"Narrating the Nation": Homi Bhabha and Gustav Frenssen*

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Summary

The following paper is concerned with an attempt to describe the relation between the narrative and the nation in terms of a "psychodynamics of reading", a project which was formulated in the special edition of *Journal of Literary Studies* concerned with "Writing/Reading", in a paper entitled "Writing and the Narrative" (to appear in *JLS//TLW* 10(1) March 1994). In that paper I provided a definition of the narrative as a form of literary text constituted of the inter-relation between two principal armatures. The first constitutes the "story", existing in what Roland Barthes describes as a logico-temporal order (Barthes 1992: 30), and which, according to Emile Benveniste, needs to be *understood* (Benveniste 1986: 228–245). The second of those two armatures constitutes the "discourse", which Barthes describes as existing beyond the constraints of a logico-temporal order (Barthes 1992: 30), and which, according to Benveniste need only be *named* (Benveniste 1986: 228–245).

Opsomming

Die volgende referaat is gemoeid met 'n poging om die relasie tussen die verhaalkuns en die nasie te beskryf in terme van 'n "psigodinamiek van lees". Hierdie projek is geformuleer in 'n referaat getiteld "Writing and the Narrative" vir die spesiale uitgawe van die *Tydskrif vir Literatuurwetenskap* oor "Lees/skryf/skrif" (verskyn in *JLS/TLW* 10(1) Maart 1994). In laasgenoemde referaat verskaf ek 'n definisie van die verhaalkuns as 'n vorm van literêre teks wat saamgestel is deur die inter-relasie tussen twee hoofankers ("armatures"), waarvan die eerste die "verhaal" konstitueer wat, volgens Roland Barthes, as 'n logiese-temporale orde beskryf word (Barthes 1992: 30) en wat, volgens Emile Benveniste, *verstaan* moet word (Benveniste 1986: 228–245). Die tweede van hierdie ankers konstitueer die "diskoers" wat, volgens Barthes, buite die beperkinge van 'n logiese-temporale orde bestaan (Barthes 1992: 30) en wat, volgens Benveniste, net *benoem* hoef te word (Benveniste 1986: 228–245).

The definition of narrative as a form of "text" that is necessarily divided into two distinct armatures is by no means unique (See Culler 1981: 169). The majority of narrative analyses which acknowledge this distinction, however, fail to provide an account of the form of relation between the two.

Freud's "Psychopathic Characters on the Stage", a paper which suggests a distinction within the narrative text not dissimilar to those recounted by Jonathan Culler, implies that the relation between the two armatures of the narrative is of a rather specific nature. Freud argues that the spectator or reader of the so-called English tragedy must recognize the unconscious impulse of the Prince of Denmark, struggling towards motility, in a more *and* less conscious manner. The spectator must confront this impulse with his attention averted, it must not be "... given a definite name" (Freud 1985: 126). Should a definite name be given to that impulse, the result would be an aversion or an inability to continue watching or reading the tragedy. In other words, Freud suggests that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* consists of two distinct registers – the nomination of the constitutive impulse of one of which (the

level of discourse) will foreclose upon the possibility of completing an encounter with the second (the level of story).

It is Barthes rather than Freud, who provides the more adequate explanation for this necessary condition of isotopic disequilibrium between the two registers of the narrative, such that the level of discourse will serve to propel the level of story through time, such that a premature nomination of the level of discourse will exhaust the reader's ability to continue with an encounter with the text, as a passage across the level of story. In *S/Z* Barthes suggests that "...it is precisely *because I forget* that I read" [italics mine] (Barthes 1992: 11).

Therefore, so as to arrive at a definition of the narrative as the process of the interaction of two armatures, existing in a "nominative eschatology" (usually formulated according to the rather inexact notion of "closure"), I would retain from both Freud and Barthes the notion to nomination. From Barthes the notion that the process of nominating and forgetting functions as the passage of reading, which he describes as the "...very labour of language" (Barthes 1992: 11). *And,* I would retain Barthes's notion that narrative is constituted of the capacity to reduce the whole of the continuum of the text to a cardinal function chain or hermeneutic sentence *without logical damage*. As a result, I would reject Barthes's notion that the passage of nominating and forgetting occurs across the vectorized tabulation of cardinal functions bound together in a solitary and exclusive relation, or the level of story. If cardinal functions exist in a sequential and consequential relation, then to forget one, is to risk logical damage to the entire text. Therefore, in agreement with Freud, I would argue that it is the level of discourse that must accommodate the nominative gesture that will serve to end the passage of the text. (The nominative gesture which Freud describes in his account of *Hamlet* has, as its normative opportunity, the psychoanalytic cure, in terms of a disinvestment or exhaustion of the compromise-formation given that much of the psychoanalytic cure depends upon having the analysand *recognise and name* the compromise-formation and its aetiology).

Perhaps one of the most interesting consequences of subjecting the narrative text to an analysis of the means through which the level of discourse comes to function to propel the reader across the level of the story in terms of this nominative eschatology, is that almost invariably, the site at which the nominative gesture is performed, is itself divided. Of course, Freud never provides such an analysis of *Hamlet*, instead he simply performs the nominative gesture. However, he performs that gesture at the site of the divided psychic apparatus, organized in terms of the so-called Oedipal complex.

The example offered by any one episode of *Murder She Wrote*, teneted upon a structure which may be described as typical of Agatha Christie's mysteries, offers another site of division. Within any one of Jessica Fletcher's adventures, the passage of the story towards the nomination of the discourse, is an effect of the distinction between character and actant; or rather, it is a matter of the nomination of an actantial site from within a field of characters. Within the narrative, the actant is usually known to the reader/spectator, *as a character*, prior to his nomination by Jessica Fletcher as that actant

"murderer". The clues, or in the terminology adopted by Barthes in "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" the "indices", are followed across a logico-temporal order, or cardinal function chain, to the point at which the nomination of that character, who occupies the actantial site "criminal", exhausts the isotopic status of the text.

It is fair to say, however, that the distinction between the crime story and the "psychological drama" is often indistinct. In Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* (1982), the narrative span that is opened between two episodes of cocaine addiction, is not the nomination as "murderer" of the Andaman Islander (Toga), or Jonathan Small. Instead the narrative is closed, or brought to a condition of restitution by an account of the motive for, or aetiology of the crime. In terms of this argument, the first narrative dispatcher or cardinal function in *The Sign of Four* is not the arrival of Miss Mary Morstan at Holmes's Baker Street residence (Conan Doyle 1982: 17). Instead, it is the trouble which Jonathan Small gets into over a girl when he is eighteen years old, joins the English Army, travels to India, and is attacked by a crocodile while swimming in the Ganges (Conan Doyle 1982: 113).

I would suggest that "the nation", offers another such divided site at which the nominative gesture which serves to close the narrative text, may be performed. Attempts to account for the relation between the narrative and the nation are by no means recent. Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero* (1978), first published in 1953, provides a short although provocative gesture towards such an account. In *Writing Degree Zero* Barthes offers a rather adumbrated history of French literature, in terms of three critical tools: language, style, and écriture. He will similarly divide the history of French literature into three periods: the preclassical, the classical (1650–1850), and the post-classical or modern. It is the classical that Barthes describes as the domain of "narrative", which he argues is so homogeneous or consistent a feature of the various texts that were produced in the period, that the only distinctions between these texts are to be located at the level of style. It is against this concretized form of literature that a variety of differing "modes of writing" militate, in a devolving spiral of rapidly assimilated "radical gestures" towards a "zero degree writing", typified by Samuel Beckett and Albert Camus.

Barthes, however, accounts for the preclassical period of French literature as one in which "modes of writing" were not yet possible. Instead, he argues, the French language was not yet concrete or stable enough to provide sufficient resistance to the "radical gesture" which constitutes a specific écriture or "ethics of language". (Thus, according to Barthes, if distinctions between different "modes of writing" should dominate analyses of post-classical literature, and if distinctions between different styles should dominate analyses of classical literature, it is the distinctions between different engagements with language that should dominate analyses of preclassical French literature). Barthes accounts for the stabilization of the French language in terms of settling a syntax, and formulating rules by which to govern the enlargement of the vocabulary, arranged *on a national scale* (Barthes 1978: 56). Furthermore, he locates the emergence of a stable French language at the same point in a history of French literature, as the emergence

of nararative. However, he fails to attempt to delimit the specific rôle that narrative was to assume in developing a language which was ". . . immediately social . . .." (Barthes 1978: 49).

If the problematic of the relation between the narrative and the nation is only implicit within Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero* (1978), it dominates many of the papers of Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha appears to exhibit the most immediate and sustained interest in narrative of all of the various scholars who might be described by the rather contentious and not necessarily accurate term "post-colonial critics". In a manner which is almost unique within his "discipline", Bhabha often and variously attempts an account of what it is that constitutes the narrative – rather than treating one, or any number of narrative performances, as an immediately accessible, and unquestionably transparent evidential field, to independent arguments; rather than treating one or any number of narrative performances as fodder for a rather naïve expressive causality.

In "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" Bhabha attempts to formulate

> the complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of "the people" or "the nation" and make them the immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narratives.
>
> (Bhabha 1990: 292)

He argues that the putative historical necessity of the idea of the nation conflicts with the contingent and arbitrary signs and symbols that signify the affective life of the national culture. The nation may signify modern social cohesion, but ". . . the cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions . . .." (Gellner 1990: 56). It does not follow, however, that nationalism is similarly contingent or accidental. According to Bhabha, historians concerned with the event and origin of the nation, and political theorists concerned with the totalities of the modern nation never pose the question of what he calls ". . . the disjunctive representation of the social . . .." (Bhabha 1990: 294).

How do we plot "the narrative of the nation" that must mediate between a teleology of progress and a timeless discourse of irrationality?

> How do we understand that "homogeneity" of modernity – "the people" – which, if pushed too far, may assume something resembling the archaic body of the despotic or totalitarian mass?
>
> (Bhabha 1990: 294)

He argues that writing the story of the nation demands an articulation of the archaic ambivalence that informs modernity; we may begin such a process by questioning the metaphor *the many as one*.

In reading between the borderlines of the nation-space we can see how "the people" come to be constructed within a range of discourses *as a double narrative movement*: "the people" are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body-politic, they are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference, where the claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the

process of signification and discursive address itself. "The people" are both the historical "objects" of a nationalist pedagogy and, at the same time, they are "subjects" of a process of signification that must erase any prior originary presence of the nation-people. The scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be located, repeatedly, at the level of signs of a national culture.

Thus, in the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitive, recursive strategy of the performative. "It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*" (Bhabha 1990: 297).

Bhabha (1990) argues that this tension between the pedagogical and the performative in the narrative address of the nation, turns the reference to a "people" into a problem of knowledge which haunts the formulation of social authority: "the people" constitute neither the beginning nor the end of a national narrative. Deprived of the possibility of looking to the legitimacy of past generations to supply a cultural autonomy, the nation turns from being the symbol of modernity into the symptom of an ethnography of the contemporary within culture. This shift emerges from an acknowledgement of the nation's interrupted address, articulated in the tension signifying "the people" as an historical presence, a pedagogical object, and "the people" constituted as a subject within the performance of narrative.

The pedagogical founds its "narrative authority" in the tradition of "the people" as a succession of historical moments that represent an eternity produced through self-generation. The performative intervenes in this self-generation as a polar distinction from an other or outsider, in that it introduces a temporality inherent within the empty nature of the sign. A binary division, the national boundary, marking a nation's selfhood, is threatened with its difference: the movement of the signifier within the narrative. (This constitutes a "double-writing" or "DissemiNation": a space of cultural signification, a discursive ambivalence that splits the cultural subject).

Following Benedict Anderson's argument presented in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Bhabha argues that the political unity of the nation consists in its continual displacement of this irredeemably plural space (bounded by different, possibly hostile nations) into a signifying space that is archaic and mythical. Thus, the nation's modern territoriality is represented or mobilized in terms of a patriotic, atavistic temporality of traditionalism: the difference of space returns in the form of a sameness of time, transforming territory into tradition, transforming "the people" into one.

In a paper entitled "A Question of Survival: Nations and Psychic States" (Bhabha 1991) (which he describes as an attempt to answer the question of whether there can be culture without melancholia), Bhabha again concerns himself with the relation between narrative and the nation. He poses several questions, namely, what vision of the coherence of community is possible when the language of cultural symbolism reveals disjunction within the sign of the social? What is identified as "the people" in the language of the culture?

What do "the people" identify with in the rhetoric of the national community?

Referring to Anderson, he argues that the narrative of the modern nation is made possible by an apprehension of cultural simultaneity from within what is called a "homologous empty time". The articulation of this historical temporality is a form of cultural subjection in terms of a particular kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests. "The people", conceived of as enunciatory subjects (in a trope of harmony or unisonance), produce the national text in a political love of patria (emblematized in the national anthem). The time of the song brings "the people" together in an empty time – a transcendental state.

Bhabha asks, however, is the naturalization of nationality so easily possible? Will "the people" so unanimously and transparently assemble in the self-presence of its speech? Anderson, according to Bhabha, adheres to an Auerbach-like narrative of national realism, constantly referring to the funeral litany: "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust". He insistently places the birth of patriotism at the site of death, in the burial ritual, belonging as it does partly to life and partly to death. The litany institutes a substitutability between time present and past, between the part and the whole. But what about the survivors? The repetition becomes doubling, imitation, mimicry, and archaism; an imitation of simultaneity; an ancestral Englishness. Thus the contemporaneity and simultaneity of the nation is possible only through the intervention of the archaic – a ghostly repetition, such that the nation's simultaneity arises from the sepulchral "otherness" of national identity.

The national past is said to articulate the space of repetition: the enunciation of ghostly simultaneity – a doubling that is always produced in the present of the nation's discursive performance, as prior to it, as an anteriority. This anteriority locates a spatial time of "the people" that is caught between the archaic tradition – the incessant repetition of ancestry, and the need to name "the people" in the historical present. Within the repetition of the archaic or the national past, the continuous national tradition is disturbed.

Bhabha refers to Anderson's question "Why do nations celebrate their hoariness and not their astonishing youth?", and suggests that this process is one in which the national subject is made to forget to remember, which will offer to national culture a deep psychological hold, and a form of political legitimacy. But can this troublesome tense of forgetting to remember (being obliged to have forgotten, to have already forgotten such that it can be remembered), yield a naturalized form of the national narrative?

In "Representation and the Colonial Text: A Critical Exploration of Some Forms of Mimeticism" (1984), Bhabha attempts to formulate the link between the order of literary history, and the putative unmediated originality of the texts which that literary history adopts as its object. He argues that F R Leavis's *The Great Tradition*, Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel*, Eric Auerbach's *Mimesis*, and Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero*, despite several considerable differences, are all teneted upon a teleological conception of history. All present a chronological ordering of the development of the novel, such that they all establish a systemic relation between the novel and history,

in terms of an organic, progressive approximation of reality, teneted upon the notion of the accuracy of reflection – an expressive causality.

Bhabha argues that literature, history, and even the history of literature, all facilitate a perspective of essential order, culmination, coherence and culture. From these initial comments Bhabha proceeds to argue that there is a consistent collaboration between the narrative (particularly in the form of the novel) and historicism, a problem that he refers to Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

> Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject – in the form of historical consciousness – will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode.
>
> (Foucault 1972: 12)

Bhabha similarly refers the problem of the collusion between narrative and historicism to Edward Said's *Beginnings*, and particularly the argument that the central purpose of the Western novel is to represent societies and characters in development, in a process of beginning, engenderment or growth. The novel is said to constitute an aesthetic object which "fills the gaps" in an incomplete world, which attempts to satisfy the human urge to add to reality by means of portraying characters in which the reader can believe. However, for Said, the novel will institute a dual beginning: one temporal and transitive, foreseeing a continuity flowing from it, and the other both intransitive and conceptual. Bhabha relates this ambiguity in the beginning to the division between the subject of enunciation, and the enounced. He argues that this paradox is resolved through the discourse of literary history, through the inception of an origin in which history becomes myth.

The putative historical and ideological determinants of the Western novel, namely bourgeois individualism, organicism, liberal humanism, autonomy and progression cannot, according to Bhabha, reflect an environment destroyed by conquest or colonization. As a result he isolates, as the most pressing problem for any criticism or history of so-called Third World literature, an understanding of the problem of the representation of the other or the colonial subject. Such an understanding, according to Bhabha, would reach beyond the level of simple mimesis, the accuracy of reflection or an expressive causality. The call to progress beyond mimesis is motivated by his claim that "... to represent the colonial subject is to conceive of the subject of difference: an other history and an other culture ...." (Bhabha 1984: 98). Bhabha thereby suggests that the study of post-colonial literature, necessarily involves an advance upon such conceptions of the novel as that form of literature which "... must be a house fit for characters to live in" (Murdoch quoted in Bhabha 1984: 94).

He argues that the representation of the other or the colonial subject is not a problem of different, more progressive representations of that other, instead it is to herald the end of the collusion between historicism and realism; it is to effect an unseating of the transcendental subject celebrated in the Western novel. According to Bhabha, the major debate concerning colonial literature has been confined to an "image analysis", one which assumes a mimetic relation between the text and a given pre-constituted reality, such that the narrative is trapped within a violent hierarchy, in which the privileged term (reality), comes to function as the measure of the adequacy of the subordinated term (the text). Within such literary criticism, he argues, the image of the other is measured against the "essential" or "original" in order to establish the degree of representativeness, the correctness of the image. The text, rather than functioning as a productive agent in the process of *generating "meaning", functions instead* as a "reflection" or "expression", such that literary criticism is reduced to the function of the recognition of the adequacy of the image.

For what Bhabha nominates anti-racist, anti-colonialist, or "nationalist criticism", the central concern within such "image analysis" is often that of the stereotype; the stereotypification of character (which Bhabha relates without much justification or argument to the problem of closure, achieved through the articulation of Barthes's hermeneutic and proairetic codes). Such a form of literary criticism constitutes speaking against a negative image or stereotype, in order to install another more progressive, more positive image or stereotype, such that the stereotype is conceived of as a distortion in relation to a given preconstituted norm or model. Thereby, Bhabha argues, the possibility of conceiving of the narrative *as a process*, as a possibility of transformative action through an encounter with the literary text, is effaced. The problem of representing difference is made to equal a demand for different representations, by reason that the stereotype is fundamentally static in nature – an "image" caught outside of the process of the text.

Probably the best known of any of Bhabha's texts is "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism" (1986), which extends his commentary upon the stereotype, and to which Abdul Jan Mohamed has formulated a rather polemic response in "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature" (1985).

Bhabha, with particular reference to Said's notion of ". . . a new median category . . . ." (Said 1978: 58) and Franz Fanon's "The Negro and Recognition", argues that the stereotype should be conceived of as the resultant object of a process of fetishization, within which racial/cultural difference is recognized and simultaneously disavowed. The stereotype, which constitutes a simplification in terms of the fact that it is an arrested and fixated form of representation, rather than the false representation of a given reality, serves as a function through which the "colonial subject" is inserted into the circulation of power, *as a productive capacity* – as a fixated "reality" that is both other and simultaneously entirely knowable and visible. The stereotype may be conceived of, according to Bhabha, as

> that "fixated" form of the colonial subject which *facilitates* colonial relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised.
>
> (Bhabha 1986: 166).

Bhabha, therefore, conceives of the stereotype as an archival construction, in Said's terms, one of the lenses through which the West's other is experienced: The stereotype constitutes

> a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing. In essence such a category is not so much a way of receiving new information as it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things.
>
> (Said 1978: 58–59)

Thence Bhabha formulates the notion of the stereotype such that it is not conceived of in terms of a "character" within the literary narrative. His commentary turns upon the assertion that the stereotype is located at the position of a so-called paratextual "symbolic". It functions as a means through which to effect the governance of the representation of the other within a colonial discourse which is only partially constituted of literary narratives.

Thus Bhabha's project is twofold – he attempts to formulate an answer to the question of what narrative (in its entirety) must be in order that it may function as an evidential field within, and legitimating strategy to nationalism. And he attempts to provide an advance upon the "image analysis" which might be said to dominate Freud's analyses of *Hamlet*, in an attempt to formulate an analytic process through which to account for the continuum of the narrative. Bhabha attempts to conceive of the narrative *as a process*, as a possibility of transformative action through an encounter with the literary text.

These two aspects of Bhabha's project are, of course, closely related. If he is to militate against an "image analysis" of character, he is compelled to provide another divided site which may accommodate that nominative gesture that will serve to close the narrative, namely the nation or nation-state.

Despite the fact that Bhabha fails to formulate the problematic relation between the narrative and the nation in these terms, his commentary provides a considerably more stimulating opportunity for further discussion than JanMohamed's "Economy of Manichean Allegory" (1985). JanMohamed implies that the stereotype and the "character" within the literary narrative coincide:

> The European writer commodifies the native by negating his individuality, his subjectivity, so that he is now perceived as a generic being that can be exchanged for any other native (they all look alike, act alike, and so on).
>
> (JanMohamed 1985: 64)

The stereotype therefore constitutes an other – the native – reduced to an exchange-value within a colonial significatory scheme, disseminated and popularized by a "colonialist" literature, so as to facilitate the validation of

the overt aims of colonization: the civilization, Christianization, and upliftment of the native; and the perpetuation of the covert aims of colonization: the exploitation of the raw materials and natural resources of the colonized region.

Perhaps the most alarming assertion within JanMohamed's rather functionalist reading of the racial/cultural stereotype (one which employs a remarkably deterministic relation between an economist paradigm of exchange and what might, rather unhappily, be termed "a discursive paradigm of exchange") is his argument for the individuation of the other/native. JanMohamed (1985) argues that such a process of individuation could adequately challenge and exhaust the generalizing function or action of the stereotype, and the commodification of the other/native. The notion that the individuation of the other/native may serve as a means through which to disrupt the stereotype is proven to be completely inadequate within a reading of Frenssen's *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (1909).

I would argue that within Frenssen's novel, the moment at which the other/native is dragged from the bushes by the old "Africander" is the moment at which the other/native threatens to enter the narrative, for the first time as an individuated "character". The detailed description of the "other/native", supposedly the means by which to effect his individuation, is precisely the means by which his circumscription as a possible stereotype, or an instance of the stereotype is achieved.

The articulation of clothing, uniforms, and personal military equipment, or any particular item thereof, appears to be of some importance within *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (1909). However, the exact nature of these particular narrative elements in terms of Barthes's taxonomy delimited in "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative", and the highly complex means through which they are distributed and integrated within the narrative, is, I would argue, of a peculiar nature.

Clothing in some form or another, is articulated at almost every occasion at which a cardinal function appears within the narrative, risking its continuum: Peter decides to join a naval battalion as a marine because he likes the uniform, the German soldiers are issued with new uniforms immediately after they have volunteered to join the expedition to Southwest Africa, the German soldiers are issued with new uniforms on the first day of the voyage, the German soldiers change into new uniforms after they have entered the Straits of Gibraltar etc. However, the exact functional status of these various articulations or descriptions is not of a uniform nature.

Peter's departure from his familial home, and his induction into the military barracks at which he undergoes his training, are never described in the text (although the marine's departure for Southwest Africa is narrated in some detail). This particular "transition" is merely indicated with the statement "But in the fall she [Peter's mother] gave me my clothes all whole and clean, as they should be and mostly brand-new" (Frenssen 1909: 4). This description, therefore, operates as a subrogate for the direct narration of a particular cardinal function, in fact a repression of the very presence of that cardinal function, such that clothing becomes imbricated within the chain of cardinal

functions which, according to Barthes, combine in a solitary and exclusive relation.

The repression evidenced in the narration of Peter's departure from his familial home, and the diacritical relation thereof with the attention granted to the marine's departure for Southwest Africa (in Barthes's terms, the relative saturation of this particular "narrative moment" with catalyses, indices, and informants serving to expand upon a nucleus, or narrative dispatcher), effects a relation of plenitude between, or a conflation of the family and the nation, the familial and the national. The first and only occasion in the narrative on which Peter says farewell to his mother and father, is both the sequence and consequence of his imminent departure from Germany.

In Barthes's terms, the consequence of deploying clothing as a means by which to effect the repression or elision of a cardinal function within a narrative continuum, is the mobilization of the description of clothing such that it always constitutes an indexical functional unit. As a result of having become imbricated within the cardinal function chain, the individual units of which combine in a solitary and exclusive relation, this particular index must appear again at every link within that chain. These functional units are "cathected" such that the second terms thereof remain constantly active, or are elevated to a position of relative instability.

On only one occasion in *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909) is the dress of an officer described (given that the chaplain who participates in the parade prior to the "final" battle that never occurs, and whose uniform is described in some detail is not an officer in terms of his actantial function within the text). The uniform worn by this particular officer, however, is that of an enlisted man, and not that which is appropriate to his rank (1909: 140). Therefore, despite the fact that clothing, uniforms and personal military equipment are deployed within the narrative as integrative units, so as to articulate the "character"' of actants, they do so only in relation to certain specific actantial positions: Peter's mother and sisters (and not his father), the German soldiers, the native prisoners, the chaplain, the emancipated slaves, the home guardsmen, the German civilians in the capital of Southwest Africa, the people of Madeira, Italians, the non-hostile natives of Southwest Africa and the enemy.

In other words, clothing – that which is deployed as a means by which to effect the conflation of the familial and the national – not only operates as a means by which to describe and articulate actants, but also as a means by which to effect a relatively inviolate division within the actantial matrix of the text: a division between the officers and the non-officers.

The otherwise considerable capacity of clothing, uniforms and personal military equipment to indicate the character of an actant is deliberately disrupted, or is made to fail at a specific point in a hierarchy of social classes, so much so that the description of the officers – in Barthes's terms, the definition of those integrative narrative elements which seek recuperation at the actantial position "officer" – automatically becomes of considerable significance to an analysis of the text.

A specific reference to buttons appears twice within *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909), significantly on the second occasion Peter sews new buttons onto his uniform immediately after he has been promoted to the rank of corporal – a non-commissioned officer. The implication thereof – given the sequentiality and consequentiality of cardinal functions – is that the rank of a non-commissioned officer is demarcated on the German military uniforms by a variety of different buttons. This is not, however, directly articulated within the narrative. As a result this particular sequence remains only partially closed. (One may well note that *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (1909) employs a relatively large number of unclosed sequences).

The partial closure of this sequence serves an important syntactical function. The sequence operates as an opportunity at which two distinct integrative units combine in a distributional relation: the statement, "After that we fastened the buttons on our uniforms" (Frenssen 1909: 14), is deployed at the end of a sequence in which disorder, laughter, and "... all sorts of nonsense..." (p. 13–14) accompanies the distribution of new uniforms, which (by reason of the logic of the sequentiality and consequentiality of cardinal functions) implies the reimposition of orderly conduct. Therefore, the buttons on the uniforms of the German soldiers – the site at which the rank of the non-commissioned officers is demarcated, according to a narrative logic – are also deployed as a means by which to separate conduct into the orderly and the disorderly, the sensible and the senseless. In other words, rank and order are made almost synonymous within the text, and I would argue that this synonymity remains continuous across the division between the officers and the non-commissioned officers and enlisted German soldiers.

Order, discipline and labour, and their imposition, and the opposite thereof – a condition of chaos, nondifferentiation, carelessness and sloth – are of particular significance within *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (1909). The fact that the natives have not imposed order upon the land – they have not stemmed water, dug wells, tilled the soil, planted corn, built houses and woven clothes – is held to be the real reason for the campaign. The German soldiers march from the capital in a column arranged in a particular configuration, the divisions within which are carefully narrated: first the guides – the homeguardsmen mounted on good shaggy horses; then the captain and the officers; then the wagons and the artillery, alongside of which run the African drivers; then the divisions of foot-soldiers, alongside of which ride several mounted officers; and finally the rearguard, half a platoon of foot-soldiers.

In contrast, the movement of the enemy is narrated as a flight "... with their whole enormous mass – women, children, and herds" (Frenssen 1909: 188), although most frequently their movement is narrated in terms of the evidence of their passing: footprints, abandoned blankets, skins, ostrich feathers, household utensils, women's ornaments, cattle, men dead and dying, the smell of manure and decaying bodies, and a distant cloud of dust.

The narration of the enemy as an itinerant people, whose presence is only temporarily registered upon the landscape, is of particular consequence to the narrative and the whole notion of order. Naming – a relatively normative process by which to individuate actants within a narrative, to impose a certain order upon the actantial matrix of the text – is almost completely absent within *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909). However, as a means by which to fix an actantial position, or structure an actantial matrix, the text nominates the geographic origin of the "character": "One was a Thuringian boy . . ." (p. 117); "He was born in Nuremburg . . ." (p. 118); "A blond boy, son of a Berlin cab-driver . . . and a young Alsatian and . . . a man from Mecklenburg" etcetera (Frenssen 1909: 156). (In this failure to employ proper names, yet to individuate actants by nominating their geographical origin, there is, again, a certain relation established between the familial and the national). Thence, to articulate the enemy as itinerant, without a permanent relation to a specific area of land, without a permanent house or home, is to place the enemy outside of the apparatus deployed by the text to effect the capture of a specific actantial position.

Within Frenssen's novel, the whole notion of order, and its relation to the landscape, is associated with that of the animal and the monstrous: the emancipated slaves climb like cats, writhe like snakes, and eat in a beast-like fashion; the huts of the enemy are described as giant beehives that are plastered with cow-dung; the enemy slink, duck, leap, slip, creep, climb trees, and emit wild cries; the enemy travel with everything that they can use – women and children, goats, dogs, oxen, horses and animal skins; the relation of the enemy to the landscape is determined by the need of their oxen for fresh pasture; the enemy rise "like snakes out of the grass" (Frenssen 1909: 97); they are hunted; the suppression of the uprising is likened to the taming of a colt; South West Africa is described as a "monkey-land" (pp. 74, 124); and an enemy soldier is a "black, half-naked figure like an ape" (Frenssen 1909: 98).

Integrative functional elements relating to animals are not recuperated exclusively at this actantial site. Thoughtless German soldiers who "talk big" are described as dogs; during the first encounter with the enemy, Peter's eyes move like mice in a cage; the German soldiers also slink, duck, leap etcetera; the German civilians crowd the town square in a swarm; and German soldiers run "like so many rabbits" if they can do any service for the old major (Frenssen 1909: 75).

What is implied in this commentary, is that there is one actantial position within *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909) at which none of these "categories" of indices (what might be called "isotopes" within a functional disequilibrium propelling the narrative towards closure) find recuperation. Animal-like qualities, naming or identification by indicating geographical or provincial origin, and clothing or dress all consistently fail to describe (with the exception of Peter's father) *only* the German officers. Or perhaps the inverse is more accurate, namely the description or intelligibility of these particular actants is achieved only by the consistent failure of these

integrative functional units to find a second term at the position "officer" within an actantial matrix or network.

In other words, JanMohamed's notion of a Manichean allegory, in terms of a polar division between the "self" and the "other" – the "German" and the "native" is absurdly useless in terms of an analysis of the actants within *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909). If such an economy were to be considered essential it would (in terms of this particular narrative) more sensibly be constituted as a division between the (German) "officers" and the "non-officers", which would immediately fail for the reason that such a division must necessarily be simultaneously articulated as a division between the "German" (officers) and the "non-German". (One may well note that JanMohamed in "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature" (1985) fails to offer an analysis of a literary text according to the tenets of even his own argument. Instead, he passes a few rather glib comments or judgments upon a wide range of texts, and literary "characters").

One must conclude, therefore, that in *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909), there exists a particular and highly complex relation between classes of indices (or integrative elements of the narrative, constituting the discourse of the narrative), and actantial positions, as well as a highly complex interrelation between various classes of indices, one that Barthes in his delimitation of the functional syntax of the narrative elements of the readerly text, does not account for. In *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (Frenssen 1909), there is a relatively consistent frustration of a variety of indices to find a second term as a distinct actantial position. In terms of an actantial position "officer", this frustration is relatively absolute. In terms of an actantial position "enemy" or other, this frustration is also considerable, although by no means absolute, for the reason that the enemy *as an actantial position* is only sporadically present within the narrative.

The effect of the frustration of indices to find a second term, thereby achieving a certain stability and signifying capacity will, I would argue, result in a number of "effects": firstly, the coalescence of these frustrated indices into isotopic nebulae, such that a disaggregation of the various "isotopes" within the text becomes a relatively complex procedure; and secondly, the recuperation of these various indices as an aggregated mass, will occur at the earliest possible opportunity within the narrative.

The strategies through which the narrative of the German campaign effects the generation of a distinct actantial position – nominating the provincial or urban origin of the actant – forecloses upon the possibility of formulating the distinct actantial position "enemy" (so as not to risk a contradiction of the "real" causes for the campaign, namely the failure of the enemy to impose order upon the landscape: to stem water, to dig wells, to till the soil, plant corn and build houses). However, this foreclosure happens only up to a certain point in the narrative continuum. This distinct moment is that at which the enemy can no longer impose upon the landscape by stemming water, digging wells and cultivating crops, because the land into which they are driven is a desert.

Therefore, it is necessarily only after the flight of the nation into the desert that the text may open a distinct actantial position "enemy", an actantial position that serves, I would argue, as a scapegoated second term for a considerable number of previously frustrated and aggregated indices. The first and only occasion on which the other enters the narrative as an "individual", in JanMohamed's (1985) terms, as a non-commodity within a discursive economy of exchange, is the moment at which a relatively large number of aggregated isotopes, previously existing in a position of relative instability to the actantial matrix of the text, find "satisfaction" or a viable site of integration.

The native is dragged from the bush, is shot, and still the narrative continues. Peter and his companions return to base camp, victory is declared, and still the narrative continues. Another uprising breaks out to the south, and although Peter is diagnosed as having a heart condition, necessitating his return to Germany, still the narrative continues, as though the level of story were attempting and failing to find the nominative form which would terminate or exhaust the efficacy or cathexis of the level of discourse. Peter returns to Germany, *describes his clothes*, meets a friend of his father's, and, at last, the narrative closes.

But what nomination is this? Why a friend of Peter's father? Surely the answer is that Peter's father is the only other character to share the actantial site "*German* officer": that "class" of character which is never described in terms of clothing, and that "class" of character which is never nominated according to urban or provincial origin? Surely, therefore, the final nomination of the level of discourse must be the problem of the unification of Germany – the nation?

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