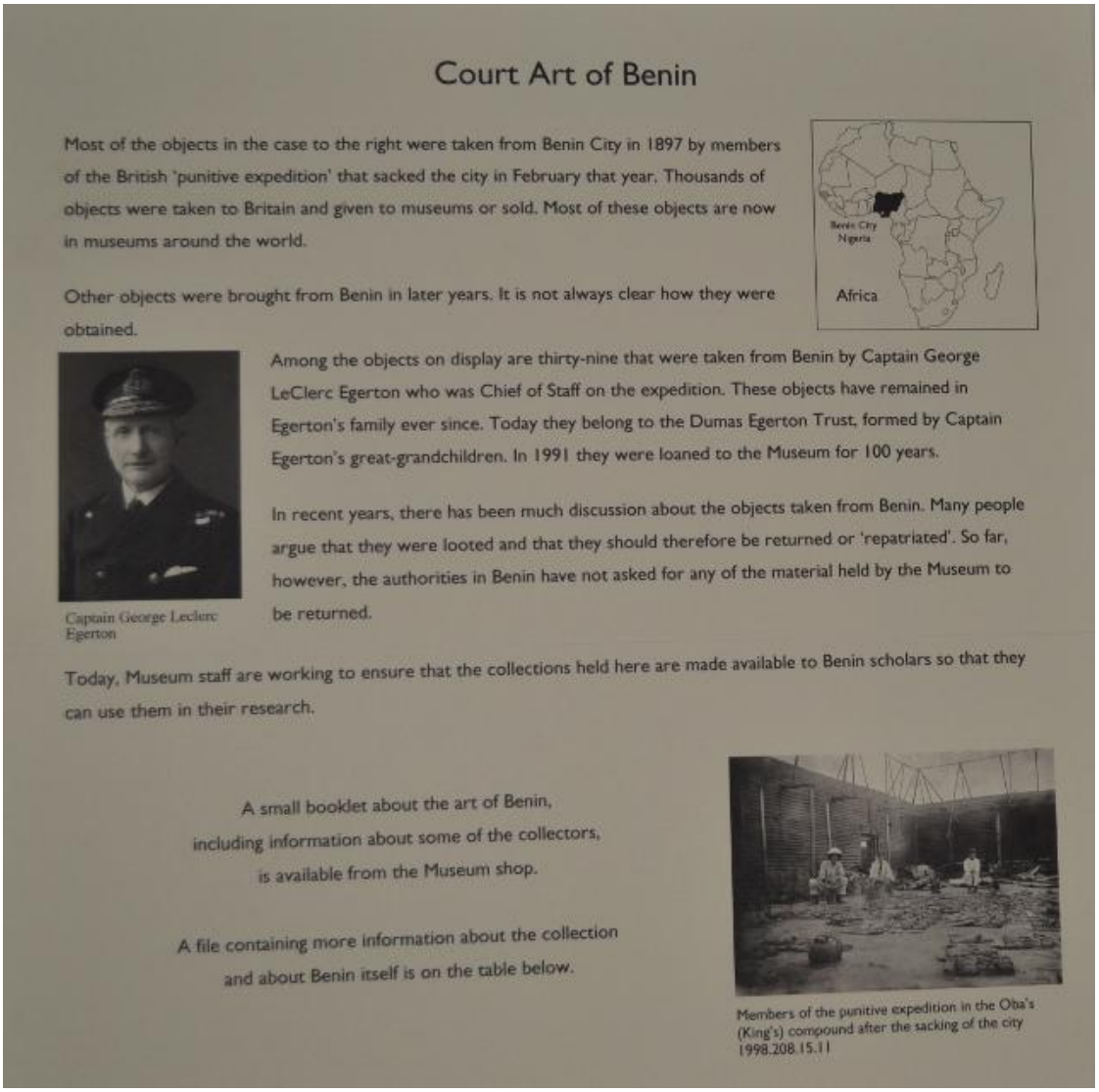
Linearity can often seem restrictive and suffocating, but there is one way, exemplified by the timeline, in which it can lead to enhancement. By giving objects a historical position in relation to events and to other objects, the timeline can return vigor to items which might otherwise be considered 'dead'. Writing upon the Old Testament, Auerbach noted how the 'vertical connection' of events and characters within the biblical narrative turns these entities into creatures 'fully developed,...fraught with their own biographical past,...distinct

as individuals...'[297] By clearly placing the fossils of History of Life into a story, the timeline turns them into characters or events necessary for the perpetuation of said story, and thus allows them to live, in some altered form once more.

A museum's use of language and texts, crucial for the ways in which the visitor engages with and understands objects, is also vital for the facilitation of linear structures.[298] Their use of verbs, such as 'look' which is used in the Ashmolean's Connections Objects panel in the gallery Exploring the Past, both presumes and generates future action in the visitor's experience. This is directive language, encouraging the visitor to 'look', and its intensity is enhanced by the regular use of words such as 'will', a modal verb which expresses a strong degree of certainty about the action of actions yet to come. 'As a visitor,' the Welcome Panel states, 'you *will* discover how we have redisplayed our collections under the theme *Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time.*' Thus the visitor's future experience is given a pre-ordained quality, recalling the transmissive educative model which many contemporary museum and educational thinkers might eschew. [299]

Tense, conveyed through verbs, can also be used to express the linear construction of past and present activity occurring with the various sjuzet that museums put on display, whether that sjuzet details the history of an object, the development of a collection, or the activities of an institution. On the Lower Gallery of the Pitt Rivers, a panel displays the story of the 'Court Art of Benin' using a number of tense forms, past and present: a combination which, in itself, expresses continuity (Fig.5.8).

[297]Auerbach, p.17
[298]Ravelli, p.1
[299]Ibid., p.13



Court Art of Benin

Most of the objects in the case to the right were taken from Benin City in 1897 by members of the British 'punitive expedition' that sacked the city in February that year. Thousands of objects were taken to Britain and given to museums or sold. Most of these objects are now in museums around the world.

Benin City Nigeria

Africa

Other objects were brought from Benin in later years. It is not always clear how they were obtained.

Captain George Leclerc Egerton

Among the objects on display are thirty-nine that were taken from Benin by Captain George LeClerc Egerton who was Chief of Staff on the expedition. These objects have remained in Egerton's family ever since. Today they belong to the Dumas Egerton Trust, formed by Captain Egerton's great-grandchildren. In 1991 they were loaned to the Museum for 100 years.

In recent years, there has been much discussion about the objects taken from Benin. Many people argue that they were looted and that they should therefore be returned or 'repatriated'. So far, however, the authorities in Benin have not asked for any of the material held by the Museum to be returned.

Today, Museum staff are working to ensure that the collections held here are made available to Benin scholars so that they can use them in their research.

A small booklet about the art of Benin, including information about some of the collectors, is available from the Museum shop.

A file containing more information about the collection and about Benin itself is on the table below.

Members of the punitive expedition in the Oba's (King's) compound after the sacking of the city 1998.208.15.11

Fig.5.8: Tenses in Benin. Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph the Author.

However, it is the present continuous 'are working' and the future modal 'can' which most express linear orientation. 'Today,' says the panel,

> Museum staff *are working* to ensure that the collections held here are made available to Benin scholars so that the *can* use them in their research.

Here, the modal verb 'can' is far less absolute and dogmatic than the 'will' of the Ashmolean's Welcome Panel. The individuals to which 'can' is directed, the Benin scholars,

are given far more agency over their own museum experience than the visitor to the Ashmolean. Presented with a particular future, in words at least, the visitor to the Ashmolean is restricted by the certainty of will; one outcome of their personal sjuzet, at least, is taken out of their control. Like Auerbach's Classical heroes, the visitor becomes enmeshed in a 'complex' of fate.[300]

In Serried Rows: Arranging Objects in Line

Objects are visible evidence for the events related by the museum, material analogues for the absent reality that words alone cannot provide. They can be understood as standing for those events, but also as events in the plotted structure of the visitor's experience. They may also act prosodically, creating a rhythmic pattern that drives the museum visitor on. In this part of the chapter, each of these functions will be examined in the context of the Oxford Museums.

There is little doubt that an intentional use of linearity underlies the conception and arrangement of Perfection of the Rifle, a series of cases displaying the evolution of firearms on the Upper Gallery of the Pitt Rivers. Pitt Rivers argued that material culture, if understood and shown developmentally, was evidence for evolution, a theory to which he adhered.[301] Given his particular interest in firearms and weaponry, it is not surprising that this display should be arranged so as to give weight to his Grand Narrative claim and echo the fashion in which he might have displayed the objects himself. This structure suggests inevitable narrative force and direction and its ending - with the UZI submachine gun -

[300]Auerbach, p.319
[301]Gosden and Larson, 2007, p.98

suggests that, in this particular weapon of war, perfection has been reached. Somehow, intentionally or otherwise, it implies an end to the process of firearm development. Though fraught with this underlying teleology, each individual gun, from the Webley Revolver to the UZI becomes a character: each gun becomes a significant part of the story; in Barthes terms a 'cardinal event' in the perpetuation of that fixed and concrete narrative (Fig.5.9).[302]

Fig.5.9: Teleologies and Cardinal Events. Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph the Author.

Objects can also be used as synechdoches for activity and gesture, and, though they may be static themselves, like the rivulet shaping of Apollinaire's 'Il Pleut' their grouping and arrangements may recall entropic temporal progression. In the OUMNH, the March of the Mammals display suggests quite clearly the onward tramp of the animals to Noah's Ark, and in the Ashmolean's West Meets East orientation gallery, the cases and objects are laid out in a way which echoes a ship transporting its 'Precious Cargoes', the notions of travel, trade

[302]Barthes, 1975, p.248

and exchange metaphorically engineered through the shape of cases and objects, enhancing the sense of adventure and journey which are so much a part of the Ashmolean's narrative chronotopic character (Fig.5.10).

Fig.5.10: Progressive Metaphors. March of the Mammals in the OUMNH and West Meets East, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Objects, however, do not just measure or use metaphor to illustrate progressive action: they may also incite such movement in the visitor with whom they come into contact through a metrical use of rhythm. Dramatically placed and lit, the iconic Haida totem pole in the Pitt Rivers acts like a poetic ictus, a point of stress enticing the visitor towards it, into and through the Great Court from the shop and staircase. If the visitor turns around upon reaching this they are again faced with another metrical lure; the bark kayak Salama, hanging brightly in the darkness above the Clore Learning Balcony, unavoidable once seen (Fig.5.11). Such ictic objects can be used in succession to stimulate the continued movement of a visitor through a space. Displayed one after the other down the central nave of the OUMNH, the whale jaw, *Tyrannosaurus rex* and Spider Crab become key investigative

touchstones, objects which, like words heightened through their placement in a metrical line, draw the visitor into and through the Great Court in a very physically linear way.

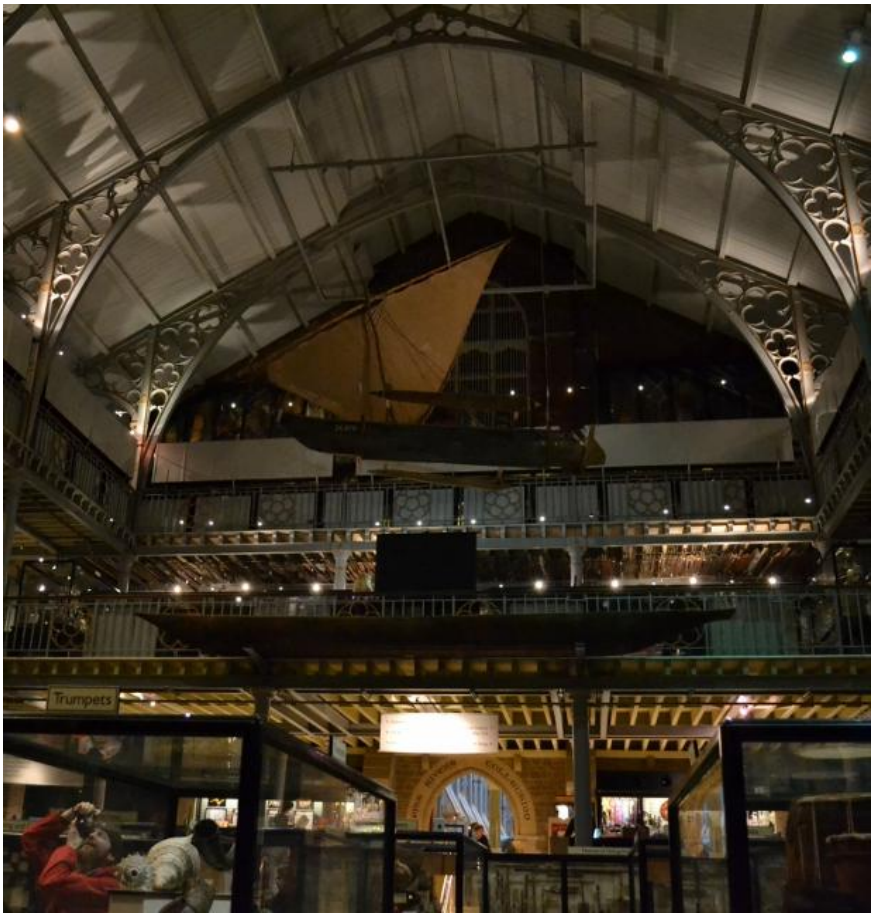


Fig.5.11: An Ictic Boat. The Kayak Above the Pitt Rivers.
Photograph the Author.

Thus far the concept of linear movement has been presented in a very positive light. But the forward movement of temporality does not bring only increasing perfection - it also brings degradation and decay. Objects can be displayed with the deliberate intent of exploring the inevitable deleterious effects of temporal movement. In the Ashmolean, this deterioration is utilized very visibly: from the fragments of cloth displayed in the centre of the Textiles gallery to the broken lekythoi in gallery 16, Greece (Fig.5.12). It is interesting and suggestive

that the lekythoi are displayed in a case entitled 'Libations to the Dead': the idea that forward movement inevitably endings in loss and death is not a palatable one for many. The Ashmolean's Conservation galleries give voice to the debates and fears surrounding such entropic degeneration. The very act of conservation is bound up with the recognition of natural degenerative processes and the combating of their effects, and the ethical issues surrounding it are manifold.[303] Through conservation, human beings manipulate natural entropic temporality, seeking to preserve a romantic ruin in a deliberate attempt to escape this other, less appealing form of linearity.

Fig.5.12: Degradation Displayed. Lekythoi in the Ashmolean.
Photograph the Author.

Objects can also be arranged in such a way which suggests a reversal of progression and which raises moral questions in terms of social and cultural perception. The Grand Narrative can be turned on its head to produce a pejorative image. The Combs case in the Pitt Rivers

[303]Museums Association, 'Ethical Debate: Conservation', www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/14217, as of 29 November 2012

contains an entire section dedicated to the 'degeneration' of the human form in the designs originating in the Congo. Though there is no reason to suppose that the increased stylization of the figure necessarily evidences atrophy in artistic capability, the implication is certainly there in the aged label text. Whilst the West improves - and builds guns - Others regress - and develop abstract art - and so what might be termed an increase in metaphorical imagination in one environment is deemed a de-evolution within this particular culture. Hierarchical positions of power, particularly the placement of the museum worker, anthropologist, and academic of the West at the pinnacle of human evolution and artistic achievement in diametric opposition to the Other are, in the instance of the Combs, plainly visible - and plainly problematic (Fig.5.13).

Fig.5.13: The De-evolution of the Other. Combs in the Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph the Author.

Writerly Visitors: The Museum Visitor and the Dialogic Arrow

Grand Narratives tend to encourage a certain amount of passivity on the part of their characters and their readers, but this is not necessarily the case with linear experience more generally, and the visitor is often an active, writerly participant in the generation of museal linearity. As Bergson noted, a succession of states requires a conscious mind to perceive them, one 'that can first retain them and then set them side by side by externalizing them in relation to one another.'[304] Barthes once wrote that the goal of literature was to generate a text which made the reader 'no longer a consumer, but a producer' - a 'writerly' text; or, in the museum, a dialogic and discursive space inhabited by an 'active visitor'.[305] The museum's visitor is no unthinking element controlled solely by the rhythmic and grammatical whims of the institution, but is a writerly, scriptoral participant in the production of its movement and gesture.

The writerly visitor can engender a linear progression in time both in terms of their own experiential narrative and that of the museum display itself. On the north-eastern end of the Upper Gallery, the OUMNH displays a model of the Sun, a label next to it telling the visitor that, opposite, models of the Earth and Moon sit in a perfectly scaled orbit (Fig.5.14). This set of objects, or collective object, cannot be immanently envisaged and must be travelled through in order to be understood as a complete whole. So the label engages the visitor, visibly encouraging them to complete the display, to be propelled by the first object and its given context towards a final revelatory completion. The museum as text and the

[304]Bergson, p.120-121
[305]Barthes, 1990, p.5

visitor collaborate and allow each other to move on, contributing to the perpetuation of both reading and narrative time.

Fig.5.14: Writing the Narrative Yourself. Scale Model of the Solar System, OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

Inevitable Entropy? Concluding the Arrow's Flight

Every museum is subject to change over time. Every museum sees an increase in dust and grime in areas impossible to clean. Every museum suffers unavoidable damage: scrapes on delicate wooden cases and black footprints on soft Portland stone. No museum is immune from the ravages of time - not even the Pitt Rivers. Each and every institution is subject to progression, and equally subject to decay.

Linear directionality, oriented towards a future, is so intrinsic a part of Western human perception that to question its legitimacy seems at first outrageous. But this form of temporal understanding has such wide-ranging and complex implications that to fail to question it or posit alternatives would be restrictive. When particular structures and tropes are deliberately deployed to shape experience and display human and natural life-worlds extant and arising, the social, ethical and philosophical issues are highly acute.

Unilinearity has certain eschatological undertones.[306] Embroiled in a certain sense of progress towards a final end, the Biblical Grand narrative presupposes a deistic, guiding hand. Whilst not overtly religious, perhaps, any linearly oriented display risks falling to a similar form, and perhaps becoming victim to the incorrect apportioning of causality; the literary *propter hoc* fallacy.[307] It may bring a sense of comfort, of security and certainty, companionship and reason in the universe, and be advantageous for the generation of united identity, continuity of history and for the telling of stories, but it is also bound and limited to a singular and particular construction of events which may be based upon a false

[306]Delumeu, p.88
[307]Porter-Abbott, p.39

premise. The chronological causal narrative, as has been shown above, can be used to inaugurate and perpetuate underlying Western hierarchies and biases. This kind of narrative can, as Lyotard suggested, create social structures with a singular, dominant narrative, limiting the ability of those who live within it to question and define 'what has the right to be said and done.'[308] The Grand Narrative determines these cultural rights and furthermore, by being a product of them, it is able to legitimate itself.[309]

One intention of this chapter, however, was to indicate that linear temporal movements need not be restricted to Newtonian causal chronologies. The linear movement of a museum visitor can also be engineered through rhythmic means, which appeal not to the abstract Newtonian time which Henri Bergson termed *temps*, but to the lived human time which he termed *durée* - pure duration.[310]

In duration, linearity does not dominate. A number of Modernist writers such as Woolf, Faulkner and Proust exploited the human mind as an entity which 'refrains from separating its present state from its former states.'[311] In *durée,* tenses slip, and temporal structures become rebellious. In the following chapter these disturbances to Time's Arrow will be explored: and perhaps they will indicate to the reader ways in which time might be innovatively manipulated within displays, how it may be freed from overly linear structures, and what that might mean for the ethical and political status of the museum as an institution.

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[308]Lyotard, 1984, p.23
[309]Ibid.
[310]Bergson, p.91
[311]Ibid., p.100

Chapter Six

Disrupting the Arrow - Other Directions for Museum Time

Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights receding.

William Gibson, Neuromancer

Introduction

In durée, tenses slip, and temporal structures become rebellious. Echoes, transtextual references and anachronies blur the boundaries between past and future, certain moments and events are punctuated and sharply delineated from each other, conscious observers are pulled in and out of temporal proximity to things and events, and instability in rhythm and chronology disrupt linear progression.

Creators of fiction and poetry have learn to harness certain techniques and features of language to attempt to express the more refractory aspect of temporal experience, techniques which manipulate plotted structures, the diegetic involvement of characters and readers in prose and the patterns of stress and rhyme in poetry. Similar features are also to be found in museums and, whether deployed intentionally or more organically emergent, they are of profound interest for the analyst of museum temporality. This chapter will explore how transtextuality, anachrony, diegesis, prosody and punctuation can shed light on the instances where museum time becomes truculent, and fails to comply with the arrow's flight.

Transtextuality: Pulling Times and Spaces Together

In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* Gerard Genette wrote of the 'transtextual' characteristics of literature: the various relationships which texts construct between themselves, of inter-, para-, meta-, hyper- and architextuality, as outlined above in Plotting Time.[312] A similar set of linkages is apparent in the relationships existing between the spatial and temporal locations which arise in the physical and abstract museum environment. The architecture, medial devices and objects of museums can be deployed to refer to worlds beyond their immediate spatio-temporal bounds, creating for these institutions meaningful bonds both translocational and transchronic.

In the Ashmolean there are certain spaces which invite comparison with the porous environment of Walter Benjamin's Naples. In his essay on this city, written in 1925, Benjamin told of an interpenetrative environment, in which visual encounters and the various aspects of life co-mingle, almost without consideration for boundaries or privacy. 'Just as the living room reappears on the street, with chairs, hearth, and alter, so - only much more loudly - the street migrates into the living room.'[313] Islamic Middle East is a gallery of high visual and auditory porosity - 'integration' in Psarra's terms - from which the Ancient Worlds orientation gallery, the museum's restaurant, the galleries of Music and Tapestry and West meets East, and the bridge between Eastern Art and Mediterranean World can be seen, and between which sounds echo (Fig.6.1).[314] These spaces, pulled into

[312]Genette, 1997, p.1
[313]Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis, 'Naples', *Selected Writings, Volume One, 1913-1926,* ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), pp.414-421, p.420
[314]Psarra, 2009, p.50

the environment of Islamic Middle East in a way akin to literary intertextuality, become 'simultaneously animated theatres...at the same time stage and boxes'; places of present enactment, but also places which frame distant and future stories.

Fig.6.1: Animated Theatres. The Open Wall of Islamic Middle East, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

In this point of intertextual nexus, narrative plotted linearity is disrupted, both in terms of the historical chronology constructed by Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time, and in terms of the experiential plot constructed by the writerly visitor. In Islamic Middle East, events and galleries more linearly ordered in Crossing Cultures are disordered and reconfigured, cultural connections, loose influences and possibilities emphasized over direct causality: the linear teleological mindset, susceptible to the *propter hoc* fallacy, which the Ashmolean risks falling into, undermined by the more open potential recognized by and in this double height, open gallery.

For the visitor too, Islamic Middle East is a disruptive space. It upsets the tense structure of their personal plot, drawing both past and future events and experiences into the present. The Now becomes rife with possibility - open to many futures and a place where the past can be recalled. In Islamic Middle East, tenses curl in a fashion reminiscent of Proust's *Sodom and Gomorrah,* the visitor's abilities to recall and expect give a physical, architectural analogue.[315]

In a sense this naturalizes the museum experience. Modernist writers such as Proust played with tense in order to come closer to representing the movement of the human psyche, to relieve the inadequacies of 'realist' linear novels: it could be argued that Islamic Middle East expresses just this concern.[316] However, it is in many ways also an act of estrangement. Modernist fiction which mingles tenses or uses stream of consciousness is often considered difficult - it is often deliberately different to the more naturalized, yet far more false linear narrative, and because of this it makes its reader aware of the reconstructed nature of itself and of all narratives. Islamic Middle East is a space which does precisely this: showing the museum's narrative from a different intertextual angle, it jolts the visitor out of their homodiegetic relationship with the space, forcing them to consider the Ashmolean, and by implication all other museums, as constructed subjective artifacts rather than bastions of eternal, absolute truth.

Windows, both interior and exterior, also indicate the transtextual nature of museum space and significantly affect the temporal characteristics of their environments. Inside, they create porous transtextual linkages such as those in Islamic Middle East. Windows onto the

[315]Proust, 2000
[316]Houston, p.41

outside world, however, link the interior timescape of the museum to that of the everyday, show how their heterochronies - their 'slices of time' - are not, as Foucault argued, separated by each other by an 'absolute break' in temporality. The windows are architectural reminders that the museum is not an isolated temporal site, but one connected to the outside world by the visitor, who segues between them with their own form of temporal durée. In spaces without windows, these reminders are limited, and the present temporality becomes much more intense. In the Pitt Rivers, there are no windows, and thus it seems almost an archetypal heterotopia. But visitors still enter its door; connections are still made to the outside world. Despite its visual illusion of isolation, the Pitt Rivers cannot help but be transtextual.

The architectural features of the Oxford museums also permit a different kind of transtextuality to arise, one which disrupts a singular narrative flow with coterminous temporal sites, sites which exist alongside and are at times bound in a mutually generative relationship with the display space. There are parts of the museum which most visitors only glimpse. Locked doors to teaching, research or storage spaces appear in each of the Oxford museums. On the basement floor of the Ashmolean, two doors flush with the wall hide the rollerstacks which house the undisplayed collection (Fig.6.2). Unobtrusive, but still visible, they indicate the present of the display space's hypotext - the earlier expression of the collection onto which the galleries are grafted and rely. A closed door such as this is easily missed; however, when there is a window through which the places behind the scenes can be seen, such as that which leads from the Russian Art gallery to the Print Room of the Ashmolean, this hypertextual relationship is made explicit and the holistic, engulfing, natural

character of the museum once again disrupted (Fig.6.3). The walls of the museum, the hyper and transtextualities say, cannot encompass the whole of the present.

Fig.6.2: The Hidden Hypotext. Doors to the Undisplayed Collection, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Fig.6.3: The Impossibility of the Totalising Present. Looking through to the Print Room, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The display media used in a museum, both textual and graphical, can engineer subtle transtextual connections to disrupt the flight of Time's Arrow. The transtextual role of graphics will be taken up in the section on remediation in Chapter Seven - here, the written text is the focus for analysis.

Textual quotations are, in Genette's terms, intertextual, for they create visible connections between spatially and temporally distanced locations. In China to AD 800, a gallery on the ground floor of the Ashmolean, connections are made between the present and the Yangtze Basin of the ninth century through the quoted poetry of Lu Guimeng (Fig.6.4). Combined with the diaphanous watercolour paintings of kilns, the poetry gives a cultural context to the pottery displayed, gives a sense of their historical locale and indicates their emergence from a specific point in chronological time. Yet this time is no longer physically tangible; the poetic nature of the words and the loose, painterly qualities of the watercolours suggest how fictionalized and limited any imagining of the past could be.

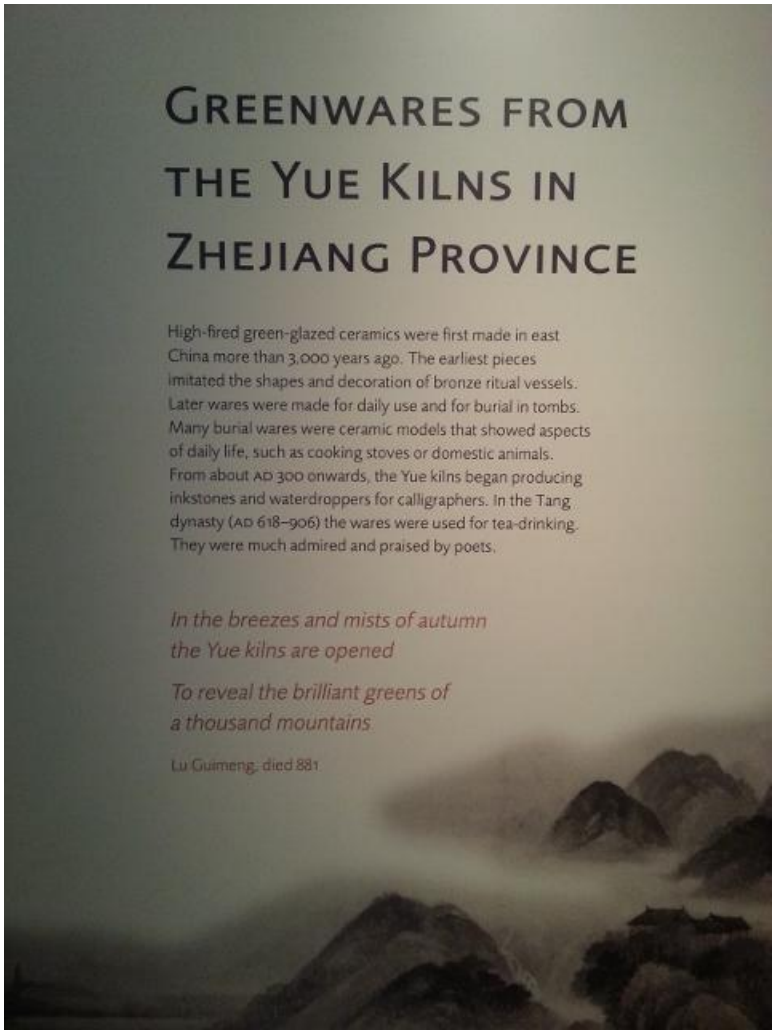

Fig.6.4: Quotes from a Chinese Poet, China to AD800, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

References and quotations can have multiple referents and are able to link temporal landscapes past, present and future, real and fictional, together, breaking the conceptual, if not the physical, boundaries imposed by the present. Next to the Twelve Caesars display in the Ashmolean's Rome gallery is placed the following quote from Oxford scholar Henry Liddell,

> Suetonius certainly tells a prodigious number of scandalous anecdotes about the Caesars, but there was plenty to tell about them…As a great collection of facts of all kinds, his work on the Caesars is invaluable.
>
> *Oxford's Henry Liddell, (1811-1898), co-author of The Greek-English Lexicon, and father of Alice, who inspired Alice in Wonderland.*

This piece of text offers multiple transtextual connections. Most simply, it acts intertextually, bringing the words and by implication the historical context of Henry Liddell into the present of the museum visit. But this statement was already transtextual in its original context, referring to the work of Suetonius in a more abstract, critical way - a metatextual link to Classical histories. This link brings Suetonius' world into the Now, and intimates its passage through and mediation by the timescape of nineteenth century Oxford academia. This is not a clean quote, covered as it is by the temporal detritus of historic and contemporary interpretation.

This particular text panel has a number of references attached to it, which make its transtextual status even more complex. It mentions Liddell's work on *The Greek English Lexicon* - an important work still in use today after over one hundred and fifty years - thus calling upon the chronotopic environment of the university. More interestingly, however, it tells the reader that Henry was the father of Alice, the child who inspired Lewis Carroll to create Wonderland. So this one reference, and by implication the space and objects around it, is linked however, invisibly to all other references to *Alice's Adventures*, to the books themselves and to the iconographic and tourist industry they spurred - a tourist industry used in both the Ashmolean and the OUMNH. Transtextuality, in this instance, allows an

isolated museum space discussing Rome to connect with one of the most pervasive and influential objects of contemporary shared knowledge - the historic city of Rome and its inhabitants equally as tangible as the denizens of the nonsense world of Carroll.

All museum objects are, in some sense, transtextual, for they all draw fragments of other times and spaces into the present. Loan objects make this very apparent, and in Oxford the frequent proximity of the lending and receiving institutions exaggerates the intertextual nature of objects till further. In the OUMNH is a small display entitled *Musaeum Tradescantianum,* showing some of the 'naturalia' collected by the Tradescants which were part of the original founding collection for the Ashmolean and which have since been moved to the University Museum (Fig.6.5). The temporality of the transtextual link is dual - one fork leads to the Ark of the Tradescants and the Ashmolean of the past, and one, more inferential, to the Ashmolean of the present.

Fig.6.5: Transtextual Tradescantianum. Borrowed Collections in the OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

In *Of Grammatology,* Derrida defined *différance,* the constant fluidity of linguistic signs (words) in relation to their referents.[317] He was pointing to the non-identical nature of the written word and the concrete object to which it is attached, and thereby intimating the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign. This ambiguity is well evidence in certain museum objects which, by tapping into intertextuality, can occupy multiple identities in a single corporeal site. In the Great Court of the OUMNH there is a case called 'The Real Alice'. Purporting to tell the story behind Wonderland, the case makes reference to various temporal and textual sites - the historical reality of Charles Dodgson and Alice Liddell, the fictional word of Alice's imagination and, by physical presence, the OUMNH itself. So the objects within it are faced with manifold selves: the taxidermy animals at one and the same time scientific objects and the avatars of sentient beings in a fantasy universe (Fig.6.6).

[317]Derrida, 1997 (1976), p.23

Fig.6.6: A white rabbit or a White Rabbit? Manifold Identities in the OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

Transtextual relationships disrupt tensorial structures - often, they make these structures and their limits visible. In the next part of the chapter, focus will turn onto the anachrony; a narratological concept which commits precisely this kind of temporal disruption, and which can be successfully used in the analysis of museum timescapes.

Anachronies: Disrupting Tense and Time in Narratives

In *Narrative Discourse,* Genette described some of the temporal complexities involved in the dramatic structure of prose, in which the ordering of the narrative - the sjuzet - need not align with the chronological history of the fabula, the milieu from which the events of the sjuzet are selected.[318] These 'anachronies' were noted in Plotting Time. Various forms and intensities of these may be brought to bear upon the exploration of museological

[318]Genette, 1980, p.36

timescapes. To facilitate the clarity with which such complexities can be explored and described here, it is worth utilizing the schema employed by Genette to define the relationships between the order of events in a narrative and the chronology of the fabula. Using letters A, B, C etcetera, to describe the order of occurrences as they arise in the narrative structure, and numbers 1, 2, 3 etcetera, to define their chronological position, he offers a useful framework for demarcating the various anachronies present in museum exhibition spaces.

Some of the most interesting opportunities for such analysis are offered by the Ashmolean's orientation galleries, in particular Ancient Worlds, which in a typical encounter also serves as the Museum's own introductory gallery. It is a complex temporal environment displaying many anachronic features which affect not only the sjuzet of the gallery, but of the plotted picaresque experience of the visitor as well. A walk through of Ancient Worlds applying Genette's formula follows, and though individual variance in terms of visitor engagement should always be taken into account, this typical structure can nevertheless provide an illuminating example of how and where anachronies appear, and suggest how they might be used to enhance the museum experience (Fig.6.7). Here, the letters are used to mark the points in the visitor's physical narrative experience, the numbers to the chronology of the gallery sjuzet.

Fig.6.7: Anachronic Ancient Worlds. Ancient Worlds, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

You enter Ancient Worlds from the Atrium which follows the Ashmolean's impressive front doors. On your left is a panel welcoming you to the museum; and though the elaborate *mise-en-page* of the gallery provides many potential initial engagements, it is this deliberately initiatory panel which you, being the 'Ideal Visitor' take as your narrative starting point - thus is becomes point A. However, as its contents describe the general condition of being in the museum rather than directly refer to the Ancient Worlds gallery and its contents, it has no firm temporal reference point within the sjuzet of the gallery itself. Thus, its situation in this regard can be marked with a zero - 0.

This panel is followed by one which actually introduces the Ancient Worlds gallery and its themes of travel and transport (B). Contextualizing the present space, it can be positioned as 1 within the gallery's own sjuzet. Directly after this panel are two

features which complicate the relationship between visitor plot and gallery sjuzet - an interactive (C) and a timeline displaying the position of other galleries on this floor in regard to wider human history (D). Placing objects to be encountered later in the museological experience along a chronology within the historical scope of the Orientation gallery, the timeline refers to points in the museum's fabula at several different moments in time which lie ahead of the present; and thus can be given the number 2. On the other hand, the contents of the interactive occupy a virtual position parallel to the gallery's sjuzet, but not necessarily directly involved with it: thus it can be termed C-p, the p used instead of a number in recognition of its peculiar paraleptical status.

Two maps, one above The Ancient World panel, and one upon the opposite wall, occupy, like the Welcome panel, a strange achronic position in regard to the sjuzet of the gallery itself. Thus they can be deemed E-0 and G-0 respectively. The statues which peak up out of the basement to occupy the space where a wall opposite the atrium’s entrance would usually be are, in terms of the physical layout, in position F. However, they do not add directly to the museum sjuzet but intimate the floor below - they are intertextual, in that sense, and thus can be given i to denote their position in the gallery's conceptual sjuzet.

The anachronic structure of the gallery can be shown more simply like this

A-0, B-1, C-p, D-2, E-0, F-i, G-0

This is indicative of the fact that the temporality of physical experience and that of conceptual abstract sjuzet need not always directly correspond. Genette's framework has its limits, however. After these introductory points, the chronologies of both narratives in Ancient Worlds become extremely distorted and complex, for the gallery is an open space in which the route of the visitor is fairly free. Genette himself notes how his anachronic framework breaks down in the case of texts in which 'temporal reference is deliberately sabotaged.'[319] Yet it is still a useful tool to use when exploring the temporal relationships existing in any museum space and it has potential to be used with the purpose of creating powerful narrative experiences - it might even help the museum maker step beyond simplistic notions of narrative, to use it in its proper, formal and structural sense rather than as a rather indeterminate definition. It has the potential to open to the museum varied and complex narrative forms.

[319]Ibid., p.35

Fig.6.8: Multiple Possible Sjuzet - the Timeline. Ancient Worlds, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Genette's model is also of use in the analysis of text panels and labels where it may be used to analyze their particular manipulation, graphical and textual, of the museum's sjuzet. The timeline in Ancient Worlds provides one such example, containing as it does information about both the history of the objects and the order of the galleries through which they shall be experienced (Fig.6.8). The timeline is a device which inherently and pointedly emphasizes the relationship between the museum as sjuzet and the fabula of the world from which it selected things to collect and display. It is also indicative of the potential for the cotemporal existence of two different shapings of fabula, two entirely different sjuzet; that of the objects as displayed on the Ancient Worlds floor and that of their arrangement on the timeline.

Almost coterminous in the timeline and roughly in historical time, an Augustinian coin and a Yemeni alabaster are the first objects to appear. These shall be termed Ai and Aii respectively by virtue of their chronological proximity. Next comes a Greek gemstone depicting Alexander (B), then a Chinese buckle (C). Next is an Etruscan statue (D), then a Cypriot bronze (E), a Mediterranean seal (F), an Indus seal (G), an Egyptian Lapis Lazuli (H), and finally an Iraqi ram seal (I) and a Ukrainian figurine (J). However, the order in which the objects appear in the galleries themselves does not match with this order on the timeline - the two sjuzet diverge. Following Genette, this disjunction can be illuminated with the following formula, in which the lettering denotes the order of appearance in the timeline and the numbering the order that the objects are encountered in the movement through the galleries.

Ai-4, Aii-1, B-6, C-2, D-5, E-8, F-10, G-3, H-11, I-9, J-7

The divergence between these two sjuzet indicate how many inversions occur within museum spaces, how many different manipulations of temporality co-exist, and how the singular progressive linearity of the museum suggested in Time's Arrow can so easily be disrupted.

For Genette, such analysis in literature highlighted two anachronic forms in particular; those which are retrospective, and those which are anticipatory. The first of these, also known as a 'flashback', he termed 'analepsis', and the second, the flash-forward, 'prolepsis'.[320] Alongside these forms he also identified ellipsis, in which time leaps forward without return, and paralipsis, the interpenetration of a moment into a coterminous neighboring narrative.[321] This latter has already been encountered in the interactive outlined above in the first anachronic analysis of Ancient Worlds. How might such structures be more intentionally exploited in a museum, what effect might they have, and what might they suggest about the nature of temporality in museums?

As noted in Plotting Time, analepsis can be used to contextualize a current situation. This is not just of use in literature, but also in the museum, for it might be used to explain and legitimate an object's presence in a gallery or the historical situation the gallery describes. The selection of these explanatory or contextualizing elements is fraught with ethical questions which every museum using analepsis should be aware of. Used to legitimate situations, analepsis can also imply singular causality; can be used to restrict the chaotic pattern of events to a preordained structure.

[320]Ibid., p.40
[321]Ibid., p.51

Genette also discussed repeating or recollective analepsis.[322] In *In Search of Lost Time,* his exemplary text, recall is a fundamental feature: it invites the comparison of the past with the present, highlighting issues regarding the maintenance and building of identity, and raises broader questions about the voluntary or involuntary nature of nature of memory in which museums are so deeply embroiled. Motifs which repeat throughout museums, such as the Cycladic figurines which occur in different contexts at several points throughout the Ashmolean - as prehistoric archaeological artifacts and as inspirations for works of modern art - can provide the impetus for just such recollective moments. On the second encounter, the visitor may recall the first, implicitly recalling their own knowledge development and extending the number of identities to which the figurines can belong.

It is also important to consider whether or not the analeptic jump is resolved with a fully detailed return to its point of departure. This kind of complete analepsis is very useful for determining the causal relationships of any present timescape. In the Oxford museums, such complete analepsis do not appear to exist, unless the fact that the entrance and exit points for all the institutions are located at the same point. Partial analepsis also exists, however, and in this the end of the recollected element remains unconnected to the point at which the main narrative is resumed. Such forms may be used in a museum to underline a historical or conceptual break, or for emotive metaphorical effect to emphasize the discontinuity which often accompanies cultural or personal trauma. Thus, whilst it can foreground unity and continuity of identity, analepsis can also indicate painful discontinuity

[322]Ibid., p.54

and rupture. As much as it is about retention and remembrance, it can also be about loss and forgetting.

Prolepsis is more infrequent in literature, but in museums - the orientation galleries in particular - the yet to come plays a very visible role.[323] In the Ancient Worlds gallery, the text and synechdochic representation of objects from other galleries - in the timeline, for example - indicate particular situations which the museum's visitor will perform or experience at some point in the future. These can incite expectation and anticipation and, like a rhyme, the hope of their resolution can be used to spur the curious visitor on. However, there is something more sinister at play here, a certain prophetic and deterministic quality to such narrative occurrences, and when they are resolved through their realization rather than remaining anticipated and imagined, the narrative leading to them and the source of their prediction are ratified and given authority. Once more, it seems, free will can lose out to predestination, and an almost deistic sense of fate. Museums must remain aware of these 'hidden' teleologies, recognizing them for the useful purposes which they serve, but also being wary of their more authoritarian implications.

Aristotle wrote of a particularly interesting anachronic narrative form, known as *in medias res,* which was used by Homer in his construction of epic poetry.[324] Using both anachronic forms, *in medias res* dramatic structures begin in the middle of a story, then jump backwards in the fabulaic chronology in order to describe and perhaps explain by what means and for what reasons the situation at the point of departure came to be. In the *Odyssey,* identified by Auerbach as an exemplar of epic *in medias res,* the jump occurs at a

[323]Ibid., p.67
[324]Aristotle, 1968, pp.43-44

powerfully emotive point: the moment in which Odysseus' old nurse recognizes the aged beggar whose feet she is washing as her lost master.[325] Though this use of anachronic forms does not arise with any clarity in any of the Oxford Museums, it is a particularly useful form for museum makers to consider - for it can incite quite powerful emotional responses, but also break up the intensity of the moment by relating a story within it. The reader or visitor is thereby given a chance to recover, but when the moment of departure is recaptured at the end, that intensity can be relived and resolved. For the museum maker, this could be an extremely powerful tool.

Pulling In and Out of Time: Shifts in Diegetic Involvement

Anachronies manipulate the order and position of events with regard to a narrative. However, as Chapter Two 'Looking at Time' showed, it is also possible to manipulate the position of the various scriptors - authors, narrators, focalisors and readers - in relation to a text.[326] This shift in diegetic involvement may in some cases arise alongside a disruption in the linear progression of a narrative itself - though there need be no causal linkage. However, even when it does not, diegetic shifts do have a significant affect upon how that narrative is perceived and, for the scriptor being shifted, temporal disturbance may indeed occur. In the section below, the focus will be upon how this latter kind of disruption arises or can be engineered in the museum. Particular regard will be given to the visitor's relationship with the museum's displayed narrative structure, but also, equally importantly, their relationship with their own experiential sjuzet. Throughout this section, the terms

[325]Auerbach, 1953, p.3
[326]Chapter Two, 'Looking at Time,' p.62

hetero- and homodiegesis, as used in 'Looking at Time', will recur, for they provide a subtle literary way of distinguishing between the various degrees of visitor involvement.

Firstly it is valuable to consider the ways in which the museum sjuzet is broken when a visitor's perspective is physically and forcibly altered. In the earlier discussion of transtextualities, attention was placed upon the glimpses into spaces outside the museum display, particularly back of house areas, and the ways in which these break the continuity of the display by showing the coterminous existence of other spatio-temporal environments.[327] But these visions of alternative plots also reduce the visitor's homodiegetic involvement in the museum sjuzet by breaking its illusion of completeness.

Staircases also have a role to play in dispelling this illusion - but it is a complex one and the effects of staircases upon the diegetic relationship between visitor and museum narrative structure are many. There are some which seek to preserve institutional continuity and the homodiegetic position of the visitor within their experience of the museum. The staircase up to Western Art from the Ashmolean's entrance lobby is a prime example. Part of the old Cockerell building and thus traditional in its neo-Classicism, it nonetheless segues well into Mather's more minimal, contemporary interpretation of the style, providing a subtle shift in tone between the new and the aged parts of the institution without breaking the diegetic illusion too dramatically (Fig.6.9).

[327]Chapter Six, 'Disrupting the Arrow,' pp.152-153

Fig.6.9: Smooth Neo-Classicism. The Lobby Staircase in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

However, there are also staircases which make clear distinctions between themselves and the display spaces of the museum. When the visitor, of necessity, encounters them, they break the exhibition space's theatrical pretense at singularity, unity and truth. Part of the extension to the building which now houses the Balfour Research Library, the Pitt Rivers' staircase is an area obviously differentiated from that of the display (Fig.6.10). The alternation between this functional, light and modern space and the dark traditionalism of the galleries themselves forces the visitor to the Pitt Rivers Museum to continually switch their diegetic involvement - from that of a picaro immersed in weaving the objects presented to them into a personally cohesive whole, essentially, a character within the text - to that of a heterodiegetic, distanced observer, someone outside the manifold stories that the Pitt Rivers seeks to tell. Such an effect is also to be found when an empty display case or insect trap appears, and thus creates holes and gaps in the museums constructed world, showing its incompleteness and mutability. This manipulation of the visitor is almost metafictional, for it encourages an awareness of the curated, contrived nature of the Pitt Rivers, awareness that its displays are only one of many sjuzets and styles in which the objects concerned could have been displayed.

Fig.6.10: Through to a metafictive staircase. Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph the Author.

In each of the Oxford museums there are points at which visitors are able to stand back from their own experience and reflect upon it from a more heterodiegetic position. These sites are often places from which visitors are able to take a bird's eye view upon a place already experienced: in the Ashmolean, the Human Image gallery can be viewed from the bridge displaying Italy Before Rome (Fig.6.11), and the Great Courts of the Pitt Rivers and OUMNH can be seen from the balconies above. By shifting their perspective in this way, the visitors are placed in a much more externalized position in regard to their personal museum sjuzet, able to look back upon the position they once held in the narrative and reflect upon their own actions and responses by observing the people still occupying those spaces. Yet even at these points they remain participants in their personal museum diegesis, for all that they may realize their developmental progression within it. Whilst they may come to understand in part that this experience is a constructed sjuzet and that, as a result, it has boundaries, they remain unable to escape it: their personal experience, though only a single example of the multitude of others around it, is the only one that they can know.

Fig.6.11: Looking Back On Where We Used to Be. Looking at Human Image from Italy Before Rome, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Prosodic Disruptions: Metrical Events and Rhyme Schemes in the Museum

Prosodic structures, as 'The Rhythm of Time' suggested, can be used not only to create unity, continuity and linear movement, but also to disrupt and undermine them.[328] Lennard's analysis of poetry suggests that an echo's particular effect is a result of two factors, the intensity of the echo and its position within the line, which combine to create unique prosodic moments.[329] Such echoic forms appear in the museum; one role of the section below is to examine how these affect the temporal character of an institution. Its second role is to consider the patterns of stress within a museum, for metrical form, as this thesis should already have made clear, is a similarly critical part of a poem's - and a museum's - rhythmic and temporal character. Rhyme and stress can halt or speed up the movement of a poem, or change its tone or direction: their role in undermining simple linearity is similar in the case of a museum.

The temporary cessation of linear flow is dramatically enacted in the visitor's initial view of the Pitt Rivers' Great Court. Both the intense similitude of the cases, in terms of colour if not in form, and their position at the opening of this museum experience produce a moment high in wonder, arresting the visitor's onward progression. A visual poem such as Apollinaire's 'Il Pleut' arrests the eye's attention upon the shape and form of the piece, rather than drawing the reader straight into its words.[330] In the visual poem and the *mise-en-page* of the Great Court, everything is seen as a flattened form, singular and all at the same time. The enhanced icticity of the *mise-en-page,* whether of the text or the museum,

[328]Chapter Four, 'The Rhythm of Time', p.112
[329]Lennard, p.190-191
[330]Chapter Four, 'The Rhythm of Time', p.107

results in a moment of pause before the visitor or reader is able to continue with their exploration of the text, or the display (Fig.6.12).

Fig.6.12: The Mise-en-Page. Entering the Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph the Author.

Echoes and rhymes of varied prominence can be used to create anachronic structures which, like the glimpses of past experiences outlined in the section above, pull the visitor out of their comfortable homodiegetic position, but which also create a sense of continued, self-aware museal identity. This is of particular importance when that continuity needs to be maintained over a physical or stylistic break. In the Ashmolean, classical statuary ties together the Mather extension and Western Art, which are so stylistically and topically different. Of particular note is the shared image of Laocoön, the bust of which in the Britain and Italy gallery may be interpreted as a synechdochic reference to the complete statue displayed in the Cast Gallery of the new building, and even onwards to the work of Lessing and to the physical original now held in the Vatican's Museums (Fig.6.13). Here, the echo unites two spatially distanced areas of the Ashmolean, and between two distinct interpretations of the material object - the Laocoön both art object and archaeological study. At the same time, the recursion and recollection allows comparison to be drawn between the different stylistic contexts in which the object is presented. Temporal shifts, emphasized by echoic structures, can change the interpretation of an object - and the visitor's perception of it - and can alter the way in which the visitor understands the distinction between the museum's various sjuzets and that of their own personal experience.

Fig.6.13: Echoes of Trauma. The Repetition of Laocoön, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Whether positioned internally, at the beginning or at the end of the museum experience, and however intense they are, such rhymes and metrical features can have significant and unique effect upon the perception of temporal movement within any museum, as they can in poetry. Recognizing this would enable museum makers to not only manipulate experiences and objects, but also more subtly negotiate the relationships between those objects and experiences and the visiting audience.

Punctuation and Lineation: Sharp Shifts in Temporal Trajectories

Rhythmic structures are influenced by the devices of punctuation and lineation that break up pieces of prose or verse. According to Lennard there are various forms of punctuation and in 'The Rhythm of Time' the functions of stops, *signes de renvoi,* and lineation in

literature were examined.[331] Below, the ways in which the concepts and various forms of punctuation might be utilized to examine the temporal landscape of the museum will be explored, with reference in particular to the various degrees of stops and *signes de renvoi* - signs of sending back.

Between the Mather extension and Western Art, there is a clear break. Visitors step through a set of automatic doors out of the noisy, exploratory space of the Mather and into the hushed, contemplative enclaves of Western Art. Acting like the line break which comes between the body of verse and the final couple of a Shakespearean sonnet, this set of glass doors bifurcate the Ashmolean. As in the sonnet, this break enables a shift in tone - a volta. Architecturally divided, both halves of the institution express very different notions of the museum ideal: one open, modern and visitor friendly, the other quiet, antique and rarefied. These two sites have distinctly different temporal characters, two different chronotopic forms. In the Mather, the time of the everyday is given freer reign, embroiled as this set of galleries is in the networks and flows of the historic and the contemporary world. Western Art, on the other hand, is far more traditionally heterotopic. Standing almost isolated and enclosed from both the Mather galleries and the outside world, Western art is pervaded by a sense of the 'aesthetic cult', belonging to a seemingly static, eternalized space.[332] Linearity is again complicated - both galleries exist simultaneously, therefore there cannot be only one singular linear narrative route to go down. When the visitor crosses the boundary between the two spaces, the enclosed singularity of each, no matter how linear or causal their separate narrative structures might be, is shattered.

[331]Chapter Four, 'The Rhythm of Time', p.101
[332]Duncan, 1995, p.14

More subtle shifts, far more akin to the softer forms of stop - colons, semi-colons and commas, for instance - can also be used to isolate certain galleries within the museum space. Within the already rarefied environment of Western Art, there are yet deeper enclaves of intense contemplation. Their entrances obvious or awkward, whether by virtue of a heavy door or a demonstrative wall or door frame, 'Arts of the Eighteenth Century', 'English Delftware', 'Dutch Still Lives' and the 'Pre-Raphaelites' galleries act as side chapels, isolated subclauses in the museum which provide moments of enclosed cessation and pause and which, placed alongside other galleries and with only one door, act as diversions from the onward flow of the visitor's experience and the main thrust of the museum sjuzet.

In the Pitt Rivers, blue circles surrounding a white I appear in a number of the cases (Fig.6.14). The role of these symbols is that of a *signes de renvoi;* in other words, they act to associate the object to which they are attached to marginalia - to one of the other case texts which sit alongside or within the displays. The visitor is forced out of a structure based upon the linear observation of objects and texts into one based upon marginal references and paratexts. Their progress through the museum is paused upon one particular object, contemplation of its specific features encouraged using a punctuative, paratextual notion to disturb the homogeneous flow.

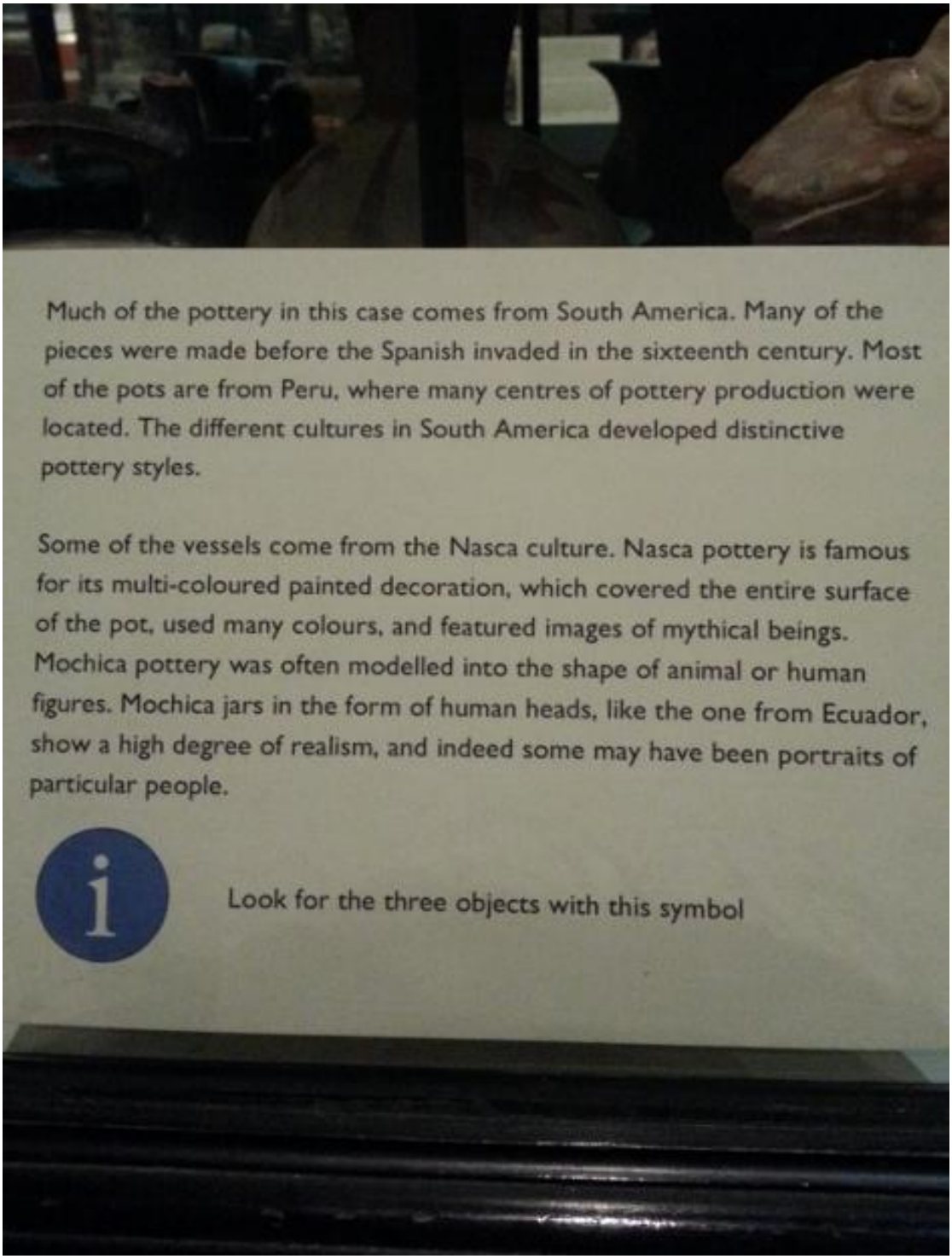

Fig.6.14: *Signes de Renvoi* in the Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

Free Verse and Fragmented Plots: Irregular Temporalities

Once the metrical structure of a poem is set up, it is often expected to continue in a stable fashion.[333] When it does not, it may signal a change, in pace, time frame or topic, for example, and it may also incite a certain level of discomfort and tension between the reader and the text. In the Pitt Rivers and the OUMNH, the highly regularized Great Courts, colonnades and balconies mean that the metrical structure of the building itself does not interfere to any great degree with the sjuzet or visitor experience. The Ashmolean, on the other hand, belies the connotations of balance and symmetry which come with its neoclassical facade. Most rooms in the Mather extension have multiple doorways, and rarely repeat a form or location from floor to floor, thus making the footprint for each level of the Ashmolean unique.

This undermining of rhythmic stability results in a fragmented environment in which the visitor is forced to concentrate to maintain a sense of a united whole. The visitor, in fact, is faced with a number of choices as soon as they enter, for the Atrium immediately provides three options for exploration: straight ahead, into 'Ancient Worlds', up to the right via a neoclassical staircase to the removed realm of Western Art, or left though the ritualistic arcade of 'Greek and Roman Sculpture' towards the Egyptian Galleries. The Ashmolean is a space in which pace is unsteady and in which topical shifts are frequent, and often lack a simple logic. At the back of the 'Textiles' gallery, for instance, a staircase mysteriously counters the thematic and spatial logic to bring the visitor out into an interstitial zone on

[333]Attridge, p.78

the floor above, near the Greece gallery, creating that sense of physical and disorientation so central to the Jentschean form of the uncanny.[334]

Cases can also be used to create a sense of rhythmic and narrative dislocation. The first time visitor to the Ark to Ashmolean gallery might expect to be shown a simple historical sjuzet - but they would be surprised, for here the erratic layout of floor case breaks up any rhythmic logic. Such structures disturb not only sensory and medial stability, but also a strong sense of causality - something which might seem central to a historical gallery. Instead of cause, the episodic layout of the cases here suggests a lack of finality or completion, suggesting that the Ashmolean is no complete, whole being, but an ongoing performance, always fluctuating and open to question.

[334]Ernst Jentsch, 'On the psychology of the uncanny, (1906)', *Angeliki,* 2(1), 7-16, p.8

Fig.6.15: Irregular Metrics. Ark to Ashmolean Gallery, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Like cases, the interpretive media used within museums are frames which may also contribute to the perpetuation or disruption of linear flow. They may do so through visual effect or simply through their placement within a display environment in a manner not dissimilar to the pattern of stress presented within a poem. The original timeline of 'England 400-1600' used huge quantities of irregularly positioned images and pieces of text to undermine the simple, causal narrative which a history gallery might be expected to present through displaying emphasis in a strong and highly irregular fashion, rather like the metrical and rhyming schemes of Sylvia Path's Daddy. Since the initial research, this has been altered, and the gallery's timeline is now much more akin to that of 'Ancient Worlds' and the other galleries.

The interpretive media, however, do not impact only upon movement within the level of the story being told, but also upon that of the visitor's experience. For example, the panels of 'Ancient Near East' and 'India to AD600' are positioned in unexpected locations which interfere with the logical unfurling of visitor progression, disrupting their smooth engagement with the subject and to some extent breaking the museum's theatrical illusion.

As will be explored in a later chapter, 'Manifesting in Time', museum visitors are somewhat picaresque characters, responsible for the creation of their own sjuzet and acts of meaning making. In Barthes' terms, they are writerly beings; 'no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text.'[335] There are places in the Oxford museums in which a lighter narrative touch from the museum maker enables the visitor to act in a more picaresque fashion - in the Pitt Rivers, where they are invited to explore the museum as they like, or the OUMNH, which retains a sense of an open, 'abstract' space in which, in Acland's terms, 'the intelligent learner may take a general survey of a great field of knowledge.'[336] Positioned as such a picaro - a character that can unite the disparate episodes of a fragmentary literary work - the reader is able to reframe any narrative logic, however linear, imposed by the museum and create their own unique dramatic structures.[337] Products of durée and chance, such structures make it clear that any determinedly teleological linear structure is limited; and perhaps, deeply controlling.

[335]Barthes, 1974, 1990, p.4
[336]Henry W. Acland and John Ruskin, *The Oxford Museum,* complete facsimile of 1859 original (London: Euston Grove Press, 2010), p.19
[337]Wicks, p.244

Conclusion

To explore non-singular, non-linear temporal forms is to make various important suggestions for the purpose and operation of a museum. The clashes and upheavals offered by disrupting the arrow can indicate the fictive nature of presented and received perceptual structures, temporal and causal, and can permit an interrogation of - perhaps a rebellion against - the sources of their knowledge and authority. For a museum, this could engender a self-reflexive questioning of the kind of institution it is and wishes to be. Freeing museums from overtly linear, potentially eschatological and causal structures increases the possibility for practical, cultural, and philosophical openness, and acceptance. There is always more than one way through time.

Chapter Seven

Manifesting in Time - Examining the Presence of Things

"Do you not feel," said the Doctor in his very soft but still crisp-edged voice, "that invisible presences have more reality than visible ones? They exert more influence upon us. They make us cry more easily."

Angela Carter, The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr. Hoffman

Temporal art, for its part, is a vision of the instant that envelops presence in its flame and consumes it: an art of presence even though it hacks it to pieces, as in Picasso's work. Presence is not only what we see: Andre Breton speaks of the inner model, meaning the ghost that haunts our nights, that secret presence that is proof of the otherness of the world. Presence is the cipher of the world, the cipher of being. It is also the scare, the trace of the temporal wound: it is the instant, instants. It is meaning pointing to the object designated, an object desired and never quite attained.

Octavio Paz, Alternating Current

Introduction

The presence or absence of any given thing is inherently entangled with its temporal nature, and seems initially such an easy thing to define. It is a definition marked out by spatial and temporal features - something is considered present if it manifests tangibly in the current moment; for something absent, the opposite is true. The precise characteristics of that

presence or absence, however, and the effects they create within their surrounding environment, are complex and many. To understand the temporal nature of museums as fully as possible, these complexities must be explored and analyzed. The ways in which literary thought might apply to questions of presence and absence may not be clear at this initial stage, but if literature and objects of sensory perception are thought of as analogous - both are, after all, physical entities and communicative media - then the similarities become much more apparent. Fundamentally, both are objects of perception which have a present reality but which can evoke times past and yet to come. The complex relationships between the plastic arts and the written word are clearly visible in media where the two combine; visual poetics, for instance, or the comic book. Physical things, and words both spoken and written, are tangible traces bequeathed by the past to the present and suggestive of an expected future existence. Once again, therefore, literary tools and concepts are of use in the exploration of museum temporality. This chapter is divided into two halves, one focusing on the exploration of presence, the other upon absence, each examining the means by which these qualities are generated and perceived, and focusing in particular upon those entities responsible; the museum's manifold authors.

Perceiving Presences

The presence of objects and their surrounding environments is perceived through all the human senses. Each sense connotes a different kind of presence, and the intensity of that presence is dependent both upon the inherent characteristics of the subject of perception and the milieu which surrounds them and their observer. Optical relationships are fundamental, and most immediately apparent in the museum context, but presence may

also be engineered through sound, touch, scent, and taste. Therefore, whilst this section will in large part focus upon the visual, it will also examine how other modes of sensory perception indicate presence.

Generating visual forms of presence relies, in part, upon the inherent characteristics of the object concerned. Dramatic visuality makes a statement, claims for the object a concrete existence in the here and now. Both the Ashmolean and the OUNHM announce themselves with their overt and performative facades, delimiting their positions in the wider physical and social worlds. The solidity of their architectures, and in these cases in particular the connotations of stone and brick, lend a tangible permanency to the institutions. But there is another, more abstract and ineffable effect of their dramatic performativity. The theatricality of the *mise-en-page*, the immediately apprehensible layout of a text, a museum facade, or an entrance such as the spectacular Great Court of the Pitt Rivers, allows such a site to proclaim its own immanence (see Fig.13, Chapter Six). Such *mise-en-page* environments may be seen as akin to visual poetry; a form in which the physical shaping of the verse is as meaningful as the text, and which is thereby able to create an immediacy of experience[338] which can lead, if only for a moment, to the 'exalted attention' of wonder, the heightened intensity of the totalizing present from which all external disturbances and all movements are excluded.[339]

Visual poetry, however, once the *mise-en-page* is broken down into its constituent parts, takes on the successional qualities of all literature; it still has to be read.[340] Similarly, when

[338]Bohn, p.30
[339]Greenblatt, 1991, pp.42, 49
[340]Bohn, p.65

the visitor moves beyond the facade or *mise-en-page* of the museum, they are no longer looking from the outside at an object of intense immanence, but to an environment with temporal extent in which they are immersed, and in which they will encounter other objects which, in various ways, will claim a concentrated, demonstrative existence. These are not singular and solitary, unlike the *mise-en-page,* but parts in a broader, sequential structure. Therefore, whilst for some such as the Haida Totem Pole or the Painted Augustus (Fig.7.1), their colour and size alone would be enough to demonstrate their presence, others are, of necessity, given visual prominence through the relational devices which this structure permits.

Fig.7.1: Colourful Presence. The Painted Augustus in Human Image, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Location and framing are crucial in this regard. Even the already powerful totem pole benefits from its situation directly in the sight line of the entering visitor. Metrically

arranged verse places stress upon certain syllables in its line through their position in a sequence of other syllables, drawing the concentration of the reader towards them and thereby according them prominence. This form of rhythmic arrangement works too in the museum, affording the objects to which it is applied an enhanced ictic presence. These qualities are further heightened when the object is located near the beginning or end of a defined museum space; in the case of the Haida Totem, its final location in the 'line' of the Great Court creates an emphatic rising rhythm, of which it is the culmination.

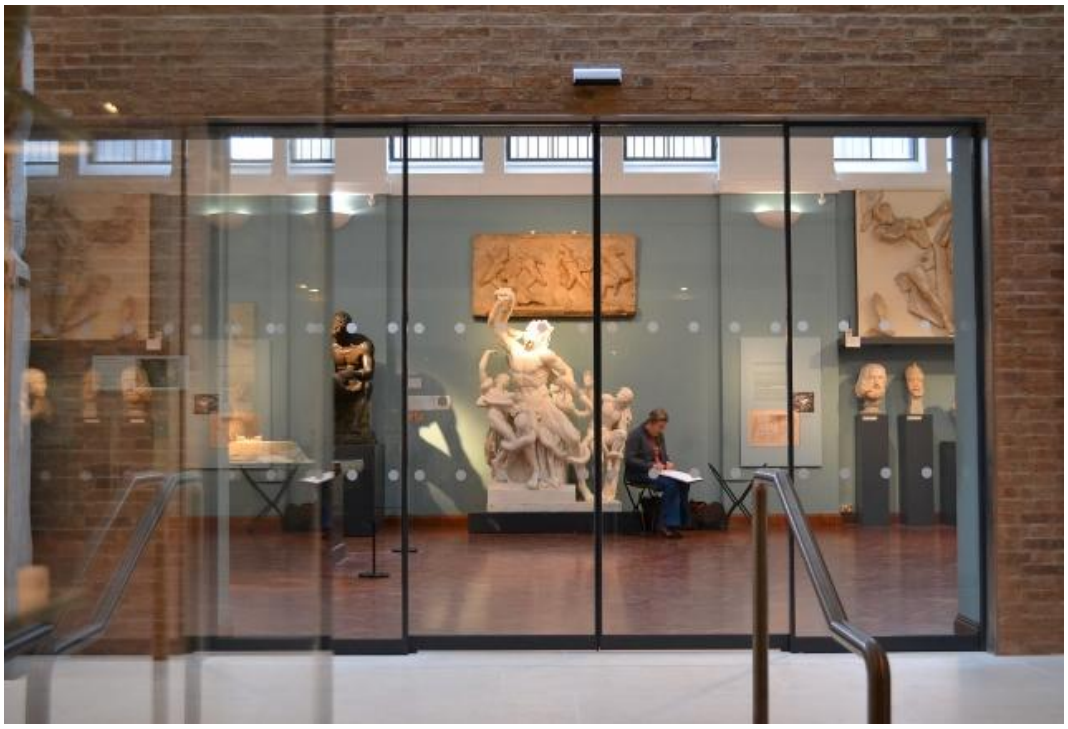

Fig.7.2: Transtextual Laocoön. Pulled into Rome from the Cast Gallery, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The way in which an object is visually framed determines the viewer's prosodic and perspectival relationships to it. Whether or not the object has a role in their current sjuzet - and, if it does, what the nature of that role is - is determined by the devices which bring it into, or distance it from, the experience of the visitor. The cast of the Laocoön housed in the

Cast Gallery is brought into the neighboring gallery of Rome not through physical relocation, but through the steps and glass doors which surround it and direct the eye of the visitor towards it (Fig.7.2). These devices permit a transtextual relationship to arise, in which the visitor to the Rome gallery is made aware of the existence of the Cast Gallery by virtue of the latter's synecdochic presence in the former.

Visual contact is not the only means by which presence may be generated. Constance Classen wrote that 'The culture of touch involves all of culture,'[341] and there has for some time been an increasing concentration in anthropological and museological studies, both practical and theoretical, upon the notion and politics of touch.[342] The importance of this field of study is recognized, but it is not its existing literature that is used in this thesis. Instead, the focus is upon the literary problem of the disjunction between language, and that which it designates, and how this relates to temporality and touch in particular.

Fig.7.3: Making Mandy Present. OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

[341] Constance Classen, 'Fingerprints: Writing About Touch', in *The Book of Touch,* ed. Constance Classen, (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp.1-9

[342] See, for instance, Helen J. Chatterjee, *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling,* (Oxford: Berg, 2008)

When the object or fabric of a building can be touched, the nature of temporal presence takes on a subtly different quality. When the visitor to the OUMNH strokes Mandy the Shetland Pony (Fig.7.3), that contact breaks the representational, symbolic quality of the purely visual image she has hitherto enjoyed. In the museum, the power of touch makes the object, however decontextualized, something which a word, being only an abstract inscription, never can be - much more completely the thing which it designates and represents. Through touch, Mandy becomes a creature whom, though removed from her original lifetime context, continues to have a concrete existence in any given moment.

Vision and touch give concreteness to things in the vicinity of the perceiver, but it is clear that the ways in which they do so are subtly different. Whilst touch confirms the proximity of an object to the entity experiencing it, vision permits the perception of things much further away. Sound, too, permits the apprehension of things distant and unseen. In each of the Oxford Museums, the auditory environments are complex and contingent upon their changing occupants from moment to moment. This notwithstanding, there are clear and definable ways in which the behavior of an auditory environment connotes a sense of presence of and within an experiential milieu; and the Ashmolean exhibits two extreme forms which help to characterize and differentiate its two distinctive halves.

In the echo-filled Mather extension, sound bounces off the Portland stone from each and every angle, emanating from one space and re-emerging in another which need not be spatially contiguous. In this way sound crosses spatial and temporal territories, acknowledging the coterminous presence of other environments and experiences by creating auditory transtextual linkages. Given this audible awareness of other spaces visitors

may experience the exhibition spaces around them in a much more distanced way, the awareness of another place removing them from total, bounded immersion in their own. Mark Z. Danielewski once wrote that echoes were a form of 'acoustic light', for they illuminate space and time. [343]

At the other end of the scale, Western Art reverses this act by lessening the mobility and penetrative potential of sound. The fabric-lined walls and wooden floors soften noise and dampen echoes, and at the same time the far less porous and open architecture lessens the ease with which it can travel. As a result, it is the immediate environment which comes to matter, the presence of the enclosed gallery far more intense and immersive now that external distractions have been obliterated. Thus, by placing constraints upon sound, the Ashmolean creates discrete chronotopic sites; removed spaces within the museum itself, internalized heterotopias whose concentrated presents reify the objects contained within, but at the same time absorb them into an overarching plenum (Fig.7.4).

[343]Mark Z. Danielewski, *House of Leaves,* (London: Doubleday, 2001), p.47

Fig.7.4: A Quiet Space. Western Art, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

All these forms of presencing rely upon an observer to bring them to fruition. They also demand a creative hand to arrange their devices in the first place. The ways in which these creative hands make themselves known within the museum environment is also of interest here; their historic location in regard to the museum and its visitors and the nature of their activity of distinct, direct importance upon the temporal character of any museum.

Perspectives: Authorial, Narratorial, and Focalizing Presences

The study of literature has long explored the complex ontologies of its creators, especially in terms of their presence in a text. There are at least two forces at work in the production of any literary piece - the author and the reader. Roland Barthes, in S/Z, claimed that the literary establishment unnecessarily 'divorced' these two forces, reducing the activity of the reader.[344] He suggested that the reader - who finds an indirect analogue in the museum visitor - should not be considered a passive participant in the performance of the work, and the same is true for the visitor. In the same book he wrote of the 'writerly text' - that is, a text which readers interpret and manipulate in their own way, turning that which is written on the page into something personally meaningful.[345] Similarly, it should be remembered that the visitor to any museum, however manipulative its mode of display, always retains some writerly hermeneutic control. The visitor experience is so diverse and complex that to attempt to explain or even to explore its modes of presencing here would be presumptuous. So it is to those who occupy a more traditionally authorial position that this chapter turns - to the curators and designers, to the collectors, past and present, and to the more abstract entity of the institution itself. How do these beings present themselves within the museum spaces concerned, how do they interact with the sjuzet, with the visitor, and with each other, and what can literary tools offer to help illuminate this?

Authorial voices make themselves known in ways both demonstrative and restrained. In a museum, as in a novel or poem, the most overt method of designating authorship is to append a name to it. Both the Ashmolean and the Pitt Rivers carry such names, and in the

[344]Barthes, 1974, p.4
[345]Ibid.

case of the latter, the General whose collection founded the museum has a distinct presence within it. On the Upper Gallery lies the display of weaponry, in which he had an especial interest, and in the section on firearms his presence is once again accentuated by a small corner case in which his photograph and his interest in this form in particular are prominently displayed (Fig.7.5). Along with this, the historic character of the displays and the traces of his evolutionary arrangements which remain as well as the dominant objects of interest to him - the boats and paddles in particular - contribute to a sense that his hand still has a heavy presence within the modern institution. The same cannot be said for Elias Ashmole or the Tradescants, who gave their names and collections respectively to the Ashmolean.[346]

[346]Brown, pp.5-7

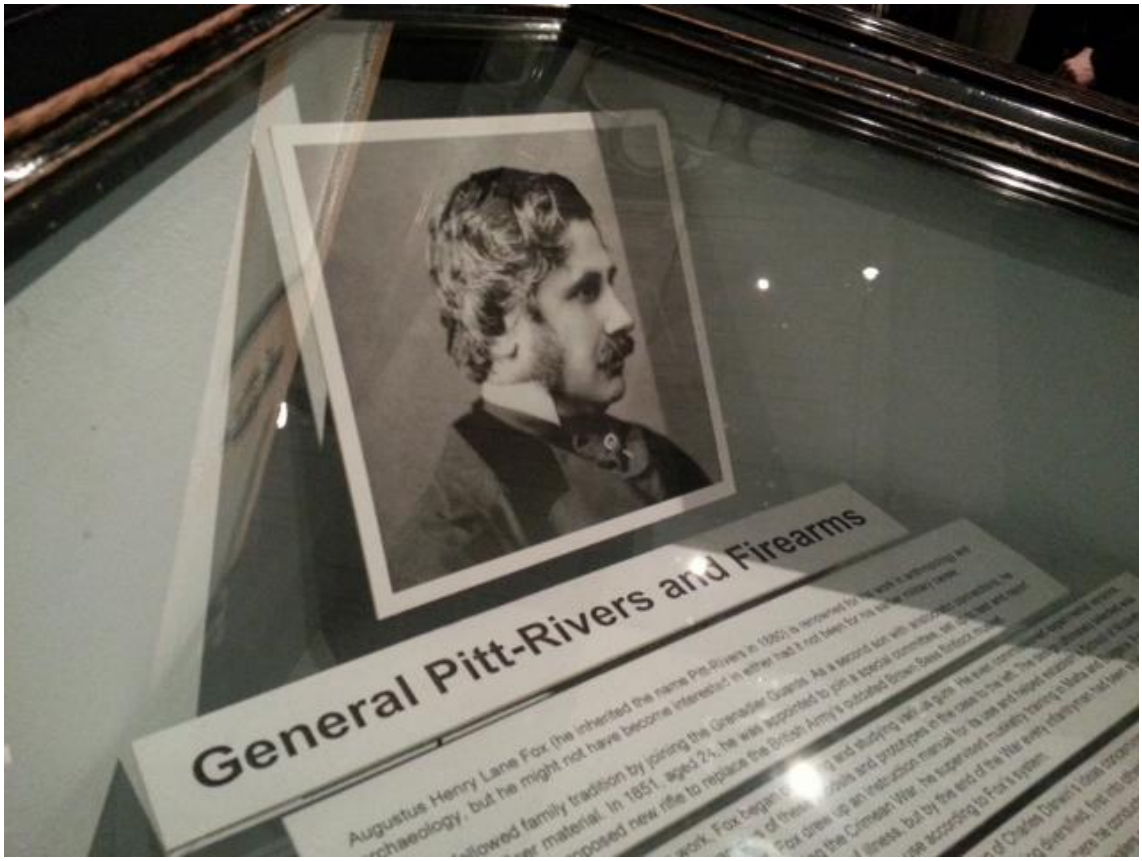

Fig.7.5: The Presence of the General. Pitt Rivers and His Weaponry. Photograph the Author.

A museum, which must continually change if it is to survive, is consistently undergoing revision and re-inscription by many authorial hands. Throughout their histories, all three of the Oxford Museums have continued to acquire objects, change their ideas about those objects and reconsider their own functions as museums, and thus have regularly needed to redisplay their ever-growing collections. Despite its seeming immutability the Pitt Rivers contains the most evidence for the palimpsestual nature of authorial activity. Whilst the Ashmolean's redisplay has entailed a sweeping away of the old displays, the Pitt Rivers' has involved their enhancement, thus allowing the history of the museum a continual role in the present. It has always operated in such a way. Many of its displayed objects have retained the original tags appended to them when they first entered the museum. The various

curatorial hands and eras are thus present throughout the museum as a whole, showing overtly how - and by whom - the space and collection has been continually re-inscribed. This comes most obviously to the fore in the case of object re-inscriptions - that is, when an object has been identified and labeled in one way, and has subsequently been newly understood, yet has kept both its old and new labels - as has happened with the Umtali Knives displayed on the Upper Gallery (Fig.7.6).

Fig.7.6: Things Re-Written. Umtali Knives and Two Labels. Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

Typically, however, these later authors are far more anonymous in the Pitt Rivers. This is particularly true of the contemporary members of staff - at least in the permanent display. Aside from Jeremy Coote, these vital creative individuals are known to exist mainly through the indirect evidence of their activity: the object movement labels and other operational detritus which litters the museum. They also gain some implied prominence through the displays in which the museum reflects upon its own identity - the display detailing the

Rethinking Pitt Rivers project, for instance, is overtly indicative of the research that goes on behind the scenes and, thus, the individuals who must perform it (Fig.7.7). But few of these individual are ever identified. Other than Coote, it is only the artists, who come from outside the museum, who are permitted a name and a strong individual identity within the display space. Everyone else is thus overwhelmed by the dominant voice of 'The Pitt Rivers Museum'.

Fig.7.7: Looking Inside the Pitt Rivers Museum. 'Re-thinking the Pitt Rivers' Project Cases. Photograph the Author.

Diverse authors need not be named, however, but can be made visible and present within the display space through their stylistic character. Most of the new displays in the Ashmolean, though selected and arranged by their relevant specialist curators, are cohesive in overall tone and style and largely indistinguishable from each other. At the time of the initial fieldwork, however, there were two galleries which were highly distinctive: 'England 400 – 1600' and 'European Ceramics'. Both contained forms of presentation which ran

counter to the typical 'Mather' style; in the England gallery the eye taxing graphics were so much more busy and colourful than their counterparts elsewhere, and in European Ceramics the closely packed density of objects came as a shock after the comparative minimalism of the surrounding gallery spaces (Fig.7.8). David Berry and Timothy Wilson, their respective 'authors', each had positions within the Ashmolean which might go some way to explaining this disparity. Berry was brought in temporarily to see the England gallery through to completion and so didn't have the same institutional investment as more permanent members of staff, and Wilson, Head of Western Art, came from a display tradition quite distinct from that which pervades the rest of the new extension.[347] It is worth noting that, whilst the European Ceramics displays have remained the same, 'England 400-1600' has seen significant alteration. On returning to the Ashmolean in November 2012, the author discovered that the graphics had been altered and the room rearranged so as to conform with the other galleries in the Mather extension. In this there is evidence of the mutable authorial voices of an institution, and the historically proximal changes which rewrite museum spaces and thereby create historical elisions.

[347]This information was taken from a lecture given by David Berry detailing his work on the 29th July 2009, and from observation of the Western Art team during the author's MA work experience placement in the same year.

Fig.7.8 Identifiable Authorship. Galleries with Personality in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Rather than 'authorship' in the sense of a named and identifiable individual, those who study the identities which present themselves in literary texts often focus on the narrator, or the narrative voice.[348] They examine how they present themselves in relation to the text concerned, whether in the first, second or third person, singular or plural, and whether heterodiegetically distanced or homodiegetically immersed in the story concerned. As the medium by means of which the reader relates to the contents of the text, the voice is a vital component in the realization of the textual timescape. In the museum it is no different; narrators and, as shall become clear, focalisors, are as equally critical here as they are in a novel or poem.

[348]Porter-Abbott, p.64

Fig.7.9: The 'We' of the Museum. Ashmolean Welcome Panel. Photograph the Author.

In the Ashmolean's Orientation and Welcome Gallery, Ancient Worlds, the most common personal pronoun to be used is the collective and plural 'we' (Fig.7.9).

This use of ‘we’ has an interesting effect in terms of the institution's presence within the experience of the visitor. Through it those who created the institution are ambient presences throughout the visit, the self-announcement defining the institution as a collection of creative individuals. Foregrounding authorship in this way is highly self-conscious and, like meta-fiction, draws attention to the status of the museum environment

as artifact.[349] This act is one which makes immediately present the museum-as-thing, its displays an externalized sjuzet to be looked at rather than a complete, extensive fabula in which the visitor can be totally, and uncritically, immersed.

The lack of personal pronouns has a very different effect. The Pitt Rivers Museum's gallery texts already tend toward a heterodiegetic style of narration, which positions the museum at a distinct remove from the content it is trying to express. This is heightened by the lack of personal pronouns, and the use of proper nouns to distinguish 'The Staff' from 'The Museum.' Instead of the personal 'we' which integrates the Ashmolean museum and its staff into a singular and collective identity, the Pitt Rivers museum becomes a character in its own right, distinct from its Staff; and both are distanced from, and independent of, the content they relate and the visitor to whom they relate it.

> The Museum's displays recall museums at the time of its founding in 1884, when General Pitt Rivers gave his personal collection to the University of Oxford. Staff have chosen to keep the Museum's historic appearance because it represents an important moment in museum history, but they also actively research and add to the collections.

There is a distinct difference in the use of the collective personal pronoun between the Pitt Rivers and the Ashmolean. Whilst the 'we' of the Ashmolean is a declamatory marking out of identities in a way which separates the visitor as interpreter and 'writer' from the

[349]Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction,* (London: Routledge, 1984), p.2

institution and its staff, in the Pitt Rivers the use of 'us' unites the staff and visitors of the museum, distinguishing them both from the institution.

This is one factor which enables the Pitt Rivers to enfold and immerse its visitors in the space, for it allows those visitors to occupy a position similar to that of the staff. Here it is the visitor who is, ostensibly, in control - a fact enhanced by the use of the second person in the case texts; 'Explore the Museum as *you* like', reads the Welcome panel. It is, then, the visitor and their activity within the space which determines the nature of their experience, they who shape their own unique sjuzet. This is the case with any museum but, in being ostensibly plotless, the Pitt Rivers museum foregrounds the visitors' creative role, deliberately placing them within an as yet untold narrative - their own experiential sjuzet - in which they are an unusually active picaro.

The notion of the focalisor, as employed by Porter-Abbot, is also useful to describing and distinguishing between the different creative entities which are made present within a museum. In Porter-Abbot's terms, the focalisor is the conscious position through which the events within a literary sjuzet are framed and viewed.[350] This may be: the narrator - if the text is written in the first person; another character - if the text is written in the third person; or the reader - if it is written in the second. In a sense the text and the museum are products of their focalisors - any inherent characteristics always coloured and manipulated by the lenses trained upon them. Many focalisors are present throughout the Ashmolean, all enabling the visitor to gain a different perspective - often very temporally distinctive - upon the collected objects and the institution as a whole. Individuals historically associated

[350]Porter-Abbott, p.66

with the collections are often used not merely to contextualize the history of objects, but also the history of the discipline through which they are examined. Thus, in European Prehistory, Sir John Evans is represented in textual form and through his cases, arrangements, objects and tools of collection - becomes the focalisor not only for that evocative display, but also of the history of collecting and the development of archaeology as a discipline (Fig.7.10).

Fig.7.10: Focalising Figures. The John Evans Displays in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Although it is historic characters who dominate, there are some more contemporary museum workers who make themselves apparent. In the 'Conservation' galleries in the Ashmolean's basement, the role of the conservator past and present is used to shed new light upon the objects - which are seen less as items of display than things to be protected and rebuilt - but upon the activities which occur day to day within the museum's back of house areas (Fig.7.11). In these galleries there is also a further perspectival complication; through an interactive mockup of a conservator's table, the visitor is able to place

themselves, homodiegetically, in this focalising position which is so different from their own. Communication between coterminous sjuzets is thus enabled; the visitor made more than ever aware that beyond the display lies another active landscape which is, in part, responsible for the character of that display.

Fig.7.11: The Roles of Others. Conservators in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Throughout the Oxford Museums many perspectives make themselves present, whether overtly or with more subtlety, and each contributes to the museum's continually renewed realization. It is worth returning to Barthes at this juncture, for his work offers a concept which this more fluid world could put to good use. In 'The Death of the Author' he posited the notion of the 'scriptor', an entity identified and born with the creation and reading of a text, and in existence only for those periods of activity.[351] It is a notion valuable to the museum, for it might enable those who create exhibitions and displays to have a more individual, overt and personalized voice within the museum space, and a much more mutable and nuanced role, distinct from that of the dominant, and often singularizing, museum voice.

Presencing Atmosphere

There are certain environments which, through a combination of intense factors, are given a weighty and singular character. These are spaces in which the atmospheres are so resonant that they take on an almost tangible presence. Atmosphere is a concept fundamental to aesthetic discourse, yet all too often it can be dismissed as something ontologically indeterminate and hazy, and thus beyond rational explanation.[352] For Gernot Böhme, however, there is something far more concrete about the concept,

> atmospheres are neither something objective, that is, qualities possessed by things, and yet they are something thinglike, belonging to the thing in that things articulate their presence through qualities - conceived as ecstasies. Nor are atmospheres

[351]Barthes, 1977, pp.145

[352]Gernot Böhme, 'Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics', *Thesis Eleven,* 36, 1993, 113-126, pp.113-114

> something subjective, for example, determinations of a psychic state. And yet they are subjectlike, belong to subjects in that they are sensed in bodily presence by human beings and this sensing is at the same time a bodily state of being of subjects in space.[353]

In this definition, atmospheres are interpretable by means both subjective and more materially evidenced. Devices of literary creation and interpretation have to withstand such apparently incompatible uses; thus they, and their associated concepts, will be put to good use in the discussion below. The atmospheres of resonant presence upon which they shall be used come in a number of forms. Ruins and reconstructions - which might be termed 'sites of memory' - are one form, and figurative, immersive, and chronotopically performative sites - 'sites of rhetoric' - another.[354]

'Ruins,' writes Edensor, 'are sites which have not been exorcised, where the supposedly over-and-done remains.'[355] A quality of the ruin - and indeed of the recollective reconstruction - is its ability to represent, to different degrees of completion, fragments of the past as constituent elements of the present. The 'ruined' nature of the decontextualized museum object has long been understood, and it is not the focus here, but it is worth remarking that the above quality of the ruin may quite legitimately be applied to any object, and any museum in which such objects reside. Here, however, it is to the more deliberate

[353]Ibid., p.122

[354]The phrase 'sites of rhetoric' is one constructed independently by the author – however, it finds a counterpart in the 'rhetorical locations' and 'rhetorical landscapes' of Elizabeth Weiser and Greg Clark. Weiser, p.33

[355]Tim Edensor, 'The ghosts of industrial ruins: ordering and disordering memory in excessive space' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 23, 2005, 829-849, p.829

and illustrative evocation of the ruin and its counterpart the reconstruction upon which attention is focused.

In the Ashmolean, the concept of the ruin is appropriate in the partial reconstruction of a room in the Knossos Palace. Composed of actual fragments augmented by visibly artistic representation of lost elements of the original building, it is part ruin, part poetic reconstruction of a ruin, used to evoke a lost complete environment and its current degraded status. It is pertinent to note that Arthur Evans, who excavated much of the Ashmolean's holdings from Knossos, rather controversially sought to reconstruct the lost architecture of the palace itself: it is difficult to judge how much of this reconstruction is evidenced, and how much based on his imagination.[356] The reconstruction in the Ashmolean, which is visibly partial and imaginative, takes on a different cast in light of this information (Fig.7.12). Like *The Waste Land,* T. S. Eliot's highly allusive modernist masterpiece, it uses quotation and imitation to turn itself and the room around it into a collage of past and present. But its current materiality also allows it to perform a meta-fictional announcement. By foregrounding its own piecemeal corporeality, it highlights its status as object as well as interpretive decoration or display media. Thus its presence is dualistic, for it leaves enough information to enable the visitor to perform imaginative closure, to build a lost palace and world around the synechdochic fragments that remain, whilst also allowing those fragments to be understood as objects, tangibly present and complete in their own right.

[356]A.C. Brown, *Arthur Evans and the Palace of Minos,* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum Publications, 1983), p.12. Comment on this information is to be found on the panels that surround the Knossos Palace reconstruction in the 'Aegean World' gallery.

Fig.7.12: The Palace of Minos. Partial Reconstructions in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Ruins are mediated throughout the Ashmolean in ways which, whilst still giving them presence in the space, further foreground their strange and fictive qualities. Again the notion of the frame is a pertinent device for exploring the status of the ruins displayed in the Ashmolean through the slide-shows of the Ancient Worlds gallery and in the even more visibly mediated painting - which is of course an object of display in its own right. Lyotard noted that it is not only the site depicted which is made present by the painting, but the very act of painting in its own right.

> The whole space of exhibition becomes the remains of a time; all the places, here, indices for other, past, times, the olden days; the look, now, of the looker, the visitor, on the paint makes it into the sign of the paint it was, in its position of pose

> and the beginning of the work, at the moment of the *opus's* operation...The exhibition, says J-L. Deotte, submerges every position.[357]

Both paint and photograph permit that which is not materially present to have, if nothing else, an existence in the minds of the observing visitors, thus collapsing distances of space and time. In the photographic slides, the reader is invited to imagine a coterminous locale with a shared temporal but divergent geographical present. However, the painting of the ruin, such as the landscapes of Canaletto on display in the Britain and Italy gallery has, because of the less realistic nature of the images the medium of paint produces, a heightened fictivity about it (Fig.7.13). Particularly in the eighteenth century, the picturesque ruin featured strongly in the cultural imagination as an aspect of the sublime.[358] The romanticism which surrounded the ruin at this time means that these images can never be deemed entirely accurate; the ruin becoming a poetic thing to manipulate and metaphorically enhance.

[357]Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time,* trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p.145

[358]William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to which is added a poem, on Landscape Painting,* (London: R. Blamire, 1794), p.7

Fig.7.13: Picturesque Canaletto. Britain and Italy, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The ruin and the reconstruction can themselves be used to enhance the environment around them. Other than the Tea House, the most physically complete reconstructions are to be found in Western Art. Two are of particular interest, as they share certain qualities but also differ quite markedly. These are the 'Mallett Gallery' - also known more generically as 'European Art' - and the Georgian Dining Table displayed in the 'European Ceramics' gallery. Both use objects in specific arrangements to reproduce historic environments. Both are synechdochic, in that they use evocative components of their original environments to stand for those environments *in totalis.* Like the ruin, these recreated environments give present tangibility to the objects and spaces of the past. The significant difference between

the two is marked by framing and the readerly distancing this framing creates. In the 'Mallett Gallery' the reconstruction is immersive; the visitor is enveloped in deep red damask and aristocratic domesticity, the paintings and sculpture which would elsewhere be the focus becoming, instead, constituent parts of an overwhelming chronotope of stately grandeur (Fig.7.14). The frame, here, encloses both contents and visitor - the object of observation, it might be said, is the frame and its constituent parts.

Fig.7.14: Stately Grandeur. Mallett Gallery, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The Georgian Dining Table, on the other hand, however complete its layout and however it might represent traces of opulent domesticity, is deeply affected by its encasement (Fig.7.15). Given a heightened ictic presence through objectification in a glass case, it is at once made demonstrably visually powerful, less ambient than the decor of the Mallett Gallery, but also much more haptically and spatially distanced. Rather than the complete

immersive environment, this is a visible quotation, a collage piece of a past world superimposed upon the visitor's present but quite clearly independent from it. This is a truly synechdochic act, for the visitor is invited by the appearance of the table to fill in the rest of the room which would have existed around it in its original setting. Even a single object or group of objects can perform in this evocative way; as has been shown, the lekythoi in the Greece gallery are arranged as they would have been at a burial and are able thereby to conjure up an image, however generic, of the funereal environments of the ancient world.

Fig.7.15: Synechdochic Feast. A Georgian Dining Table, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The synecdochic substitution of part for whole is not the only figure of speech which can be appropriated to describe reconstructed forms. Metonymy, in which something is made to stand for a closely related object, is also at work. In the Rome gallery, vertical floor cases evoke corridors surrounding an enclosed inner space, in which those floor cases become walls, the tabletop cases and benches which fill it with the furniture of an ancient domus. The objects on display enhance this; small items of jewelry and cooking equipment.

Enclosure and evocative techniques are crucial for the creation of a powerfully present atmosphere. When the environment created is particularly chronotopically iconic, its power is most apparent. By means of metaphor, quotation, framing and plotting, literary authors and museum makers can create environments of acute presence, rhetorical sites containing the thickened space and time which characterizes the chronotope.[359]

Fig.7.16: Metaphoric Facades. Ashmolean and OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

[359]Bakhtin, 1981, p.84

Chronotopic sites exhibit certain surface metaphors and stylistic features which associate them with particular forms. These are visibly present in the Ashmolean and the OUNHM; both institutions use their facades and interior decorative features to connote the sacral sites of the classical temple and the Gothic cathedral.

The Ashmolean also uses stylistic features, narrative forms and rhythmic structures to create another closely associated chronotope; the art gallery. There have, historically been two main stylistic versions; the demonstrative decorative space of the nineteenth century, which foregrounded the framing environment as much as the objects, and that of the mid twentieth century which sought deliberately to elide decorative language.[360] The disparity between these forms indicates that it is not merely style upon which the chronotope relies, but also the connotations which arise from its contents and their arrangements. Both are apparent in the Ashmolean's Western Art galleries, and it is useful to compare 'Britain and Italy' with 'Modern Art' as examples of these two forms of the chronotope. The toplighting, rich red damask walls, wooden floors and heavy gilt frames of the former are typical of the nineteenth century installation, which emphasized not the individual pieces but the story of art in which they were implicated. In 'Modern Art' however, the white, seemingly undemonstrative walls accentuate the paintings and sculptures, the visitor invited into close proximity with the discrete objects. The abstract but pervasive environment of the Romantic lyric poem is swapped for the detail of the imagist piece; the broad immersion and distanced objects of the Britain and Italy gallery distilled to the acute, penetrating

[360]Germano Celant, 'A Visual Machine: Art installation and its modern archetypes.' In *Thinking About Exhibitions,* Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp.371-386, p.374, p.377

contemplation of a single specific thing. Both distancing and proximity have a similar effect, however; according the object concerned a special, reified status.

The function of plotting is to manipulate socially conventional temporal movement into affective artistic forms; the sjuzet for the museum environment, therefore, is fundamental in shaping its atmospheric qualities. Throughout 'Forms of time and the chronotope in the Novel,' Mikhail Bakhtin notes the importance of plotted structures in the realization of textual genre.[361] This is certainly also visible in the museum - in chapters five and six the relationship between the topical content of a museum and its plotted structure was intimated even where no clear narrative was articulated. Certain of those sjuzet forms, however, can be used to enhance environmental presence.

Firstly, there are those sjuzet forms which disengage from the historical chronology of the social world by entirely lacking reference to its calendric progression. The 'Greek and Roman Sculpture' gallery in the Ashmolean is just such a site, for lacks internal movement, is arranged without a progressive narrative in a way which intensifies its character as a bastion of an eternal, static Now. Excessive internal movement, however, can also generate an intense, if disorienting, atmosphere. The temporal copresence which characterizes *In Search of Lost Time* was a result of Proust's disordering manipulation of tense. A similar intensity characterizes the Great Court of the Pitt Rivers, in which objects from across history and geography are brought together in a picaresque arrangement based upon type rather than chronology, brought into a sequence only by the action of the visitor. Here, the continuous

[361]Bakhtin, 1981, pp.84-258

present of history, with its constantly fading atmosphere, is replaced with the palpable, extended Now of human culture.

In *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative,* Porter Abbot emphasized the importance of a plot's boundaries.[362] In texts, short forms such as the haiku or imagist poem are given intensity because their outer boundaries are so visible. In the small, enclosed spaces of the Dutch Still Lives and Pre-Raphaelites galleries of the Ashmolean's Western Art wing, the visitor is enveloped into a heterotopia that the outside world cannot penetrate, their focus forced upon the topic which saturates the environment. It is in such spaces that presence is felt in a thickened, powerful fashion.

Perceiving Absences

The temporal museum, however, is comprised not only of presence, but of absence. In any work of literature some amount of elision is involved in terms of plotted events in in terms of the disparity between the text as written and the objects it represent. It is the task of the final part of this chapter to explore those absences and the role they play in generating the character of museum temporality.

In *Of Grammatology,* Derrida suggested that the written word can never be more than a shade; that writing was perhaps the most abstracted of the devices by which humanity represented the flickering shadows and reflections visible in the dim light of Plato's Cave.[363] He was not the first to do so - indeed, Plato had himself dealt with this very issue in a dialogue roughly contemporary with the *Republic; Cratylus.* In this piece, the central

[362]Porter-Abbott, 'Chapter 3: The borders of narrative', pp.25-35
[363]Derrida, 1976, p.18

problem encountered by Socrates and his interlocutors is the relationship between language and things. After discussion, Socrates addresses Cratylus, who believes in the truth of names, thus,

> *Soc.* But let us see, Cratylus, whether we cannot find a meeting point, for you would admit that the name is not the same with the thing named?
>
> *Crat.* I should.
>
> *Soc.* And would you further acknowledge that the name is an imitation of the thing?
>
> *Crat.* Certainly.
>
> *Soc.* And you would say that pictures are also imitations of things, but in another way?
>
> *Crat.* Yes.[364]

In the very presence of museum objects such absences can be perceived. Their material existence in the present connotes former situations and states of being which only ever hand limited temporal extent, and which have been lost in the progression of entropy; this entropy most overtly apparent in the objects which physically evidence its deleterious effects, such as the cloth panel in the Ashmolean's 'Conservation' galleries which becomes dirtier with every visitor's passing touch.

[364]Plato, 'Cratylus', in *The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. 3: Timeaus & Other Dialogues*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, (London: Sphere Books Limited, 1970), pp.181-182, l.430a-430b

The use of exhibition media is also critical in the perception of absence in regard to objects. Cases are crucial. In Ark to Ashmolean and European Prehistory, objects and ideas are couched in the material equivalent of antiquated words - aged cases - and thus seem automatically more obsolete and removed. Displayed in older, wooden cases, the objects in the John Evans display in the latter gallery seem to belong to an earlier iteration of the museum, lately swept away in the recent redevelopment. Cases are not the only means, however, by which such distancing of objects occurs. Though light intensifies an object, giving it an ictic quality, it can also, arguably, absent it from the space by reifying and aestheticizing it.

The presentational form of an object is fundamental to the precise tone and intensity of absence which they indicate. The specimens of the OUNHM which ostensibly display life, also clearly demonstrate its absence in a variety of ways. Some specimens are displayed in static pickling blocks, others in mimetic displays of their former environments and actions (Fig.7.17).

Fig.7.17: Displaying Life's Absence. Displays in the OUMNH. Photographs the Author.

The pickling block presents the absence of life through its overt mummification of the specimen, which makes no reference to the previous existence of the creature. The taxidermied birds, however, which are housed on the upper gallery, use a limited form of mimesis to recall their former state. This intertextual allusion, in which the past existence of the birds is understood as the prior text for their existence in the museum, loosens them from the concrete present but cannot, of course, return them to the past. They can never therefore, be entirely present in either historic space, and will always remain incomplete. Transtextual references, then, force objects to acknowledge the absences which surround them.

Conversely, however, transtextual references and paratexts can also be used to affect a presence for objects physically absent from a space. In 'The Centre of the Story,' Lydia Davis writes of a woman who writes a story which exists only in the allusions Davies makes to it in her own text.[365] The woman's story is absent from the actual text, and exists only because of this paratextual commentary. Similarly, the objects missing from the Pitt Rivers' Captain Cook displays become partially present by virtue of the object movement labels that replace them. Objects which are missing and unreferenced simply do not matter - effectively, they do not exist. The paradox of absence is that it only matters when it is made visible - when it is made present.

[365]Lydia Davis, *The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis,* (London: Penguin, 2009), p.173-177

Re-Mediations

Of all the means by which absence may be made present, the act of re-mediation - that is, the new presentation of an object or idea in a media other than that of its original incarnation - is the most complex and varied in its form, and can have highly significant consequences. The peculiarity of a re-mediation stems from the disjuncture between words and things, a disjoint outlined not just in literature, but in material culture studies. 'Objects,' wrote Sue Pearce, 'like words and bodies, are not 'themselves', but symbols of themselves...'[366] Literary thought does not merely underlie and illuminate this disjunction; it can also be used to analyze its structures, functions and consequences in each specific re-mediation. Below, transtextuality, anachrony, and prosody will be applied to the study of two re-mediation forms - photography and the digital interactive - and then to specific consideration of the Oxford Dodo; an icon produced by a diverse and intricate web of re-mediations. It should be noted that there are a vast array of sources in existence regarding the nature and theory of photography, from the early days of the medium,[367] through the middle of the twentieth century with Roland Barthes and others,[368] and becoming incorporated into the museological discourse by theorists such as Elizabeth Edwards.[369] Increasingly, digital media is seeing similar levels of analysis and interpretation – Urry's *Global Complexity* is one sociological example[370] – and it is also becoming important in

[366]Susan M. Pearce, 'Forward: Words and Things' pp.1-10 in, *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World,* ed. Susan M. Pearce, (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p .10
[367]Benjamin
[368]Barthes, 2000
[369]Elizabeth Edwards, Photographs and History: Emotion and Materiality', in *Museum Materialities,* ed. Sandra Dudley, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp.21-38
[370]Urry, 2003

museological circles as the subject of Digital Heritage begins to take off.[371] As with the discussion of Mandy and touch (p.206-207), it is not this literature which forms the basis for this analysis, but literary theory, in the hope that this will extend the value of the literary model, but also contribute new concepts and terminology to those existing fields of cultural study.

Photographs occupy an ambiguous position between representational form and object in their own right. As Elizabeth Edwards has noted, the former status seems to have been obscured, the materiality and emotive power of the image encouraging its use as a synecdoche for the object it represents.[372] However, it is crucial to acknowledge their representational status if their temporal function is to be fully acknowledged. As objects, photographs can only occupy the same temporal status as other, non-representative material artifacts. It is only when they are viewed as representations, as re-mediations of another thing that, as Lyotard said, photographs 'make us see tensorial stances'.[373] The means by which they do this are diverse, and here, literary concepts can be put to good use.

[371]Texts include Ross Parry, *Recoding the Museum: Digital Heritage and the Technologies of Change,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine, eds., *Theorizing digital cultural heritage: A critical discourse,* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2007), and annual conferences such as 'Museums and the Web' attest to the increasing critical discourse surrounding this more recent aspect of cultural life.
[372]Edwards, p.26
[373]Lyotard, 1991, p.132

Photographs are always temporally transtextual; they always bring a moment, an event, from some other time and place, and resituate it within the sjuzet of the present. In the Pitt Rivers, photographs take on three transtextual roles. All are intertextual, in that they make present a previous time - a previous sjuzet - in the current one, in a manner not dissimilar to that of a quote. The intertextual relationship is one way, however; there is no given evidence that the current museum sjuzet is similarly reflected in the quoted world. That world is previous to this, is lost; that loss made present in its fragmentary products, the photographs which can never be more than a symbolic snapshot of what used to be.

Fig.7.18: Emphatic Musealization. A Tibetan Apron, Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

Photographs may also be used as paratexts, to contextualize an encased museum object within its previous realm of existence. In the Asia case in the Pitt Rivers' Great Court, an image of a Tibetan lady shows how an apron displayed nearby would have been worn when in use (Fig.7.18). Giving this context to the apron prevents it from belonging only to the

present, to which the purely material object is bound. Paratexts like this show the pervasive loss which occurs within entropic time; the continual game of resymbolisation which objects and people both play, and which involves the absence of former identities as much as it does the formation of new ones. That apron is no longer a used item of dress, but a symbol for it. The paratextual photograph emphasizes how the musealised object becomes a symbol; becomes, in effect, a word – something which can never be that which it represents.

A photograph can also be hypertextual, for it can unite one museum situation with a previous state of affairs within the same physical site. Photographs which show the Pitt Rivers in previous times, such as those in the Welcome case or the New Projects cases on the Upper Gallery perform precisely this function, uniting the hypertext of the current museum with the hypotext of its former self upon which it is, as Genette put it, 'grafted'.[374] This relationship presents the temporal extent of the Museum; that it had an existence in the past that has continued in some form into the present. But because the hypertextual link leaps over and elides the intervening period, changes in form and the instability of institutional identity are also more clearly marked. The anachrony of elision allows the hypertextual link to exist - but also questions the precise nature of the relationship between the things that it conjoins.

The photograph's portrayal of absence does not rely purely upon the use to which it is put, but also upon its own intrinsic material qualities. The wear of a photograph, its use of colour

[374]Genette, 1997a, p.5

and the arrangement of its contents can represent emptiness and loss to varied degrees. All of these qualities, and their various effects, can be analyzed by literary means.

The Pitt Rivers contains both black and white and colour photographs. Each form has different temporal qualities which affect the perception of both the photograph and the space around and within it. Black and white photographs, such as that of Utse-tah-wha-ti-an-ka in the Pitt Rivers, suggest distance and absence far more so that do colour images for two main reasons (Fig.7.19). The first reason is that of style; because it is associated with the earliest days of the media, like an archaic word in a text, the monochrome image suggests an origin point in a time now far past. Though this is appropriate in the case of Utse-tah-wha-ti-an-ka, it is not true for all black and white photographs, which are still created today. Their connotations, however, lend them a historic, aged atmosphere, no matter how recently they might have been taken. Connotation alone is not enough to explain the temporal oddities of the monochrome image; nor does it illuminate with enough nuance their ability to evoke absence.

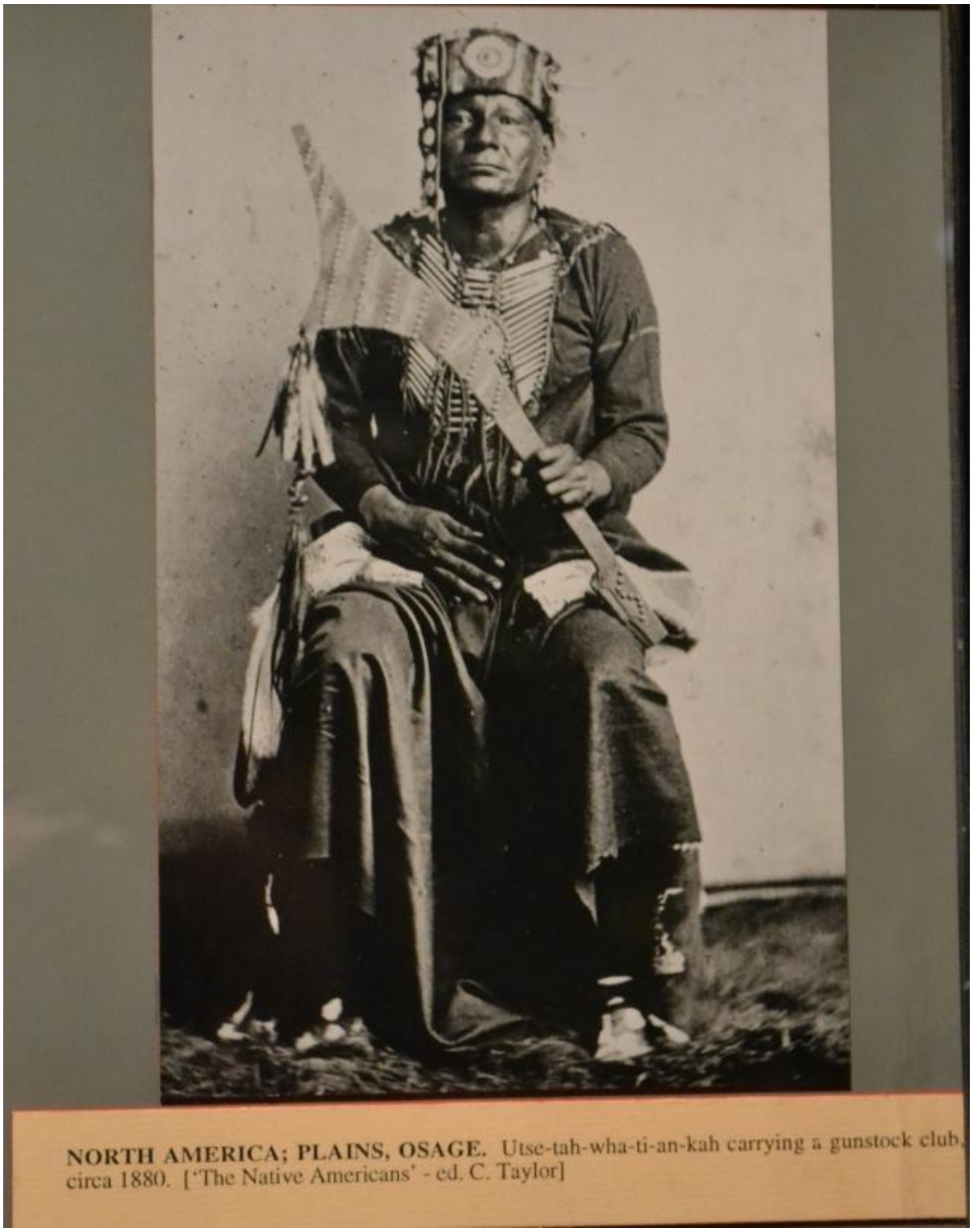

Fig.7.19: An Absent Ruler. Utse-tah-wha-ti-an-kah in the Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

There is a more solid and objective way by means of which a black and white image implies loss and distance. The monochrome photograph can represent shape, form, expression and movement and even, to some degree, shade and light. But human beings perceive reality in colour; and the image without colour breaks the synecdochic illusion and shows the photograph as the representative symbol it is. They are appealing and theatrical precisely because they indicate their own fictivity, and the visibility of their frame also permits them to become an evocative object in their own right.

The colour photograph seems to bring its contents nearer to the present by more closely approximating that perceived reality. The objects within them seem less fictional than their monochrome counterparts, more vibrant and alive, just as a text which mimics real speech.

But the colour photograph is deceptive. Less honest about its own mediated nature, it becomes, in Todorov's words, 'a mask' which conceals its own laws, 'and which we are supposed to take for a relation with reality.'[375] It is a form of image which denies the gap between object and representation a form which, in effect, creates a silent, absent, absence.

The *vraisemblance* of the photograph is also related to its arrangement of objects within it - including in particular its representation of movement. As verbs which connote rapid mobility create a sense of living presence and activity, so too do the Body Painting photographs suggest movement and life. There are colour photographs too which represent the activities occurring within the Pitt Rivers itself; these lend the institution they represent

[375]Cited in Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature,* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul 1975) p.139

a vitality impossible in its historic, apparently unchanging, displays. In their representation of movement, they tell the viewer that the institution is still a living being. The photograph of Utse-tah-wha-ti-an-kah, on the other hand, is static, almost scientific - as if the chief were a specimen. Like verbs suggestive of slowness and stillness, by absenting the motion which is vital to temporal perception, the image connotes an air of turpitude, an absence of vitality, and the absence of the living chief, Utse-tah-wha-ti-an-kah himself.

Fig 7.20: Colour, Movement, Life. Body Painting Photographs, Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

As Walter Benjamin noted in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' it is the apparent removal of a creative hand which gives the photograph its distinctive character.[376] Media which use their own form as a frame present two absences and distances far more overtly - that of the author, and that of the object concerned. In the

[376]Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations,* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), 217-52, p.213

Ashmolean, the digital interactives are indicative of these gaps; their lacunaic act based upon their use of frames (Fig.7.21).

Fig.7.21: Technological Lacunae. Interactives in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Like the covers of a book, the console of the interactive is a paratextual threshold which distinguishes and distances its contents from the contents of the outside world, despite the fact that those of the former often represent those of the latter. Like the act of musealization itself, the placing of a representative image in an interactive produces a rupture: a break between the object and its sign, and the splitting of a thing's identity onto two coterminous temporal tracks. In re-mediation, the identity of an object is multiplied in parallel.

The multiple framings which generate this rupture create a Chinese-box narrative structure around the objects. The object, now doubly distanced from its existence before its museum accession becomes ever more mobile and malleable; placing it into the virtual environment of the interactive means that it can be included in a much wider spectrum of sjuzet form and content. Placing it within the demonstrably theatrical frame of the interactive also means that, in theory at least, the object and its telling become open to speculation and fictionalization; the very device which allows the narrator of Lord Dunsany's 'Jorgens' stories to tell these unrealistic tall tales through the mouth of another - the drunk Jorgens - thus leaving intact his own status as a truthful, unfanciful man.[377]

Reflecting the museum's actions of decontextualisation, the interactive becomes a metafictional mirror for the institution. By employing its own acts of absencing and distancing, it foregrounds those of the museum in which it is held. Examining the interactive, then, gives the museum cause for self-reflexivity, to examine and reflect upon their role in the external world, and the consequences of their actions for the objects they hold.

[377]Lord Dunsany, *In the Land of Time,* (London: Penguin Classics, 2004)

A Complex Re-Mediation: The Oxford Dodo

Fig.7.22: All That Remains. The Remnants of the Dodo in the OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

Somewhere in the zoological collections of the Oxford University Natural History Museum lie the most complete remains of a dodo anywhere in the world; the mummified head and left foot all that is left of the complete dodo originally brought to the British Isles by John Tradescant (Fig.7.22). These fragments are the only physical remains of this hugely iconic creature, fragments whose presence makes the absence of the missing remains even more acute.

The iconic nature of the Oxford Dodo is inseparable from notions of absence and re-mediation. As a species, the dodo is emblematic of extinction - the phrase 'dead as a dodo' evidence of its association with mortality, and, thereby, entropic, deleterious time. In living memory the dodo exists as nothing but a series of symbols and phrases like this, symbols for which there is no longer a direct, material referent. Like the story in 'The Centre of the Story,' it exists only by virtue of its paratexts, as real as the Platonic ideal form. Its paratexts

are diverse, the form and context of each adding to the paradoxical air of presence and absence which surrounds this strange creature. To understand their function and effects requires nuance; and such is offered by a literary analysis.

With the Dodo, any attempt to reproduce or represent its living form involves a certain amount of speculation. The only truly mimetic tellings of the Dodo are the casts of its incomplete remains; that which is no longer present cannot be represented without some degree of imagination. However, as will become clear in Chapter Eight, 'Authenticity in the Temporal Museum', the cast has a complicated relationship with the real. In the case of the Dodo, the fact that it is the casts on display rather than the actual mummified remains and the fact that this is acknowledged in the accompanying text which makes the remains, and the species and specific creature from which they come, ever more absent. The casts of the Dodo's remains, in this relationship to the real thing, exhibit what Roland Barthes termed *satori*: 'the passage of a void.'[378]

Fig.7.23: The Dead and Unliving. Two Model Dodos. OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

[378]Barthes, 2000, p.49

Speculative models of a more complete Dodo also play a role in creating its very particular tone of absence. Between them, the Ashmolean and OUNHM hold three three-dimensional models. The two in the OUNHM are visually very different; one a cast of a composite skeleton, the other a model with feathers and flesh. The skeleton draws attention once again to absence by evidencing the death and decay of the living being. The fleshed model, on the other hand, depicts the same lacunae through stasis and encasement; the absence of movement enough to show the unreality of the statue. Because of the scientific milieu in which they are presented, however, both models give the Dodo a distinct former reality - the sense of having once been present akin to that offered by the accurate photograph.

The Ashmolean's model, however, is surrounded by a very different atmosphere. Its label situates it as an aesthetic piece - a sculpture in bronze created by an artist, Nick Bibby (Fig.7.24). Though the Dodo is recognized as important in the OUNHM, its models remain scientific specimens. Placed in the 'Ark to Ashmolean' gallery with other icons of the Tradescant Collection - itself an iconic and fragmented collective object - and manufactured from a material often used for heroic statues, the Dodo sculpture, and by implication the bird itself, however absurd and grotesque its physical body, is elevated to an almost legendary status; thus the actual, historic creature becomes ever more fictionalized and absent.

Fig.7.24: Grotesque Fictionalisation. Nick Bibby's Dodo. Photograph the Author.

The two-dimensional representations used in the Ashmolean and OUMNH take this even further. The accuracy of painted images of the Dodo is open to question, lending the already visibly mediated artwork an even greater sense of speculation and unreality. The status of the two dimensional image as a distanced and distancing paratext is enhanced by the absence of its referent which, in turn, is enhanced by the presence of the paratext.

The two dimensional image of the Dodo is appropriated by the Ashmolean in a very specific way. Perhaps because the truth of its referent will likely always be conjectural, and because

its iconicity has, over time, become such a naturalized commonplace, it is possible to take its image and turn it from a symbol to an iconic object in its own right, flattened and in need of no specific referent to be meaningful. Instead, in the 'Exploring the Past' gallery, it appears on a panel not as a synecdoche for the Dodo itself, but a metonym for the general iconicity of the Ashmolean and its holdings. It is also the symbol of the OUMNH, appearing on its leaflets, directional signs, and website.

The absence of the actual bird and the resultant malleability of its symbols and symbolic paratexts are most visibly evidenced in the act which turned the bird from a museum curiosity into a widely known cultural icon. When Lewis Carroll took the Dodo's remains from their context of display and transformed them into a physically complete denizen of Wonderland, he created something more than just a fictional character. He created an icon which would come to stand for things far beyond an extinct bird, which would stand for unique museum objects, for the OUMNH, for Oxford, and for the nonsense of Alice which throws into sharp relief the strangeness of reality, and the twisted re-mediation that that reality undergoes in a museum.

The Death of the Author, Narrator, and Focalisor

In 'The Death of the Author', Barthes wrote that,

> Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing.[379]

Though some of the ambiguities of the authorial role have already been depicted within this chapter, it is important to examine more specifically their relationship with absence.

For Barthes, the individualized author with a name and personality was a modern phenomenon; one accorded too much prominence in the analysis of literary production. The text should not be read merely through the context of the authorial personality, but as an object with existence and meaning independent from a name. Standing alone, every literary text - and every museum - is evidence for the former presence, and current absence, of numerous authorial and curatorial hands, the names on book covers and the signed, handwritten labels concrete metonyms for their historic activity.

The narrative voice of each of the Oxford Museums is a composite one, made up of the traces of momentary collisions between objects and individuals, events which now exist only in the object label or interpretive contexts left behind. So too are focalisors such as John and Arthur Evans deployed as representative symbols of individuals now gone, empty vessels with which to shape the story told. In the case of the focalisor, it is precisely their internal void which allows them to function. Despite the fact that he is described in terms of

[379]Barthes, 1977, p.142

his work, Sir John Evans remains psychologically empty, and because of this the visitor is able to insert themselves into something approaching his perspective; he is, in effect, a blank slate through which the visitor to the Ashmolean's Prehistoric Europe gallery can more closely immerse themselves in the sjuzet and fabula of the museum.

In place of the author, Roland Barthes posited the 'scriptor'. This entity exists only in the context of the text, is 'born simultaneously' with it, and fades when the text comes to an end.[380] It cannot exceed the text. Similarly, the voice of the museum, the narrator of the experiential sjuzet cannot exceed the visit to the institution. Even in the Pitt Rivers, where the writerly nature of the sjuzet might cause the observer to confuse the scriptoral visitor with the named individual who lives in the outside world, the scriptor exists only for the period of the visit. Identities are futural; texts and museums, literary writers and museum makers, readers and visitors are in continual processes of change in which they lose parts of themselves, gain, and expect to gain, others. A museum, a curator, and a visitor is always surrounded by absence - either of that which was, or that which is yet to come.

[380]Ibid., p.145

Conclusion

There is more to presence than tangibility. In a museum, objects, museum makers, former characters in the museum's history and its current visitors are all made or make themselves present either by physically manifesting or by leaving traces of themselves behind. The formation and effects of presences are inherently temporal: they extend over periods of time, situate objects and observers in various temporally based relationships, and indicate the various 'tensorial stances' - positions of past, present and future - with which a museum is made. Applying literary concepts such as narrative, transtextuality, prosody and grammar offer useful tools with which to analyze these presences and effects, and help to show how subtle and ambiguous the very notion of presence can be.

Absence, too, is ambiguous and even paradoxical. Once a lacuna is highlighted and known, there is a sense in which it can no longer be called 'absent', for true absence is unseen and unknown. Yet every part of a museum is imbued with losses, gaps, and disjoints, memories of things that were and that will be. Literary theory understands these losses, for literature itself is based upon the representation of something by something which it is not, based upon the telling of an absent thing.

To understand the temporal structure of a museum and its peculiarities requires detailed examination of these polarities; this chapter has sought to produce such an examination using literary concepts and modes of analysis. These tools are subtle and based upon a disciplinary awareness of this very dichotomy; that presence cannot exist without absence,

that both are vital in the generation of the Now. Presence, as Paz said, hacks itself to pieces, and both it and its opposite are the traces of the temporal wound.[381]

[381]Octavio Paz, 'Nature, Abstraction, Time', in *Alternating Current,* trans. Helen R. Lane, (London: The Viking Press Inc. 1973), p .30

Chapter Eight

In Real Time – Authenticity in the Temporal Museum

the 'real' is assumed not to need any independent justification, that it is powerful enough to negate any notion of 'function', that it can be expressed without there being any need for it to be integrated into a structure, and that the having-been-there of things is a sufficient reason for speaking of them.

Roland Barthes, The Reality Affect

Introduction

Museums have a complex and contested relationship with the authentic. There are those like Victoria Newhouse who see the museum as a bastion of truth; a 'refuge of the real' in an increasingly mediated world.[382] Historically, too, the level of trust accorded to museum institutions and those who create them has positioned them as purveyors of truth, reliable authorities; a position which has often been debated and criticised. Unsurprisingly, then, there are also those who see museums as illusionists, each one displaying a 'highly artificial assemblage of objects, installations, people and arguments' impossible elsewhere.[383] In that sense, then, they are fictive and theatrical, and this is becoming increasingly recognised and played upon. Museums have long engaged with other external voices and interpretations,

[382]Victoria Newhouse, *Towards a New Museum (Expanded Edition),* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998, 2006), p.270

[383]Peter Weibel and Bruno Latour, 'Experimenting With Representation: *Iconoclash* and *Making Things Public'*, in Paul Basu and Sharon Macdonald (eds.), *Exhibition Experiments,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp.94-108, p.94

and they are now themselves beginning to revel in the tools of drama and poetics to find and display other facets of their collections.[384] Museums and the objects within them are abstract and concrete, 'real and emblematic',[385] having, as Morris and others have suggested, a 'double existence in both the physical and imaginative world.'[386]

The purpose of this chapter is to untangle these complexities, situating them within the thesis' overall discourse on temporality, with which the concepts of authenticity and simulation have a reciprocal relationship. The temporal relationships between things have a significant effect upon the perception of the authenticity of those things. To investigate how temporal position and identity influences these perceptions requires sensitive tools; literature, again, can provide certain useful devices. The chapter below will employ Jonathan Culler's definition of *vraisemblance,*[387] the concepts of diegesis already utilized in Chapters Two and Six,[388] paratexts as exemplified by Genette,[389] and metafiction, as described by Patricia Waugh,[390] to examine how various parts of the museum, from the objects, through their paratexts, to the ambient environment around them, have their authenticity constituted by various factors.

Though two of these concepts have already been utilized and thus described at earlier points in the thesis, *vraisemblance* and metafiction have yet to be extensively defined. In

[384]A notable recent example of this is the following volume: Suzanne Macleod, Laura Hourston Hanks and Jonathan Hale, eds., *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions,* (London: Routledge, 2012)
[385]Elaine Heumann Gurian 'Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display,* ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, (Smithsonian Institution, 1991), pp.176-190, p.181
[386]Rachel Morris, 'Imaginary Museums: what mainstream museums can learn from them', in Macleod *et al,* 2012, pp.5-11, p.9
[387]Culler, 'Chapter 7: Convention and Naturalisation', pp.131-160
[388]Chapter Two, 'Looking at Time', p.69 and Chapter Six, 'Disrupting the Arrow's Flight', p.168
[389]Genette, 1997b
[390]Waugh, 1984

this chapter, metafiction will arise and be described in its own discrete section. *Vraisemblance,* however, will be employed throughout the chapter: therefore a clear description must be given before analysis can begin.

To give one single definition to *vraisemblance* is something of a simplification, but at times a necessary one.[391] For the purposes of this thesis, *vraisemblance* shall be defined as the extent to which a text - or a museum or object - integrates with the rules and conventions of other related discourses; that is, how closely they conform to conventionalized 'reality' and other socially agreed frames, and how these make each other intelligible and meaningful.

There are various forms of *vraisemblance,* many of which can be gainfully employed in the analysis of museal authenticity. In *Structuralist Poetics,* Culler defines five.[392] Firstly, there is the *vraisemblance* of the real; 'a discourse', Culler writes, 'which requires no justification because it seems to derive directly from the structure of the world.' This first form is often difficult to distinguish from the second - 'cultural *vraisemblance*' - which denotes the correlation of a text with socially agreed notions produced in a specific time or place and which, despite the fact that these are constantly mutable, are so widely naturalised that they are often taken for reality. Third, there is generic *vraisemblance,* in which a text corresponds with a set of structures agreed upon as an artificial or literary form or genre. Fourthly, there is a form of *vraisemblance* akin to the metafictional, in which a text exposes the falsity of the third kind, sometimes with the intention of affirming its own authority. Finally, there is a form of *vraisemblance* specific to individual texts, in which one takes

[391]Culler, p.139
[392]Ibid.

another as its basis and so must ascribe to its laws. This latter Culler termed 'the complex *vraisemblance* of specific intertextualities.'[393]

The museum and its contents can arguably have their levels of authenticity measured against similar divisions; how they and their contents relate to the given 'real' world and its knowledge, how each individual institution relates to the museum concept in general and to the specific 'genre' in which museums come, how they legitimise themselves by questioning those concepts and, finally, how they relate to and reference other institutions to which they are directly related. The objects, environments and conscious beings which constitute each museum should be similarly conceptualized; it is with these constituent parts that this analysis of temporality and authenticity shall begin.

The Things Themselves: The Authentic Object

Though in their materiality objects may seem to guarantee their reality, they cannot help but be part of museal theatrics; as Barthes noted in 'The reality effect,' even the most seemingly concrete description, detail, or representation of a thing can fall prey to the referential illusion, in which a referencing sign is taken as identical with the thing it references.[394] Using literary tools, the ambiguities of objects can be highlighted, and examined for their temporal effect. Yet there is a question which should always be borne in mind; whether these ambivalences and ambiguities in the experience of things really matter, in the end, whether they are indicative of falsity and should be distrusted or

[393]Culler, p.140

[394]Roland Barthes, 'The reality effect', in Tzvetan Todorov, (ed.), *French Literary Theory Today: A reader,* trans. R. Carter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.11-17, p.16

whether they should, in actual fact, be understood as just another of the interpretive and contingent frames which constitute all 'reality.'

Within the Oxford museums there are many objects of various physical forms, and each individual object interacts with authenticity in its own particular way. The orders of *vraisemblance* outlined by Culler can be usefully applied to describe these various interactions, giving the museum analyst and museum maker a frame for understanding their particular effects.

The first order of *vraisemblance,* the *vraisemblance* of the real, might well be applied to the live insects on the Upper Gallery of the OUNHM - the bees in the Hope Room, and the cockroaches, beetles, millipedes and stick insects lined up along one of the Gallery's corridors (Fig.8.1). They live, move, decay and die; thus they hold within them the basic preconditions for that which is considered 'reality.' Yet they cannot be considered as purely 'real' in any sense; though living, they have been used as representative signs, their framing within the museum form a clear medial break between the insects in the museum and their counterparts in the outside world. The temporal behaviour and entropic movement of these musealised insects may indicate their reality, but their location in the chronotopic, bounded present of the museum separates them from it. The same is true for even the most typical artefact displayed in a museum; they too are seeming fragments of the real, brought into an environment which decontextualizes them, removing them from the first order of *vraisemblance* and placing them in the fifth, that 'complex *vraisemblance* of specific intertextualities' which demands that the object concerned be understood with reference to

the meanings and values of its prior existence, the laws of the world outside and its previous time and place of use.

Fig.8.1: Real Signs. Cockroaches in the OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

What of the objects which explicitly set themselves up as representations - for example, deliberately figurative paintings or other works of art? It is true that such works are material objects with their own physical genuineness, when perceived in the context of the immediate present; but they are far more complex than that. A painting, as Yuri Lotman said, is always 'the reflection of one reality in another...always a *translation*.'[395] How, then,

[395]Jurij Lotman *The Structure of the Artistic Text,* trans. Ronald Vroon, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977), p.210

do paintings sit within Culler's structures of the *vraisemblable,* and what can the examination of them indicate about temporality?

Conceptualised purely as matter, manipulated into particular forms and bound within a sealed immediate present, the painting fits comfortably within the first order. To recognise it as something more than an anonymous agglomeration of stuff, to give it the name of painting or art, however, is to position it immediately in the second order - the order of cultural *vraisemblance*, which recognises the mutable, human manipulations of nature as having a valuable, meaningful reality. A painting may further be understood as generically *vraisemblable*: the Dutch Still Lives and pre-Renaissance paintings both displayed in Western Art, though notable for the artificiality of their representations, all accord to the conventions of their particular modes of expression. Neither is there any reason why a painting should not ascribe to the fourth mode of *vraisemblance*, reflecting upon its own cultural or generic form and showing its conventionalised nature; the very fact that all paintings are framed is indicative of this. These last three orders of vraisemblance attach the object to a broad span of shared time, as well as to genre and formal schools. Finally, there is that fifth, intertextual level, to which paintings and artworks do, to some extent, conform. It is certainly the case that paintings reflect upon prior texts, that they take other realities as their basis and translate them. But they can never do so precisely, and they can, being signs, never take on the rules of that represented reality. They are temporally distanced from the objects they represent, but are nonetheless conduits between these objects and the world of the display.

Pearson and Shanks argue that rupture is essential to the 'authentic imagination' - that is, it is in the visible changes a site or object has undergone that its reality can be perceived.[396] If they are correct, then the damaged or visibly repaired artefact must support a higher quality of authenticity than a perfect specimen: can such a statement be evidenced using *vraisemblance?*

As Chapter Five, 'Time's Arrow', indicated, linear forms of narrative tend to have a heightened level of authenticity ascribed to them because, on the surface, they appear to mimic the perceived movement of time. It would seem logical, therefore, to suggest that objects such as the lekythoi in the Greece gallery or the damaged objects in the Conservation Galleries are, like the live insects, somehow closer to lived reality because they show degradation, evidence of the pervasive loss which is, as Knell wrote, an inevitable product of change: an unavoidable product of temporal movement and indicative of its action.[397] Perhaps the sense of authenticity which is perceived as arising from any given thing is precisely to do with this sense of movement and life; the Ashmolean's Conservation Galleries entangle the visitor in reality with the touchable cloth interactive (Fig.8.2), to the degradation of which they can actively contribute; the Pitt Rivers' historical authenticity is, in part, built from the cracks, grazes and nicks in its display cases and glasses; the age and solidity of the OUNHM compounded by the motes of dust and dirt gathering in the girders holding up the leaf-strewn glass roof. It seems incontrovertible that this sense of progression and decay should be indicative of authenticity, of reality and honesty.

[396]Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre Archaeology,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p.118
[397]Simon Knell, 'Museums, Reality and the Material World', in *Museums and the Material World,* ed. Simon Knell, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp.1-28, p.21

Fig.8.2: Pervasive Loss. Cloth Interactive in the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Yet authenticity, life, movement and decay are not synonymous, nor are any one of these a necessary condition for any of the others. When Knell wrote of loss, he did not define the form which that loss would take, nor did he presuppose the sensory or intellectual mode of its perception. Objects unchanged on their visible surfaces have, through their very musealization, automatically suffered loss and change in their context or biography; it just happens that this damage is invisible. Nor does a lack of visible degradation imply that the object is inauthentic; whilst they do not show the characteristic marks of entropic time, the butterflies which decorate the Insects display case in the Great Court of the OUNHM were once living, breathing *real* creatures (Fig.8.3).

Fig.8.3: Metafictional Butterflies. Insects Case, OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

However, despite this, their lack of movement combined with the perfection of the preservation pointedly emphasizes their present symbolic status; even the most accurate and genuine of objects can, in the correct circumstances, become symbolic. These butterflies present that strange, metafictional level of *vraisemblance*: that genre-breaking form which points to the falsity of its own medium, for in being so overtly symbolic and decontextualized, they remind the visitor of the curated, decontextualized fictivity of all other parts of the museum.

These are qualities to be found in any museum object, for most museum objects occupy a liminal position between various forms of the *vraisemblable.* There is one class of object, however, in which notions of reality and simulation are particularly intricate and complex. They have appeared before; they are the re-mediations. In the following section, a re-mediation of a particularly convoluted nature will be examined. That re-mediation is the Cast.

The Cast: Translation and Re-Mediation

Fig.8.4: Questioning Authenticity. Cast Gallery, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The Ashmolean's Cast Collection contains some 900 casts of Greek and Roman sculpture both Classical and Hellenic (Fig.8.4).[398] Though there are casts on display throughout the museum, it is their concentration in a dedicated gallery which renders their peculiarity distinctly apparent. For in the cast, the line between symbol and referent, the concordance of the terms 'original' and 'authentic' become questionable.

Roland Barthes noted in 'The Reality Effect' that there is a form of *vraisemblance* which contaminates and is contaminated by, reality.[399] As Todorov phrased it, the *vraisemblable* is 'the mask which conceals the texts' own laws, and which we are supposed to take for a

[398]Ashmolean Museum, 'Research and Conservation: Cast Gallery', www.ashmolean.org/departments/castgallery/about, accessed 28 November 2012
[399]Barthes, 1982, p.16

relation with reality.'[400] The cast is such a mask, and it is a mask with a temporal basis. Never a 'fake' in the general sense of the term, the cast is a copy of an object which has itself already been altered through the entropic action of history. Thus the cast is taken is already distanced from its original form, and placed as a result at a double level of remove. The cast, thereby, falls victim to the 'most unfortunate feature of irony',

> At the moment when we propose that a text means something other than what it appears to say we introduce, as hermeneutic devices which are supposed to lead us to the truth of the text, models which are based on our expectations about the text and the world.[401]

As soon as the cast is understood as such a model, rather than the actuality of the object it mimics, its initial level of *vraisemblance*, its' first level concordance with reality, is disrupted. Almost immediately, however, this is replaced by the application of a new set of hermeneutic expectations; that it is a copy, a parody, or a fake, manufactured for educative or other purposes, such as commerce, trade, or status. The particular cultural *vraisemblance* of the cast is long standing, and thus easily naturalised, allowing them to be situated within the present in which their observation occurs. But as soon as they are understood as *vraisemblances,* rather than actualities, as objects which pertain to some reality and location in time other than their own, they become far more ontologically and temporally complex. This complexity can be usefully illuminated with the literary concept of intertextuality. Indeed, Culler claimed that this was a process based upon *vraisemblance*,

[400]Cited in Culler, p.139
[401]Culler, p.157

and it can therefore be used here to add nuance to the discussion of the temporal implications of the *vraisemblable* cast.[402]

Fig.8.5: Two Caesars, Both Unreal. Both Versions of the Augustus, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

When a cast is first created, it is a denotative object, a simple signification of the statue on which it is based. Once it is moved away from its referent, as such a denotative object its role is intertextual, for acting like a direct quotation it pulls the time and place of its origin through into the moment in which the cast itself is present. Almost immediately, however, the cast ceases to be directly denotative, for in splitting from its referent it develops its own

[402]Ibid., p.139

trajectory and biography independent of that original statue, which will itself continue to mutate. Thus does the cast become paratextual, as a version of that original object to which it no longer directly correlates, but the former state of which it references. The bizarre relationship of the cast with both temporality and authenticity is made plain in the Augustus of Primo Porto. In the Ashmolean, there are two casts (Fig.8.5). One is on display in the 'Cast Gallery', and is a typical, white, plaster example referring to the original statue as it was at the time the cast was taken. The other is in 'Human Image', and painted almost garishly it refers to the statue as it is currently thought to have looked in its Classical heyday. This latter, a speculative quotation, pointedly emphasises the space of discomfort between the original and the re-mediation; the desperate attempt of the latter to come to some authentic depiction whilst remaining aware that, because of temporal and geographic separation, direct correlation can never be. The cast cuts through all forms of *vraisemblance*, for it is a material reality, a culturally recognised symbol, a genre of object which marks the falsity of its own form, and an intertextual object pulling times and places together.

Meta-fictions

There is a form of literature related to the fourth level of *vraisemblance,* the level that breaks down the *vraisemblance* of genre. This is metafiction: writing which, as Waugh phrases it, 'self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as artefact', writing which knowingly points to its own artificiality and thereby the artificiality of other, non-metafictional writings that resemble it.[403] There are many metafictional objects in the

[403]Waugh, p.2

Oxford Museums, and these vary in their forms and the ways in which they are used. Some comment upon the institution in which they are held, some upon the objects, and some upon objects such as landscapes which cannot exist within the museum itself. Each form can be investigated for its unique relationship with temporality, and what that relationship tells us about the temporality of museums and material culture more broadly.

Fig.8.6: A Temporalizing Metafiction. Architectural Model of the Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

In the Ark to Ashmolean gallery there is an architectural model showing the recent Rick Mather redevelopment (Fig.8.6). Whilst the Ashmolean was undergoing this series of renovations, the model was on display in the shop, used to explain to the visitors what was going on and what the future of the institution would be. Now it is situated in Ark to Ashmolean; it is part of the Ashmolean's history. Its temporal position in the museum display has changed, shifting from an object expressing present and future events to an

object expressing the occurrences of the recent past. Despite these tensorial shifts, however, it has always acted metafictively. In its first incarnation, it emphasised the creation of the new displays, pointing to the curated and representational nature of the institution. It its current existence, it is part of a cohort of things in Ark to Ashmolean which, in pointing to the changes that the institution has undergone historically and more recently, indicate the museum's status as a particular moulding of reality, a specific and selective sjuzet. In so doing, the model temporalizes the institution, forcing the visitor to understand it and the meanings it presents and creates as located and contingent, based upon a past, but situated only in the now, and always expressing uncertainty about the future.

Other objects make metafictional comment upon the artefacts which surround them, and whilst being objects themselves also act as interpretive paratexts to the pure objects of display. In the miniature diorama of a Late Neolithic village, the European Prehistory gallery in the Ashmolean seems to be attempting to heighten the contextual realism of the accompanying artefacts, marking them as genuine objects of a historic world by depicting that very environment (Fig.8.7). Though it is based on archaeological evidence, it foregrounds its own falsity; it is a miniature, the world it depicts encased within a clear Perspex dome. It is not mimetic, but instead acts as a representative echo of a time and community which can never be reclaimed or named, and which because it is based upon limited evidence can only ever be speculative. As such, it is a Platonic ideal, an imagining of that Neolithic world as it should have been, based upon a collage of surviving evidence. By implication, the model emphasises the symbolic and partial status of the other objects in the gallery, showing how these too can now, as a result of their temporal progression and

survival into another historical period, can only ever be fragmented, metonymic references to the time and place from which they came.

Fig.8.7: Time in a Dome. Reconstruction of a Neolithic Village, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

There are objects other than miniatures which seem deliberately designed to emphasise their fictional qualities and those of the environment around them. In the OUNHM, there are a number of displays which use clearly artificial models to depict subjects which, for many people, are deeply unpleasant. On the Upper Gallery, a case entitled 'Forensic Entomology' showcases how knowledge of insects and their behaviour can be used in solving murder cases (Fig.8.8). To illustrate its point, it uses a cartoonish, plastic model of a hand and the imagery of the television series *CSI*. Utilizing the third and fourth levels of *vraisemblance*, which fictionalise reality and then point to this fictivity, the case makes safe something which, if related realistically could be traumatic and terrifying. *Vraisemblance* of

the third and fourth orders allows the museum to position these events as non-specific, fictional occurrences, involving nameless, generic victims with no history and no precise location in time or space; the Platonic ideal of a criminal investigation.

Fig.8.8: Platonic Crimes. Forensic Entomology Case, OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

In every object, no matter how re-mediated or meta-fictional, there is some quality of authenticity. Depending upon where they are viewed from, each object can be real in its own terms, but also relate to other levels of *vraisemblance,* disrupting or confirming the genuine status of the things around it. Interpreting objects in terms of *vraisemblance,* intertextuality, re-mediation and metafiction shows how authenticity is a social construct, based upon contingent terms and locations of observers in time and space. To further understand those terms, it is necessary to move to the things which surround the contents of the museum; the paratexts and environments within which they are enclosed.

(In)Authentic Frames: Reality and Paratext

The perceivable framing of an object or idea immediately wraps it in a mediated removal from reality, thereby according it an automatic symbolic status. But the precise intensity and flavour of that fictivity varies dependent upon the specific nature of the intervening frame. In the case of the museum, that frame may be the display case, a textual re-rendering, a re-mediation such as a photograph, a digital representation or a haptic interactive. This section of the chapter will focus on the paratextual media, of various forms, which surround the objects on display, and explore how they themselves are deemed 'authentic' and what implications they have for the authenticity and temporal status of the objects to which they are attached.

In the Oxford museums the graphical paratexts are hugely varied, and each holds a unique relationship with authenticity. Again, this relationship is both temporally based and temporally indicative; the archaic or contemporary nature of a paratext affecting its perceived temporal proximity to the objects to which it is appended and its and their relationship to the Now in which they are encountered by an observer.

The precise medial form of the graphic implies a particular level of correspondence between it and its referent. That correspondence affects the extent to which the graphical paratext is deemed to be valid or accurate. For instance, the direct representation of a photograph accords with the first level of *vraisemblance* in terms of a visual image, and with the second as the culturally recognised and trusted form of the photograph. Barthes claimed that the photograph was a ‘weightless, transparent envelope’, an invisible media, and thus that the images within them were less encumbered by the materiality of their presentational

form.[404] Thus it might be argued that they are closer to an authentic representation than any other form of media, partly because the temporal and visual difference between the referent and the sign is far less. The photograph is a product of the past perfect; it attests to the fact that '*the thing has been there*'.[405] There is a solidity and certainty as to the happenings of that past time, because the photograph, much more so than any other graphical rendering, 'carries its referent with itself'. [406] Thus the photographs of people and events in the Pitt Rivers, particularly those which are coloured and apparently unstaged, enhance the sense of authenticity surrounding the objects to which they refer, and the reality of the distant places of which they tell.

But photographs remain limited. They can show only a moment, an arrested, permanent present, and are unable to describe the possible pasts from which the events depicted might have come, or futures to which they might have gone. For Barthes, this made them immediately melancholic, and emotively intense. He recognised this when he discussed that the images depicting his mother, however accurately they corresponded to his memory of her, could only show one momentary facet of her being. Therefore, by being images which were only partially true, they were also wholly false. It was in an image of her as he had never known her, as a child, where Barthes claimed to have found the most affecting and most genuine image of his mother.[407]

As the accuracy of the photograph belies its framed, mediated, momentary nature, so does the fictionalised form of a graphical mediation belie the fact that the representation might

[404]Barthes, 2000, p.5
[405]Ibid., p.76
[406]Ibid., p.5
[407]Ibid., p.66

be the most accurate possible. Golvin's panorama of Pompeii, which decorates one wall of the Ashmolean's Rome gallery, is based upon the best evidence, written and material, available to the artist (Fig.8.9). Despite being as accurate as it can be, the fact that it is a watercolour painting rather than a more direct image indicates the distance in history between Pompeii and the present; a distance impossible to bridge in the embodied experience of a twenty-first century visitor. Unlike the photograph, however, the watercolour is honest about this distance, because it does not remove or hide its mediatory frame; the paint.

Fig.8.9: An Unbridgeable Gap in Watercolour. Golvin's Panorama of Pompeii, Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

Authentic meaning, as the watercolour shows, need not be constituted only, if at all, in that first level of *vraisemblance*, the mimesis of reality. In 'The Salon of 1859', Baudelaire wrote,

> I would rather return to the dioramas, whose brutal and enormous magic has the power to impose in me a useful illusion. I would rather go to the theatre and feast my eyes on the scenery, in which I find my dearest dreams artistically expressed and

> tragically concentrated. These things, because they are false, are infinitely closer to the truth.[408]

The authentic need not arise only in surface resemblance or social convention; the weight, relevance or meaningfulness of a thing is also dependent upon the effect it provokes in the perceiver. On occasion, it is the deliberately theatrical and oneiric which affords the most satisfying and meaningful encounter. In *Understanding Comics,* the following panels appear,

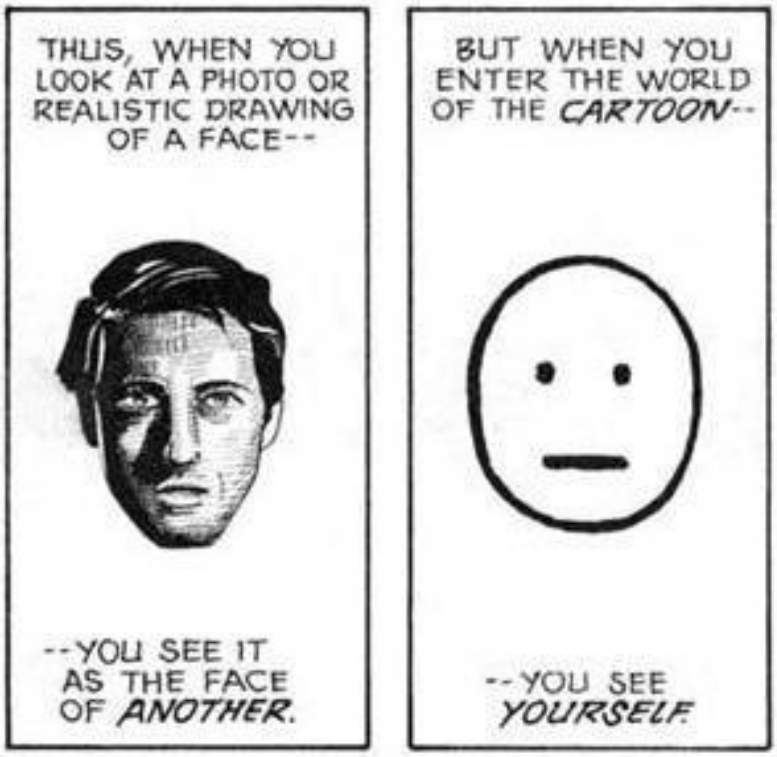

Fig. 8.10: Reality and Cartoon. From *Understanding Comics*, by Scott McCloud

McCloud's argument may be précised thus. The cartoon is a blank slate through which information may be mediated, and into which a reader can insert themselves to access that information more directly. In other words, the less specific an image's relationship to its

[408]Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres,* ed le Dantec, vol 2 <Paris, 1932>, p.273 ("Salon de 1859" section 8, "le Paysage"), cited in Benjamin, 2002, p.536

referent is, the more it can be manipulated to suit its viewer's own personal requirements. Were the image to approximate too closely to its referent, the medium would become distracting, and the emotive message would be lessened.[409] Removed from the reality of their original referent, the cartoons of Ashmole and Tradescant in Ark to Ashmolean become much more friendly and malleable beings, able to relate to the visitor on human terms, but also able to retain the authority of the original figures; they are both authoritative and likable (Fig.8.11). It can be argued that it is their very lack of visual accuracy-authenticity which permits the visitor to experience these as more human figures – figures more emotionally 'authentic'.

[409]Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art,* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), p.36

Fig.8.11: Cartooned Authenticities. A Cartoon of John Tradescant the Elder in Ark to Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

The representations of objects in digital interactives are even more complex in their relationship to authenticity than either the object or the physical representation. Made of numerical code filtered through a computer screen, these are virtual images, the only thing physical about them the terminal on which they are displayed. Despite their lack of material actuality, however, they can engage in a reciprocal enhancement of authenticity with the objects with which they are associated. In the Ashmolean's basement gallery 'Exploring the Past', the interactive panel displays an image of Powhaten's mantle, a famous object from the founding collection now on display in the 'Ark to Ashmolean' gallery. The physicality and actual presence of the mantle validates the image in the interactive which, in turn, adds to the information the visitor knows about the object and extending how it relates to other elements of life.

The interactive image has an intertextual and anachronic role which enhances not only the authenticity of the object to which it refers, but also the authenticity of the visitor's experience. For in bringing timeframes from various points of the visit into cognitive proximity, it gives their visit protensity, psychological duration stretching into the future and recalling the past. Because the interactive refers to another artefact located somewhere in the past or future of the visit, it more closely aligns that experience with everyday durée, that object becoming indicative of movement and the highly temporal nature of museum experience.

(In)Authentic Environments: Narrative Structures and Chronotopes

The *vraisemblance* of a literary text is dependent, in part, upon its plotted structure. A museum is no different in this regard, and it is therefore necessary to turn to the forms of sjuzet which these institutions utilize. In the Oxford museums, these forms are varied, and the act of analysing them can reveal much about the attitudes towards time, reality and control which underlie an institution, and may give a museum maker pause for thought when they are considering how to form new exhibitions and displays.

As emphasised in Plotting Time, the causal linear form is 'a simulacrum of the structure and processes of real events'.[410] For Aristotle, the beauty of this form lay in its explanatory and balanced qualities; it is certainly a useful structure to use when a museum needs to tell of events unfolding over a long period of time.[411] This mimesis of historical process seems to lie at the conceptual heart of the History of Life displays in the OUNHM and, to some extent, the Ashmolean's Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time display strategy, which charts the interrelated development of cultures over the course of human history.

To assume that the linear historical plot is entirely mimetic and *vraisemblable,* however, is problematic. As has been shown above, it is a structure filled with elision and it should be understood to be as open to manipulation as any form of plotted structure. Chapter One, 'Plotting Time', discussed the *propter hoc* fallacy, in which the order of events encourages a reader to assume the existence and nature of causal linkages between them.[412] Museum

[410]Hayden White, 'The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory', from *History and Theory,* vol.23, no.1 (Feb 1984), pp.1-33, p.3
[411]Aristotle, 1968, p.18
[412]Chapter One, 'Plotting Time', p.39

narrative structures are equally as able to engender this fallacy, at times with significant representational implications. To see the consequences of causal manipulation and linear direction, it is useful to look at the relationships between the galleries 'China to AD800', 'India to AD600', and 'Rome' on the Ancient Worlds floor of the Ashmolean. The visitor may enter the India gallery from either direction, from 'China' or from 'Rome'. At either entrance they will find a wall panel describing much of the contents of the gallery. Dependent upon which side they enter from, these wall panels will emphasise either the Chinese or Greco-Roman influences on India, but never both. Here, direction of movement and causal relationships are fundamentally linked, the visitor's understanding of the ascendant powers of the Ancient World potentially considerably affected as a result.

The linear form of plot also involves elision, for it pares down events to a singular and directed sequence. On occasion, as 'Plotting Time' and 'Time's Arrow' showed, this is a necessity and a benefit, for it facilitates the telling of events in a comprehensible fashion. However, it is also important to recognise its limitations, for it is a structure which cannot, by its very nature, include every event within a given period of time. It forces history into a unidirectional movement, a tensed progression which cannot account for the multiplicitous movements and relationships which exist within reality and human consciousness. Yet because it seems to align closely with socially agreed chronological reality, the artifice of the linear plot may too easily be forgotten. Bruner called these elisions and conventionalisations 'narrative seduction' and 'narrative banalization'; it is with these devices that unidirectional, linear structures create their illusions of truth.[413] Humans have learned a lot, he notes,

[413]Bruner, p.9

about how to construct and explain the world in a causal way, but 'we know altogether too little about how we go about constructing and representing the rich and messy domain of human interaction.'[414]

There are plotted structures, however, which, in making their own manipulations of temporal progression obvious, are far more honest about their own contrivance and which as a result come closer, perhaps, to representing that 'messy' domain. The picaresque Pitt Rivers, for instance, makes its own artifice plain by presenting the visitor with the fabula (conceived of here in a limited way as the artefacts on display rather than as reality as a whole), and asking them to construct from that their own sjuzet, their own simulacrum of the world. Theatrical and manipulative as the ambiance of the Pitt Rivers is, this structure allows the visitor to become 'writerly', and in presenting a ground more strictly about display than explanation, it permits the creation of a personally meaningful, emotively authentic experience, and as a metafictional reflection on the curatorial display process, throws the manipulative structures of less writerly displays into sharp relief. It occupies that fourth level of *vraisemblance*; subscribing to some of the conventions of the museum genre, but also undermining any pretence a museum might make towards total authority and comprehensiveness. The Pitt Rivers' overall picaresque structure, unlike the linear narrative, makes no attempt to constitute a totalising reality.

The authenticity of a museum environment and its contents, however, is not simply dependent upon the plotted structure of events within it. The creation of a *vraisemblable* chronotope is also heavily dependent upon style. Here, the Pitt Rivers is much more

[414]Ibid., p.4

ambiguous in its relationship with truth. It is often perceived as unchanging, as an *Ur* text of Victorian ethnography museums; its heavy wooden cases and historic labels, like archaic words in a poem or prose work, encouraging the perception of its age. But it is a far more progressive institution than this would suggest, its conventionalised, generic style masking an institution continually reflecting upon itself and undergoing change.

It is possible to manufacture a museum site with the intention of depicting a chronotopically distinctive environment as accurately as possible. But this depiction, however accurate, is always peculiar in its relationship to the authentic. Take the Ashmolean's Japanese Tea House, for example (Fig.8.11). Designed by Komoda Isao, an architect recognised for using traditional Japanese building forms, it was built in Tokyo by the specialist company Amakasu Komuten. That same company dismantled it, brought it to Oxford, and rebuilt it inside gallery number 36, 'Japan from 1850'.[415] Its mode of manufacture, then, was about as authentic as it is possible to be, subscribing to all the conventions of the Tea House as a form. Being a completely original construction, it does not mimic another site already in existence in the world, and so cannot be said to be a reconstruction or sign in the simplest sense of the terms. What it represents is not any particular Tea House, but a Platonic ideal.

[415]Ashmolean, 'Eastern Art Online, Yousef Jameel Centre for Islamic and Asian Art, Room 36: Japan from 1850 gallery: The Tea House', www.jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/4/867/877, accessed 28 November 2012

Fig.8.12: A Japanese Tea House? Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

However, its location within the Ashmolean and its role of museum object cannot be ignored. The Japanese Tea House is not a Japanese Tea House in terms of intent, for it was never designed to fulfil the function generally required of the form. It was commissioned by the Ashmolean with the explicit intention of being used as an exemplar; in this sense, then, it is perhaps the most unadulterated, most authentic kind of 'Museum Object', for it has no previous life outside the institution's aegis. The Japanese Tea House is the one object within

the Ashmolean which has been placed into an interpretative context in which it can claim to be purely, and singularly, itself.

Conclusion: Any Thing Authentic?

The multiple identities of things and the many hermeneutic systems in which they are positioned means that no thing, no situation and no place can be definitively determined as 'authentic.' The material existence and qualities of things are the only things which can truly be understood as 'genuine'; once external abstract notions are appended to it, the object becomes contaminated by their interpretive frame, and it becomes impossible to extract their objective being from perception and meaning making. *Vraisemblance,* intertextuality, and metafiction are useful literary concepts which permit the museum analyst and maker to examine and describe some of the oddities in the relationship between museums, museum objects, museum structures and authenticity. They indicate that 'authenticity' is not singular, nor constituted in any one thing or attribute, but that it is multiple and relational. They indicate too that the deliberately, visibly inauthentic can be as meaningful, and in some senses, as truthful, as the accurate depiction. As Pearson and Shanks wrote,

> What is found *becomes* authentic and valuable because it is set by choice in a new and separate environment with its own order, purpose and its own temporality...[416]

Museums, easily imagined as purveyors of immutable certainties and glimpses into Platonic truths, are clandestine heterotopias precisely because their inherent artificiality denies such certainties, and if the viewer looks hard enough, actually points to the only thing that can

[416]Pearson and Shanks, p.115

ever be known; that all human beings can see are interpretations, not absolutes. It is critical that it is possible to examine the type of *vraisemblance* claimed by any museum display; those who create a museum space must be aware of the varied ways in which their creations relate to reality and how they propound or undermine perceptions of the authentic. The museum can show how reality as perceived by human beings is at one and the same time 'real and emblematic' - it is this ability which is partly responsible for the strangeness of museum spaces, which is partly responsible for their peculiar, and heavy, auras.

Chapter Nine

Unique Things in Time and Space - Auracity and Temporality

Here we discover that immensity in the intimate domain is intensity, an intensity of being, the intensity of a being evolving in a vast perspective of intimate immensity

Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space

Introduction

Auras are those characteristic feelings, tangible and intangible, which surround and give personality to any given object or site. They are experiential phenomena generated in the intersections between objects, environments and conscious observers. Both temporally based and temporally consequential, auras arise from the perception of tensorial relationships and are able to create particular chronotopic atmospheres. The aim of this chapter is to explore auras as they manifest within the temporal landscape of the Oxford Museums, to investigate the sites and objects from which they emerge, and explore by what means and to what consequence auras produce temporally affective atmospheres and experiences. Using the language associated with aura, 'atmosphere',[417] 'antaeic magic',[418] 'resonance' and 'wonder',[419] and literary tools from prosody, narratology, and semantics, the chapter will initially consider the auras arising in relation to particular things. Thereafter

[417]Böhme, 113-126

[418]Mattias Ekman, 'Architecture for the Nation's Memory: History, art and the Halls of Norway's National Gallery', in Macleod, *et al., Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions,* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.114-156, p.148

[419]Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display,* ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp.42-56

it will examine how those can be enhanced or altered by the surrounding environment, and then tackle two chronotopic forms characterized by particularly recognizable and powerful auras - the sublime and the uncanny.

The Auras of Things

The 'museum effect' is akin to the 'making strange' of language that characterizes the literary work.[420] By de-contextualizing and thereby defamiliarising words and things, literature and museums imbue their representative forms of expression with particularly overt auratic qualities, or enhance those that are already there. Aura may too easily be dismissed as something indeterminate and intangible, and therefore the museum, which emphasizes both the abstract and concrete qualities of things, is an ideal site in which this dismissal might be countered. Chapter Seven quoted Böhme's paradoxical definition of atmosphere as something between hermeneutic perception and physical presence, indicating the value which is to be found in examining the material ground - the object - which is partly responsible for the generation of aura.[421] Prosody and semantics are especially useful literary tools for examining this phenomenon. This section of the chapter will examine auratic characteristics as they specifically pertain to objects and temporality, investigating physicality, rarity, and the information, known, expressed, and connotative, which surround material things, and it will do so with a very literary eye.

[420]Svetlana Alpers, 'The Museum as A Way of Seeing', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display,* ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp.25-32, p.26

[421]Chapter Seven, 'Manifesting in Time – Examining the Presences of Things', pp.223-224

Fig.9.1: Ictic Aura. The Coromandel Screen and the *Battle of the Animals*. Photograph the Author.

On entering the Ashmolean's second floor orientation gallery West Meets East, the visitor is confronted by two objects which, because of their sheer size and vivid colour, are intensely ictic. The *Battle of the Animals* tapestry and the Coromandel Screen are so dramatic and visually stressed that they almost immediately generate an exulted circle of 'wonder', an auratic bubble which places the objects at the centre of attention and blocks out all external interference (Fig.9.1). Their aura is that of the palpable present, a Now which remains static,

but extended in an almost spatial way - the aura as amber around a moment, fossilized and tangible for as long as the gaze continues.

The *Battle of the Animals* and the Coromandel Screen are designed to be objects of beauty, so it is less than surprising that their effects should potentially be so intense and temporally affective. However, the ictic generation of aura is not just the preserve of the beautiful. Less aesthetically pleasing objects may also generate powerful auratic environments, often through similar means. The *Tyrannosaurus rex* displayed in the Great Court of the OUNHM also inspires a dramatic aura through its ictic size and visually striking form (Fig.9.2). But this aura is not one of an aesthetic, eternal present, but of momentary visceral fear, followed by an awareness of decay and the entropic passage of time.

Fig.9.2: Visceral Fear, Visible Decay. T-rex in the OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

In his discussion of antaeic magic - the provocation of an intense experience through sensory involvement - Mattias Ekman pointed out how auratic sites and objects are often deemed 'strange', 'unapproachable' or 'alienated', suggesting that aura is a product of the rare or the curious.[422] Unique things certainly make a statement amongst the quotidian material of the world. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass,* Lewis Carroll created new words, like 'Jabberwocky' and 'brillig', moulding peculiar, unknown, but recognizable linguistic forms from existing linguistic structures. In doing so, he made his world strange and his words iconic, thrown into sharp relief against everyday, mundane language. This distinctiveness makes objects like the Pitt Rivers' Dream Paintings as auratic as they are - these objects are puzzles, made from recognizable materials but visually far stranger than the shapes into which the world is usually moulded (Fig.9.3). For the non-Aboriginal viewer, the Dream Paintings can be little more than visual images; their true meaning can only be known to those who dreamt and made them. This is, to some extent, true of every object made to incite dialogue, but the cultural differences between the Aboriginal and European viewers make explicit the incomplete nature of representational communicative acts. Like Carroll's words, these objects highlight the impossibility of direct human engagement, the inability of the written word or the museum artifact to express the fullness of human experience. They are not mimetic signs, but idiosyncratic and exclusive poetic extants, as immanent as the peculiar facade of the Pitt Rivers.

[422]Ekman, p.148

Fig.9.3: Stranger Mouldings. Dream-Paintings in the Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

Anonymous objects in particular resonate with this kind of a-chronic auracity. The unknown object has no past or future, and is thereby entrenched in the present moment. In the OUNHM there are unlabeled, unidentified fossils and around them lies a 'halo of indefiniteness'.[423] In *The Open Work,* Umberto Eco wrote of the blank space - typographical and interpretive, which prevents 'a single sense from imposing itself at the very outset of the receptive process.'[424] The blank space around the unidentified fossil opens them up to almost endless interpretations. These lacunae can be freeing for an object - but they can also be imprisoning. The anonymous fossils remain in the Now, and the unnamed 'Native of Victoria' whose image illustrates the 'Methods of making Fire' case in the Pitt Rivers ceases to be a human being, but an ideal form - the living and dying individual he was now a-

[423]Umberto Eco, *The Open Work,* trans. Anna Concogni, (Harvard College, 1989), p.9
[424]Ibid., p.8

historicized, forever lost to the anonymity and a-temporality of the archetype (Fig.9.4). These objects cannot be signs, because they are themselves the only example of what such a sign might signify. Their temporal aura is that of the solitary artifact, removed from typical narrative forms, from broader structures of commerce. These artifacts, though as subject to entropic temporality, cannot be placed comfortably into a historicized causal chronology; their auratic moment is that of the stasis of the visual poem.

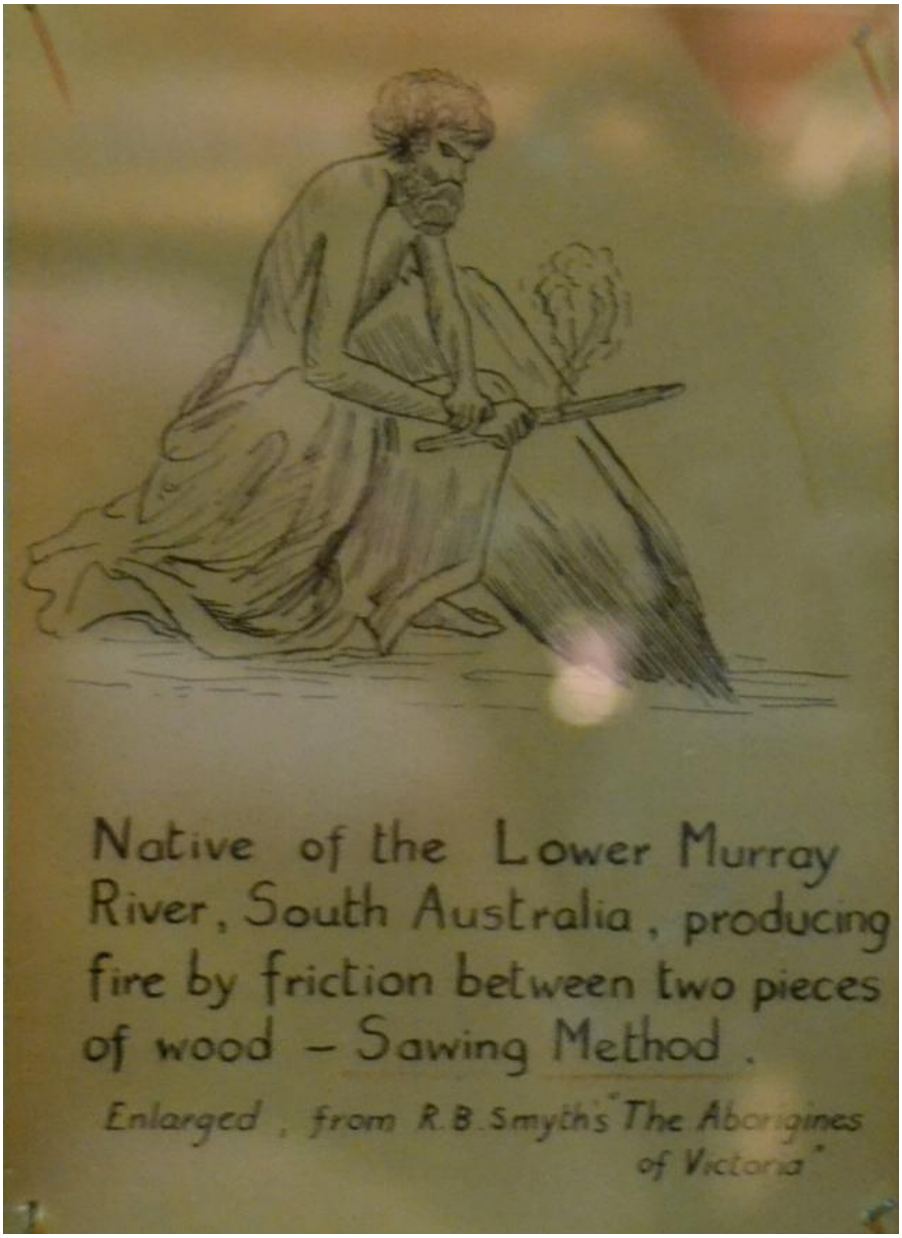

Fig.9.4: Nameless Archetype. Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

Usually, however, even the most bizarre and unique object has some relationship to the outside world, thought those connections might only be based upon the intangible values, meanings and connotations that are appended to physical forms. These abstract paratexts can significantly alter the auratic qualities of even the least visually ictic item. The *tsantsas* - shrunken heads - on display in the Pitt Rivers are not immediately apparent, their blackened forms hidden in a case which faces away from the main door. Despite this they are iconic, and draw visitors to the museum. In part, the atmosphere - the aura - which surrounds these objects is a product of this dissipative iconicity, enforced by self-reinforcing rumor and the antaeic magic produced by an object that is exotic and disturbing.

But the iconicity of the *tsantsas* is by no means only produced by the lure of the unfamiliar. Once a visitor encounters them in their material form they cease to be a purely abstract quantity and develop a very different, but no less powerful, auratic quality. Their visual form and the texts surrounding them remove them from the aura of the a-temporal, immaterial icon, and return them to a lived, temporal world characterized by corporeality, violence, death and decay. The *tsantsas* cease to be rarefied icons - instead, they gain the seductive power of the grotesque. The literary grotesque, as Bakhtin notes, exaggerates base physicality, reflects birth, death, and the 'swallowing up and generating' action of entropy.[425] The *tsantsas* are auratic, in part, because they force their viewer into this contemplation of fecundity and putrefaction; their aura is not that of the eternal and the transcendent, but of the lived and the fleshly.

[425]Bakhtin, 1984, p.27

According to Greenblatt, this precarious and ephemeral quality of material things is a rich source of 'resonance'. It can give to even the most mundane object a powerfully melancholic aura; the Japanese aesthetic concept of *mono no aware* is descriptive of precisely this kind of sadness, the pensive realization of the transience of all things. The touchable cloth strip in the Ashmolean's Conservation galleries is a performative 'wounded artifact', on display with the explicit purpose of attesting to a world of continual change.[426] These moments of realization can be shocking - they can instill in the viewer '*satori*'.[427] In those moments, the viewer sees what has been as a visible absence; an aura of loss.

Making Auras for Things

The auratic timbre of a museum arises not just from objects, but from the built environment around them. Various exhibitionary strategies are used to accord an object a temporal reverberation which enhances or undermines its own inherent auracity. These include the various paratexts appended to an item in the museum space itself, the labels, texts, interpretive environmental features such as lighting, and cases, which make up its physical milieu. The task of this part of the chapter is to examine these paratexts, and their impact upon the timescape of the museum, with the aid of literary notions including diegetic framing, metrics, and plot.

As Maurice Blanchot was aware, the aura of a museum object is in part a product of its encasement.[428] By means of the case, the observer is isolated from the object. 'Isolating an

[426]Greenblatt, p.44
[427]Barthes, 2000, p.49
[428]Blanchot, p.11

object,' writes Dean, 'confers importance to it, heightens drama, and emphasizes it.'[429] The aura thus created is the aura as defined by Walter Benjamin, 'the unique phenomenon of distance' which appears around a certain kind of object, 'however close it may be.'[430] That which is isolated and thus emphasized is drawn out of the visitor's immediate experience; the visitor positioned heterodiegetically to any sjuzet that object may have to tell. Thus is the visitor to the Pitt Rivers able to look upon the objects in the Recycling case as historicized things, objects distanced in time and place - despite the fact that many of these articles were manufactured only in the last twenty years, from materials and other objects recognizable and familiar to many visitors of today.

Encasement can also reduce the aura of an object. The Alfred Jewel, iconic in its own right, is removed from other items in the Ashmolean's 'England 400-1600' gallery and given its own position in a tall, narrow glass case. Rather than emphasizing the object, however, the case overwhelms the jewel's diminutive stature, its height pressing down upon the object with a suffocating and distracting volume of clear air (Fig.9.5). The case, through its own sheer size and ictic presence dominates the space at the expense of the deeply significant Anglo Saxon gem.

[429]David Dean, *Museum Exhibition, Theory and Practice,* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), p.61
[430]Benjamin, 1968, p.216

Fig.9.5: Suffocating Frame. The Alfred Jewel and Its Case. Photograph the Author.

The ability to frame an object is not merely confined to the case - framing objects is also a property of environmental features such as lighting. Spotlighting is particularly affective, for it can give objects otherwise diminutive an ictic presence. Greenblatt notes how the boutique style of lighting, which seems to emanate from the object itself, can be used to heighten the wonder, and perhaps a desire to possess, experienced in its presence.[431] Certainly in the case of the Felix Gem, spotlighting brings this slight piece of the material world out from its position deep within a dark inset wall case, bringing its image, if not its physical form, into close proximity with the viewer (Fig.9.6). The spotlight emphasizes the Gem, and surrounds it with an aura of exclusivity and uniqueness. Again, this is an aura of distance; however visually proximate the spotlight makes the object, however much it reveals about the Gem's unique and beautiful properties, it reifies it in the manner of an artwork, coats it in idealized connotations. The spotlight, being theatrical, indicates that the thing it highlights is a representation; something impossible to possess, behind which lies an inaccessible, but still material reality of a more solid and mundane nature.

[431]Greenblatt, p.49

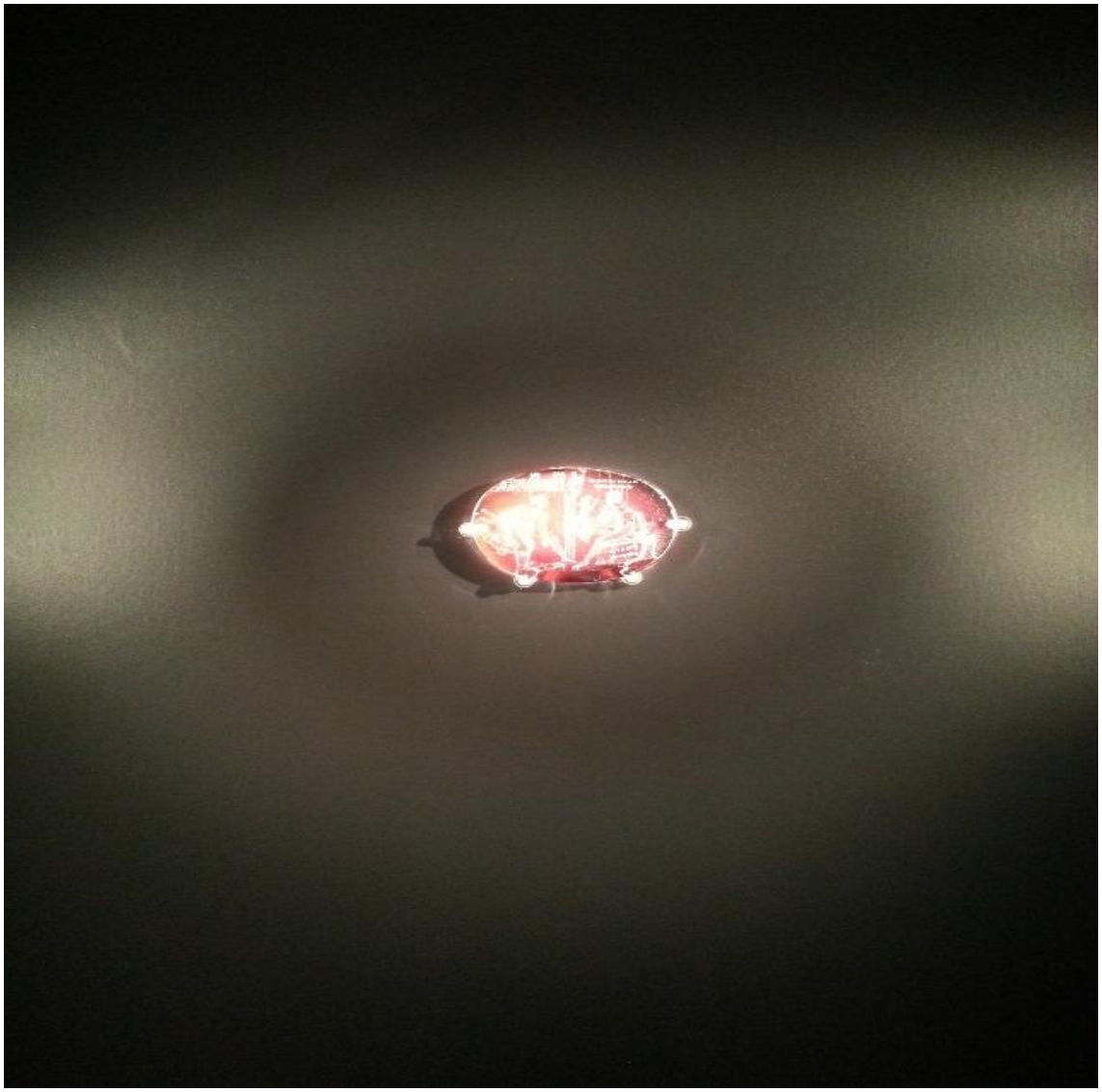

Fig.9.6: Spotlit Exclusivity. Spotlighting the Felix Gem. Photograph the Author.

The temporal auracity of an object is also affected by its spatial placement, and the effect may change as the viewer moves through relationships with said object. In literature, metrical placement and the narrative acts of revelation and delay are constituents of this changing association. Put to use in the making and analysis of the museum, they can have significant implications for the auracity of an object and its temporal relationship with its observer.

Particular kinds of metrical placement have significant implications for the auratic intensity of an object. Icticity is reliant upon the placement of objects in a visual or conceptual framework. The Haida Totem, the Kayak Salama and the New Guinean Battle Shields on display in the Pitt Rivers all have their auracity enhanced by their ictic positions in the museums metrical layout, all given the striking distance of the icon. In the case of the kayak, which is hung from the Upper Gallery of the museum, this distance is broken when the visitor walks to the place from which it is hung, becomes able to look down upon it and read its labels (Fig.9.7). Named and now tangible, it loses the heterodiegetic distance of the ictic icon, and becomes something material; a denizen of the real, lived, human world.

Fig.9.7: Named and Thus Tangible. The Label for the Kayak. Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

Fascination is partly to do with to do with distance in time and space, and the perceived unreality or wonderment this brings. 'What fascinates us,' wrote Blanchot,

> robs us of our power to give sense. It abandons its "sensory" nature, abandons the world, draws back from the world, and draws us along. It no longer reveals itself to us, and yet it affirms itself in a presence foreign to the temporal present and to presence in space.[432]

Once something comes close enough to touch, however, that particular form of aura dissipates as the object becomes concrete and solid and historical.

Metrical placement can also make the seemingly obscure and uninteresting object significant. Not particularly powerfully designed, nor containing particularly inspiring objects, the OUNHM's case 'Ancient Toolmakers' is nonetheless afforded a certain auratic quality. That it is a somewhat incongruous topic to display in a natural history gallery gives it a disjunctive, and hence affective, aura in its own right. This is heightened still further by its odd location. Situated in the interstitial space between the History of Life Galleries and the southern staircase to the Upper Gallery, in a corner where no other cases are displayed, the oddly liminal Ancient Toolmakers is a discomforting surprise (Fig.9.8). In poetry, a single line which does not entirely rhyme, either aurally, visually, or conceptually with the rest of a piece of verse can have quite emphatic power - particularly if it is placed in a typographically demonstrative position. This very thing seems to have occurred, intentionally or otherwise, with the Ancient Toolmakers, and it is a worthwhile thing to consider for someone seeking to create an instant of profound affect in a museum display.

[432]Blanchot, p.32

Fig.9.8: A Discomforting Surprise. Ancient Toolmakers, OUMNH. Photograph the Author.

The intensity of an atmosphere generated by an object can also be enhanced by features of the museum's plotted structure. Aristotle named a number of significant moments in any given literary work. One of these was *anagnorisis* - recognition, a moment in which something is revealed.[433] Though *anagnorisis* of this kind cannot be assumed to occur for any visitor to the museum on a personal level, similar revelatory occurrences are intentionally engineered within the structure of the museum itself. In the Pitt Rivers, for instance, the Feather Cloak is hidden by curtains, its aura increased by the moment of its uncovering and the build-up preceding it. In *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods,* Umberto Eco writes how the cathartic value of denouement can be enhanced by increasing the length of 'trepidation time' - that is, the time in which the reader knows that they are building to a

[433]George Whalley, 'On Translating Aristotle's Poetics', in *Aristotle's Poetics: Translated and with a Commentary by George Whalley,* ed. John Baxter and Patrick Atherton, (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press), pp.3-32, p.26

climax and are aware of the delay.[434] Such trepidation time accompanies those objects, like the Feather Cloak, which are known about but which have their encounter delayed, the provoked sense of anticipation increasing the dispersed auratic qualities of the object and increasing the expectation of wonder to be experienced at the final revelation. When the curtains are drawn back from the cloak, the visitor may experience awe or perhaps disappointment at its material form - either way, that moment is likely to be emotionally and conceptually intense and cathartic.

Fig.9.9: Increasing Trepidation Time. The Theatrical Feather Cloak, Pitt Rivers. Photograph the Author.

[434]Eco, 1994, pp.62-64

It is clear that auras arise from many sources within the museum, and combined in certain ways these sources can be used to give particular chronotopic qualities to environments. The rest of this chapter will explore two especially iconic and temporally powerful chronotopic auras - the sublime and the uncanny.

Two Auratic Chronotopes: The Sublime and the Uncanny

Lyotard once wrote that the sublime is, perhaps, 'the only mode of artistic sensibility to characterize the modern.'[435] It is often conceived of as a highly ecstatic, pleasurable experience; sublime food or fashion is spoken of as a matter of course. It is associated with many symbolic forms and concepts; beauty, the divine, Arcadia and the fabulous. But it is an ambiguous quality, for it rests upon the experience of both pleasure and pain and is, as a result, strongly linked to the uncanny.[436] No matter the precise nature of the feeling, whether positive or negative, the ultimate definition of the sublime experience is one of an intensely marvelous quality, in which the experiencing entity is utterly enchanted, to the point where they are entirely deprived of all their usual presumptions toward the linear, continual progression of time. In a museum, this moment of wonder may be created by various means from the object to the architecture surrounding it. It should always be treated and used with caution, however, for the implications of the sublime may be of great significance.

In his paper, 'Beyond narrative', Lee H. Skolnick writes of what at first seems to be a laudable aim.

[435]Lyotard, 1991, p.93
[436]Ibid., p.92

> In his 1967 neon wall sign, the artist Bruce Nauman said that 'the true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths.' I want to do that, I want to know how to do that. So I look beyond narrative: beyond the assembling and amalgamating; beyond the bits of information and the ordering of experience. To what? To a synthesis wherein the individual elements are dissolved, where the sequence gives way. Where revelation produces epiphany.[437]

He is not the first to have expressed this desire or tried to bring it to fruition. In 1995, Huyssen argued that in the early twentieth century, utopic modernist thought sought to produce such moments of temporal ecstasy through aesthetic experience.[438] For various social and political reasons museums too have, throughout their history, aimed to produce some form of revelatory, transformative experience. They have often done so by manipulating the spatial environment to create evocative spaces. In the Oxford museums, two manifestations of the sublime chronotope emerge: the Cathedral and Arcadia, both of which are associated with ritualized, semi-religious environments.

Skolnick claimed to be deeply influenced by the visceral and emotive possibilities offered by churches, whose 'pure expression of spirituality' is meaningful and inspiring.[439] In the case of the OUMNH, though the profane politics of the situation at the time of its building certainly affected the chosen architectural style, the atmosphere of a sublime, spiritual temple clings to the museum's walls. The carvings and shape of the facade, the ecclesiastical windows, the tall columns and monastic layout of the ground floor all contribute to the sense of

[437]Lee H. Skolnick, 'Beyond Narrative: Designing epiphanies', in Macleod *et al.,* 2012, pp.83-94, p.90
[438]Huyssen, p.98
[439]Skolnick, p.87

reification and wonder which surrounds the natural specimens; it makes the mundane sublime.

The relationship between the environment and the objects is reciprocal, however, and the OUNHM's contents bring the religious pretentions of the architecture down to earth. In many ways it seems ironic that objects so clearly products of nature should be housed in an environment of the divine; a reflection, perhaps, of the ambiguous links between faith and science which characterized the period in which the Museum was conceived. The OUNHM was a radical creation when first built, and is still used playfully today.[440] Thus it is able to subvert the idealized beauty of ritual with the grotesquery of the Bakhtinian carnival - the divine replaced with the feast of the lived and fleshly.

Sublime experience may also be facilitated by an Arcadian aesthetic and architecture. This particular chronotope is evidenced throughout the Mather wing of the Ashmolean. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the museums which sprang up across Europe often had an identity as spaces of pure aesthetic, almost spiritual contemplation, removed from the profanity of the lived commercial world.[441] Despite the fact that it is almost brand new, the renovated Ashmolean conforms to this mode of gallery using neo-classical style architecture, white paint, Portland Stone, and a diffuse light from above to evoke a Classical temple. There is an a-chronic quality to such spaces; Arcadia, when used by poets, is often a place taken out of historical, entropic time, an idealized place into which death should not come - thus the melancholy rage of John Milton's Lycidas.

[440]Garnham, p.1-2
[441]Klonk, p.19

For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill,

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;

Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd

Under the opening eyelids of the morn,

We drove afield, and both together heard

What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,

Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,

Oft till the star that rose at ev'ning bright

Toward heav'n's descent had slop'd his westering wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,

Temper'd to th'oaten flute;

Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel,

From the glad sound would not be absent long;

And old Damætas lov'd to hear our song.[442]

Within both the Ashmolean and the OUNHM there lie rooms which seem further yet from lived life, removed as they are from even the rest of the Museum. In *The Arabian Nights* or *The Canterbury Tales,* nested narrative structures give the various narrative focalisors license to tell ever more fantastical tales without compromising their authority in the real world. These tales take on the a-temporal qualities of the fable, removed from lived, entropic time; their own, temporal kind of auratic distance. This Chinese-box effect is particularly notable and effective in the Ashmolean; within the museum is the segregated

[442]John Milton, 'Lycidas' in *The Complete Poems,* ed. John Leonard, (London: Penguin Books, 1998), pp.41-46, p.42

wing of Western Art, which deliberately distinguishes itself from the new Mather extension, forcing the visitor to traverse liminal passages such as the lobby staircase, for instance, in order to reach its exclusive, reified space. Even further interiorized in this space are other cloisters, 'English Delftware', 'Dutch Still Lives' and the small, chapel-like gallery dedicated to the 'Pre-Raphaelites'. Protected by arches or heavy doors, these rooms are removed further still from the profane world, and in them history, barred from entering, seems to cease.

The uncanny chronotope is the skewed reflection of the sublime. As the sublime removes the visitor from lived time, the uncanny moment disturbs their perception of it. As the sublime momentarily unites all awareness and knowledge into a single moment, so the uncanny produces confusion and a loss of singularity and certainty. The uncanny, according to Jentsch, is an experience of disorientation, a not-quite-homeliness and an uncertainty as to the relation between sentient extants and the world into which they fall.[443] In the museum, it is entirely possible for sublime environments and the techniques which produce them to slip over into the uncanny, and, as with the sublime, the production of the uncanny moment may be engineered and analyzed through tools both prosodic and narratological.

One prosodic form shared by the sublime and the uncanny is that of repetition. Poe wrote that the refrain - a repeated line or number of lines in a poem or song - produces pleasure, and it is certainly the case that repeated motifs and lighting schemes, as found in the arcades of the OUNHM, produce a strong sense of stability and identity.[444] Repetition, as

[443]Jentsch, p.8

[444]E. A. Poe, *The Raven and other Poems, Preceded by The Philosophy of Composition,* (Leipzig: Pandora, no publication date), p.10

'Plotting Time' and 'Disrupting the Arrow' showed, can lead to certainty and comfort. It gives a sense of eternality, of permanence. But that kind of comfort can be disingenuous and disconcerting. Something sinister lurks below the most ritualized repetitive spaces. The frequent recurrence of architectural form in the History of Life, and 'Greek and Roman Sculpture' galleries of the OUNHM and Ashmolean respectively, reinforce the authority of the paradigms each espouse, whether scientific or cultural. As Bal has pointed out, there is an element of imperialism, or at least dogmatism, intentional or otherwise, at the base of this kind of repetition, for in the recurrence of the same what is known is reinforced, and what is new and different hidden or elided.[445]

Fig.9.10: Ritualised Reification. Statue of a Priestess in Greek and Roman Sculpture. Ashmolean. Photograph the Author.

[445]Mieke Bal, 1996, pp.204-5

This understanding of uncanny repetition is largely negative; but turning a literary lens upon it, a more nuanced picture can be drawn out that exposes the positive aspects of the uncanny and how deeply affective its results can be. The anaphoric repetition of Allen Ginsberg's Howl quoted in 'The Rhythm of Time' is an enforced propelling list which pulls characters and readers out of shared lived time; almost like the tumbling objects of the overcrowded Pitt Rivers.

Spaces in which objects and styles are so repetitive as to be almost indistinguishable from each other - the ultimate form of *rime riche* - are perhaps the most disturbing, because they are suggestive of stasis and of 'hollowness.'

> Aside from recurrence, revision and commensurate symbolic reference, echoes also reveal emptiness. Since objects always muffle or impede acoustic reflection, only empty places can create echoes of lasting clarity.[446]

Identical repetitions can only occur in undifferentiated spaces, spaces which do not change. These are non-living, desolate spaces. But they are rare - and are not to be found in the Oxford museums studied here. The true echo speaks of difference as well as identically, for it always returns with 'a quality not present in the original'.[447] In physical, lived, human and writerly space, which is new on each viewing and in which there are extended spaces of place and time, there can be no identical repetition, only echoes. Thus the museum, though it might seem to embody a mausoleum-like permanence, cannot help but be transient.

[446]Danielewski, p.46
[447]Ibid., p.42

Echoes can also be disordered and irregular. As Sylvia Plath showed in 'Daddy', this can be used to create tension through the unpredictable recurrence of rhymes, or even a denial of their resolution. Such disruption can be seen in the Pitt Rivers, where objects and cases of similar forms occur quite unexpectedly throughout the museum, creating a disordered, almost chaotic rhyme scheme. The cases built by Sage, which are so characteristic of the Pitt Rivers, occur unpredictably throughout it, arising unexpectedly, in various locations and articulations, and with various contents.

Narratological strategies can also be used to design and analyze uncanny spaces, as the work of Paul Basu and others has shown. In 'The Labyrinthine Aesthetic in Contemporary Museum Design', Basu examines the nature and reasoning of the labyrinth, which he deems significant for the design of museums in the contemporary 'uncertain and relativistic' Zeitgeist.[448] In Leibeskind's museum designs he finds precisely this kind of disjuncture and disturbance, for they refuse to accord to the visitor's expectations of museal certainty and authority. The picaresque structure of the Pitt Rivers Museum, which disrupts socially agreed forms of historical temporality, turns this museum into such an eldritch space; left to move at will in a plethora of unknown things, the visitor may well feel disoriented and uncertain in the dark. They have entered not a divine temple of enlightenment and revelation, but a dark and forbidding house of mystery.

[448]Basu, p.49

Conclusion

There is a risk that, in seeking to precisely engineer the occurrence of the sublime and uncanny, the exact form of ecstasy produced becomes fetishized. To seek to produce only sublime moments of wonder is disingenuous; the world is not a purely good place, and if a museum is to communicate all aspects of human experience, it should be prepared to display that which is distressing and disturbing - it should be prepared to discomfort the visitor and use the uncanny.

It is crucial that those attempting to produce such moments, like Skolnick, bear in mind the moral and ethical implications of emotive manipulation. They should remember that epiphanaic experiences, sublime or uncanny, are not merely imposed from outside, but are generated within the emotive world of the visitor. The museum maker cannot expect to create specific kinds of epiphany on their terms alone; they depend on too many other factors and, as has been shown in this chapter, complete communication of emotion or experience is impossible.

To seek to manufacture intense experiences of wonder or horror is in many ways a praiseworthy aim. To seek to create epiphany, however, is far more questionable. Whilst the creation of wonder, awe, fear and the like permits the precise reasons and characteristics of those emotions to be manipulated in every visitor's experience, the word epiphany presupposes that this experience will produce something more than a temporary emotion - permanent change in knowledge or behavior. Epiphany, historically, refers to the manifestation of God in the world - a divine form of revelation which has long term effects and results in a form of knowledge that assumes the existence of transcendental, eternal

truths. This thesis has at times directly opposed this assumption, taking a much more relational approach; for even if such absolutes exist, they cannot be perceived within the realm of human experience. Museum makers, in particular those seeking to create auratic environments, must be careful in their choice of words if they do not want to sound, or be, dogmatic or indoctrinal.

Aura is not located in one single object or produced by one architectural or intellectual technique. Aura is relational, existing in the intersections between object, environment and observer. Aura is temporally based, arising from the perceived diegetic, historic and rhythmic relationships between things and conscious beings. Aura is temporally affective; it produces a sense of location in space and time, a sense of stability or disorientation. Aura comes in recognizable forms, but it is not bound strictly or at all to any of their conventions. Above all, aura is a crucial factor in the relationships built between visitor and museum and, whether intentionally designed or contingently produced, it must not be ignored.

Conclusion

However, the work – the work of art, the literary work – is neither finished nor unfinished: it is. What it says is exclusively this: that it is – and nothing more.

Maurice Blanchot, The Space of Literature

What Has This Thesis Shown?

There are three main observational strands which stem from this thesis, and which form the basis for this part of the conclusion. The first relates to the nature of museum timescapes and temporal activity, the second to the ontological nature of museums themselves, and the final strand illuminates some of the strange relationships and networks within which museums are entangled. All of these themes are intricately related, and they are threaded together throughout this closing discussion.

The peculiarity of museum temporality has long been a given; it has, indeed, been something of a black box. This thesis sought to open that box, and actively and specifically question and explore the qualities of museum temporality and, as a result find out which, if any, of those qualities were responsible for that strangeness. It has certainly uncovered particular features of museum timescapes which contribute to their character. These will be explored below. Whilst this is being done, however, one vital thing should be borne in mind. This whole thesis has, by implication, perpetuated that black-boxed assumption that there is something unique, something special about museum temporality which makes it worthy of investigation. But is there? Is a museum timescape really so strange after all?

Timescapes has shown that museum temporality is not intractable, but that it is pliant and workable, a quality to be manipulated to create an effect. This manipulation may be intentionally temporal, or temporal consequences may arise as a result of attempts directed to other ends. For instance, tense in museum text can be used to generate a sense of historical distance or proximity between the observing visitor and the observed, related, events, as it is in the Benin and Nuer panels in the Pitt Rivers. However, this kind of spatialization of temporal relations can also arise without visible, apparently deliberate temporal action at all. The nameless fossils of the OUNHM, for instance, bear no historicising markings, no indications of age, and no tensorial stances. As a consequence, they have an overtly temporal location – an eternal present.

Temporality, then, is a constantly affective quality of museums and can be directly or indirectly manipulated. But who is responsible for manipulating it, and how do they do so? Clearly, those who create museums have an enormous role in manufacturing museum timescapes. The architects who design and build museum environments create external and internal linkages between museum spaces and various parts, near or far away, of the outside world; connections between different timescapes as well as different geographical locations. Exhibition designers shape internal spaces, giving displays rhythms and plots, thus characterising their temporalities, and the curators who place and interpret objects further complicate this internal temporality by adding smaller and smaller, and more and more intricate, threads to its web.

However, one thing which this thesis has shown is the important and distinct role of the audience, individual or en-mass. Though the precise nature of each individual's reactions to

the spaces of museums can never be collectively communicated, it can be known that it is one of interpretation. This thesis always positioned museums as writerly texts and their visitors as scriptors; thus, the museum timescape which each visitor encounters is formed, in part, from their own interpretative framework and, therefore, is unique only to them and to their moment of interaction with the space.

The makers and scriptors of museum timescapes call into action a number of devices by means of which they shape their temporal spaces. Objects may be characterised, interpreted or framed in a variety of ways, may be arranged in plotted or prosodic patterns, may be lit in order to reify and remove them, or may be used for their intrinsic, evocative effect; all have some impact upon the temporal experiences of their interlocutors, whether as part of a larger whole or in their own individual and bounded timeplaces. And every single object, of course, is at the mercy of the viewer, who brings them into their own, unique, intellectual and emotional configurations of memory, the now, and the future.

Though particularly intense temporal atmospheres coalesce around individual objects, the material holdings of museums are not the only means by which their temporalities are engendered. The environmental factors which identify a space contribute to its character and its temporality. The shapes of rooms create rhythms and plots, their size a sense of intimacy or grandeur, thus modifying the temporal relationships their inhabitants hold with the spaces, the contents of those spaces, and with each other.

Semantic aspects of the spaces are also crucial. Colour can certainly contribute to the rhythmic qualities of the environment, creating ictic points of stress or calm singularity, but it can also be used to evoke specific, identifiable chronotopic sites; the white so associated

with the classical world is a prime example. However, there are many forms of the museum chronotope, and not all are characterized by colour. Classical temples and cathedrals, chronotopes of religion and ritual, traditional art galleries of quiet intellectual contemplation, chronotopes of learning and science, and theatrical chronotopes of wonderment and drama are made from the colours, materials, and formal stylistics of museum spaces, coming together to form sites of particular and recognizable character.

Museum timescapes may be malleable, but they are not passive. The temporal tenor of a space has a significant impact upon the nature and representation of the things which inhabit and form it, and upon how the museum is understood by itself and by others. A discussion of this active role forms the basis for the following paragraphs.

The chronotopic cast and subject of a museum room changes the way in which an object placed within it is perceived, whether as object of art or object of ethnography, as something positioned as part of the past or the present. Spatialized temporality affects the distance between object and viewer, whether the visitor perceives the object as part of the present museum arrangement or an image of something, estranged from the now and interpolated from another world. Interpretation, language and framing also affect represented individuals and communities in a similar way, casting them in a realistic or mythic light and thus causing the observing visitor to relate to them in a different way.

Temporality in museums acts upon museum visitors, influencing their understandings of their own identities and roles, their relationships with other conscious beings and other times and spaces. Dependent upon the timescape in which they find themselves, they may feel isolated and enclosed, or part of a wider social and geographical whole, may feel as

though they are a homodiegetic part of a created environment and plot, or a heterodiegetic, external observer. The nature of the timescape in which they find themselves, then, has a demonstrable effect upon their perception of reality.

A temporally focussed investigation of museums emphasises how complex their relationships to reality are; indeed, it points out how complex is the nature of reality itself. Temporality affects the vraisemblance of a museum space in various ways. The conditions of removal and deliberate arrangement distance the museum space from quotidian life outside, and create a temporality differentiated by its separation, deliberately ordered and arranged, and thus invraisemblable to the more chaotic everyday. Yet in museums this separation is expected – so as naturalised 'other places' of Western society, the accord to their expected role- as part of the world, rather than attempts to mimetically represent it, they can be culturally and generically vraisemblable – despite, and because of, their removal from reality.

Temporal investigation also raises the question of authenticity, in regard to museum representations of objects, and in regard to the objects themselves. The analysis performed in this thesis has shown, through vraisemblance, that absolute authenticity is unattainable and that the object which, in fact, comes closest to authenticity is something paradoxically unreal; the Japanese Tea House of the Ashmolean. It was never used in the context typically associated with its form, but neither was it ever torn from its original home and nor did it have its initial purpose altered. It is the Oxford museums' ultimate expression of the strange relationship between museum exhibition, other forms of representation, and truth. Perhaps

it indicates that sometimes a museum should not seek to present literal or absolute reality, but a more alethic kind of ecstatic truth.

The temporalities of specific museums can, however, set them apart from generic conventions to which they may appear to ascribe. A temporal glance at the Pitt Rivers, for instance, shows how its porous and self-reflective actual temporality differs from, and undermines, the fossilised status it often appears to have. It is not, after all, the archetypal ethnographic museum, does not conform to that conventions of that form, but is a metafictional comment upon that stereotype and its history.

The temporalized museum is porous and intertextual. Doors and windows inside museums allow their various internal timescapes and chronotopic sites to interact and allow the temporalities of the outside world to enter in through sight, sound or the movements of visitors and staff. The intertextual museum is a place of quotations; taking objects from other times and spaces, words and images from external sources, objects and collections from other museums, they are a constantly unstable, shifting nexus of relationships.

As they draw things in, so things are drawn out of these temporal museums. They can be environments in an intricate relational architext; in Oxford in particular, they refer to and are referred to in each other and in the cultural milieu around them, from tourist brochures, to fiction and television, as well as being attached to Oxford's chronotopia of study.

Paradoxically, however, the timescapes of museums are externally bounded and filled with boundaries inside. Walls and stylistic and functional variation make museums distinctively different places from the world outside, enclosed spaces in which temporality functions in specific and unique ways. There are internal borders and boundaries too, physical and

abstract. These are not just spatial boundaries created by cases, doors and walls but temporal boundaries; boundaries between the synecdochic object and the things which it is used to represent, the absence and spectrality of the latter a constant part of the temporal museum. Boundaries exist, too, between the object and the viewer; these can be produced by prosodic or narratological means. The enclosure of objects in cases can bring them Icticity – an immediate visual closeness – but can distance their actuality. The words used to describe and contextualise the objects and spaces can, through tense, grammatical person and tone, bring in or distance the visitor, make them homo or heterodiegetic – this level of involvement can, too, be affected by the size, arrangement, and decorative style of the space.

Boundaries are also produced by more ineffable means. Narrative and prosodic structures, arranged temporal sjuzet, bind and contain events and fix them in particular forms so that the museum concerned can tell a single, comprehensible story to its visitors. It may seem freeing for a museum to remove these boundaries and place responsibility for the plotting of experience onto the visitor. However, this only changes the source from which the boundaries come, and makes the nature of those boundaries ever more unknowable. This is the last, most deeply embedded boundary of museum temporality, one which presents a timescape, even in a single moment, being complete, whole and absolute. At any one moment in time there may be any number of conscious individuals inhabiting a museum space – and the timescape each of them perceives is not based solely upon the space itself but upon their own unique, particular, and constantly mutable Dasein.

So museum timescapes are relational and mutable, and a product of many sources: society, individuals, objects, words, ideas and architectures. But that which ignites a timescape, which brings it into life and performance is not located in any one of these things, but at the points at which these things collide. That is why museum timescapes are unique, that is why they are special and strange.

But it remains to ask and attempt to answer the question of how strange they actually are. Museum time is malleable and managed – but so is that of the theatre. It is manipulative – but so is that of the shopping mall. Museum timescapes are variously vraisemblable, measured against different levels of reality – so are the timescapes of books, poems, plays, the cinema. Museum timescapes are paradoxically porous and bounded - as are universities and offices. Finally, museums and their timescapes are relational, perceptual language games, as are all other parts of observed and comprehensible existence. Solid reality might be out there, but they cannot be seen cleanly, without human interpretation. Museum timescapes are strange then, strange and unique – but no more, and no less, than all other aspects of the universe moulded by human hands or eyes.

What Has This Thesis Created?

Perhaps the most significant achievement of this thesis is the toolkit it has created and used. It has appropriated terminologies and techniques from the study of literature and proved their value in the analysis of museum temporality. If nothing else it leaves in its wake a new language for exploring and describing the relationships between museums and time.

This collection of strategies and the lexicon which makes them up need not, however, be restricted solely to the study of museum temporality. There is no reason why the toolkit

should not be extended to make it of use in the epistemological and ontological exploration of other aspects of the museum; it may further some of the topics already covered here, for instance, and would be of value for exploring notions of presence, authenticity and auracity outside their relationship to the temporal.

It also offers a language with which museum and exhibition spaces in general can be analysed and examined. It proved to be of use to this author in their analysis and critical review of the 'Made for Trade' exhibition at the Pitt Rivers Museum, conducted in the October of 2012. Literary terms such as transtextuality, icticity and rhyme have great descriptive value, and are useful tools for expressing the more ineffable reasons for an exhibition's success or failure.

It is a toolkit which can also be applied outside the specific study of museums, and which can be turned to the exploration of other physical environments. Other social spaces, such as theatres, cinemas, parks, shopping centres, fairgrounds and universities might be usefully investigated using this framework. It may also be applied to the exploration of more personal and private spaces, such as homes, bedrooms and gardens.

The critical framework of literature that this thesis offers is not, it should be noted, merely of use in the analysis of space and the physical aspects of existence. It can also be adopted with the purpose of illuminating the more mutable and ephemeral relationships and roles of human beings. It provides, for instance, a critical academic idiom for the description of curatorial activity within the museum and it can also be used in this way for others who create and manage physical spaces and experiences. It is also useful for describing the social

nature of the creation of space, and the role of the audience as well as that of the maker; it allows much space for the recognition of the relational nature of creation and inscription.

It is a toolkit which is solid and grounded, based upon legitimated structures which have already proven their practical worth. Yet it is a toolkit which recognises that it is not an absolute quantity, that it can always be added to, deducted from, and differently employed. What *Timescapes* has produced is, fundamentally, a pool from which diverse elements of academic study can draw, and into which they can feed back their own innovative approaches and ideas.

What Has This Thesis Contributed To?

This thesis sought to fill a lacuna in the current scholarly literature upon museums and time. It has done so by conducting a specifically temporal analysis of three iconic museums. Thus it contributes naturally to two abstract fields of academic discourse – that of museum studies, and that of the study of time. This latter cuts across disciplinary bounds; time is a boundary object, relevant in sociology, philosophy, anthropology and many other disciplines; in particular those which focus upon the spatial environment. Because it is based on a physical, embodied, research method, it can also contribute to intellectual studies in this area, and its methodology and conclusions may well be of relevance to those who work in architecture and space science, as well as museum and exhibition design.

It should be clear that *Timescapes* has also contributed to three spaces in particular. To the Ashmolean, Pitt Rivers and Oxford University Museum of Natural History it offers a new understanding of themselves, their spaces, and what they communicate both explicitly and implicitly. It does not offer them a new historical exploration, but a new exploration of

themselves as they are in the present; a strange and unusual paratext which they might use to continually adapt and become increasingly self-aware.

Timescapes also offers value to the discipline of literary studies. Although it uses concepts long known in this field, it combines them in a new way, around an object unfamiliar to those who focus on texts. Firstly, it shows how techniques gleaned from various modes of literary production, from poetry to prose, can be combined in the productive analysis of a single text – albeit that in this case the 'texts' concerned were, in fact, museums.

Museums are the second contribution of this thesis to literature. Whilst *Timescapes* has never claimed the synonymy of museums and literary works, it has treated them as partial analogies. In taking tools from literature, *Timescapes* has opened a corridor between these two forms of cultural performance. Hopefully, the flow of influence and inspiration down this corridor will be reciprocal. Perhaps in looking into the literature of museum and material culture studies, particularly into their more philosophical facets, literary studies and those who produce literature, could come to see museums and their contents as more than settings and props, and as more than symbols and metaphors, but as theoretical and artistic inspiration.

This thesis sought to contribute to cross-disciplinary and cross-media dialogue whilst maintaining the distinctiveness of the academic fields and media forms concerned. It sought to offer a new way of thinking about museums by appropriating the tools of an unfamiliar, occasionally arcane, discourse, and perhaps as a result to offer something back to literature. But museum studies and literature are only two of the many disciplines which could benefit from such cross-fertilisation; the contribution of *Timescapes* is not just that it offers scholars

of literature and museums the chance to open their eyes to the work of each other, but that it offers a model for such practice across all possible disciplines.

It is hoped, too, that this thesis has something of value to the practical endeavours of those who create museums, exhibitions, and other social spaces. Though it has not yet seen actual use in this regard, it is there for museum makers to read and refer to for ideas and descriptive tools. In the section of this conclusion dealing with the future implications of this work, this will be reflected upon further. For it is now time to turn to the next most significant contribution of this thesis: the observations it has made about the nature of museum temporality and the emergent reflections its explorations have provoked upon the characteristics and qualities of museums more broadly.

What Are The Implications of This Thesis?

This thesis, the toolkit it created and the museum characteristics it has brought to light have implications for all sectors of work immediately associated with the museum, and some less directly aligned. These implications are both academic and practical, bearing upon the theoretical and practice-based aspects of the museological discipline. In this section of the conclusion, the academic aspects will be dealt with first; but, although it may seem as though this thesis has remained mainly in conceptual realms, its practical applications are broad-ranging and important, so it is necessary to deal with these thereafter.

There is a need to explore with more subtlety the relationships between museums, 'reality' and the associated concepts of 'authenticity' and 'the genuine'. *Vraisemblance* points the way to this more nuanced approach, indicating that museums have more than a 'double' existence either real or fictional, for it shows that there are many parameters by which

'truth' can be constituted, and thus that the bipartite division between reality and imagination implied by Morris is not really tenable in a temporalized, literary world.

As a result, it is important that theorists of museum ontology look beyond the black box of the museum-as-heterotopia, critically considering what this concept really offers and what its limits are. It is no longer enough to situate museums as simply places outside the everyday, and therefore 'special', for this flattens and hides their complexity. Museums are *part of* life's strangenesses, not outside them. It is important, therefore, to turn critical attention to a consideration of what precisely it is that makes museums the bizarre and yet quotidian sites that they are; for only then can their true value in culture at large be assessed, argued for and fulfilled.

There are repercussions, too, for the specific constituent parts of museums, notably their objects and collections, and the devices which frame them. In terms of material culture theory and the ontology of objects, the complexity of authenticity in regard to museums continues to play an important role. Looking temporally and literarily at museum objects shows the absences which surround them and how impossible it is for them to be mimetic reproductions for the worlds from which they come. It is important to take the literary readings of objects into theoretical realms, to investigate not just how they might be read in quite a literal sense, but how they function within the concepts of literary theory; thus can be found a new mode of understanding them. The devices which frame objects – the interpretive media – are vital parts of this understanding and can be understood within the conceptual frameworks of literature – perspective, plot, semantics and prosody – which

have been utilized above. They too can be justifiably, and profitably, be understood by both temporal and literary means.

Until this point, reflections upon the consequences of this project have remained somewhat philosophical. Yet for all its theoretical abstraction, *Timescapes* also has practical ramifications. It is to these which this conclusion must now turn, for there are important issues to consider, related to the processes of museum creation, the recognition of the roles of museum-maker and museum visitor, and regarding the ethics of representation which emerge from this project.

Firstly, the processes of museum creation must be considered. This thesis quite overtly offers concepts of value to the museum maker – metre, prosody, narratology, anachrony and transtextuality are all notions now available for museum and exhibition designers to exploit. These are strategies by means of which they can extend and move beyond 'narrative space'. For they highlight the power of more esoteric literary tools, tools which disrupt cohesion or create a different kind of continuity, and which at times disturb comfort and comprehension, but which because of those disturbing qualities retain a strong and affective expressive power. They might be used in the arrangement of cases and rooms, or indeed in the ways in which objects are laid out and shaped within the confines of a display. They might be used in combination with architecture and the actions of the ambient environment – light, sound and scent, and they might be deployed further in the graphical and textual elements of the museum along with tense and grammatical person. For this project has shown how the literary text – and similarly the museum – operates on different diegetic levels and in different temporal layers, and that the confluences and disparities of

these might be emphasised or exaggerated to provoke emotional, intellectual and perhaps bodily responses.

Literature and time, once brought into museums, illuminate and permit the more imaginative, fictional aspects of their natures to come to the fore. The various diegetic levels of museums and the manifold forms of vraisemblance within which they are entangled point to their fabricated, novelistic and poetic elements. Once this is recognised it can be capitalized upon, allowing for playfulness and metafictional self-awareness and, thereby, for individual museum's voices and personalities to be heard and seen. Thus can museums, in the manner of the self-reflective Pitt Rivers gain identity and presence, rather than falling into obscure homogeneity. Concomitantly, the various scriptors which create museums and museum experiences can be appreciated in new, enhanced ways. For instance, if the authorial roles of the curator and museum designer were given more prominence and artistic credit, rather than being subsumed within the institutional monologue, museums could be conceived of as subjective, artistic, creative performances to be held publicly responsible for their biases and opinions; able to be controversial and open to much more genuinely forthright and sincere debate. It is only once the background from which exhibitions arise is made plain that truly equal and dialogic discussion can arise.

Out of this arises, too, increased focus upon the nature of the curator and the visitor. Both are museum scriptors, and both are independent entities in the formation of unique museum experiences. For the curator, this thesis offers an explanatory idiom for their activity and for the visitor a recognition that museum audiences are made up from heterogeneous, individual parts, able to rescript the museum space offered to them in a

fashion meaningful to themselves. Literary notions of personhood, focalisation and scriptor give nuance in the description of the various positions which conscious museum interlocutors can fill, and also enable the analyst to picture the hierarchies of power that these sets of relations may represent, imply, or destroy.

By using a literary and temporal framework, it is possible to raise certain ethical questions in regard to the structures of power and representation which are present within any museum environment, whether these be currently recognised or not. This investigation has thrown into sharp relief some of the attitudes towards peoples, cultures and even individuals which certain museums hold; the tools which it has deployed to do so might well be used in the exploration and critique of other institutions. Particular plotted structures and uses of tense actively place museums in sets of temporal relations with the objectified beings on display and such patterns have significant implications and consequences for the way the visitor relates to that museum and to the object, peoples or person placed on display. In this case in particular, the literary study of temporality has engaged with some of the institutional prejudices which still exist, however unwittingly, in a time when there seems to be a quest to drive them out. The implications and meanings of such biases remain to be investigated; an outcome of this thesis for others to take on, should they so choose, using the tools offered here. These tools also have the potential to offer possible solutions to problematic situations – particularly those in which pejorative representation is due to an unfortunate use of a museum's literary rhetoric.

There are many avenues of exploration that this thesis has opened up. There may be some which readers of this thesis find themselves, which arise when it moves from being an

examination piece to historical document, read in the context of other projects and structures of thought. It is not a document designed to be set in stone – though its author has sought to provoke action and thought of a specific kind, she is also fully aware that emergent and unexpected results will arise from it, as time and transtextuality tighten their grip. This thesis should be understood as an interpretable artefact too, something changeable, able to grow in meaning or fade as needed, something to be looked at, read, and rescripted with other eyes.

Appendix One: Gallery Questions Template

Plot

1. What shape is the/ are the plot/s in this gallery? Are they linear, episodic, fragmented, rhizomatic?

2. What devices are used to signify this shape?

3. How overt is the shape of the plot in this gallery?

4. What are the temporal effects of these plotted shapes? For instance, how do they create and intensify psychological states, and what is their impact upon the relationship between readers, authors and text?

5. What is the directionality of the plot of this gallery? Is it causal and linear, inverted linear, associative, cyclical, a-directional?

6. What devices are used to signify this directionality?

7. How many plots are to be found in this gallery?

8. Are multiple plots related to each other in this gallery? If so, how?

9. How fixed is the plot in this gallery?

10. How is its fixity articulated?

11. Where is the beginning in this gallery?

12. What devices are used to signify this beginning?

13. How many beginnings are to be found in this gallery?

14. Where is the end in this gallery?

15. What devices are used to signify this end?

16. How many ends are to be found in this gallery?

17. Where are the 'crux' points in this gallery?

18. What devices are used to signify these crux points?

19. Does the plot include cardinal and catalystic events? Which elements of the gallery can be deemed cardinal or catalystic? What is their impact?

20. Where are the temporal lacunae in this gallery?

21. What devices are used to signify these lacunae – are they signified?

22. Are the lacunae historical, geographical, psychological, or based upon content?

23. What are the impacts of the lacunae?

24. Is this a ‘writerly’ gallery space?

25. How do these plot features generate the speed or movement of the plot?

26. Where might literary equivalents to these plotted features be found?

Perspective

1. How many basic perspectives does this gallery present, and what devices are used to articulate them?

    1.1. Authorial

    1.2. Narratorial

    1.3. Readerly

    1.4. How are these related to each other, and can entities shift from one to the other?

2. Where are the perspectives located in relation to the content of the gallery?

    2.1. How is the 'person' system generated and utilized?

    2.2. How are heterodiegetic and homodiegetic perspectives generated and utilized?

    2.3. How do these systems relate to each other, and what is the resulting impact upon the timescape of the space?

3. When are the perspectives located in relation to the content of the gallery? In the past, future, present, or achronic?

4. What devices are used to relate the various perspectives to each other?

    4.1. How is 'framing' used?

    4.2. Is it possible to hold more than one perspective at the same time in this gallery?

5. Can perspectives change in this gallery?

    5.1. What devices enable alterations in perspective?

        5.1.1. 'Internal' character shifts such as reversal and recognition

        5.1.2. 'External' shifts such as focalisor alteration, changes of framing, changes in modes of discourse, voice or tone.

    5.2. What is the temporal impact of these internal and external devices?

    5.3. Are the shifts subtle or obvious?

    5.4. How do these shifts impact upon the timescape of the space?

6. Are there perspectives which the gallery itself does not generate or control?

7. How do these elements impact upon the interactions between author, narrator, audience and content, and their resulting temporal positions?

8. Where can literary equivalents to these perspectival elements be found?

Language/ The Lexicon

1. Which devices make up the lexicon of this gallery?

2. What 'parts of speech' (noun, pronoun, adjective, determiner, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection) appear in the gallery?

    2.1. Which elements of the gallery lexicon provide which functions?

    2.2. Which features of the lexical elements identify their particular functions within this specific space?

    2.3. Do/could some parts of the lexicon operate in more than one functional role?

3. How are tense and aspect constructed in this space?

    3.1. Which lexical elements construct tense and aspect?

    3.2. What is the impact upon the temporality of the space, its relationship to the audience and the outside world?

4. How do the parts of speech in this gallery generate a sense of spatio-temporal reality?

    4.1. Are the 'noun' functions concrete or abstract?

    4.2. Are the 'determiners' definite or indefinite?

    4.3. Are 'adverbial' functions stative or more abstract and 'dynamic'? Do they express 'manner', 'time', 'place' or 'degree'? 'Direction', 'frequency' 'extent' or 'instrument'?

4.4. How do the adverbial and adjectival elements create metaphor and realism in the space?

4.5. How does the gallery lexicon contribute to the generation of particular chronotopic spaces?

4.6. Does this gallery use new, strange and unique lexical forms, based upon recognizable structures, but clearly 'Carrollian'?

5. How do the parts of speech in this gallery articulate motion, in terms of directionality and speed and what is the resulting impact upon the timescape?

5.1. How do the 'verb' functions articulate speed or slowness, or the nature of the motion?

5.2. How do 'adverb' functions augment these?

5.3. How does the use of 'noun' functions impact upon speed or stasis?

5.4. How do stative and dynamic adverbial functions impact upon speed or stasis?

6. How do the different lexical elements use their material and stylistic form to contribute to the temporality of the gallery, and what is the resulting impact upon the timescape?

6.1. Are the lexical elements archaic, futuristic or very of the moment?

6.2. What is the impact of slang or subject-specific nomenclature (both textual and physical (fly-traps, for example) on the timescape of the space?

7. Who is in control of the gallery lexicon(s)?

Gallery Prosody

1. What devices does this gallery use to articulate rhythm?

2. How many rhythmic groups does this gallery have?

3. How big are these rhythmic groups?

4. How regular or irregular are they in their internal form?

5. How similar are they to those around them?

6. How regular or irregular are they in terms of position?

7. What devices does this gallery use as punctuation?

8. What kinds/degrees of punctuation are to be found in this gallery?

Is it elocutionary – signalling pauses to guide the reading?

Is it syntactic – that is, indicating grammatically intended sense?

Is it dietic/emphatic – stressing a word or phrase?

9. Are conventions of punctuation flouted in this gallery?

10. What is the metrical patternation of this gallery?

    10.1. How many levels of stress patternations are to be found in the gallery?

    10.2. What devices create these stress patternations?

10.3. Are they rising or falling?

10.4. How clear are these stress patternations?

10.5. How do different stress patternations create a sense of movement or speed?

10.6. How do the different stress patternations relate – do they strengthen, or undermine each other?

11. How does this gallery generate repetitive and echoic effects?

11.1. Which devices does this gallery use to create repetitive and echoic effects?

11.2. How often do echoic effects appear?

11.3. How strong are these echoic effects?

11.4. How are these echoes placed within the gallery?

11.5. What is the role of the echoic devices in creating the rhythmic structure of the gallery as a whole?

Appendix Two: Glossary

[All the below definitions are phrased in the author's terms, but rely upon original sources including An Oxford Modern English Grammar, The Poetry Handbook, The Oxford Companion to English Literature, The Dialogic Imagination and certain other texts to be found in the bibliography]

A

Adjective: an adjective is a part of speech used to describe a noun, when that noun is positioned as the referent of a phrase.

Dynamic: dynamic adjectives describe a temporary condition of a thing, which may be under the control of the thing being described, and which may change at a moment's notice. Thus, one might describe a soldier in a combat situation as 'brave,' though in other instances they may not be so.

Stative: stative adjectives describe a state or condition which can, broadly speaking, be considered permanent and inherent. For instance, one might describe a 'red' ball; the ball is, and always will be, that colour.

Adverb: like adjectives, adverbs are often descriptive. They act to modify verbs, adjectives, and even other adverbs.

A-historic: something outside the conventionalised run of history. Not to be confused with a-temporal.

Alethia: alethia is the ancient Greek word for truth. Here the term is used in the sense in which Heidegger used it in *Being and Time* - that it means disclosure, unconcealment.

Alethic privilege: in Six Walks in the Fictional Woods, Umberto Eco defines the alethic privilege of fiction as that which allows us to believe in the truth of the world which it creates or discloses, despite the fact that it may be unreal in concrete terms.

Allegoresis: allegoresis is the creation or interpretation of allegorical forms - that is, forms of prose which are based upon extended metaphors or partially concealed meanings behind its actions and characters. George Orwell's Animal Farm is a contemporary example.

Alliteration: the repetition of the same consonants, or consonant sounds, in two or more proximate words.

Anachronies: according to Gerard Genette, an anachrony is a discordance between the orderings of story and narrative - or fabula and sjuzet. Anachronic forms include analepsis, prolepsis, elision and paralipsis.

Analepsis: for Genette, analepsis entailed ‘any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment’. In other words, analepsis look back - they are retrospective.

Complete: complete analepsis fill in gaps from earlier sections of the main narrative and return the reader back to the point from whence the analepsis began.

Anaphora: the repetition of a word or phrase in successive units. An example given in this thesis is the consistently repeated 'who' of Allen Ginsberg's Howl.

Antaeic magic: for Mattias Ekman, the term antaeic magic, translated from the German anteishce magie, refers to the capability of any site, usually historic, to provoke an intensity of experience through sensory involvement with a specific object or thing.

A-priori: A-priori concepts are knowable without any experience of their iteration in the experiential world. Translated, it means 'before the fact.' Its twin and opposite is a-posteriori - that is, propositions or concepts which can only be known after they are experienced - 'after the fact.'

Arché: translated from the Greek, arché means 'beginning', and in Presocratic thought was used to describe the fundamental source of all beings.

-writing: arché-writing is that original form of language which cannot ever make itself present, and which shows the disjunction, the rupture, between the order of the sign and the order of the signified. Further information is to be found in Jacques Derrida's On Grammatology.

Architext: the architext is 'the entire set of transcendent categories - types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres - from which emerges each singular text.' (Genette, Palimpsests, p.1). In other words, the architext is all that can be related to any one piece of written literature. In the case of the museum, this may be defined as all the surrounding categories such as type of museum, type of object, geographic and temporal situation of occurrence, etc., from which any museum emerges and in which it operates. Thus, the architext changes subtly over the course of history.

Assonance: the repetition of the same vowels, or vowel sounds, in two or more proximate words.

A-temporal: something without temporal qualities, impossible to experience in conscious life.

Author: in simple terms, the party responsible for the creation of a text, whether that be written or museal. However, the concept of the author is complex and contested. For Barthes the author was something of an unreal figure, a name and an overarching identity for the divergent scriptoral voices which occur in each literary utterance.

B

Black box: a black box is any device or idea which can be used productively without any concept of its internal workings. For many people, for instance, a motor car or computer might be a black box.

C

Caesura: a pause in the middle of a line. Often, they are indicated by stops such as colons or semicolons.

Cardinal Events/ Functions: in narrative, cardinal events provide crucial hinge points - in other words, the literary work cannot proceed without them, and the outcome of that work is influenced by their nature. These are also known as nuclei.

Carnivalesque: Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the Carnival is that of a temporary liberation from a presiding state of affairs or hierarchical ordering, the carnivalesque a kind of expression which turns standard mores on their heads. The carnivalesque is embodied and expressive, and allows a society to renew itself.

Carrollian: having to do with or in the style of Lewis Carroll.

Catalystic Events/ Functions: these fill in the space in between the cardinal events of any given narrative. They are not inherently needed in the story and they may be used to retard its progression. They are also known as 'supplementary' events.

Chronotope: the description of the way time and space are arranged in any given literary work, giving rise to certain standard forms with generic implications. All texts have a chronotopic character, standard or otherwise. For an extended discourse on the chronotope, see Mikhail Bakhtin's The Dialogic Imagination.

Clause: a clause is a grammatical structure which expresses a relationship between a subject and something said about it. This is also known as a subject-predicate relationship.

Concrete poetry: also known as shaped poetry, this is a kind of verse in which the text is organized so as to present a shape or form on the page. It is a form in which pictorial modes of representation are used in combination with verbal.

Conjunctions: conjunctions are words which connect two or more phrases or clauses. They come in two forms.

Co-ordinating: this form of conjunction links two phrases or clauses which are considered to be of equal value.

Subordinating: in subordinating conjunctions, one clause or phrase has primacy over the other to which it is linked.

Consonance: the repetition of medial or terminal consonants in proximate words, rather than the repetition of those at the start of a word - initial consonants - which typify assonance.

Co-presence: the simultaneous existence of a being, extant or event. In this thesis, the term is used to refer to the simultaneous existence of time periods, particularly those of past and present, which are able to exist at the same time because one may be imagined whilst the other may be physically experienced.

Coup de Theatre: a sudden, surprising turn of events which give a new twist to a plot. Associated with peripeteia.

Couplet: a stanza or unit of two lines in poetry.

Closed: a form of couplet in which the second line is end-stopped.

Open: a form of couplet in which the second line is enjambed to the first line of the following couplet.

D

Dasein: a German compound word translated as ‘to be there’. Long used in German philosophy, it is Heideggar’s conceptualisation of the word which it critical here. For Heidegger, dasein refers to ‘the entity which each of us himself is’, and ‘the being of man.’ It’s being is not determined or fixed, but consists in which it is, might and will become.

Defamiliarization: the ways in which language, particularly literature, can make the world seem strange. Used frequently by Russian Formalists.

Dénouement: the final resolution in a plotted structure in which all mysteries and loose ends are usually clarified.

Determiners: determiners precede nouns, and any adjectives describing them, and limit their meaning in some way, often in terms of number or quantity.

Definite article: a form of determiner in which a noun is marked as an identifiable and specific thing, or group of things. Such as, for instance, 'the girl'

Indefinite article: a form of determiner in which a noun is marked as not referring to a specific thing, or group of things. Such as, for instance, 'a girl'

Diachronic analysis: taken from Saussure, this refers to the study of change in a phenomenon, such as a code, such as a word or text, over time, in contrast to synchronic analysis.

Diegesis: strictly speaking, the diegesis is the telling of a story. Often, however, it is used to refer to the world created by the narrative.

Diegetic levels: there are various levels of diegesis - the 'diegetic level' consists of the entities which make up the primary narrative or main story. Those things and events which lie outside this are termed 'extra-diegetic.'

Différance: a word coined by Jacques Derrida to indicate two senses in which language denies us complete meaning: first, based upon Saussure's sign theory, that no linguistic element has a positive meaning, only an effect of meaning arising from its differences from other elements; second, that full meaning is always deferred from one sign to another in an endless sequence.

Direct speech: the direct and exact quotation of something said or thought. Its opposite is indirect speech.

Discourse: a coherent body of statements that produces and supports an account of reality. Better than 'language,' discourse indicates the specific contexts and relationships existing in historically produced uses of language.

E

Ecstatic truth: something meaningful, but not necessarily factual, and which may be incommunicable in language.

Elegiac poetry: poetry mourning death or loss.

Ellipsis: a form of narrative anachrony which involves omission or elision of a portion of the narrative, and which may or may not ever be resolved.

Enjambment: the continuation of syntax or sense into the next line or stanzaic unit in a piece of verse.

Entropy: a quantity measuring the dispersion of unusable energy, or the level of disorder or randomness within a system. Entropic movement, then, is the gradual movement towards disorder, and it is frequently suggested that the universe is entropic - and that, thereby, the movement of temporality is the physical articulation of the gradual descent into that disorder.

Eschatology: the study or representation of the imagined end of the world. In Christian thought, this involves the study of the last judgement and the resurrection.

Epiphany: in religious terms, this is the manifestation of deistic presence in the material world. Since the time of James Joyce, it has been used to also denote secular revelation, a sudden radiant moment of clarity and understanding.

F

Fabula: the world of the story from which a narrative form - the sjuzet, the form of telling, is selected and created.

Focalisor: the conscious position through which events in a narrative - or other literary form - are viewed. This may be the narrator, a character, or even the reader.

Foot: a component of a poetic line, made up by means of a combination of stressed and unstressed beats. The use and even the existence of the foot is a debated quantity. Forms of the foot include the iamb, the phyrric, the spondee, the trochee, and the anapaest.

Frame (narrative): in the study of narrative, 'frame' might be used to refer to any external stories which surround others within them. Arabian Nights, for instance, is comprised of short stories arranged in an overall frame. However, frame may also be used to refer to the hermeneutic relationship existing between the text and the interpreting gaze.

Free Indirect Style: Also known as indirect speech or *indirect libre*, this is a manner of presenting a character's thoughts or utterances in the third person, but from their perspective. In other words, it allows a third person narrative to exploit a first person point of view. It was used by Flaubert in Madame Bovary, and in Zola's The Drinking Den.

G

Grotesque: the literature of the grotesque involves distorted, exaggerated, abnormal and bizarre appearances and behaviours, notably those of human beings, but also those of other extant beings.

H

Haiku: a form of Japanese verse, made up of seventeen syllables in three unlined rhymes of five, seven, and five syllables respectively. It has appealed to many in the West, notably the Imagists.

Hauntology: deriving from Derrida's *Spectres of Marx,* hauntology, unlike its homonym ontology, studies not being and presence, but the ghost – something present yet absent, something not living and yet not dead.

Heterochrony: defined by Michel Foucault in 'Of Other Spaces' as a 'slice in time', the temporal form of the heterotopia.

Heterotopia: In 'Of Other Spaces,' Foucault defined the heterotopia as a real place in which other real sites of a culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. This simplest form of the definition is perhaps the most appropriate designation of a museum. However, heterotopias are also 'absolutely different' from all other sites, and 'outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.' It is this point which makes them more problematic for the museum.

Heterodiegetic: a form of narration in which the narrator is situated outside the diegesis, the action of the story.

Homodiegetic: a form of narration in which the narrator takes part in the diegesis, the action of the story.

Hyperbeat: the addition of an extra syllable, or beat, surplus to the metre, in a line of poetry.

Hypertext (internet): a kind of text which, although not actually present is nonetheless immediately available usually through clicking on a hyperlink. It has an analogy in the footnote, which can be seen as a kind of hypertext.

Hypertext (Genettian): a related, but different definition of hypertext, in which a secondary text, the hypertext, is grafted onto an earlier text - the hypotext - in a manner not that of a commentary.

Both definitions of 'hypertext' are employed in the thesis. Each reference is clarified within the text itself.

Hypotext: the earlier text to which a hypertext is grafted in the Genettian definition of 'hypertext.'

I

Ictus: the stressed beat of a foot, or a stressed object in a museum space

Imagism: a poetic movement flourishing between 1912 and 1917. Led initially by Ezra Pound, and then by Amy Lowell, it rejected the verbosity of 19th century literature, particularly the Romantics, and aimed at clarity, direct communication, and exactness in short lyric verse. They were very influenced by the haiku. The group also included Richard Aldington, 'H.D.,' F.S. Flint, D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, and William Carlos Williams.

in medias res: translated as 'into the middle of things,' the in medias res narrative immediately places the reader in the middle of the action, then uses flashbacks - analepses - to explain the preceding events. It is a form of anachrony.

Intentional fallacy: Wimsatt and Beardsley coined this term to refer to the widespread assumption that the proper interpretation of a literary work is based upon the author's declared or supposed intention in writing it. They argued that, once the poem or work is

published, becomes distanced from the author, and open to other meanings and interpretations. They also remarked that authors themselves are often unreliable in interpreting the intentions or meanings of their own works - deliberately or otherwise.

Intertextuality: according to Genette, intertextuality is the co-presence of two or more texts with each other - that is, the actual presence of one or more in another: 'a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts: that/ is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presences of one text within another.' Quotations, for instance, are intertextual.

Invraisemblable: any textual performance which deviates from the accepted logic of human knowledge. For instance, 'The Marquise called for her carriage and then went to bed,' seems illogical. However, it may be made vraisemblable in the context of the storyworld. See Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics, p.169

K

Konkretisation: the act by means of which a reader fills in and completes a text.

L

Lacunae: A piece of knowledge or action missing from the text. These are sometimes made overtly visible - most often, they are missing, especially in the typically linear narratives which we assume to be mimetic.

Laisse: a verse of unequal length dividing a form of French medieval poem known as a *chanson du geste*, a short epic presenting the exploits of heroic noblemen. The Song of Roland is one of the earliest examples of such verse.

Langue: a term used by Saussure in the *Course* to refer to the rules and conventions of a given language, and possible to apply to other codes. Along with parole, one of the bases of structuralism.

Leptic: a neologism used in this thesis to refer to the seizure of an anachronic movement, particularly those of a repetitive nature.

Lexical: relating to the words or vocabulary of any language.

Lineation: the organisation of a poem into lines

M

Meta-fiction: a kind of fiction which draws attention to its own fictional status. Sterne's Tristram Shandy is a notable example. Self-reference within a text is generally a metafictional device. It should not be confused with metatext.

Metaphor: a widespread figure of speech in which an object, action or idea is referred to by a word or expression usually denoting another thing, indicating their common qualities. "That man is a pig" is a metaphor. It should not be confused with simile.

Metatextuality: the union of a given text with another which need not involve direct citation or naming. Defined by Genette in Palimpsests.

Metre: the rhythmic pattern of beats in a poem. Metrical forms vary across history and geography and may be either accentual - based on patterns of stress, also called qualitative - or syllabic - based upon vowel length or quantity, and also known as quantitative. Modern English verse is both accentual and syllabic.

Metonym: a word, name or expression used to substitute something else with which it is closely associated. It should not be confused with its close relative, synecdoche.

Mimesis: the Greek word for imitation, in literature it is applied to any text understood to be reproducing an external reality or some aspect of it. Mimetic criticism assumes that literary works reflect reality.

Mise-en-abyme: coined by Andre Gide, this refers to an internal duplication of a work, in whole or part. The Counterfeiters, with all its internal novels, is an example. It often suggests the unending regression of an infinity mirror.

Mise-en-page: the arrangement of text on a page - the overall immediate impression one is given without consideration of the content or words themselves.

Mode of discourse/ rhetorical mode: the variety, conventions and purposes of a major kind of writing, usually defined as exposition, argumentation, description and narration.

Modernism: though often restricted to designate the experimental and avant-garde literature and arts of the early twentieth century, including writers such as Franz Kafka and

T. S. Eliot, the 'modern moment' may occur at any historical period, and involves dissatisfaction with traditional modes of expression and their rejection or remodelling. In the twentieth century modernist moment, accepted chronological continuity was upset in the works of Proust, and Faulkner, perspective complicated by Woolf, Joyce and others.

Mono-no-aware: a Japanese notion describing the sorrow felt over the transience of all material things.

Morphology: The internal structure and form of words.

N

Narrative: the manipulated structure in which a story is told.

Grand: a Grand Narrative is one which seeks to causally explain and give meaning to existence. They are usually teleological - that is, directed towards a pre-defined end. The Biblical Story is an exemplar of a Grand Narrative structure.

Narratology: the study of narrative

Narrator: the being telling the story in a given narrative

Noun: a part of speech identifying persons and things

Abstract: these refer to a non-physical thing - an action concept, quality or state, such as 'love'.

Concrete: these nouns refer to tangible, observable things.

O

Oneric: related to dreams and dreaming

Onomatopoeia: a word formed from a sound associated with the thing to which it refers.

P

Paralipsis: a form of anachrony in which a moment in time is not skipped over, but of which a certain element is elided.

Paratext: a form of transtextual relationship in which a text is set within and commented upon by various other secondary texts. Titles, Forewords and Afterwords might be included in this.

Parole: in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics,* parole is used to refer to the specific utterances which arise from a *langue.* Along with langue, parole is one of the basic concepts of structuralism.

Pastoral poetry: a conventionalised mode of writing celebrating the innocent life of shepherds in a bucolic, Arcadian environment. It is highly influenced by Classical literature

Pentameter: a poetic line made up from five feet

Peripeteia: The sudden reversal of fortune, particularly of a tragic protagonist, important in Aristotelian conceptions of narrative.

Phantasmagoria: a form of projection invented in 18th century France, the phantasmagoria is considered a precursor to cinema. The term was used by theorists such as Walter Benjamin to describe spaces and states of mind characterised by illusion.

Picaresque: a form of novel originally arising in 16th century Spain which told of the histories of roguish or foolish characters, the term is now more conventionally used in English to describe an episodic novel in which the events are linked only by the presence of the protagonist - known as the picaro.

Picaro: the protagonist, and typically the only consistent factor, of a picaresque narrative.

Plot: the arrangement of events in a narrative.

Polysemantic: holding multiple meanings.

Porosity (Benjamin): a notion in the work of Walter Benjamin referring to the way in which times and spaces tend to bleed into each other.

Preposition: a word preceding a noun in a phrase which typically indicates spatial or temporal relations. 'On', 'in' and 'during' are some examples.

Prolepsis: a form of anachrony in which the narrative skips forward in chronological time. It could also be termed a flash-forward.

Pronoun: a word class which typically stands in for a noun which it only minimally specifies. 'She', 'he' and 'we' are all pronouns.

Prosody: the study and notation of poetic form and metre.

Protensity: having extent in time.

Propter hoc fallacy: a fallacy which argues that, because one event happened after another, it happened because of another

Punctum: a term used by Roland Barthes to describe the detail in a photograph, however incidental or arbitrary, which 'pierces' the viewer with an intense personal meaning.

Q

Quatrain: a stanza of four lines

'In Memoriam' quatrain: a form of four line stanza in which the rhyme scheme runs *abba*, which was used by Tennyson in his elegiac poem 'In Memoriam A.H.H'

Quintain: a five line stanza

R

Rabelaisian: in the manner of Rabelais, a French Renaissance scholar whose work is typified by grotesquery, bodily imagery and excess.

Re-mediation: The act of newly presenting something in a media other than that of its original incarnation.

Reversal (Aristotelian): also known as peripeteia, this involves a sudden reversal of a character's circumstances, often involving their downfall after the moment of 'recognition' - or anagnorisis.

Recognition (Aristotelian): also known as anagnorisis, this is the moment in which a character recognises the true state of affairs and realises the errors they have made. The classic example is Oedipus' realisation that, despite his best efforts, he has killed his own father.

Referential illusion: in semiotics, this is the assumption that a signifier such as a word must always have a referent, or that the meaning of this signifier lies only in its referent.

Rhyme: an identity of sound between syllables, often used in verse.

Free: where the patternation of rhyming syllables is irregular.

Full: when two or more words or phrases contain the same last stressed vowel and all following sounds. In rime riche, the sounds before the last vowel must also match.

Sight: also known as eye-rhyme, in sight-rhyme words merely look as if they rhyme, but fail to do so in actuality.

Wrenched: where a rhyme is imperfect and forced

Rhythm: the patternation of stressed and unstressed syllables - feet - in a poem.

Falling: produced when unstressed syllables follow stressed syllables.

Rising: produced when stressed syllables follow unstressed syllables.

S

Scriptor: an identity existing only within the confines of a text, for which they are responsible. See Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author'

Semiology: the study of signs. Also known as semiotics.

Semiosis: the process of thinking in signs, which call objects and then yet other signs and objects to mind.

Unlimited: a term coined by Umberto Eco to refer to the way in which the signified is always, endlessly able to become the signifier.

Signified: the mental concept or object represented by a signifier in the Saussurean model of the sign.

Signifier: the form of the sign which represents the signified

Simile: a figure of speech in which one thing is explicitly compared with another using words such as 'like'

Shaped poetry: also known as visual or concrete poetry, this form of verse has its shape on the page organised in a meaningful way.

Signes de renvoi: also known as 'signs of sending back', this form of punctuation mark which associates matter in the text with matter in the margins or further outside it. The footnote numbers used in academic texts are *signes de renvoi.*

Sjuzet: the way events are ordered in the narrative.

Sonnet: a poetic form, typically consisting of 14 lines in iambic pentameter. Shakespeare was a great exponent of this form.

Stanza: a group of verse lines which form a section of a poem.

Stanzaic poetry: poetry which is regularly divided into stanzas.

Stichic poetry: lacking stanzas, stichic poems are composed as a continuous sequence of verse lines of the same length and metre.

Stream of Consciousness: a literary method for representing the nature of individual human thought processes, often using unpunctuated or fragmentary interior monologue.

Studium: in Camera Lucida, Barthes used the term to refer to the 'landscape' of the photograph, the surface from which the punctum arises.

Sublime: an awesome grandeur in art or nature which is more affective than the merely beautiful, particularly of interest in the 18th century.

Syllables: a linguistic unit consisting of a vowel or other unit that can be produced in isolation, which may be alone or with surrounding consonants which can form the whole or part of a word.

Symbolist: a movement associated with French writers between 1880 and 1895 which rebelled against realist and naturalist tendencies in literature. It stressed suggestion and evocation over direct description and explored the musical properties of language.

Associated individual include Mallarme and Rimbaud, and it influenced later writers including Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

Synchronic analysis: the study of a system, such as a language or code, at a single moment in time. Structuralist semiotics is often criticised for a heavily synchronic approach.

Syncope: a verbal contraction in which a letter or syllable is omitted from within a word. 'Heav'n' rather than 'heaven' and 'o'er' rather than 'over' are common poetic forms.

Synecdoche: a rhetorical figure of speech in which indirect reference to something is made by naming some constituent part of it, or by naming some comprehensive entity of which it is a part.

Syntactic: the way in which a unit fits in relation to other elements in a larger construction, such as a word in a phrase.

T

Teleology: the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than the suggested cause, or, in religious terms, the doctrine of design and purpose in the material world.

Tense: a category inflected upon language to indicate the time of the event being related.

Past: earlier than the moment of speaking

Present: at the moment of speaking

Future: later than the moment of speaking

Tercet: a three line unit of verse

Terza rima: a verse form of interlinked tercets in which the second line of one tercet rhymes with the first and third of the next, thus – *aba bcb cdc,* etc.

Transtextuality: the various relationships which texts have with all other texts. In Genette's terms, 'all that sets a text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts.'

Transchronic: here used to indicate objects and ideas which can move through and between moments of chronological time and conjoin those disparate points.

Trepidation time: as defined by Umberto Eco in Six Walks in the Fictional Woods, trepidation time is the period between the present action and the known arrival of a dramatic ending. It can be extended to delay that arrival, and to increase its effect.

U

Uncanny: in this thesis, the Jentschean definition of the uncanny has been used. This form defines the uncanny as a feeling of discomfort or disorientation - as 'unheimliche', a not quite being at home.

V

Verb: a part of speech denoting actions or processes, such as 'run' or 'walk', 'write' or 'curate'

Auxiliary verb: used to form the tenses, moods and voices of other verbs. 'Be', 'do' and 'have' are auxiliary verbs.

Modal verb: a subgroup of auxiliary verbs which express mood - whether the verb is expressing fact, command, or possibility.

Viconian: of, pertaining to, or in the style of Giambattista Vico, whose work New Science (1725) postulated a theory of cyclical, recurrent processes of civilisation and history.

Villanelle: a fixed form of verse made up of an uneven number of tercets, in which the first and third lines of the opening tercet are repeated alternately as the third lines of the succeeding tercets and together as the final couplet of the quatrain which ends the piece. Their rhyme scheme is thus: A*bA ab*A *abA ab*A *abA ab*A*A*

Virtuality: inspired by Wolfgang Iser, Susan Pearce uses the word ‘virtuality’ to refer to the impossibility of concretely pinning down meaning to a singular thing, produced as it is in the encounter of reader and text, never wholly residing in both.

Visual poetry: a form of poetry which presents its meaning through its visual form as much as through textual content.

Volta: an Italian term for the 'turn' in the argument or mood of a sonnet. In the English form used by Shakespeare, it usually comes with the final couplet.

Vraisemblance: the extent to which a text, museum or object conforms to the conventions and rules of 'reality' and other socially agreed frameworks.

W

Writerly text: a text produced in the act of interpretive reading. There is an association with 'virtuality'. For a more extensive discussion, see Roland Barthes S/Z.

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