

Geographic Enchantments: the Trickster and Crone in Contemporary Fairy Tales and Storytelling

Submitted by Deborah Frances Knight,

to the University of Exeter

as a thesis for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Geography,

May 2012.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is
copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without
proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has
been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved
for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

(Signature)

Abstract

Fairy tales are enchanting geographical stories, which affectively organize space-time in socially, politically, and ethically significant ways. Despite this, fairy tales have been neglected in the discipline of geography, and the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies has rarely interrogated the spatialities of tales, or of storytelling more widely. This thesis addresses this lacuna by theorizing the relationship between fairy tales, storytelling, and geography through the subversive folkloric figures of the trickster and crone. It posits, first, that we understand fairy tales as iterative stories that constitute mythic communities; and second, that trickster and crone figures are enchanting territorializing and deterritorializing refrains that subvert this mythic community. These two concerns are explored through Nolan's (2008) Batman film *The Dark Knight*, and Maitland's (2009) short story *Moss Witch*. An experimental research approach provides insight into these 'worldly,' enchanting, and symbolically rich stories, without sacrificing their liveliness or 'systematizing' them for ideological gain. The research begins with an interpretive textual analysis to address the symbolic traditions of the fairy tale refrains. Collage enables a 'retelling' of the stories as materially and visually expressive media. Genealogical analysis traces the material-discursive matterings of the geographical refrains within academic 'storytelling.' These combined approaches 'story' the trickster and crone as spatial patterns with affective force. Trickster refrains are animating forces of destruction and chaos. They shift between the centre and periphery of mythic community, violently overturn its seemingly ordered realities, and unfold insecure and profane in-between places, where (human) community can no longer be sustained. The crone refrain enacts a 'wilding' in fairy tales, entangling the civilized, storied human *polis* (or culture more generally) with the nonhuman 'environment,' and undermining both relational accounts of being and more romantic discourses of dwelling. Going forward, continued engagement with this nexus of geography, storytelling, and fairy tales promises to enrich our multidisciplinary endeavours, highlight our theoretical 'matterings' of fairy tales, and enable more responsible engagement with these endlessly enchanting stories.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

			Page
Abstract			2
Table of contents			3
List of figures			6
Acknowledgements			7
Chapter 1		Introduction	8
	1.1	A geography of fairy tales	9
	1.2	Geographies of story and storytelling	11
	1.3	Literary geography and interdisciplinary storytelling	14
	1.4	Nonrepresentational geographies	21
	1.5	Research considerations	27
	1.6	Summary of chapters	30
Chapter 2		Geographies of fairy tales and storytelling	34
	2.1	Fairy tale geographies	35
	2.1.1	Introduction: fairy tales	35
	2.1.2	Fairy tales as geographic refrains	44
	2.1.3	Trickster and crone as geographic refrains	52
	2.2	Storytelling geographies	54
	2.2.1	Storytelling as praxis	54
	2.2.2	Storytelling as witnessing	60
	2.2.3	Storytelling as interrupted community	63
	2.3	Defining fairy tales	65
	2.3.1	Fairy tale iterations	65
	2.3.2	Classical fairy tales	68
	2.3.3	Marvel, enchantment and wonder	69
	2.3.4	Anti-tales	74
	2.4	Summary	77
Chapter 3		Methodology	79
	3.1	Methodological concerns	80
	3.2	Research approaches: the diffraction apparatus	85
	3.2.1	Philosophical hermeneutics: textual analysis	85
	3.2.2	'Looking with' experimental collage	91
	3.2.3	Material-discursive genealogies	99
	3.3	Summary	103

Chapter 4		Genealogy of trickster scholarship	105
	4.1	Introduction	105
	4.2	Trickster studies and fairy tales	106
	4.3	Research considerations	107
	4.4	Interdisciplinary genealogy of trickster studies	111
	4.4.1	Psycho-social theories	115
	4.4.2	Structural theories	116
	4.4.3	Cultural-hermeneutical theories	122
	4.4.4	Trickster humour	125
	4.5	Tricksters as geographical refrains	137
	4.6	Summary	140
Chapter 5		<i>The Dark Knight</i> as anti-tale: unma(s)king the mythic community	143
	5.1	Introduction	144
	5.2	Mythic community of Gotham	145
	5.3	Joker: the destruction of mythic community	146
	5.3.1	Graffiti ‘bombing’ and defacing the symbolic city	165
	5.3.2	Ecological gothic	181
	5.3.3	Urbicide	186
	5.3.4	Itinerancy	195
	5.4	Summary	202
Chapter 6		Genealogy of crone scholarship	204
	6.1	Introduction	205
	6.2	Differentiating crones from witches	207
	6.2.1	Witch lore	209
	6.3	Crones as post-reproductive women	215
	6.4	The etymology of ‘crone’	220
	6.5	Crones and fairy tale studies	222
	6.6	Research considerations	237
	6.7	Interdisciplinary genealogy of crone studies: gerontology	240
	6.7.1	Geographical gerontology: the place of age	240
	6.7.2	Feminist gerontology: loss and transformation	250
	6.7.3	Radical gerontology: (r)age	262
	6.8	The crone as a geographical refrain	267
	6.9	Summary	271
Chapter 7		<i>Moss Witch</i>: straying off the path	273
	7.1	Introduction	274

	7.2	Troubling genres: science, fiction, and fairy tale	274
	7.3	Ecological imperialism	282
	7.4	Becoming prey	292
	7.5	Queer home	301
	7.6	Summary	308
Chapter 8		Concluding thoughts...	310
	8.1	Introduction	311
	8.2	At the end of the road...	311
	8.3	A critical accounting	313
	8.4	Emerging geographies	321
	8.5	Final words	326
References			327

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Description	Page
1	Diagramming interdisciplinary literary geography (Crang 2009).	14
2	Fairy tales and mythic community. Collage.	44
3	Collage map depicting structural elements of El Chorrillo's lived environment (Powell 2010:551).	85
4	Batman landscaping of Gotham City. Collage.	143
5	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: dark affectivity and threat. Collage.	145
6	Heath Ledger as the Joker, <i>The Dark Knight</i> (2008). Image from Byrne (2008).	147
7	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: delirious intimacy. Collage.	153
8	Joker's graffiti writing. Film posters, <i>The Dark Knight</i> (2008).	159
9	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: graffiti as violent urban restyling. Collage	161
10	Obama as the Joker (Alkhateeb 2009); Bush as the Joker, 'No Joke,' <i>Vanity Fair</i> (July 29 th 2008).	163
11	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: fragmented city. Collage.	177
12	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: urbicide study 1. Collage.	184
13	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: urbicide study 2. Collage.	185
14	Joker landscaping of Gotham City: placelessness. Collage.	190
15	Joker's landscaping of Gotham City: clowning and profanity/laughter. Collage.	192
16	Joker's landscaping of Gotham City: betwixt and between. Collage.	193
17	Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: magical space of enchantment. Collage.	269
18	Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: into the wildwood. Collage.	283
19	Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: ecological imperialism as a fractured process of encroachment. Collage.	287
20	Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: becoming prey. Collage.	292
21	Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: decompiculture. Collage.	301
22	Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: queer home. Collage.	301

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a pleasure and privilege. However (paraphrasing Mary Midgley), there were certainly times when I felt like throwing the whole work out of the window and following it myself. At these moments, a number of people have stepped in and helped me to continue, and I owe them a debt of gratitude.

Thanks is due, first, to my supervisors, John Wylie and Henry Buller. John, for providing the initial belief in my idea, the encouragement to develop these thoughts into a viable, AHRC funded, project, and for seeing the thesis through to the end. Henry, for his vast and invaluable general knowledge, infectious enthusiasm for ‘fruity’ ideas, and meticulous comments.

During my time at Exeter, Kerry Burton has been my staunchest ally and friend, always willing to listen to my ramblings on a subject far removed from her own, and ever ready with a pithy quip that somehow manages to lighten the load. I want to thank Lynne Wyness, too, for her friendship and insightfulness, and our many enjoyable conversations on topics weird and wonderful. Within the wider academic community, there are a number of people who have provided inspiration. Important amongst these have been Catriona McAra, with her contagious energy and enthusiasm for the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies, and David Calvin, who has been the person to turn to for feedback, practical help, and confidence boosting.

Beyond academia there have been numerous friends who have had, despite their bafflement at times, great faith in this project. Sarrah Kerlake has been a superb cheerleader, and Fiona Desa a very willing ear. Karen White has shown an exceptional level of interest and support. My family (too vast to name individually) has likewise been a tremendous support network, reading and commenting on my work, asking the obvious and impossible questions, and supporting me in many practical ways. Mum, in particular, has been incredible over the final stretch, providing endless cups of tea and coffee around the clock, staying up with me into the early hours of the morning, and taking care of me in every way she can.

I am indebted to Landon Karr, who has, in the last difficult months, been the crucial voice of ‘tough love,’ pushing me to try harder, do better, and work more efficiently. He has provided invaluable advice and spectacular levels of practical help, freeing me up for the task of writing. Without his constant and sometimes painful nudging, I wouldn’t have made it to the finishing line.

Gautam Jhanjee and I go too far back to speak meaningfully of gratitude. In many ways, this thesis is a continuation of our years of conversations about space, architecture, storytelling, imagery, and ‘dwelling.’ He has provided thirteen years of informal training in visual methodologies, and his genius with collage and sculpture have inspired my own comparatively poor attempts. His friendship is irreplaceable.

Chapter 1. Introduction

- 1.1 A geography of fairy tales
- 1.2 Geographies of story and storytelling
- 1.3 Literary geography and interdisciplinary storytelling
- 1.4 Nonrepresentational geographies
- 1.5 Research considerations
- 1.6 Summary of chapters

1.1 A geography of fairy tales

This thesis is about fairy tales as enchanting geographical stories: stories that affectively organise space-time in important and often overlooked ways. The primary proposition of this thesis is that stories matter, both in the ethical and ontological senses of the word. Refusing to establish a representationalist binary between word and world, I posit fairy tales are material-discursive stories with generative and transformational weight¹. Specifically, I am interested in the ways in which material-discursive figurations of fairy tales, including academic storying of fairy tales, become part of, and enable, particular geographical arrangements; such as the entanglement of the human-natural, the cohesion of particular communities, and the formation of variously materialised profane and sacred spaces. A study of fairy tales necessitates research into practices of storytelling for, as fairy tale scholars have made clear, tales and telling are inseparable (Warner 1995). Thus, my second proposition is that fairy tales are iterative performances, and that much of their geographic enchantment inheres in their narrative propensity to self-repeat—with all of the *destinerrance*² this implies (Bacchilega 1997). As the tales repeat they establish affective intersubjective relationships, for “stories do not simply represent ... they affect, they move” (Cameron 2012:9). This affective movement has two key geographical consequences: first, as fairy tales are (re)told, they evidence territorializing and deterritorializing spatiotemporal rhythms, or refrains, which (dis)organise “distributions of space, a distribution in space” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:344). Second, the orality and mythic language of the tales, which is strengthened by recurrence, engenders a fairy tale ‘circle’ of listeners, complete with a transcendental storyteller: a gathering of community (Warner 1995). This mythic community, saturated with a folkish resonance of authenticity and the primordial, functions as the “myth of myth” (Nancy 1991:52); and serves as the source of all subsequent sociopolitical mythopoeia³.

¹ While the notion that stories (and storytelling) *matter* has become commonsense in geographical theorizing (Cameron 2012), this statement is rarely thought through, and there is still little real progress in understanding the mechanisms by which this occurs. I have found Barad’s (2007:3) agential realist philosophy, which is built around the understanding that “mattering is simultaneously a matter of substance and significance” particularly inspiring, and reference her term ‘material-discursive’ throughout the thesis. For Barad (*ibid*), the ontological, epistemological, and ethical are inseparable, and she explores what/how this means/matters through the trope, and scientific practice, of ‘diffraction.’ My primary assumption adopts her understanding, and asserts stories matter *ethically* and *materialise* ontologically (chapter 3 for further details).

² I am referring here to Derrida’s (2005) neologism. Miller (2009:28) notes of this term: “the word implies ‘wandering’ as well as ‘erring’”; and further, “*destinerrance* combines a positive and a negative in the same word: ‘destiny’ and ‘wandering.’” As with Derrida’s neologism *différance*, *destinerrance* has spatiotemporal connotations: “it is a spatial figure for time. It names a fatal possibility for erring, by not reaching a predefined temporal goal, in terms of wandering away from a predefined spatial goal” (*ibid* 29). In short, *destinerrance* points to the ultimate excess of fairy tales.

³ Benjamin’s (1999:101) insight, that “the first true storyteller is, and will continue to be, the teller of fairy tales,” taps into this performance of the mythic community. However, Benjamin does not question the authenticity of this folk community, and further implies that mythic storytelling enables us to ‘dwell.’ I am suggesting here, to the contrary, that mythic community is the source of subsequent socio-political idealism, and that this idealism necessarily leads to totalitarianism —however utopian its aims (this is discussed fully in 2.2.).

The thesis is structured around these two distinct geographical materialisations of fairy tales: fairy tales as enchanting (de)territorializing refrains, and the storying of affective mythic communities. I pursue the notion of enchanting refrains through two folkloric fairy tale figures, the trickster, and crone, and begin by making a case for understanding these captivating figures as repetitive spatiotemporal patterns with affective force. Trickster and crone refrains offer exciting geographical provocations, and bear varying subversive relationships to the wider mythic communities of fairy tales. The trickster, first, is a contrary figure, inhabiting the thresholds, crossroads, boundaries, and meeting-places of story and narrative. This refrain moves between the centre and periphery of mythic community, forcing us out of our seemingly ordered realities into insecure and profane in-between places where what it means to be human, and to be in community, can no longer be assumed. The crone is a mysterious wilderness figure, who does not so much undermine, but eschew the mythic community. Crone stories enact a spatiotemporal ‘wilding’, entangling the human *polis* with the nonhuman environment, and undermining the integrity of human civilization with its social, political, moral, and ontological order. Complicating this geography further, crone figures are simultaneously nursery nurses with a privileged relationship to processes of storytelling. Indeed, the crone is the leitmotif of the fairy tale genre, and the gravitational force which holds the genre, and its mythic community, together⁴. This refrain offers us a twofold geographical consciousness that grapples with, first, the role of storytelling in the consolidation and civilizing of ‘the human’ as separate from ‘wilderness’; and, second, with notions of wilderness, environment, and nature themselves, in a way which contradicts both relational accounts of being, and more romantic discourses of dwelling.

Whilst tricksters and crones are ubiquitous figures in fairy tales, there is a paucity of geographical research on these folkloric figures, and into fairy tales and storytelling more generally. As such, I have drawn on a wider body of cross-disciplinary research, including: anthropological accounts of space; analytical psychology; psychoanalysis; myth studies; literary studies; linguistic studies; indigenous studies; folkloric studies; architectural theory; sociology; esoteric and magic studies; and philosophy. My geographical disciplinary background, meanwhile, has brought valuable insights to these disciplines in turn, many of which have traditionally had little to say about the spatial organisation of fairy tales and storytelling. Reading these diverse perspectives through each other, I follow in the footsteps of fairy tale studies itself, which is a melting pot of predominantly literary, artistic, historical, and narrative disciplines; and admirably open to the different theoretical stances and methodologies that characterize these. Indeed, fairy tale scholarship at its best is a multidisciplinary project, which knits together diverse approaches whilst

⁴ E.g. see Zipes (2012) on the coevolution of fairy tales, fairies, and witches.

“remain[ing] rigorously attentive to important details of specialised arguments within a given field, in an effort to foster constructive engagements across (and a reworking of) disciplinary boundaries” (Barad 2007:25)⁵.

The thesis continues this multidisciplinary endeavour, and asserts, strongly, that working at the interstices of varied theoretical and disciplinary positions yields new, productive possibilities for theorizing a geography of fairy tales and storytelling. To this end, I adopt Lather’s (1993:677) provocation as the epistemological motto of the thesis: to employ a “strategy of excess and categorical scandal in the hope of both imploding ideas of policing social science and working against the inscription of another ‘regime of truth’⁶. By deliberately exceeding disciplinary boundaries, I practise an anti-systematic approach to knowledge making⁷, and align the thesis with post-disciplinary scholarship, which strives to “change the rules of the scientific game,” and consequentially open out “alternative circuits of knowledge” (Smith 1998:311). This theoretical positioning brings me to my third and final proposition: of the ‘messy’ (Law 2004) and essentially “entangled material practices of knowing and becoming” (Barad 2007:89). The thesis highlights the performative nature of knowledge as “a material practice of engagement as part of the world in its differential becoming” (*ibid* 89)⁸; and situates my own knowledge-making practices in the engagement and development of key debates and practices within the material-discursive geographies of story and storytelling, literary geographies, and nonrepresentational theory.

1.2 Geographies of story and storytelling

The academic study of storytelling, folklore, fairytale and myth has undergone something of a renaissance in recent decades, corresponding to the commercial and cultural success of this genre (Daniels and Lorimer 2012; Zipes 2012). In the discipline of geography, however, there has been less work on the entanglements of folklore and fairy tales with storytelling, although interesting forays have been made individually into local oral traditions (Riley and Harvey 2007; Pratt 2009; Cameron 2011), place-bound folklore motifs and meanings (Ryden 1993; Buller 2001, 2004;

⁵ It is inevitable that fairy tale studies is a multidisciplinary endeavor, given how fairy tales defy any strict notion of ‘genre,’ being at once oral and literary stories, fantasy, marvellous, gothic, etc. See Benson (2000:117) on fairy tale’s “generic heterogeneity”; also Tiffin (2009).

⁶ A statement reminiscent of Haraway’s (1991:149) notion of “blasphemy” in feminist, socialist, materialist research.

⁷ Lather’s anti-systematic stance derives from a Nietzschean attitude to research. I am referring here, of course, to Nietzsche’s (1998:8) famous aphorism: “I mistrust all systematists and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity.”

⁸ In other words this thesis eschews the “discursive idealism” of representationalism (Dewsbury et al. 2002:439), to “focus inquiry on the practices or performances of representing, as well as the productive effects of those practices” (Barad 2007:49).

Jones and Cloke 2002; Wardough 2005), and indigenous ‘story memory’ (Cameron 2008, 2009; Pratt 2009). Research into geographies of story and storytelling more broadly has had a greater presence in the discipline, particularly during the ‘cultural turn’ (1990s), where specific story/tellings were frequently cited as exemplars of (and contributors to) wider ideological narratives, discourses, and circulations of power (Cameron 2012), most notably in feminist emotional geographies, postcolonial geographies, geographies of identity politics and resistance, geopolitics, and globalisation (e.g. Balfe 2004; Anderson and Domosh 2002; Gregory 1994, 1995, 2000; Rose 1996; Tuan 1990, 1991; Valentine 1998)⁹. At this macro-scale, with its structural and discursive preoccupations, stories and storytelling were often met with suspicion:

There was a time, not too long ago, when few geographers were interested in telling stories. Stories, it seemed, were at best a quaintly humanistic preoccupation and at worst understood as the building blocks of oppression and inequality: however much stories might seem ‘small’ and ‘innocent,’ geographic engagement with theories of discourse, power, and knowledge led geographers to understand stories as fundamentally implicated in the production of cultural, economic, political, and social power (*ibid* 1).

Cameron (2012)¹⁰ proposes that the last decade has seen geographers reengaging story/tellings in three key ways: first, in response to the relational and material turn; second, in recognition of the political possibilities of storytelling; and third as part of a nonrepresentational and (post)phenomenological project. In the first instance, geographers have pursued storytelling in an attempt to “[find] ways of accounting for lives and experiences without immediately or unproblematically tethering them to concepts of power, discourse, or ideology” (*ibid* 3). ‘Story,’ here, is adopted as an alternative to the grander narratives and discourses of the cultural turn, as it “offers a kind of heterogeneity, materiality, sensuousness, and openness that narrative does not” (*ibid* 5), and consequently provides access to the experiential, local, particular, embodied, affective, autobiographical, and non-human particularities of lifescapes. For example, DeSilvey (2007a, 2007b, 2010) recounts (human) oral histories, and tells material stories of ‘mutable,’ ‘decaying,’ and ‘waste’ things on a hardscrabble homestead in Montana, in an ethical project of interpretive memory-work that collaborates with “other-than-human agencies” (DeSilvey 2006:318). Lorimer (2003:214), meanwhile, narrates

⁹ Anderson’s (2006) theory of imagined communities, and Said’s (2003) *Orientalism*, were key inspirational texts for geographies of story/storytelling in these sub-disciplines during this period.

¹⁰ Cameron’s (2012) progress paper, *New Geographies of Story and Storytelling*, is the first to summarize and contextualize geographies of story and storytelling in the discipline. As such, her comprehensive framework has been an invaluable resource for this thesis. Daniels’ and Lorimer’s (2012:7) introduction to the *Cultural Geographies* themed issue on the narration of landscape and environment likewise offers important insights into geographies of storytelling and the storying of geography, and alludes to alternative techniques and medias of storytelling (“techniques of cut-up, montage, bricolage, simultaneity work in different media, prose, film, street theatre, to articulate other ways of telling”) beyond the typical academic written paper.

“small stories [which] can tell of epistemic shifts on personal and intimate terms,” and fill in the larger archive of geographical knowledge with messy and partial human detail¹¹.

The second reengagement likewise recognises the power of stories, however the focus this time lies with the political, ethical and ontological potency of storytelling. Important here is the transformative promise of storytelling for community building, societal cohesion, and the production of alternative subjectivities (e.g. Gibson-Graham 2006; Maynard-Ford 2011). Research occasionally touches on the dissolution and disruption of community through storytelling, and the sedimentation of conservative subjectivities in story (e.g. Pratt 2009). My own work on trickster stories, such as the Nolen (2009) Batman film *The Dark Knight*, is situated within this latter trajectory, with the Joker’s storytelling effecting a dystopian landscaping of fear, crime, chaos, placelessness, and uricide, and not the ‘geographies of hope’ that largely prevail in the former literatures (chapter 7 of this thesis; Knight 2011). However positive or negative the political prospect, these second geographies of story and storytelling are concerned with how stories as affective narratives might differently “produce subjects and ... publics,” thus offering hope for new ways of being and living (Cameron 2012:10).

Finally, geographers have engaged stories and storytelling as expressive media and nonrepresentational methodology with the power to “move audiences toward new realms of thought and practice” (Cameron 2012:3). ‘Story,’ here, proffers post-discursive (especially post-Foucauldian), anti-representational purchase, and a way of “making dead geographies live” (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000:411). “Telling stories” (Cameron 2012:11) is a natural progression for those nonrepresentational scholars in geography, who “want to work on presenting the world, not on representing it, or explaining it” (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002:439). Indeed, nonrepresentational geographies have consistently prioritised the ‘truths’ that lie in performance (McCormack 2003; Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Thrift 2007, 2008), witnessing (Harrison 2007; Wylie 2005, 2007, 2009), creative writing (Rose 2006; Lorimer and Wylie 2010), and stories (Latham and Conradson 2003)¹² over the “discursive idealism” of formal representationalism (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002:439). Unlike the highly politicised storytelling of the previous instance, nonrepresentational and (post)phenomenological approaches generally assume the “political and intellectual consequences of narration and the ways in which storying

¹¹ See Cameron (2011), DeSilvey (2012), Lorimer (2006), Lorimer and Wylie (2010), Pearson (2007), Tolia-Kelly (2004a, 2004b), and Stewart (1996) for key examples of the discussion and practice of storying the ‘particular.’

¹² Latham and Conradson (2003:1901) open their guest editorial, *The Possibilities of Performance*, with a citation from anthropologist Ingold (2000) on the importance of stories to academic knowledges: “stories help to open up the world, not cloak it.”

shapes the contours of the knowledges they produce,” their chief concern lying with auto-ethnographic “explorations of the authors’ own bodies and experiences” (Cameron 2012:12). As such, these geographies have provoked strong criticism, for example, of the privileged positionality of the research subject¹³, and consequent usefulness and relevance of such storytelling; as well as enquiries as to where such storytelling can lead geographical thought. As Daniels and Lorimer (2001:7) note (albeit speaking more widely of narrative approaches in geography), there is a disturbing quality of ‘anything goes’:

The risk here is a tendency, which has now become endemic, to loosen narrative as an interpretative term, to give it too much room, too little analytical purchase, so elastic that ‘narrative’ has become a shorthand for almost any kind of knowledge, discourse, meaning, experience or point of view.

The chief defence proffered by nonrepresentational theorists is that such critique misses the point: representationalist-derived criteria of ‘analytical purchase,’ ‘progression of knowledge,’ ‘worth,’ etc., are irrelevant to geographies that seek to engage the world in its very becoming. Further, nonrepresentational storytelling is committed to a narrative experimentalism that “draw[s] our attention to ... the becoming made possible by stories, their capacity to cultivate perceptions and inclinations that are not provoked through didactic or expository prose” (Cameron 2012:14). The value of such storying lies not in its ‘relevance,’ but in the ethical and political transformations it effects at a precognitive, pre-subjective level (Thrift 2007)¹⁴. Yet we are left with the questions of exactly how this happens, and how we can evaluate such scholarship.

1.3 Literary geography and interdisciplinary storytelling

‘New geographies of story and storytelling’ provide greater insight into the political and ethical potential of storytelling, and the grounded particularities of daily life, including the daily life of the geographical academy. Further they enable richer, more affective ways of ‘doing’ geography. However, the specific *ways* in which stories ‘work,’ remain under-theorized.’ Cameron (2012:14) contends¹⁵:

¹³ That is the preponderance of “notably British and male subject positions” in such nonrepresentationalist accounts (Price 2010:208).

¹⁴ I return to the politics and ethics of ‘affect’ in my discussion of nonrepresentational geographies (1.3.3), and in my definition of fairy tales as enchanting stories (2.3.3).

¹⁵ Of course ‘new geographies of story and storytelling’ and literary, filmic, graphic, etc. geographies are not mutually exclusive. For example, Pearson (2012:64) creates a film, *Raindogs*, to explore the “convergences of time, narrative and location,” and “perform” the city of Cardiff. There is, however, a notable lack of interest in the former field as to the formal techniques and significance of different media, storytellings, and narratives. There is also a disappointing lack of interdisciplinary conversation.

We know that stories matter, that they materialise. But the precise ways in which this works, as one reads or listens to a story, the experiential, phenomenological dimensions of being drawn into a story and carried toward its views and conclusions, this we have seemed not to want to approach.

Recent developments in the more interdisciplinary fields of literature, film, and various graphic media offer a useful corrective with their direct address of these issues¹⁶. There is not space, here, to account for each of these geographies of media. Rather, I approach the lacuna above through one body of scholarship that attends in great detail to the “performative enactment of space and spacing” (Carter and McCormack 2006:228) in storytelling. Thus I turn next to the ways in which recent literary and geographical scholars have storied the inter-discipline of literary geography, finding critical purchase for my own theorizing of fairy tales and storytelling in their narratives of ‘metadisciplinarity.’

In the seminal *Geography Compass* virtual interdisciplinary conference on literary geographies, Crang (2009) remarks: “it is notable that even in special issues and books ... there is depressingly little truck and commerce between geographical literary studies and literary studies.” His simplistic¹⁷ diagramming (figure 1) suggests an important disjuncture between literary and geographical studies, revolving around a failure of literary scholars to understand geographical texts and theories; and a converse failure of geographical scholars to bring literary theory to bear on their analyses of literature, and to theorize the differences between works of literature and geographical ‘text.’ Literary studies present a similar picture, such that Luria (2012:190) likens the lack of dialogue and collaboration to a childhood scenario of ‘parallel play’:

We resemble a bit those toddlers in the sand box engaged in what the psychologists term “parallel play,” too absorbed still to be able to turn to each other, combine forces, and achieve something new and great.

¹⁶ I add the qualifier ‘more’ here quite self-consciously; a perennial lament in literary geographies, for example, from both literature and geography disciplinary perspectives, is the *lack* of productive communication between the two disciplines, and the problems that consequently arise from their differing conceptions and uses of key terms such as ‘geography,’ ‘space,’ ‘literary,’ etc. (e.g. Sharp 2000; Hones 2008; Luria 2012; Winkler et al. 2012).

¹⁷ I do not mean this as a criticism; indeed Crang (2009) himself describes his diagramming as “trite.” It is useful, however, for a broad overview of how many literary geographers consider the state of the field.

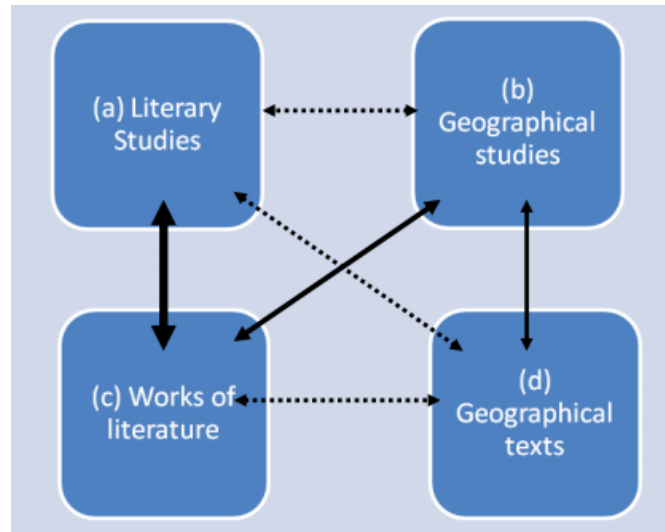


Figure 1. Diagramming interdisciplinary literary geography (Crang 2009).

‘Parallel play’ stymies the cross-disciplinary dissemination of relevant research and inhibits the development of a cutting-edge interdisciplinary field of study¹⁸. However, it is the deep philosophical and methodological ruptures that prevent the greater cohesion of this field. A consideration of these ruptures is telling for my thesis, which likewise works across interdisciplinary borders.

Perhaps the most important rupture between literary and geographical studies originates in their differential conceptualisation of the key terms of the field (literary/geography); that is “whether [these] ... refer to discipline or to subject matter” (Hones 2008:1303). This rupture gives rise to a complex interplay of divergent perspectives, which have tended to coalesce around two “gaps”: between “‘the textuality of space’ and the ‘spatiality of texts’” (*ibid* 1307); and “between studies of texts (and textual spaces) and studies of the production, dissemination and reception of texts” (Kneale 2009). Hones’s and Kneale’s careful wording invites a performative understanding of the field, whilst their emphasis on ‘text’ widens the terms of the debate beyond *literature*¹⁹. For now, however, I want to focus more closely on the ‘gaps’ they identify, and consider how these have shaped the development of literary geography.

Theorizing ‘the textuality of space,’ to begin, pertains to how we understand a *literary* text (subject matter), and specifically raises the question of “what makes [literary texts] different from geographical texts” (Sharp 2000:329). This question can only be properly answered when we become familiar with the analytical tools of literary criticism:

Brosseau ... insisted on the value of the close reading techniques characteristic of literary studies in analysing the subversive power of fiction, arguing that that geographers engaging with literary texts should overlook neither ‘the specificity of its form’ nor ‘its singular use of language’ (Hones 2008:1304).

Brosseau (1994) highlights the subversive properties of literature: “the destabilising form that literature takes ... its ability to disrupt or challenge conventional meaning” (Hones 2008:1304)—including its destabilisation of common-sense *geographies*. Thus, literary texts “constitute a

¹⁸ For example, Crang (2009) notes the disappointing lack of engagement with Bakhtin’s (1981) spatiotemporal concept of chronotype in geographical studies, whilst Luria (2012) urges a collaboration of experimental geographies and literary studies in their so far separated researches of the militarization of the American desert.

¹⁹ The term ‘text’ has often been preferred to literature in geographical scholarship; a fact which serves to underscore the uneasy relationship between literary and geographic studies. ‘Text’ allows geographers to enlarge the parameters of their research beyond the ‘fictional,’ draw attention to the wider economies of the textual, and mark the difficulty of establishing any one piece of writing as ‘literary.’ Thus, Saunders (2010:437) notes that while “‘textual geography’ ... does not efface the literary, it does call on literature to validate itself more explicitly as a meaningful source of geographical knowledge.”

‘geographer’ in its own right as it generates norms, particular modes of readability, that produce a particular type of geography” (Brosseau 1994 cited in Hones 2008:1304). This insight has encouraged more performative approaches to literature in geographical studies, such as Hones’ (2010:484) exemplary exposition of the “literary detonation” established through the spacing of a very particular reader-writer relationship in Walker’s short story *Petunias*²⁰. Hones’ study is, however, an exception in the wider body of geographical literary research, as geographers have traditionally paid scant attention to such subtleties of form and texture, and have tended to “reduce literature to just another source of ‘data’ on social and cultural phenomena” (Sharp 2000:329)²¹. As such, textual analysis has been adopted as “a strategy useful for the exploration of *geographical themes*,” with little consideration of differences between the styles and matterings of writing (Hones 2008:1307, emphasis added). Further, the ‘textuality of space’ is often reduced to a question of “the public consumption of literary texts” (*ibid* 1309)—that is the processes of production, dissemination and reception of literary texts. Literary scholars, meanwhile, have struggled to convincingly theorize ‘the spatiality of texts’, proving “it is not just the meaning of literary texts that is at stake” in the field of literary geography (Kneale 2009). Thus Harvey (2001, in Kneale 2009) acerbically dismisses Moretti’s (1998) popular forays into the mapping of literary space as mere “cartographic banalities.” Thacker (2005:56), himself a literary scholar, similarly criticizes literary applications of spatial theory that “subjugate ... spatiality to ... an aesthetic theme or trope.” He attempts to exceed such metaphorical appropriations of ‘space’ through a historical materialist understanding of geography, positing:

To think geographically about literary and cultural texts means to understand them in material locations, locations that can and should be examined historically and with an awareness of how diverse spaces can reflect, produce or resist forms of power (*ibid* 60).

Whilst Thacker (2005:63) argues for the “mutual implication ... [of] ... metaphorical and material spaces” through this ‘critical’²² positioning, his account is nonetheless haunted by a lingering representational dualism of ‘material locations’ (‘real’ space), and ‘literary and cultural texts’ (metaphorical space). Indeed, his attempts to bring “questions of space and geography ... to bear upon texts” (*ibid* 58) make bold assumptions

²⁰ Included in Alice Walker’s (1981) collection *You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down*.

²¹ Especially during the period described as the ‘cultural turn’ (see 1.3), which was characterized by an especially “[strong] historicist approach to cultural works, seeking to ground the text’s meaning in its context, sometimes ‘uncovering’ meanings from the text that are at odds with the commonsense interpretations of ordinary readers” (Kneale 2009). Sharp (2000) notes that this ignorance is a problem across the board of humanistic, regional, and critical geographies, with the former two approaches, in particular, tending to produce unsustainable generalizations. Critical geographies, meanwhile, with their “[sensitivities] to literature as a product of culture” (329), have been more apt to “theoretical overdetermination,” reading grand discourses through individual narratives, and ignoring the individual “‘voice’ of the text” (331).

²² Thacker (2005:63) names his approach “critical literary theory.”

about the meanings of these terms ('space'/'geography') without recourse to wider debates in the discipline of geography itself. His material understanding of 'geography,' which places space in the background, as a surrounding environment, for example, sits uneasily with much contemporary geographical scholarship. Recent literary interventions that have likewise sought to resolve the gap between disciplinary approaches in literary geography evidence similar 'shortcuts.' Thus both Hess-Luttich (2012) and Winkler *et al.* (2012) separately critique the 'topographical' and 'topological' turn in literary studies for their flattened account of space, only to revert to Soja's (1989) 'Thirdspace' for their 'geographical' alternative²³. Again, we see here a reduction of "spatiality to a cipher, a concrete, absolute dimension on which to locate textual phenomenon" (Kneale 2009).

A fundamental hindrance to the consolidation of a literary geography field of study thus lies in the differing languages of the literary and geographical disciplines²⁴. As Hones (2009) notes:

Within this loose leaky 'field' [of literary geography] it seems to me that it's usually the seemingly basic, self-evident key words (space, place, geography, distance, scale, literary, critical, etc.) that cause the most confusion and miscommunication.

The gap between 'the textuality of space' and the 'spatiality of texts' presents a serious problem to the development of a coherent field of literary geography. However, Moore's (2001:19) reading of Derrida's "becoming-literary of the literal" suggests a way to negotiate this problem. Moore (*ibid*) strives, after Derrida, to "wrench the literal out of a system that would have it be the passive designator of an already pre-formed reality," and so trouble the fundamental basis of this rupture: the question of whether we view 'literature' and 'geography' as 'material' subject matter or 'immaterial' practice. He turns to Deleuze to ask: "what remains?" (*ibid* 20) when we reject the presupposition of literary texts as interpretive discourses, representing a reality 'out there.' By undermining the assumed passivity of language as representation, Moore (*ibid*) is able to foreground its performative, fluid, excessive and ludic qualities, and answer: literature's potential to effect social and political change. His performative focus returns us to Hone's (2010:484) "literary detonation," and her own reengagement with literature, or 'text,' as a complex event-space.

²³ My comment is not intended as a critique of Thirdspace *per se*, but rather points to the disconcerting fact that Winkler *et al.*(2012) seek to derive a 'new' collaborative approach to the interdisciplinary field of literary geographies without recourse to contemporary geographical debates.

²⁴ Indeed, language is often the sticking point for interdisciplinary study; see, for example, Bracken and Oughton's (2006) study of dialects, metaphors, and articulation in the problematic language of geography, which as a discipline is itself fractured into two largely non-communicative 'human' and 'physical' sub-disciplines.

Hones (2008:1308), like Moore (2001), approaches fictional texts from a performative perspective, but her approach foregrounds the question of academic audience: “to whom is one speaking?” She approaches this ‘audience’ from Thrift’s (2007) nonrepresentational perspective, viewing it as “‘a plural event which is more or less spatially extensive and more or less temporally specific’ and which ‘invites only particular kinds of presenting practices’” (Hones 2008:1309). The performative audience (the disciplinary context) thus influences the ‘reading’ of texts, and gives rise to its differing ‘meanings.’ Indeed, Hones’s main contribution to literary geography, I would argue, lies in her insightful understanding of this reading event, and its connection to text. Hones (*ibid* 1301-2) pays great attention to the *spatial encounter* between reader and writer, positing “a text ‘happens’ when read.” This happening has a necessarily spatial flavour: text is “something which happens at the intersection of agents and situations scattered across time and space, both human and non-human, absent and present.” The text ‘event’ is an extensive relational event space which gathers “people, places, times, contexts, networks, and communities,” and further:

Multiple traces of other readers and writers; novelists, geographers, colleagues, students, reviewers, and editors. It is informed by disparate communities and specialist competencies, by contexts and local conditions. The physical words on the page are involved: the text, the font, the layout, the page, and the screen. Writing and reading technologies are part of it, too, not to mention lighting, heating, the view from our windows, and ambient sound: my chair, your desk, and our bodies (*ibid* 1301)²⁵.

The reading experience is an unbounded performative nexus of reader, writers, nonhuman agents, various practices, etc.; a notion which side-steps the problematic rupture of textual space/spatial text above, and allows us to theorize this rupture “in terms of location rather than disagreement” (*ibid* 1309). These differing perspectives (textual space/spatial text) become a product of both the “initial encounter of reader, writer, and text”, as well as the secondary, academic mediation of this initial event (*ibid*). Indeed, the key ruptures of the inter-discipline turn out to be a mirage, arising from an erroneous assumption of the difference between academic and literary (professional), and general public, reading practices. When we engage both reading experiences (professional/public) as similar events, understanding academic criticism as public consumption “differently conditioned by context, conventions, and expectations” (*ibid* 1307), we can focus our attention away from nit-picking the differences of meaning and approach between literary and geographical scholars, to focus on the inter-discipline itself as a ‘happening text.’ As such, we can foster a more tolerant and diverse *metadisciplinary* approach to literary geography, understanding:

²⁵ Note the remarkable resemblance of Hone’s extensive ‘event’ space to Barad’s (2007) notion of material-discursive ‘apparatuses.’

Both analytical strategies and specific readings ... as the located products of particular collaborations and performative social situations, thereby enabling dialogue and opening up new geographical ways of working with fiction (*ibid* 1314).

Within such a shared, collaborative space, it becomes considerably easier to discuss the “things we take seriously about both texts and geography” (Kneale 2009), in piecemeal, but still productive, ways.

1.4 Nonrepresentational geographies

Thus far, I have engaged key debates and practices of geographies of story and storytelling, and literary geographies. In both cases, I have drawn heavily on nonrepresentational theory (NRT) within geography, finding its anti-representational performative stance particularly interesting for a study of enchanting fairy tales and storytelling. I now engage nonrepresentational theory (NRT) directly, and briefly sketch out some of the problems and insights that this body of thought raises for geographical thinking, which I have brought to bear in this thesis²⁶.

NRT in human geography is “an umbrella term for diverse work that seeks better to cope with our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds” (Lorimer 2005:83). Heavily influenced by French poststructural theory of the 1960s, but also by performance studies, and Judith Butler’s use of performativity (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000), NRT’s most fundamental drive is to problematize the dualistic metaphysics of representationalism, by highlighting the non-innocence of language, and the power inherent in the act of representation²⁷. Thus Dewsbury *et al.* (2002:439) note that representations are not passive reflections of a reality ‘out there,’ but actualities or “doings”: they are “performative in themselves.” NRT aims to “redirect attention from the *posited meaning* towards the *material compositions and conduct* of

²⁶ This is necessarily a ‘whistle-stop’ tour of NRT. A more thorough study of NRT, together with its connections with other relational theorizing (e.g. Actor Network Theory) and theories of affect, is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Anderson and Harrison 2010 for a comprehensive introduction to this body of geographical work). Ultimately, my thesis is concerned with fairy tales; and whilst it is important to consider the material-discursive contributions to my understanding of these stories, I am equally wary of the dangers of theoretical overdetermination, systemization, and the silencing of the essentially excessive and marvellous voices of these tales.

²⁷ Representationalism is a dualistic metaphysics based on “the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent” (Barad 2007:46). This break between the world and our knowledge of the world (our *representational* knowledge) is sometimes theorized in terms of a tripartite schema of “knowledge (i.e., representations),” “known (i.e., that which is purportedly represented),” and a “knower (i.e., someone who does the representing)” (*ibid* 46-7). The “ontological gap” presents representations (knowledge) as “a mediating function between independently existing entities” (*ibid* 47). It is this ontological gap that NRT takes to task, in both naive realist (positivist), and social constructivist metaphysics.

representations” (*ibid*, emphasis added), and so undermine the “ontological gap” of representationalism. Closing down this gap requires us to re-conceptualise temporality and spatiality, from a background state, to something produced *through* the endless interactions that make up the world²⁸. More specifically, NRT challenges the static notion of time that inheres in representation, refusing the ‘time out’ pause for reflection. It insists, rather, on the continuity or “onflow of everyday life,” and the “leitmotif of movement,” for “movement captures the animic flux of life and especially an ontogenesis which undoes a dependence on the preformed subject (Thrift 2007:5).

Thrift (*ibid* 2), the seminal figure of NRT, highlights this movement and inseparability of knowing-doing in his definition of NRT as “the geography of what happens.” Breaking with a cultural geography that attributes “structuralizing/signifying” (Lorimer 2008:551) meaning to a textually encoded world, he urges geographers to engage more closely with the happening world in all its excessiveness:

Rather than simply have to think, always and endless, what else there could be, we sometimes seem to connect with a layer in our existence that simply wants the things of the world close to our skin (Gumbrecht 2004, in Thrift 2007:5).

What is emerging, is a sense of ‘doing the world differently’; and NRT has a number of important consequences for how we perform geography. First, as we have seen, is its recognition of the fundamental worldliness of knowledge. Second, and following on from this, is the redirection of research from idealistic narratives and discourses to the minutiae of everyday life, in a reengagement with the world as it happens. Given NRT’s strong Deleuzian heritage, this reengagement has tended to a vitalist outlook, with a radical empiricist focus on materiality²⁹, excess, hybridity, the nonhuman, and *life*. In short, NRT gives “equal weight to the vast spillage of things” (Thrift 2007:9), and brings geography back to life (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000)³⁰. Third, NRT thus challenges cultural theory’s preoccupation with ‘discourse,’ and brings our scholarly attention back to the material and the body³¹. An important element of this, and in keeping with the vitalism above, has been a focus on questions of *affect* (as opposed to *emotion*, which is construed as upholding subjectivity) and sensation, whereby affect is understood through a Deleuzian-Massumi

²⁸ Note that this re-conceptualization of space time is incomplete in most NRT, although NRT at least raises the problematic question of a static, background, sense of space and time.

²⁹ See Anderson and Wylie (2009:318) for a particularly insightful summary of NRT’s “material imagination.”

³⁰ Thrift and Dewsbury’s (2000) paper *Dead Geographies—and how to make them live* insists on the need to re-enliven a world rendered mute, immobile, and deadened by idealistic, epistemologically driven theories of ‘being’; an enlivening which is simultaneously a *re-enchanting* of both research and world (also see Davies and Dwyer 2007). This is especially interesting in a study of marvellous tales, which have frequently been ‘deadened’ by idealistic grand narratives in fairy tale scholarship.

³¹ Indeed, NRT is a direct challenge to the discourse theories of the ‘cultural turn’ of the 1990s (Cameron 2012).

lineage as a pre-subjective force or intensity that transforms (affects)³². Affect theory, in turn, destabilises the subject position, by highlighting the performative nature of subjectivity, the trans-subjective nature of experience (Dewsbury *et al.* 2000), and the radical openness of being. In turn, this has led to a rethinking of “reflexivity, responsibility, intentionality, autonomy and identity” beyond representational frameworks (Anderson and Harrison 2006:334). In eschewing subject-based theorizing (and particularly identity-based politics and ethics), NRT has focused research on the autobiographical and pre-individual, positing a:

Material schemation [*sic*] in which the world is made up of all kinds of things brought into relation with one another by many and various spaces through a continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter, and the violent training that such encounter forces (Thrift 2007:8).

Drawing on Spinoza, Thrift (*ibid* 13) insists, “there is no longer a subject, but only individuating affective states of an anonymous force.” However, he draws back from a full commitment to post-subjectivity by retaining:

A certain minimum humanism ... [a] sense of personal authorship, no matter that the trace is very faint and no matter that the brain is a society, different parts of which are dynamically and differentially connected to all manner of environments. And the reason? Because *how things seem is often more important than what they are* (*ibid*).

Such fundamental challenges to subjectivity, knowledge, and our ‘sense’ of the world necessitate a rethinking of epistemology; thus, fourth, NRT encourages experimentalism in its “style” (Latham and Conradson 2003:1902), in order to better engage with “emotions, passions, and desires, the immaterial matters of spirit, belief, and faith—all forces that move beyond our familiar, (because) denoted world” (Dewsbury 2003:1907). Indeed, as we saw with regard to new geographies of story and storytelling (1.3), discursive methods are ill-suited to grapple with the world in its becoming.

The fifth, and perhaps most important, challenge of NRT is its ethical import. It is at this point that we become aware of a fracture in the body of research that comprises NRT, between “the affirmative and the critical” (Anderson and Harrison 2010:25). The bulk of NRT privileges an

³² Seigworth and Gregg (2010:2), drawing on a similar Deleuzian-Massumi heritage, define affect as follows: “affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability.”

affirmative ethics of connection and ‘hope,’ drawing on the theoretical genealogy of Spinoza/Deleuze/Massumi for inspiration (e.g. Anderson 2002, 2006; Anderson and Holden 2008; Popke 2009; McCormack 2010). Somewhat against this connective and ‘enlivening’ grain, an important minority of scholars have engaged with the more ‘sober’ Derridian and Levinasian poststructural challenges to representation, to posit a “faint view of human agency,” with a concordant ethics of “out of jointness” and “strangeness” (Thrift 2007:14). For example, Harrison (2007:592-3), in a welcome counter-narrative, critiques the ‘relational turn’ in cultural geography, arguing that NRT narratives of connectedness and generosity do a subtle violence to the Other:

In the very relating of the relational at the ‘heart’ of relationality as it were abides the absence of the nonrelational as that which silently called for, provoked, and continues to disturb and set in motion the relational. In this way I believe that any shift to a ‘relational ontology’ if there can actually be such a thing must not simply be describing a will to connect and thereby tie our fidelity to an irresponsible and unconsidered will to power, but rather must have as its acknowledged occasion the incessant proximity of the nonrelational.

For Harrison (*ibid* 591-2), immanentist and structural ‘relationalism’ sacrifices the “aporetic” relationship, with its “irreducible nonthematizability”; and it is only within this “hermeneutic enigma” of “breaks and gaps, interruptions and intervals, caesuras and tears” that we can have ethics free of violence. Indeed, stories and storytelling, as exercises in “comprehension,” are particularly problematic:

What is happening ... when we recount, narrate, and make ‘storyable,’ render intelligible, accountable, and observable, and thereby deliver to comprehension and theory, such singular and traumatic occasions as the death of a loved one or experiences of extreme helplessness, wretchedness, or despair?

Harrison (*ibid*) posits that in ‘making sense’ of something through storytelling we deny its excessive non-sense, mystery, or irreducible difference as *Other*; instead, he prefers to speak in the passive and “broken words” of “testimony and witness,” which are radically open to the Other. However, I would contend—and strongly—that he has fundamentally misunderstood the nature of storytelling, stories, and especially fairy tales, in this claim. Indeed, fairy tales establish exactly this aporetic relationship that Harrison lauds, with their irreducible mystery, subversive alter-voices, and testimony to the wronged and departed (see 2.2.2). Fairy stories and storytelling rarely ‘make sense,’ as narratives harbour contradictory anti-tales (see 2.3.4), and playfully destabilise the spectatorial position (Kérchy 2011) and reader-writer subjectivities (see 2.1.1). Fairy tale tricksters, in particular, are playful semioticians who transgress language and meaning making, overturning all systems of symbolic

circularity and communication (see 5.1.6), and challenging our knowledge of the Other. More generally, the ‘marvel’ of the tales resists our understanding and threatens our pretence at control (see 2.3.4).

Beyond Harrison’s meticulous theorizing of non-relationality through witnessing, nonrepresentationalist theorists have also turned their attention to the limits and impossibilities of knowing, dwelling, community, love, etc. (e.g. Barnett 2005, 2008; Wylie 2007, 2009, 2012). These more “tragic” geographies (Harrison 2007:591) likewise disturb an affirmative ethics of becoming-Other, being-together or being-as-one, in order to champion separation, distance, and irreducible difference. As such, they are pertinent for my theorizing of the deviant trickster and crone figures, who overturn common-sense moral landscapes to embrace distance (rather than proximity), profane disorder (rather than sacred and primordial communication) and singularity (rather than communal togetherness). These figures point to more subtle forms of being-in-relation, reinforcing the Otherness of humanity, but through an enchanted, not nihilistic, register³³.

Whilst NRT has contributed much valid and provocative work to cultural geography, there have been numerous and cogent criticisms of this body of theory. Briefly, these attack NRT for its: ethnocentricism and privileged positionality (Tolia-Kelly 2006; Price 2010); irresponsible promotion of posthumanism over more subjective and individually programmed and marked bodies (Thien 2005); solipsism, especially in research ‘approaches’ (Blacksell 2005); and depoliticization of culture (Cresswell 2006). These criticisms arguably refine too much on the divide between representational and nonrepresentational theory. Thus Lorimer (2008:555) proposes we might better understand NRT as a “more-than-representational” dialogue with representationally based theory, which asks “what *more* is to be found during commonplace episodes of language-in-use, direct observation of practical encounters and closest consideration of empirical matters.” As a supplementary *more-than*, NRT becomes a “background hum, asking questions of style, form, technique and method, and ushering in experimental kinds of response” (Lorimer 2008:556). Lorimer’s (*ibid*, also 2007) ‘more-than’ proposal seems a misunderstanding of sorts, however, as it (largely) restricts NRT to experimental questions of ‘style,’ fosters a division of aesthetics from politics, and epistemology from ontology, and downplays NRT’s very real social, ethical, and *political* concerns. Indeed, these concerns (subjectivity, performativity, the affective, worldliness of knowledge-making, the enlivening of the ‘research subject’) constitute a very real and vital challenge to representational metaphysics. NRT does not so much supplement social constructivist theorizing, as refute its basic assumptions.

³³ See 2.2.3 on interrupted community; also chapter 7.

Perhaps a more valid critique would be that NRT does not go *far enough*, as it fails to sufficiently challenge its own assumptions and coherency. For example, nonrepresentational theorists have insufficiently theorized the principle of (self) reflexivity, at most noting that its “goal ... should not be transparency” (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002:440), and so fail to recognize that reflexivity operates on the same fetishized optical plane as representationalism (Barad 2007). More problematic is the preponderance of under-theorized accounts of ‘relationality,’ which draw on an alarmingly wide range of theoretical strands, many of which are counter to NRT’s fundamental aims (Harrison 2007; Barad 2007:429). Even ‘non-relational’ counterpoints speak more from a quasi-transcendental position of *epistemological* uncertainty (we can never fully know the opaque, quasi-transcendental face of the Other which calls us into being), rather than radical *ontological* difference (‘we’ and ‘Other,’ as well as space and time, are performed, and thus known, together)³⁴. A further issue is the vagueness of certain key theoretical concepts, such as ‘residual humanism’ or ‘performativity’—helped, no doubt, by the myriad voices and viewpoints of the field. Although I am not suggesting that we should strive for one unified position or uniform field of study (indeed, this would be counter to NRT’s history and aims, as Thrift and Dewsbury 2000 make clear in their genealogy of NRT’s use of performativity), I am concerned that the woolliness of such terms speaks rather to an insufficient theorization of the relationship between the material and the discursive, and points to a residual streak of representationalism in this nonrepresentational world. Thrift’s claim (2007:13) that “how things seem is often more important than what they are,” strikes an ironic note, given NRT’s strident rejection of dualist metaphysics. Finally, I suggest NRT would benefit from engaging with radical realist posthumanist metaphysics, such as Barad’s (2007) agential realism, which grapple with similar issues, but with the additional benefits of a (performative) knowledge of scientific practices, and a considerable historical awareness.

³⁴ See Barad (2007, 2011a) for more on this difference.

1.5 Research considerations

Having laid out the groundwork of my engagement with geographical literatures and practices, I can now turn to the key considerations that have guided this fairy tale thesis. A wide body of scholarship examining the ‘canon’ of fairy tale literature through a diverse range of approaches (most notably historical materialist, psychoanalytical, feminist, and postcolonial) already exists. However, Haase (2004) has recommended that we move beyond these established grounds, to pursue a number of new directions, including: reception studies, interdisciplinary work, comparative, multicultural and transnational research, recovery work, interpretation and the close reading of film and other media. Despite the enormity of this list, there are a number of areas of potentially rich fairy tale scholarship that escape his purview, and to which a specifically *geographical* perspective can contribute. These form the backbone of my research agenda, and I will detail them briefly below.

First, recurrent folk motifs are largely neglected in contemporary fairy tale scholarship, although there are exceptions where, for example, feminist scholars have engaged with the recurrent female folklore figures of mothers, maidens and crones (e.g. Lieberman 1972; Rowe 1979; Warner 1995; Wilson 1993, 2000). Otherwise, research has been mostly limited to psychoanalytical and analytical psychology explanations. This lacuna is largely due to an understandable distancing from the reductionism of Bettelheim (1976), Jung (1959), Von Franz (1995, 1996), Estés (1992), Bly (2004), etc., with their claims of psychic or archetypal universality³⁵. However, my interest in fairy tales is strongly caught up with the affective force of these recurrent figures, and how they work within, and constitute, distinctive unsettling geographies; as Robert’s (1990) exemplary work on the spread and transformation of African American trickster figures (the West African derived Anansi, Brer Rabbit, ‘John’ of the North American slave communities, and the badmen of the emancipation period) demonstrates. Perhaps even the Batman Joker, the focus of my trickster study in chapter five, could be understood as a descendent of this particular historic-geographic trajectory. One of the primary aims of the thesis is to explore these repeating figures, not as ubiquitous and universal archetypes, but as geographical ‘refrains,’ which function on the affective and symbolic levels.

The second potential area of research is methodological, and involves finding more appropriate ways of addressing the *enchantment* of fairy tales,

³⁵ The exception to this trend is perhaps Zipes’s (2012) efforts to understand folk figures, such as the ‘witch,’ through Dawkin’s (1976) quasi-biological (and quasi-essentialist) notion of ‘meme.’

beyond their symbolic importance. For many scholars the ‘meaning’ of fairy tales lies on this symbolic, discursive level, hence Zipes’ (1995) portrayal of Disney as a magic-making industry, and his historical-materialist exposé of its tricks. Bacchilega (1999:8) likewise takes issues with the ‘mythologizing business,’ of fairy tales, adopting a “*narratological* effort to name its paradoxes and articulate its variable ideological effects.” She adds: “to break the magic spell, we must recognize it as a spell that can be unmade” (*ibid*). Unlike these demythologizing scholars, however, I have no wish to sacrifice the liveliness of the tales to an idealistic discursive account that renders them transparent: a lens placed over the ‘reality’ of society³⁶. I posit the enchantment of the geographical refrains of the trickster and crone, originates in what is excessive, unknowable, and uncontrollable; and thus cannot be captured and harnessed to any one institution (oppressive or otherwise), or understood and ‘broken’³⁷. Countering this representational, discursive thrust, I consider fairy tale ‘refrains’ as “affective intensities,” following the nonrepresentational turn in geography, with its performative understandings of knowledge making and enlivening ambitions. This stance is especially pertinent to the transgressive motifs I pursue here, which at times defy meaning making itself. My thesis experiments with a multifaceted methodology to address not just the political, social and cultural material-discourses that contribute to the magic of the stories, but the affectivity of the tales themselves; and, beyond this, their academic ‘materialization.’ I begin by drawing on Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics to address the political and social ‘contexts’ of the stories within an interpretive textual analysis. Subsequently, I experiment with collage in a re-telling gesture, which ‘looks with’ the stories to evoke their affective force and linguistic, and indeed, visual excesses (Wylie 2005). Finally, I employ genealogical analysis to draw attention to the unstable nature of academic knowledge, and explore the mattering of these folk refrains throughout a series of fairy tales and fairy tale scholarship.

This complex methodological agenda involves redefining fairy tales as primarily *enchanted stories*; which leads me to the third area of research with which I engage. There is a need to consider the socio-political transformations that fairy tales effect, recalling Massey’s (2005:189) vision of a geography that can “[evoke] the ‘outwardlookingness’ of a spatial imagination.” This requires researching fairy tales and storytelling in tandem, rather than dividing the two as content and form, and researching one at the expense of the other. I therefore engage storytelling in practice, as I construct genealogies of fairy tale refrains in academic scholarship, and retell the tales through collage. Further, I explore theories of storytelling,

³⁶ Recent scholarship in fairy tale studies has begun to challenge this representationalism from a performative perspective, but this challenge is still very much in its infancy (e.g. Kérchy 2011).

³⁷ In this I agree with Benson (2000:118) who remarks: “the overhaul of the fairy tale by such [demythologizing] schools in the last thirty years has been hugely important and justifyingly influential, but has tended at times to be at the expense of the sheer alterity of the genre.”

folding Benjamin's (1999) and Arendt's (1983) notions of memory-work and *polis*-building, and Nancy's (1991) ontological account of myth and community, into a geographical definition of fairy tales as iterative storytelling that constitutes an audience as a mythic collective with totalitarian force (see 1.1.3). Finally, I engage Harrison's (2007) concept of testimony, and Nancy's (1991) elaboration of the *interrupted* community, to add nuance to this 'outwardlooking' geography.

The fourth consideration I bring to this thesis is of the problematic meaning and fundamental instability of the fairy tale genre (Tiffin 2009, 2011). I pursue this consideration by working at the limits of 'fairy tale,' where the genre breaks down into other, less definable forms, or is amalgamated into different genres. It is at these borders that the transformational potential, enduring mystery, and indeed *endurance*, of these stories becomes most apparent. Thus, I choose stories that trouble the fairy tale genre, and generate rich material-discursive fairy tale 'afterlives,' incorporating: documentary/action/gothic/urban fantasy film hybrid, blogs and newspaper spin offs (trickster); magic realism and botanical science (crone). As I engage these unstable, multi-genre tales, I am able to implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) trouble the very concept of genre, and draw attention to the wider implications of fairy tale 'enchantment.'

Finally, beyond these fairy tale considerations, I address Hasse's (2004) wider concern with practices and possibilities of interdisciplinary work. There has been little research in the geography discipline on fairy tales in tandem with storytelling, although cultural geography research has touched separately on oral histories, folklore, storytelling and story from a number of perspectives (see 1.3 above). Conversely, in the interdisciplinary field of fairy tale scholarship the spatialisation of fairy tales and storytelling has been largely taken-for-granted, excepting occasional ecocritical research (Thesz 2011; Whitley 2008); work on the cross-cultural transformations of stories (e.g. Zipes 2012); and sporadic forays into urban and rural spaces/spacings (Murai 2011; Susina 2002; Tiffin 2009; Zolkover 2011). I have chosen to focus the thesis on the geographies of tricksters and crones, as it is the recurrent and enchanting properties of fairy tales that interests me most. Like Tiffin (2009), I regard these recurrent figures as vital to the mythic language of the fairy tale genre, as well as other enchanting and mythic forms of storytelling (see 2.1 and 2.2 for an explanation of why these particular folk figures). The primary objective of my thesis is thus to construct a rigorous, multidisciplinary spatialised theory of storytelling and fairy tales around these folk figures.

1.6 Summary of chapters

At its heart, the thesis is a thorough engagement with, and rigorous exploration of, fairy tales as rich and exciting geographical stories, which never cease to enchant. I address these enchanting stories over the course of five subsequent chapters.

Chapter two presents the main challenge of the thesis: the need to adequately theorize the relationship between fairy tales, storytelling and geography. I begin by briefly summarising the importance of fairy tales studies as a field of research. From here, I lay the groundwork for a geography of fairy tales, and specifically trickster and crone tales, drawing on fairy tale scholarship to consider their mythologizing, metafictional, archetypal, self-repeating, and resonating properties. Focusing more closely on ‘resonance,’ I develop this notion through Deleuze and Guattari, to theorize these folk motifs as territorializing and deterritorializing spatiotemporal rhythms or ‘refrains,’ which organise space-time. The chapter turns next to theorizing a geography of storytelling as the cohering of mythic community, through Benjamin’s concept of the ‘authentic’ fairy tale, Arendt’s storying of the *polis*, and Nancy’s insight into the meta-myth of the ‘storytelling circle.’ I trouble the pessimism inherent in this theory of mythic community by reconsidering storytelling, first, as a witnessing gesture, and second as an always-interrupted myth. I end the chapter by engaging some contemporary definitions of fairy tales as recursive texts, classical literary tales, enchanting and ‘marvellous’ stories, and ‘anti-tales,’ and noting their implicit spatial assumptions. In attending to the recurrent, literary, enchanting and multi-vocal nature of fairy tales, I am able to add nuance to my own geographical accounting of these stories as comprising spatial refrains with affective force.

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the thesis, and directly addresses my second research concern (concerning what method, or methods, are best suited to communicating the symbolic import *and* enchantment of the tales, and evoking the geographies of fairy tales and storytelling). It discusses the challenges of fixing meaning to such subversive refrains as the trickster and crone; and posits the need for a multidimensional methodological approach which is both ‘lively’ and ‘worldly,’ drawing inspiration from Lather’s excessive, and Barad’s diffractive feminist epistemologies. It provides a thorough account of this multidimensional methodological framework, detailing the (Gadamerian) philosophical hermeneutic ‘approach’ to textual analysis, experimental retelling through collage, and genealogical analyses in turn; and considering how each contributes to forwarding my research interests.

Chapter four is the first of two trickster chapters, and offers a genealogy of the academic storytelling of this folk figure. The chapter works through key debates in trickster theory, acknowledges their implicit geographical assumptions, and makes a strong case for a more productive definition of trickster figures as geographical refrains. I begin the genealogy with recent fairy tale scholarship, and its unusual emphasis on *female* trickster figures and female cunning. From this opening, I draw out three major issues that dog trickster research, including the problematic ubiquity of this figure, the dubious ‘borrowing’ (and de-contextualizing) of indigenous trickster mythology, and definitional issues stemming from deeper epistemological debates of universalism versus particularism. With these issues in mind, the chapter progresses to the three major strands that comprise the field of interdisciplinary trickster scholarship: psycho-social, structural, and cultural-hermeneutical. I then tease out a fourth, minor, strand, of the theorizing of trickster humour. Whilst these four lines of inquiry have dealt variously with the moral, social, cultural, political and narrative disorders that riddle trickster tales, they have failed to make a causal link with the *spatial* disorder of these stories. Thus geographical interruptions and disorderliness are usually taken to be a consequence of trickster behaviour, and not its precondition. I reverse this causality by positing the vital importance of geography to trickster narratives, and arguing that trickster behaviour is not merely spatially articulated *in*, but *enabled by*, the strange to-and-fro movements, crossroads, and other liminal spaces, which undermine all forms of organization in trickster stories. The chapter concludes by presenting trickster narratives as affective geographical refrains, which propel us out of our seemingly ordered realities into insecure and profane in-between places that unsettle our assumptions of what it means to be human, and especially to be in community.

Chapter five presents a contemporary trickster story, Nolan’s (2008) *The Dark Knight*, and employs an anti-fairy tale framework to address the enchanting mythical and subversive layers of the tale. The focus lies with the larger-than-life character of the Joker, who is central to the ‘film space’ (despite being off-screen for much of the story). This trickster-like figure takes over the traditionally heroic Batman tale, and undermines its narrative and moral certainty. The chapter explores the Joker’s violent landscaping and destruction of the mythic community of Gotham City through a mixed medium of hermeneutic analysis and collage. It begins with the mythic community of Gotham City, which seeps beyond the film to a longstanding comics franchise, with a vibrant fan culture, complete with blog spinoffs and virtual reality games. I explore the interplay of 9/11 terrorism and the Joker’s own terrorism, within and beyond the film, noting that this successful metafictional trickster unsettles not just the film, but a wider global community riven by the fear of post-9/11 political uncertainty. I turn next to the Joker’s material-discursive techniques of destruction, including: his initiation of urban chaos through physical and musical aggression; his affective destructiveness and violent ‘re-styling’

of the urban, through graffiti bombing, defacement practices, and uricide; his embodied storytelling, rife with semiotic eruptions, which subverts the sterility of Batman's Manichean mythology; his destabilizing, liminal narrative position as both teller and told. As the Joker deploys these subversive techniques, he takes the democratic Batman myth of order and civilized cooperation in the *polis* to its contradictory limits, and problematizes our common assumptions of storytelling, fairy tales, and community.

Chapter six is the first of two crone chapters, and presents a genealogical analysis of crone storytelling across a multidisciplinary academic context. I begin by recognizing the dearth of crone research, attributing this to a problematic multidisciplinary conflation of crone and witch figures in feminist theorizing. I argue that this conflation neglects, or misconstrues, the geography of crone stories—and draw a tentative line between these figures based on their divergent geographies. The chapter focuses initially on 'witch' theorizing, and its two key public and scholarly inheritances: 1950s pagan 'goddess worship,' and 1970s feminist discourses of sexual and domestic violence, and environmentalism. I denounce these theories for their geographical naivety (whilst acknowledging their many political achievements), and push for a more sophisticated storytelling capable of addressing the crone's complex 'nursery-nurse,' menopausal, barren, deceitful, deadly, and antisocial wilderness nuances. I seek inspiration from fairy tale scholarship and post-Jungian theory; however, I conclude that such scholarship all too often buys into witch theorizing, and attempts to rehabilitate the crone at the cost of her important geographical and temporal insights, fundamentally transforming this figure in the bargain. I argue that the crone's invisibility—as a crone—in academic scholarship is a product of her post-menopausal 'non-productivity'; and that this invisibility echoes a wider societal ignorance and fear of ageing women. To acknowledge this neglect, I turn to a wealth of marginalized geographical, feminist, and queer gerontology debates, calling attention to the post-historical and post-geographical thinking that characterizes these accounts. Finally, I look more closely at crone geographies, and posit we understand this enigmatic figure as an affective refrain that both enacts—and subsequently undermines—a spatialisation of *human* time: the time-space of finitude, which spans the individual human life; and the time-space of fairy tale storytelling itself, with its strong affiliations to the specific material-discourses of 'nation,' and 'civilization.' In undermining these human temporalities, crone refrains enact a 'wilding' in fairy tales, entangling the civilized, storied, human *polis* and life, with the primordial, 'timeless' nonhuman environment. I conclude the chapter by arguing that the crone refrain, the leitmotif of the fairy tale genre, brings us right down to earth, in a way which contradicts both relational accounts of being, and more Romantic discourses of dwelling.

Chapter seven provides a textual analysis of, and affective engagement with, Maitland's (2009) short story *Moss Witch*. The story narrates the meeting of a crone-like witch and a bryologist in a patch of moss-laden ancient oak wood within a microcosmic Scottish wilderness setting. This dark fairy tale harnesses the primordial storyteller with the savage beast resonances of the crone to produce a horrific (and sometimes comic) 'wilding' in the narrative. These two convergences—of bryologist and Moss Witch and of primordial storyteller and savage crone—constitute an uneasy dwelling, which contradicts both relational (networked) accounts of being and romantic discourses of dwelling. Instead, the crone story offers us a more radical entanglement, which is played out across affective 'discourses' of ecological imperialism, 'becoming prey,' and the queer home. *Moss Witch*, commissioned for a science-fiction anthology, employs the subversive crone figure to undermine the anthropocentric, 'monumental' temporality of the anthology, and overturn its 'progressive' futurism. An interplay of a number of competing narrative 'voices,' including cartographic, ecological, and ecocritical writings, and mythic and fictional storytelling, erodes the scientific certainty of the story, and further entangles human and nonhuman on the *narrative* level. As fairy tale enchants science, the peril of the Moss Witch's wildwood becomes clear: it disrupts the dualistic hierarchies of science and fiction, human and nonhuman, and even life and death—with frighteningly unpredictable consequences.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis with a critical account of where we are at the end of this long research journey. I begin by pinpointing the key achievements of the thesis, including its potential to breathe fresh life into fairy tale studies, and move it beyond the two dominant paradigms that characterise this inter-discipline—that is beyond either one or other strand of historicism (historicism and new historicism), and the various, now rather stale, varieties of identity-oriented ideology critique. Following this, I draw attention to the less successful aspects of this research, and proffer suggestions for addressing these shortcomings in future research. Finally, I consider some of the geographies might emerge as a result of this sustained engagement with fairy tales and storytelling, and propose some fruitful potential avenues for future research.

Chapter 2. Geographies of fairy tales and storytelling

2.1 Fairy tale geographies

2.1.1 Introduction: fairy tales

2.1.2 Fairy tales as geographic refrains

2.1.3 Trickster and crone as geographic refrains

2.2 Storytelling geographies

2.2.1 Storytelling as praxis

2.2.2 Storytelling as witnessing

2.2.3 Storytelling as interrupted community

2.3 Defining fairy tales

2.3.1 Fairy tale iterations

2.3.2 Classical fairy tales

2.3.3 Marvel, enchantment and wonder

2.3.4 Anti-tales

2.4 Summary

2.1 Fairy tale geographies

2.1.1 Introduction: fairy tales

Fairy tales play with space-time, implicating how we³⁸ conceptualise, and indeed constitute, the human as a social being, and this social being in its environment. Indeed fairy tales, with their seemingly childish narrative, are sophisticated and controversial stories, worthy of academic scrutiny. Despite this, the fantasy world of fairy tales, with its seepage into the wider imaginative landscapes of folklore, legend and mythology, has been frequently overlooked in historical and socio-cultural theory (Selling 2003), or trivialised as antiquated³⁹, entertaining, or thinly symbolic through a simplified imaginary/reality binary (Warner 1995). Again, psychoanalysts have reductively interpreted these stories as representations of an infant's psychic development or the earlier stages of humanity's evolution as a whole (see Bettelheim 1991; Freud 2003; Jung 1959). Likewise, literary theorists have emphasized their connection with childhood, female and lower class gossip, and manipulative fabulation (Lurie 1990; Tatar 1993; Warner 1995)⁴⁰. At worst, desire-laden fairy tales have been equated with the much-maligned popular genre of romance, which shares many parallel structural and symbolic features, and roundly condemned as sentimental escapism (Bacchilega 2008; Lee 2008).

History, however, has demonstrated their surprising social and political potency, as fairy tales have played central roles in controlling or exploitative moral and political economies. The Grimms, a particularly well-cited example, simplified and 'purified' the fairy stories they collected through successive editing, rendering them morally and pedagogically palatable for the middle classes of nineteenth century Germany (Bottigheimer 1993; Tatar 2003). *Hansel and Gretel*, for instance, underwent numerous transformations until it was deemed fit for childhood consumption. The mother who abandons her children in the woods to be eaten by wild animals becomes a stepmother, as it was felt that the mother figure, with her ideological connections to the German Motherland, was too sacred to be the instigator of such a web of deceit and

³⁸ This 'we' is an unstable product of the gathering implicit in a fairy tale performance, not a preformed collective or folk, as is often assumed in discussions around storytelling or folk and fairy stories (see 1.2).

³⁹ Fairy tale scholars insist on the contemporaneity of the seemingly antiquated tales, as well as "the ever-renewed relevance and profound worldliness of this self-consciously fictitious genre" (Dutheil de la Rochere 2011:iii), and much has been made of this question of contemporaneity, and further the meaning of 'contemporary' in light of fairy tales (e.g. see Benson 2008 for a particularly useful discussion on this subject).

⁴⁰ Folklore is often defined in opposition to fairy tales, with its supposed social and political relevance and involvement lending it an apparent immediacy (see Landy 1986; Limón 1983). For example, much attention has been paid to the liberating position of the folk storyteller/s (see Jackson 2002; Mackintosh 2004; and Seifert 2004).

betrayal; likewise the mother in *Snow White* (Zipes 2006). Genders have been altered, disturbing and amoral figures omitted, and certain tales, such as the violent *Fitcher's Bird*, never made it into wider circulation at all, but were removed after preliminary editing (*ibid*). More generally, the tales were 'feminized' with weak 'Cinderfellas' giving way to helpless Cinderellas (Tatar 2012). Disney continues to bifurcate these tales along strong gender lines based on reproductive norms, portraying heroines as vulnerable or ditzy feminine beauties, and heroes as rugged and manly, albeit not too intelligent⁴¹. More disturbingly, fairy tales have been utilised in nationalist and fascist propaganda, as by the contemporary Lega Nord party of Italy, and have contributed towards many political tragedies, the Third Reich and Tudjman's ethnic cleansing being especially poignant examples⁴². Indeed, Praet (2011:41) posits the fundamental coincidence of fairy tales and "historical crises", whereby: "the rise of the fairy tale genre in its defining moments seems to largely coincide with periods of fierce social and political turmoil"⁴³.

It could be argued that the overt fabulation and deceptively simple construction of these stories (repetitive plotlines⁴⁴, two-dimensional heroes, archetypal elements, refrains of 'once upon a time' and 'happily ever after,' everydayness of magical objects, etc.) is what lends them to exploitation by moral and political communities in times of upheaval⁴⁵. Fairy tales are undeniably easy to memorise and communicate, and their 'emptiness' allows a peculiar listener involvement in, and penetration into, the tale⁴⁶. Furthermore, they form an important part of a culture's "metaphoric toy box," which comprises:

⁴¹ Disney's sentimental rendition of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) is case in point. Compare this to the Jean Cocteau (1946) version, which has more subversive and suggestive social and sexual undertones. Even the more recent, active female figures are eventually folded back into traditional societal roles, as in the case of *Mulan* (1998). The most recent Disney fairy tale offering, *Tangled* (2011), continues to uphold this trend.

⁴² The current Lega Nord party (in Italy) has adopted an expedient amalgamation of folklore, fairy tales, and myth to further their agenda, referring to specific stories, such as *The Golden Goose* to propagate their message of the 'danger' of immigration from the South. Azzarello (2010) notes, in relation to this Golden Goose campaign, "the [Lega's] recourse to myths and symbols in the construction of 'Padania' establishes a representation of the North as a mythical land whose inhabitants share economical interests and cultural traditions which are different and in contraposition to those of the rest of the Italian citizens.

⁴³ Praet (2011:41) further notes how such historical tension is "often accompanied by corresponding tensions in the cultural-artistic field," with fairy tales flourishing at moments of literary "crises." He defines crises as "an unusual amount of tension between certain areas of the field, but also a complete lack thereof."

⁴⁴ E.g. Propp's (1968) functional classification, which sorts the immeasurable archive of fairy tales into 52 categories of plot and motif function. A useful and rigorous study, it nonetheless has limited use for a geography of fairy tales, especially as it downplays the importance of situated telling (see Warner 1995).

⁴⁵ We can return to Praet (2011:41-2) who suggests that it is the "artificial style" of fairy tales which lends them to "self-conscious literary reflection and experimentation." My interest at this point, however, is less with the interventions of fairy tales on the literary scene, and more with their uptake in socio-political communities.

⁴⁶ Benson (2000:115) notes that the "abstract environment" of fairy tales is "incomplete," with a "ghostly lack ... of psychological motivation and descriptive weight."

Story stuff [that] feels like the very essence of our mother tongue⁴⁷, embedded there before we've even learned it, so much a part of us that we forget it didn't come with the language, but that someone made it up and put it there" (Coover 1969, in Bacchilega 2008:197).

Fairy tale scholar Zipes (1994:6), drawing on Barthes (1972), identifies this embedding process as a form of 'mythicization,' where:

The myth acts to deny its historical and systematic development. It takes material that already has a signification and reworks it parasitically to make it suitable for communication in an ideological mode that appears nonideological.

The naturalising and eternalising of fairy tales freezes them into a speech that is "ideologically ... dehistoricized [and] depoliticized to represent the hegemonic interests of the bourgeoisie" (*ibid*). These collective fairy tale representations thus become myth-making transformational forms. Emptied of specific meaning, fairy tales can be recycled and manipulated for various ends, as they are ascribed value according to the ideological needs of teller and audience. Thus whilst much feminist work decries the patriarchal values embedded in popular Disney tales, ironically, many of these stories can be traced back to seventeenth century Parisian feminist struggles (Haase 2004; Seifert 2004). Similarly, fairy tales which have been (re)presented as moral tales for children, previously existed in more risqué, witty or horrific forms:

The narratives started out as adult entertainment - violent, bawdy, melodramatic improvisations that emerged in the evening hours, when ordinary chores engaged the labour of hands, leaving minds free to wander and wonder. Fairy tales ... were the television and pornography of an earlier age ... that were told to the rhythms of spinning, weaving, repairing tools, and mending clothes (Tatar 2005).

Elsewhere, fairy tales have been employed by ethnic minorities to usurp power in struggles with dominating majorities (racial and class) over property rights and cultural credibility (Warner 1995). The rapid spread of the *Brer Rabbit* and *Anansy the Spiderman* tales through North American slave communities, for example, could be seen as such an Afro-American endeavour (Roberts 1990; Marshall 2011). Famously

⁴⁷ I look in greater depth at the figure of the 'mother' (and grandmother) in the 'tongue' of fairy tales in chapter 6. For now, I want to make a brief, speculative link between Coover's phrase 'mother tongue,' and, first, Kristeva's psychoanalytical notion of the semiotic (see Athanasiou et al. 2008:11); and, second, political theorizing which highlights the crucial role of the mother, and specifically the *mother-as-storyteller*, in the forming of nationhood. To expound: nationalism's power as a political and lived ideology is bolstered by specific emotions and affects (including "romantic love and the ethos of sacrifice"), which "[inculcates] the nation as a system of *kinship*" (*ibid*). This system of kinship "permits the imagining of the nation as a community of descent and as a biological entity defined in terms of 'race' and 'blood,' which renders the nation as a community that has to be defended from miscegenation" (*ibid* 10; also Banti 2008). The figure of the mother thus plays a twofold role in the defense of the body-politic of the nation or community: giving birth to the 'pure blood' descendants of the nation, and imparting to these descendants the story, or myth, of nationhood. Her role could be summed in some simple word play: 'na(rra)tion.' As such, when Coover speaks of a mother tongue, he could as easily be referring to the semiotic or the politically affective tongue of fairy tales.

subversive postmodern and feminist retellings, such as those by Robert Coover, Margaret Atwood, Neil Gaiman, Jeanette Winterson, and Angela Carter, have likewise sought to overturn popular, especially ‘Disneyfied,’ fairy tales, in order to comment on western sociopolitical gender, sex, and reproductive norms, or the failures of capitalism.

These properties of ‘emptiness,’ and consequently endless malleability, are commonly held to be vital to the definition of the fairy tale genre (e.g. Benson 2000; Jones 2003; Warner 2005; Zipes 2012). Indeed, questions of genre and of “what would constitute a proper expression of the [fairy tale] genre” have dominated interdisciplinary fairy tale scholarship over the past forty years, oftentimes, and ironically, to the detriment of “the sheer alterity” of these stories (Benson 2000:118). To define a genre is, of course, a task fraught with difficulty, and much fairy tale scholarship has come undone as it has attempted to ‘fix’ these stories into one or another self-evident and mutually exclusive categories. Further, such a task is highly contentious, with the greatest strife and inter-disciplinary wrangling revolving around the question of the authentic fairy tale form and origin; this latter question determining, in turn, the authenticity of particular stories over others, and certain modes of expression over others (*ibid*; also Martin 2012, with regards to the fairy tales of the German Enlightenment period). For example, Jones (2003:55) would locate the origins of the fairy tale genre in the light-hearted stories told in the salons of seventeenth century aristocratic Paris: “the French tales of the 1690s, and notably those written by women, established the genre that we now know as fairy tale,” whilst Bottigheimer (2002) contentiously credits the sixteenth century Italian writer Straparola with inventing the genre. Warner (1995), meanwhile, draws our attention the crossovers between print and oral cultures in the evolution of fairy tales, and locates precursors to Straparola’s stories amongst older Latin texts, such as Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses*. Zipes (2012:57), meanwhile, takes umbrage with the ‘literary theses,’ and identifies the earliest ‘seeds’ of the present day genre, including recurrent folkloric figures such as witches, amongst “pagan cultural traditions that hark back to the Neolithic period, if not before” (*ibid* 57), long before the evolution of a writing culture.

What becomes clear in all of these accounts is the impossibility of fixing the genre—together with the compulsion to do so (see Derrida 1992; also 2.3). Indeed, we witness an unfortunate tautology at play in such accounts where, irrespective of whether the question revolves around “authenticity of form ... [or of] content,” the end point of such classificatory projects “remains the same: *this is what the fairy tale should be, because this is what the fairy tale really is*” (Benson 2000:118, emphasis added). This tautology is to be expected, for a contradiction underpins the very principle of genre:

Suppose for a moment that it were impossible not to mix genres. What if there were, lodged within the heart of the law [of genre] itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination? And suppose the condition for the possibility of the law were the *a priori* of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility that would confound its sense, order and reason? (Derrida 1992:225).

Derrida (*ibid* 226-7) maintains that the purity of ‘genre’ is fundamentally disrupted by “a law of impurity,” itself a product of the repetition entailed in identifying a common type or “species”. Or better yet, this is a problem of “re-citation,” for “a citation in the strict sense implies all sorts of contextual conventions, precautions and protocols in the mode of reiteration” (*ibid* 226). Within repetition (or re-citation), is an inevitable and transformational play of ‘difference,’ where:

From one repetition to the next, a change insinuated itself into the relationship between the two initial utterances. The punctuation was slightly modified, as was the content ... This barely noticeable shift could theoretically have created a small mutual independency between the interpretive alternatives that might have tempted you to opt for one or the other, or for one *and* the other of these two decisions. A particularly rich combinatorial of possibilities would thus ensue... (*ibid* 227).

Derrida (*ibid*) is hinting here at the “parasitical economy” of genre, which takes the form of: “a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part of, without having membership in a set.” Indeed, the “trait that marks membership” within such a set as genre (e.g. the ‘emptiness’ that marls membership within the genre of fairy tales) “inevitably *divides*” (*ibid*, emphasis added). Thus, the “boundary” of a set “comes to form, by invagination, an internal pocket larger than the whole” (*ibid* 228). There is an “overflowing” or “excess” within genre such that the mark, trait or code that distinguishes belonging always precedes itself: “such a distinctive trait *qua* mark is however always *a priori remarkable*” (*ibid* 229). Moreover, the mark of genre is inescapable, being essential to the expression of art, poetry, or literature:

It underwrites the eruption of *technē* ... Can one identify a work of art, of whatever sort ... if it does not bear the mark of a genre, if it does not signal or mention it or make it remarkable in any way? ... Every text *participates* in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre, and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging. And not because of an abundant overflowing or a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of this *trait* of participation itself, because of the effect of the code and of the generic mark. *In marking itself generically, a text unmarks itself* (*ibid* 229-30, emphasis added).

Whilst we may appeal to the “sheer alterity” (Benson 2000:118) or Otherness of fairy tales as the source of our definitional difficulties, the problem of identifying the genre of fairy tales originates, instead, from the deeper contradiction that bifurcates the workings of genre itself. This contradiction, as we have seen, arises from the impossible closure of genre, whereby, for example, the designation ‘fairy tale’ is not fairy tale-esque; “it does not, in whole or in part, take part in the corpus whose denomination it nonetheless imparts” (Derrida 1992:230). Instead, “genre-designations” remain on, and indeed demarcate, the threshold, “within and without the work, along its boundary, an inclusion and exclusion with regard to genre in general” (*ibid* 230-1). As a boundary-marker, this “singular *topos*” of the name ‘fairy tale’:

Gathers together the corpus and, at the same time ... keeps it from closing, from identifying with itself. This axiom of non-closure or non-fulfilment enfolds within itself the condition and the impossibility of taxonomy (*ibid* 231).

Rather than pointing to an inherent origin, form, content or meaning of fairy tales, or identifying the essential *qualities* (markers of identification) of a self-evident genre, I would like to draw attention here to the *undermining of genre*, and of all fixed categories and forms, that is effected in these stories. The ‘emptiness’ and malleability of the tales, as observed above, is an act of ‘opening to the Other,’ for “fairy tales are strange things ... [their] unexplainability and unrecuperability, are, paradoxically, essential” (Benson 2000:119). If we can speak of an inherent geography of fairy tales, it would be of this hollowness and readiness to transform, to carry us *away*. These are tales of “smoke and mirrors ... a tale of language and perhaps, above all, a tale of transformation” (*ibid* 2010:174). We can usefully compare the “lightness” and humbleness⁴⁸ of fairy tales to the “traditional heaviness of myth,” with its “weight of a whole alternative world, with its gods and power politics; of accumulated and assumed cultural status, of faith and ritual” (*ibid* 176). Where myth’s “preoccupation with origins and inauguration” lend it to the shaping of community (see 2.1), fairy tale geographies are “ghostly” and “lack[ing]” (*ibid* 2000:115), and “somehow elsewhere” (*ibid* 2010:173). We see this in the most clearly in light of the place fairy tales have occupied in the western canon of literature; indeed, it would be more accurate to say that fairy tales are “*out of place*” in the history of western literature, a “minor literature,” which is “at odds with the strictures of realism” and occupying a “magical realm that Western culture long ago repudiated but cannot quite shake” (*ibid* 2000:112).

⁴⁸ These stories are as much concerned with the ‘everyday’ (if we can use such a term) as with magical Other realms.

Being at once apart and “incomplete,” fairy tales “require the fleshing out of music or the literary imagination” (*ibid* 115). As we ‘flesh out’ these stories, whether for oppressive or emancipatory purposes, we may wonder “whether such hermeneutic filling in does not alter the nature of the object, neutralising an uncanny one-dimensionality in exchange for novella-like psychologism” (*ibid*). For example, when fairy tales speak with heavier, mythic language, that is, in the tongue of an oral folk, or a gathering of a people,⁴⁹ do they become-myth, and thus something-other than fairy tale? To ask this question, is to return to an essentialising view of genre, where fairy tale comprises certain ‘properties,’ which have been lost in their ‘mixing’ with other genres. Once again, I would highlight the transformational geographies of these tales, to posit that fairy tales are *(un)doings*; and that specifically they undo the law of genre, whether that genre may be of mythic or any other form. Weaving through myth, horror, gothic, or realist genres, these light, playful and ‘innocent’ stories, with their “suggestion of the childlike” (Benson 2010:172), resist generic capture and, instead, lead us astray.

Thus far we have examined how fairy tales readily lend themselves to a reshaping and retelling process, offering their ‘emptiness’ as a vessel to be filled. Indeed, it is impossible to separate out a study of tales from one of telling, in part due to the ease with which these stories nestle within larger framing fictions that problematise simple equations between text (‘imaginative representation’) and context (‘material reality’), as demonstrated by those masterly works of metafiction, *Arabian Nights*, and Boccaccio’s *Decamerone* (1353) (Cavarero 2000; Hawwas 2007; Praet 2011). Demanding an abrupt suspension of disbelief with the impossible opening refrain of ‘once upon a time’⁵⁰, fairy tales are more than stand-alone stories of the marvellous “Elsewhere” (Zolkover 2011:67), for they immediately beckon to a narrator and the world in which this storyteller lives: a frame. Complicating the reality-imagination binary still further, fairy tales are inevitably intertextual stories, which are “created within the context of the structures of the genre understood through its other exemplars” (Tiffin 2006:10). Finally, they often address us directly as listeners in a world ‘outside’ that of the realm of Story. Thus, they slyly laugh at and with us, mocking their own fictitiousness, and our enjoyment of the same. As they do so, they trouble our positionality as ‘listeners,’ and require us to simultaneously straddle a number of worlds

⁴⁹ We can define mythic language as “the unique speech of the many ... it is self communicating ... [it] narrates origins and destinies and thereby organizes and distributes being” (Deppman 1997:14).

⁵⁰ This terminology invites us into what Deleuze (2004) identifies mythic time, with its suggestion of circularity, as opposed to the linear time of modernity. Circular time consists of “a succession of instants which are governed by an external law,” (Roffe 2005). Under this temporal condition, life is experienced as a series of repetitions of the same, breeding habit: “the subject experiences the passing of moments cyclically (the sun will come up every morning), and contracts habits which make sense of time as a continually living present” (*ibid*). Indeed, it is the “passive synthesis” of these habitual moments which comprises the subject.

by playing on our psychological suspension of disbelief (Kérchy 2011)⁵¹. In this way, fairy tales catapult an audience into an uncanny realm of ‘here and there’, somewhere between ‘reality’ and ‘imagination’⁵². Thus Tiffin (2006:7,23) understands fairy tales to be necessarily disturbing metafictional stories, their deliberate nonmimetic artificiality exemplary of all metafiction, which “self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality”⁵³.

Even as the tales metafictionally trouble the positions of narrator, author, listeners, etc., they bind them in a communal web of story (Warner 1995; Zipes 2008). This is further heightened by the inviting and equalising nature of the tales, evoking as they do a fraternity of ‘folk’:

The classical fairy tale makes it appear that we are all part of a universal community with shared values and norms; that we are all striving for the same happiness ... We need only have faith and believe” (Zipes 1994:5).

Indeed, from a Jungian analytical psychology perspective, the fairy tale encounter is always already communal, being grounded, psychologically, in a ‘collective unconscious’. For Jung (1959), fairy tales are riddled with primordial archetypes that are repeated across humankind, and reawakened, i.e. brought to consciousness, in the process of retelling. Archetypes are “pre-existent forms,” or “unconscious ... patterns of instinctual behaviour” that lack specifiable content, but rather exist as the propensity to develop certain types of imaginary, or symbolic, communal relations (*ibid* 43-44). It is worth noting that Jung’s understanding of ‘form’ and ‘content’ is not that of a straightforward dualism. Instead, “what Jung calls the ‘form’ of an archetype might as easily be labelled as its particular constellation of ‘emotions’ or ‘affect’” (Jensen 2004:26). That is archetypes are affectively mobilising forces⁵⁴, which engender specific types of relationships and ways of communal being. Moreover, post-Jungian theorists and practitioners who specialise in archetypal theory, such as Estés (1992, 1993) and von Franz (1996), have

⁵¹ Kérchy (2011) offers us an excellent example of this ‘playfulness’ in her analysis of the meta(visual)narrativity and destabilisation of the spectatorial position in Gilliam’s (2005) *Tideland*.

⁵² Freud (2003) himself did not view fairy tales as uncanny because they declare their intention of otherworldliness upfront, making their estrangement from reality somewhat less disturbing. Zipes (2008), however, disputes this, arguing for another kind of uncanniness in the *retelling* of fairy tales: “using and modifying Freud’s category of the uncanny, I want to argue that the very act of reading a fairy tale is an uncanny experience in that it separates the reader from the restrictions of reality from the onset and makes the repressed unfamiliar familiar once again.”

⁵³ Praet (2011:42) attributes fairy tales’ “inherent propensity for the metafictional” to their deliberate distancing artificiality, with its self-deconstructive motion which “lays bare its ground rules and the literary, social, and political conventions which govern them.” Further, these metafictional qualities enable the tales to “function as a ‘borderline discourse’ between criticism and art, theory and practice,” and gives them their unusual, hermeneutic and social force (*ibid* 42-3).

⁵⁴ Post-Jungian Samuels (2004:xiv, emphasis added) notes: “it is in the *intensity of affective response* to any given image or situation that we find what is archetypal.”

posited the therapeutic nature of such affective relationships; for, with their evocation and expression of primordial human values and feelings, fairy stories are cathartic on retelling⁵⁵.

Whilst the Jungian notion of ubiquitous and universal archetypes forming a shared human sub-language (or ‘experience’) is problematically essentialist, as Dundes (1965) has convincingly argued⁵⁶, it does usefully draw attention to the commonality of fairy tale motifs and storytelling practices across diverse and often isolated cultures, and over time (Warner 1995). Moreover, it provides a framework from which to theorize the affective, symbolic, and material geographies of fairy tales. This thesis does not intend to support Jung’s argument for a collective unconscious (a notion which cannot by definition be proven); however, it does aim to engage with these troublingly persistent and transformational folk ‘forms’ that he identifies within fairy tales. Instead of adopting a Jungian approach, however, it draws inspiration from Tiffin’s (2009:15) quasi-structural narratological account, which understands these motifs to be the uniquely “mythic language” of fairy tales, which “cannot be read symbolically - it is marvellous narrative, not allegory.” Tiffin shifts the focus from the psychological (collective or singular), where archetypes function as primordial contents of mythological story or mind, to the narrative level. Here, archetypes are recurring *narrative* patterns, typical of the fairy tale genre’s “clear-cut identifications and traditional wondering certainty, which Tolkien calls the ‘enchanted state’ of ‘Secondary Belief’” (Tiffin 2011:223). Indeed, for Tiffin (2009:15), archetypal figures are a key constitutive feature of fairy tales’ “marvellous geometry,” which has nonrepresentational import: “resonance rather than meaning.” Thus,

Despite the simplicity of its lines, fairy tale is told for its own sake, its meaning is contained within the narrative, so that narrative does not ‘stand for’ anything outside the Tale. Fairy tale symbols function resonantly rather than illustratively to suggest multiple meanings rather than to illustrate one aspect of reality (*ibid* 15-16).

Drawing the threads of theory together thus far, we have an account of fairy tales as complex metafictional stories, replete with resonating motifs, which constitute certain kinds of affective relationships. These stories are simultaneously narratively ‘naturalised’ and historically situated, and

⁵⁵ In Estés’ (1993) heartbreaking Chinese-box sequence of tales, *The Gift of Story: a wise tale about what is enough*, she demonstrates how fairy tales can function as a witnessing and healing process where all other words are powerless, drawing on her Auntie Irena’s experience of World War Two Nazi-occupied Hungary. The atrocities Irena witnessed rendered her silent and impotent in more prosaic speech, and so she turned instead to marvellous genre of fairy tale in order to express herself, and relive/relieve her pain. See also Silverman (2004) for examples of the use of fairy tales in psychotherapy.

⁵⁶ Dundes (1965) ‘dispersion’ argument attributes the phenomena of cross-cultural similarities in fairy stories and myth to trade and travel routes (cross-cultural exchange); and not to ubiquitous patterns in the human psyche or universal human experience (also see Shinoda 2008).

this emptiness, together with their resonating power, lends them to (communal) ideological projects. However, fairy tales are not static stories; the narrative qualities which make them marvellous, and thus opaque, is open to, and indeed invites, transformation:

This well-made artifice produces the receiver's desire to repeat the tale anew: repetition functions as reassurance within the tale, but this very same compulsion to repeat the tale explodes its coherence as well-made artifice (Bacchilega 1999:23).

2.1.2 Fairy tales as geographic refrains

I would like to complicate this account of fairy tales as self-repeating, 'resonating' narrative patterns by attending more closely to the spatial and temporal implications of Bacchilega's observation. That is, I propose we go further: to comprehend fairy tales as affective *geographical* possibilities. Fairy tales are not located 'within' history and geography, their narrative 'settings' a mere reflection of a historical or socio-cultural context (whether we imagine this as a background or container). Rather, they fundamentally implicate the ways in which we constitute, and are constituted by, the space-time through which we structure our worlds. Developing this line of thought, the repetitive narrative patterns that Tiffin and Bacchilega identify above comprise spatial, temporal and affective *rhythms*, which coalesce into particular social, cultural and political assemblages. Alternatively, they may emerge more spontaneously, with force.

It is pertinent, here, to draw on Deleuze and Guattari's 1980⁵⁷ geophilosophical notion of the 'refrain,' and current appropriations of the refrain and of 'de/re-territorialisation' within the broad field of cultural geography; indeed, Bacchilega's (1999) account of the repetitiveness of 'fairy tale' is curiously consistent with their premise⁵⁸. Bacchilega (*ibid* 23) presents the "well-made artifice" that is fairy tale as an autonomous force that pushes the human subject (the "receiver") to tell and tell again. The receiver is stirred at a deep pre-cognitive level by this "compulsion," which has a doubled affect: reassuring in the first instance (hence the desire to retell), but quickly unsettling, as the coherence of the tale – its

⁵⁷ I will be referencing the 2004 continuum edition in this thesis (especially chapter 11). Deleuze and Guattari describe their philosophy as a 'geophilosophy,' see Bonta and Protevi (2004) for more on this. It is worth noting here that the term 'refrain' is a rather clunky translation of the French '*ritournelle*,' a more literal translation being 'little return' (*ibid*).

⁵⁸ This is a necessarily brief encounter with the 'refrain,' which is a premise of considerable philosophical complexity. I do not want to subsume fairy tales under a Deleuze and Guattarian geophilosophical metaphysics; rather I propose their notion of the refrain proffers a useful alternative to the geographical paucity and rigidity of Jungian 'archetypes,' as well as more common folkloristic indexes of fairy tale figures/figurations (where fairy tales are carved up into units of 'tale types,' 'functions,' and 'motifs'). I have drawn on key cultural geography engagements with re/de-territorialisation within this discussion in order to contextualise my own geographical understanding of the refrain and provide a sense of the current status of this premise within the sub-discipline.

recognisable and repeatable ‘identity’ – is “exploded,” and a non-recoupable difference seeps into the repetition (*ibid*). This doubling affect of reassurance and disturbance chimes with the (re)territorialising and deterritorialising workings of the refrain. Beginning⁵⁹ with its territorialising aspect, the refrain establishes a centre of comfort and fragile order in the wider chaos of the ‘cosmos’:

A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilising, calm and stable, centre in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:343).

Popular children’s narratives, and especially fairy tales with their unique orality (Warner 1995), offer such cadenced comfort, and belong to the “rhythms of routines and habits that help the child to organise her surrounding environment into the enduring contours of home” (Lorraine 2005:162). Thus these centring rhythms eventually lead to the production of a circle: a clearly bordered home, enveloped by a “wall of sound, or at least a wall with some sonic bricks in it” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:343). Here, the “forces of chaos” are “kept outside ... [through] an activity of “selection, elimination and extraction” (*ibid*). Sound is a key marker in this childish territorialisation, and indeed all territorialisation, as exemplified by birdsong or metered (“pulsed”) music:

The role of the refrain ... is territorial, a territorial assemblage. Bird songs: the bird sings to mark its territory. The Greek modes and Hindu rhythms are themselves territorial, provincial, regional (*ibid* 344)⁶⁰.

As we see with the walking, singing child, territorial assemblages may assume mobile and temporary forms, offering us security in troubled moments (Buchanan 1997). As we venture forth “with a song in our hearts we are able to extend indefinitely the secure interiority of the home” (*ibid*). In a more stable manner, we may territorialise our very bodies as in “the house of a tortoise, the hermitage of a crab, but also tattoos, which make the body a territory” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:353).

⁵⁹ I use the word ‘begin’ in a narrative sense. I am not suggesting we understand the refrain sequentially, as a progression from territorializing to deterritorializing to reterritorializing for “they are not three successive movements in an evolution. They are three aspects of a single thing, the Refrain (*ritournelle*)” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:344).

⁶⁰ Again, fairy tales lend themselves to the building of such sonic walls, and to processes of rhythmic enchantment more generally (see 2.3.3).

However, the stability of the home, and thus of subjectivity and identity (essence)⁶¹, is illusory, for territorialisation is constantly at risk of deterritorialisation (Doel 2000). The refrain is vulnerable, first, to accidental collapse: a “mistake in speed, rhythm, or harmony is catastrophic [for it] brings back the forces of chaos, destroying both creator and creation” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:343). Indeed, postmodern storytellers, including Angela Carter, Robert Coover, Emma Donoghue, Sara Maitland, etc., have exploited this very vulnerability in their (mis)tellings in order to send a transformational ripple of chaos through the stabilised narratives of popular fairy tales. Deterritorialisation occurs, secondly, when one purposefully “opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, calls someone, or else goes out oneself, launches forth” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:343). Whilst exposure to chaos is dangerous, without these small openings the subject (a product of the refrain) would stagnate:

Opening the flesh to the cosmos-universe without the protective space of a house or personal territory would lead to the demise of the individual. Refusing any connection to the cosmos-universe except those permitted by one’s territory can lead to deadening repetition (Lorraine 2005:161)⁶².

It is significant that this crack is opened out in a new region, and “not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it,” as this allows one to “hazar[d] an *improvisation*” in a “breakaway [which...] bud[s] ‘lines of drift’ with different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures, and sonorities” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 343-4, emphasis)⁶³. Third, deterritorialization is inevitable: it necessarily inheres in the territorialising compulsion of the refrain, where:

⁶¹ Identity is the product of “a habit or habitus”: i.e. of the rhythmic, habitual patterns of the refrain (Doel 2000:119).

⁶² Thus territorialisation, as much as deterritorialisation, affirms life. It is worth emphasizing this point, as it is all too easy to construct a Manichean binary which opposes the bad (territorialisation) to the good (deterritorialisation), as characterizes much ‘refrain’ scholarship. For example, notwithstanding the occasional lip service paid to the potential problems of disordering compulsions, the sub-discipline of Cultural Geography is strongly concerned with the moral high ground of deterritorialising forces, which are assumed to denote productive “escape[s] from ... institutionalised apparatus[es] of capture” (Woodward and Jones 2005:237; also see Cloke and Jones 2005; Doel 2000; Thrift 2007). Of course, this prioritisation is related to wider issues of ‘geographies of hope’ (see 1.4 and 2.3.3). Lambert (2005:237) offers the Children’s Crusade as historical evidence that deterritorialisation “need not always assume the form of a positive (or ‘joyous’) emancipation of political subjectivity” (see also Dale 2002 on the violence of deterritorialisations and becomings). Pertaining to my own thesis, then, I need to resist arranging folkloric figures along this simplistic moral axis (e.g. the Good Mother as a territorializing and thus problematic figure, versus the Trickster and Crone as disordered and thus emancipatory figures). Indeed, the trickster, who bears much in common with the “un-glunking” ‘Cat in the Hat’ of which Doel (2000) speaks, unleashes terror on Gotham City in his deterritorialising capacity.

⁶³ See Nealon (2005) for an interesting examination of the forces of (de/re-)territorialization in the “performative improvisations” of the American blues movement.

Every movement of deterritorialisation produces the conditions for reterritorialisation, recoding, or for new stratifications, and every reterritorialisation always foresees new possibilities of deterritorialised flows and even takes steps in anticipation of these flows and seeks to capture them, and to internalise them once more. But in each case, these possibilities appear as unprecedented and take on new character and new revolutionary potential (Lambert 2005:235).

Returning to fairy tales, it is clear that de/re-territorialisation drive these stories, as Deleuze and Guattari (2004:344, emphasis added) themselves acknowledge: these “three aspects [i.e. de/re/territorialisation] are found in tales (both horror and *fairy tales*), and in *lieder* as well.” Fairy tales, with their repetitive mythic or archetypal language, build anthropomorphic, gendered, nationalistic, etc., communal assemblages (see 2.2), and are thus territory⁶⁴. Meanwhile certain recurring folkloric figures are strongly deterritorialising forces, constituting exciting “metamorphic becomings” (Woodward and Jones 2005:239) or ‘lines of flight,’⁶⁵ which transform the landscapes and ‘matterings’⁶⁶ of the tales at the narrative and plot levels (i.e. within the immediate story world), and at the wider material-discursive level (i.e. beyond the immediate story world)⁶⁷. Whatever their form and function, a refrain of Mother, Hero, Fool, Trickster, Crone, etc., “*always carries earth with it; it has land ... as its concomitant; it has an essential relation to a Natal, a Native*” (*ibid* 344, emphasis added)⁶⁸. In short, fairy tale figures perform a specific geography or “distribution of space, a distribution in space” (*ibid*).

There are a number of significant advantages to conceiving fairy tales and folkloric figures as ‘refrains’ as opposed to ‘archetypes,’ ‘motifs,’ ‘tale types,’ ‘narrative forms,’ or other classifications commonly employed in fairy tale scholarship. Firstly, the notion of the refrain brings a much-needed dynamism to fairy tale scholarship, and enables us to engage these stories as lively and affective ‘becomings’ or ‘matterings,’ capable of

⁶⁴ See the following section (2.2) for more on this; it is worth explicating briefly now: fairy tales gather a community (or a people i.e. *Volk*) together with a land (e.g. motherland or nation, etc.), presenting this assemblage as ‘natural’—hence their importance to German unification and nationalist movements more widely.

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004:4) concept of ‘lines of flight’ refers specifically to such “movements of deterritorialization and destratification [*sic*].”

⁶⁶ I use the term ‘mattering’ here after Barad (2007), to refer to the ethical (these refrains ‘matter,’ i.e. are ethically meaningful), but also to the physical mattering brought about by these fairy tale lines of flight, for example the anarchic geographies made possible by the trickster figure of the Joker, which materialise through graffiti, urban non-spaces, uricide, etc. (chapter 5).

⁶⁷ I refer to separate ‘levels’ here, however, I do not mean to imply an *ontological* difference, or binary, between the imaginary story (mental image, or representation) and the physical reality of the world beyond (including the physical dimensions of storytelling, as in oral telling, or marks on paper, etc.). Rather, I refuse any kind of separation of material and discursive, after Barad (2007), and refer to this division solely in empirical terms (i.e. a question of perspective and scale).

⁶⁸ Within the cultural geography literature Deleuze and Guattari’s refrain thus leads us to such dynamic spatial concepts as ‘borderland assemblages’ (Woodward and Jones 2005), or “mobile architectural platforms,” ‘thinking-spaces,’ and ‘transversal paths and perimeters’ (McCormack 2008:11).

engendering social and political transformation. It is ironic when fairy tales are constrained within such popular prosaic typologies as Thompson's (1932-37) *Motif Index of Folk-Literature*⁶⁹, for their *metamorphic* magic is hereby captured, immobilised, and subsumed under collective categories, such as 'F. Marvels,' with further subdivisions yielding ever more precise and rigid *metaphoric* identities (e.g. F.200 fairies, and F.200.1 pixies, etc.). The magical 'doing' or 'becoming' (verb) of fairy tales becomes the static and mundane 'being' (noun) of idealised forms; and the narratives are consequently stripped of their energising force, rendered ideological (see 2.1.1; also Zipes 1994), and presented as mere "story stuff" (Coover 1969 in Bacchilega 2008:197). Thompson's *Motif Index* organises fairy tales into a closed, stratifying or "arboreal" system of knowledge that:

Assembles terms and relations according to likenesses, imagining for itself a prior, transcendental Ideal form to which all other terms speak. [...] Locking these terms into a form of progressive development, each following from the previous in an arboreal series of increasingly different likenesses, produces a hierarchical model that uses the supposed unity of the first term in the series, the Ideal subject or object, as a grounds for producing the individual (individuated) unities of subsequent subjects/objects, each of which differ in varying degrees of perfection, but find their wholeness through a hierarchy of likenesses (Woodward and Jones 2005:238).

To reiterate: the classification process has a regrettably deadening effect⁷⁰, where 'monstrous beings' (F510), including such marvels as 'persons whose heads are stone-hammers' (F511.0.3), are objectified and distanced from the 'subjective' researcher, and consequently lose their capacity to astonish and enchant. Likewise, the tantalising 'sky-rope of mucus' (F51.1.7) becomes a de-contextualised object of voyeuristic disgust, with its potential 'line of flight' to other realms and possible becomings sadly cut short⁷¹.

Such severe de-contextualisation, second, severs the rich tapestry of fairy tales from their 'milieu,' subsequently leads to reductive and shallow understandings of these stories, and to a woeful ignorance of certain possibilities and becomings in fairy tales. For example, frightening crone

⁶⁹ 'Motif' can be defined as "the smallest elements in a tale having the power to persist in tradition" (Thompson in Dundes 1997:196). Motifs are therefore considered to be the "narrative building blocks" out of which the tales are constructed (Conrad 2008:645). The concept of motif carries much weight within folklore and fairy tale studies, such that eminent folklorist Alan Dundes (1997:196) boldly asserts of Thompson's index: "its use serves to distinguish scholarly studies of folk narrative from those carried out by a host of amateurs and dilettantes."

⁷⁰ See Thrift and Dewsbury (2000) on the deadening effect of representation.

⁷¹ The de-contextualisation I'm speaking of here exceeds that discussed by Dundes (1997:196) in his critique of Thompson's *Motif Index*, which itself echoes other criticisms of the "alleged 'independence' of the [motif] units" in the typology. Scholars have cogently argued that "individual motifs [are] more often than not found to be interdependent upon other motifs in a given tale," and "proposed the notion of 'motif-complex'" to account for this interdependence (*ibid*).

figures (which do not appear as motifs in their right in Thompson's index), are detached from their specialised, unsettling landscapes, which themselves are parsed out into seemingly-arbitrary categories, such as 'F960 extraordinary nature phenomena,' or 'F970 extraordinary behaviour of trees and plants,' etc. Their unique *geographical* force, including the supernatural-natural-human entanglements they effect, is thus neglected, along with the geographies of age and aging, and the posthuman, which she constitutes in and through fairy tales. Furthermore, the wider importance of *affect* in fairy tales is overlooked in this subject/object-based system (see chapter 6)⁷².

The neglected crone refrain engenders a fascinating and lively "thinking-space for research-creation" (McCormack 2008:1), which brings us to the third key advantage of jettisoning the notion of 'motif' in favour of 'refrain': this shift enables us to think and conduct research differently, in a nonrepresentationalist manner (indeed, to think *difference*). For McCormack, the refrain offers us a new "disciplinary grammar" beyond that of the representationalist "thinking *about* space," which problematically "designates an epistemological after-awareness of processuality, a second-order derivative activity, always kicking in just a little too late to capture the ontogenetic movement of thought" (*ibid*). In the representationalist grammar, "the logics of creation are often subservient to those of critique," whereas the hyphen in 'thinking-space' indicates the inseparability of world and thought: "thinking-space might be better understood as the co-intensive sensing, in affective-dynamic terms, of the *creative processuality of something in the world forcing us to think*" (*ibid*, emphasis added). For McCormack (*ibid* 7), then, the refrain is a compulsion that pushes us to think, albeit "prehending this processuality depends on certain kinds of facilitating environments" (*ibid* 5). Again, we see a remarkable similarity to Bacchilega's (1999:23) notion of the force of fairy tale, with its compulsion acting on the "receiver" to repeat each telling anew. However, here the subjectivity of the 'receiver' is intrinsically caught up in the assemblage of research-creation, and not perceived as a primary or *a priori* category, separate from the fairy tale, from whence thinking originates. In sum, the premise of the refrain enables us to conduct fairy tale research that is attentive to the affective and embodied processes of representation. We elude the arboreal system, which cleaves the world of research between subject and object, and become a part of the research assemblage, a part of the *story*, and ultimately aware of how fairy tale scholarship is itself a retelling which matters, in the material and ethical senses (see 1.4 and 3.1).

The trickster figure has more commonly been associated with such transformations in disciplinary thought for, as playful semioticians, transgressing language and meaning making, they inhibit the system of representation, overturning its divisional metaphysics, which attempts to

⁷² There are exceptions to this neglect of affect (e.g. Benson 2010; Kérchy 2011), but such scholarship is still disappointingly rare.

systematically order the world according to pre-existing categories of being, and preconceived frameworks of knowing (Hynes and Doty 1993; see 3.1). Like the crone refrain, the trickster refrain deterritorialises space itself; that is, it brings about a shift in our *awareness* of space, from “space as a passive background for the dynamism of time,” to “the ontogenetic processuality of space-time” (McCormack 2008:3). Thus, fourth, adopting the premise of the refrain upsets our comfortable belief that “space and time [are] totalised wholes within which everything can be either spatially or chronologically related with respect to everything else” (Lorraine 2005:159), and forces us to seriously contemplate the geographies of these stories, as opposed to regarding such geographies as background settings⁷³. This belief derives from a specific conflation of the fields of mathematics and politics in the seventeenth century, where space becomes a passive, abstracted and measurable container for human and other activity:

Space, as it comes to be known, is bounded and exclusive, where something can share the same place but not the same space, but more crucially is something calculated, extended in three dimensions [...]. The concept of space—abstract and mathematical—is superimposed over already existing places (Elden 2005:16).

Space is equated to time in this Newtonian legacy, which is likewise positioned (or mattered) as a totalised and calculable transcendental background (see Dewsbury and Thrift 2005⁷⁴). With a refrain-based approach, however, we expose this belief to be “no more than [a] retrospective construc[t],” and “experience[e] and thin[k] space and time in terms of blocks of space-time that are not necessarily linked into a rational whole of measurable units” (Lorraine 2005:159). Equipped with this notion of space and time, we can begin to “un-glunk⁷⁵” the “pointilism” that pervades understandings of space within fairy tale scholarship, where:

⁷³ I am referring here to the earlier discussion of inter-disciplinary encounters between literature and geography, where literary geographers have often drawn the assumption that geography (the ‘spatiality of texts’) is merely an opaque ‘setting’ or background against which a story is played out (see 1.3).

⁷⁴ Dewsbury and Thrift (2005:89) also note two other popular conceptions of space that are likewise constraining: first space as “a *relative*, but active, term ... a material reality dealing with questions of scale - space as a plane, as a distance, as something that acts as a weak actant and has effect”; second, space is rendered “*relative to the transcendent*” in social constructivist understandings. That is “space is a product of society but also a factor in the production of the social becoming socially constructed, idealized and ideological” (*ibid*). Deleuzian space, as emergent through such figures as the refrain, is dynamic, “a moving concept ... of an immanent spatiality” (*ibid*).

⁷⁵ Doel is referring to the Glunk in Dr. Seuss’ (1957, 1958) stories *The Cat in the Hat* and *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back*.

Everywhere one looks ... [we] are hung up on points: sites, places, nodes, ... identities, differences, the self, the same, the other, positions ... and so on and so forth. Lines are run between points. Surfaces extend from lines. Volumes are unfolded from surfaces. And then there is the networking, not to mention the hybridization, othering, thirthing Etcetera (Doel 2000:120).

Beyond this, we can un-glunk every category that is “given as ready-made – boat, fish, spade, cake, dress, snow, pinkness, earth, etcetera” (*ibid* 117)–even space-time⁷⁶. All are “deterritorialised from [their] habitual actuality and sent crashing through ever-shifting contexts of reproduction and rearticulation along a hundred thousand lines of flight” (*ibid* 117-8). For Doel (*ibid* 118), “nothing can resist the disarranging force of the Cat in the Hat,” the namesake trickster figure of Dr Suss’ most popular works who teaches us that:

Nothing simply ‘is’ as it would appear to ‘be.’ [...] Every ‘one,’ every ‘each,’ every ‘a’ is packed with innumerable others that are bursting to get out ... they are always becoming-other, becoming-undecidable, and becoming-imperceptible. [...] Metamorphosy without origin or end (*ibid* 122).

Doel (*ibid* 123) speaks of the refrain as a dissimulation of givens, a “destabilization on the move in ... the things themselves”; and indeed, it is this deterritorialisation in fairy tales that makes these stories so enchanting. The fifth and final key advantage of a refrain-based approach in fairy tale studies would lie with this recognition of the instability of ‘things,’ which not only challenges ‘deadedning scholarship’ (my first point) but ultimately directs scholarship away from the well-worn paradigm of identity-oriented ideology critique that so dominates fairy tale studies, to a more hopeful scholarship that traces the deterritorialisations of fairy tales, and celebrates their ethical potential for transformation (see 1.4 and 2.3.3). Cloke and Jones’ (2005) work on the disordered and deterritorialising space(s) of childhood is exemplary of such an approach, and especially pertinent to fairy tale studies, with its focus on how childhood territories become-other (or become-children, and thus other-than-adult) in adult literary discourses of childhood. Attentive to the “moral loadings” and romanticism of these discourses (i.e. childhood disordered spaces as places of risk and mischief, versus places of innocence), they nonetheless celebrate the “seemingly irrepressible capacity in children to

⁷⁶ Merriman (2012:20, emphasis added) encourages to go further and ‘un-glunk’ the processual category of space-time, arguing a “Deleuzian geography concerned with tracing the unfolding of events, processes of becoming, and the incessant movement, flux, buzz and vibrations of a world comprised of folds upon folds, *should be as concerned with the rhythmic intensities, visceral sensations, dynamic movements and emergent visualities of the world as it is with the events of spacing and timing.*” I.e. he urges us to abandon the fetish of space-time, and look to the ways in which “position, context and extension ... may be constituted through affective forces, atmospheres and rhythms, and registered r apprehended in more dynamic, embodied ways [than space and time] – whether kinaesthetically, proprioceptively, rhythmically” (*ibid* 24). He cites Western cultures who “inhabi[t] and liv[e] with ‘pure plastic rhythms’” (*ibid*), such as Australian Aboriginals, as exemplary of this geographical understanding beyond space and time.

transform and possess the materials and spaces with which, and in which they find themselves” (Cloke and Jones 2005:316). Indeed, such childish ‘play’ has wider reverberations on the “striated fabric of society,” by “prising out new smooth spaces in the striated fabric of society” and furthermore “strangl[ing] the roots and codes of arboreal thinking about the display, and potential loss of innocence” that pervade adult literary discourses of childhood (*ibid* 329). Fairy tales, often presumed to be the literature of (and about) childhood (Tatar 1993), are rich in playful metamorphosings and deterritorialisations, and it is “along [these] line[s] of flight that things come to pass, becomings evolve, revolutions take place” (Deleuze, cited in Doel 2000:118).

2.1.3 Trickster and crone as geographic refrains

I have chosen to focus on two geographically important fairy tale refrains in this thesis, the trickster and crone, and pursue them through some contemporary transformations or retellings of older fairy tales. For me, these are especially enigmatic, and yet typically marvellous, fairy tale figures, which evoke distinctively subversive (deterritorialising) geographical configurations. Furthermore, they are suffused with wider historical and symbolic meaning, which resonates throughout each individual retelling. Thus, tricksters haunt the carnivalesque and have strong Indigenous connotations⁷⁷. They have more recently made their presence felt in academic literatures, most notably through Haraway’s (1991, 1992) employment of the Native American Coyote, precipitating here, no less than in fairy stories, the death of an old order (or paradigm), with its challenge to the authority of traditional scientific ontologies and epistemologies. The crone, whilst less academically theorized, has a strong presence in ancient mythology. This presence has been frequently utilised by neopagans, who draw on the crone as a powerful Earth Mother/Destroyer, and American and British feminists from the 1960s, seeking a powerful female figure to drive political, social, cultural, and environmental transformation. In turn, this ‘cult of the crone’ has fed back into fairy tales, with the crone refrain reappearing as an ancient goddess or persecuted witch in post 1970s retellings.

Focusing on these refrains, then, I hope to tap into the affective geographical resonances of fairy tales, and explore their sociopolitical provocations. It is worth briefly summarising their geographical import at this point. Trickster figures disrupt time-space, as articulated in the

⁷⁷ The ‘indigenous’ trickster has, to some extent, already been recognised as geographically significant, as in Roberts (1990) research on the West African folk figure, Anansy, who survived the infamous Atlantic crossing to put roots down in the New World, provoking song, dance, and rebellion amongst slave communities, who often adopted this character as a figurehead for their own desperate situation.

strange to-and-fro movements, crossroads and other liminal spaces (psychical and metaphorical) that abound in trickster tales, and which unsettle the social, political and 'moral' organization of these stories. As social rebels and taboo-breakers they undermine existing sacred, social and political conventions, and overthrow communal order, precipitating transformation at a fundamental level. Their utopian force, however, is shadowed by the danger of anarchy. This figure performs disturbingly profane geographies of hybridity (tricksters are shape-shifters with indeterminate bodies), criminality (in pursuit of self-gratification), and amorality (as much selfish buffoons as culture heroes), which may secretly compel. Thus we can celebrate with and surreptitiously admire the profane Winnebago or West African tricksters who make a mockery, through 'unnatural' hybrid forms, scatological parody and vulgar sexual or gluttonous behaviour, of social and sacred customs and taboos; or we can laugh (albeit with horror) with the huntsman/werewolf who annihilates Rosaleen's superstitious grandmother in Jordan's (1984) *The Company of Wolves*, overthrowing centuries of oppressive Christian lore with one rake of his claws. Perhaps we even feel a secret envy for Nolan's (2008) Joker, who's chilling antisocial and criminal antics nonetheless undermine Gotham's social and political hypocrisy, and expose Batman himself to be a creature of naïve and idealistic delusions. Yet, however appropriately just or humorously ridiculous the trickster's playfulness, we know we must reject this devilish creature, or at least approach him very warily in his profane landscape, fully aware that he represents death to all notions of order, and the sacred, moral, social or political; and (if unchecked) death to the possibility of human life itself⁷⁸.

The crone, meanwhile, performs wilder geographies of bestiality, forcing us to confront the boundaries we erect around the human as a figure of 'civilization,' and entangling nature and society/culture, and human and inhuman, in disconcerting ways. An ageing figure of filth and decay, she is the embodiment of indifferent life, offering death to Vasilissa the Wise, Hansel, Gretel, and countless unnamed children, usually female, who have the misfortune to cross her grounds⁷⁹. The crone sits at the very heart of what we might call 'wilderness': exiled landscapes of endless forests, burnt out wastelands, barren canyons, or the deep and unfathomable bottoms of the sea, and resists all attempts to be civilized or to be drawn into society or community; or at least community based on accounting for and bringing together (see Barnett 2005). As such, she presents an untamed and unsocialised way of being, simultaneously abject human (an old woman), natural beast (ravenous predator and wilderness abode), unnatural terror (an immoral, not-quite-human witch), and supernatural deity (with her goddess-like properties). To rely solely on

⁷⁸ Note that the Winnebago trickster is known to cannibalise himself on various occasions in pursuit of his own pleasure, usually by feasting on his own intestines; and Rumpelstiltskin, a Grimms trickster figure, tears himself to pieces foot first with scant regard for the 'natural order' or 'sacred space' of the body. See Radin (1987) and Hyde (1998:26-27) on cannibalism, self-cannibalism and the eating of scabs, body parts and excrement etc. in trickster tales.

⁷⁹ Although she sometimes rewards those able to withstand her.

discourses of abjection or Othering, which privilege a vision of the crone as distant, alien, impure and thus pitiful, is thus to fundamentally misconstrue this figure, and, further, exacerbate reductionist dichotomies between primitive, romanticised states of being, and less ‘innocent,’ cultured civilization. The crone is neither powerless in the face of such culture, nor ‘naturally’ sacred. Her power lies in strange magic, poisons, and ireful curses, which take life as glowing skulls that turn all in their path to ash; and she usually gains the upper hand of the (more) human protagonists in her stories⁸⁰. Of all the figures in fairy tales, she is the most perplexing: at home in the world, but in a way that contradicts both relational accounts of being, and more romantic discourses of dwelling. In sum, these refrains perform, as they are told and retold, a different geography of what it is to be in (human) community, and in relationship to the ‘natural’ environment.

2.2 Storytelling geographies

2.2.1 Storytelling as praxis

The fairy tale refrains above are geographical practices and possibilities, both imaginative and transformational, and to address them as such raises several issues. Foremost of these is the need to engage these lively tales as socially, politically, ethically, etc., situated; an ambition that echoes Massey’s (2005:189) vision of a geography that can “[evoke] the ‘outwardlookingness’ of a spatial imagination.”

Massey (2005) offers a socially and politically robust account of space as a “simultaneity of stories-so-far” (*ibid*); a notion which, in turn, recalls Benjamin’s (1999) and Arendt’s (1983) understandings of storytelling as praxis. These philosophers were enthralled by the power of storytelling, and adopted a compelling narrative approach to theory building (Benhibab 1994; Disch 1993; Leslie 1998). Interestingly, Benjamin (1999:101) celebrated fairy tales above all other stories, claiming: “the first true storyteller is, and will continue to be, the teller of fairy tales.” For Benjamin (*ibid*), this ‘authentic’ folkish storyteller is a craftsman, who counsels the undifferentiated peasant mass whom comprises his audience. If we reverse his hierarchy, however, to place this attentive audience at the heart of the storytelling process, we come to a better understanding of the

⁸⁰ One key exception to this is the Grimms’ witch of *Hansel and Gretel*. However, this story was significantly edited to fit the German middle class sensibilities of the time. *Frau Trude* in the same collection retains her croneish power to the end of the tale. Perhaps this one deviation could be explained by its likely Parisian influences: Madame D’Aulnoy’s (1892) *Finette Cendron* and Perrault’s (1697) *Le Petit Poucet* forerunners feature a *male* ogre/giant, and not a crone figure (see Heiner 1999). In other tales the crone fails to secure her supper (as in the case of Tishka or Vasilissa the Wise, etc.), but she is not overly perturbed by this loss, and may even reward the earnest or cunning child who steadfastly answers her challenge.

uniting force of fairy tales, for “a real fairy tale, a fairy tale in its true function, is a tale within a circle of listeners” (Capek 1931, in Warner 1995:17)⁸¹. The generic vision of a circle of listeners advised by a transcendental storyteller figure has achieved almost sacral status in the western popular imagination. Indeed, it serves as the meta-myth of western civilization. Nancy (1991:52) argues this storytelling “myth of myth” gathers community, and, further, is the source of all subsequent socio-political mythopoeia:

We know the scene: there is a gathering, and someone is telling a story. We do not yet know whether these people gathered together to form an assembly, if they are a horde or a tribe. But we call them brothers and sisters because they are gathered together and because they are listening to the same story...
He recounts to them their history, or his own, a story that they all know, but that he alone has the gift, the right, or the duty to tell. It is the story of their origin, of where they came from, or of how they come from the Origin itself... And so at the same time it is also the story of the beginning of the world, of the beginning of their assembling together, or of the beginning of narrative itself...
In the speech of the narrator, their language for the first time serves no other purpose than that of presenting the narrative and of keeping it going. It is no longer the language of their exchanges, but of their reunion – the sacred language of a foundation and an oath (*ibid* 43-44).

Fairy tales ‘act’ by founding this *mythic* audience, which takes the form of a circular (complete and closed) community (figure 2). This community is based upon shared values and identities, uniting the listeners through strategic narrative agreements such as the ironic suspension of disbelief: “what a tall story! It’s not me the liar, but the people who went before” (Tombofeno 2008: pers. comm.⁸²). By overtly affirming the fabulous (and therefore impossible) status of the fairy tale, the narrator appropriates a transcendental position of objectivity and enfold the audience into a superior space of the same: a statement that “‘we,’ teller and listeners, know better!” Equally essential to the mythic community, then, is the image and craft of the narrator—and I do not mean here the ‘individual’ who tells. Rather the narrator in this context is embedded within the text as a self-autonomous and impersonal series of strategic narrative moves that drive the fairy tale forward in its recognisable forms.

⁸¹ The audience, here, occupies a contradictory double-space: it constitutes the fairy tale by enclosing it within an imaginary space of (mythic) community; but, in turn, it becomes internalized and brought into the tale. It becomes impossible to say what came first: fairy tale or audience (folk story or folk).

⁸² Each of the Sakalava Anganu (folk tales of the Sakalava tribe, Nosy-Be, Madagascar) end with this ironic line. Mme. Tombofeno is a Malagasy (Sakalva) oral folk teller. She was happy to share with me several key tales of her repertoire. These communal endings are common also to western storytelling traditions. For example, consider the Grimms’ (2002:72) closure of *Hansel and Gretel*: “my tale is done, there runs a mouse, whosoever catches it, may make himself a big fur cap out of it,” which offers a similar blend of irony, superiority and shared identity.

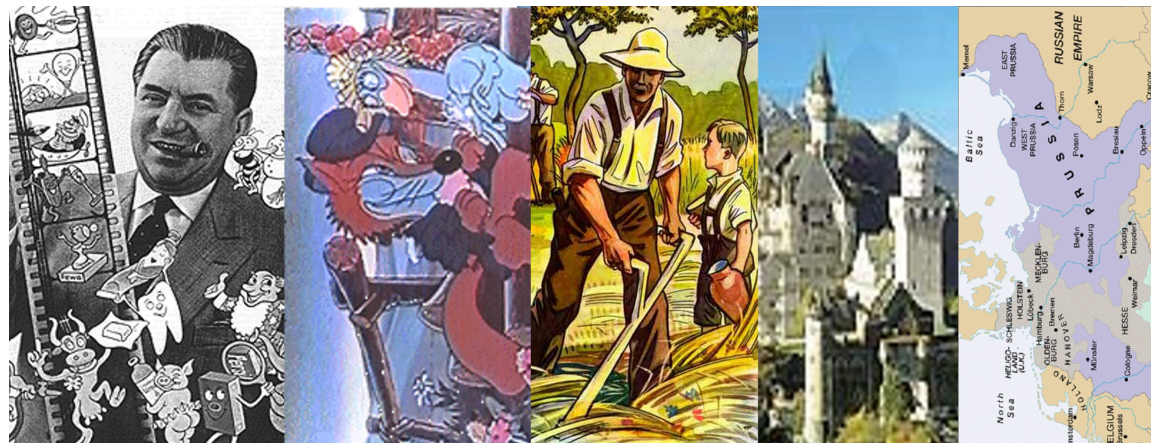


Figure 2. Fairy tales and mythic community. Collage.

However, the ‘mythic’ fairy tale is neither entirely a closed community nor inert form. As in any text, there is an excess of meaning, and arguably (contra Bakhtin’s and Propp’s notions of the idyllic simplicity and reducibility of folklore) this is especially so in these stories, where the ‘caricatures’ that comprise a fairy tale (crone, trickster, mother, stepmother, simpleton, etc., many of whom never receive their own name) are hollowed out. Emptied of specific meaning, they offer themselves to the reteller/listener to ‘fill in’ or, more relationally, affectively engineer (see Benson 2000). Fairy tales are not, then, repeated tellings of the same in a long chain of storytelling that stems back to one primordial telling. There is clearly difference within the recurrence of fairy tales, which carries them beyond any claim to original or authentic meaning (or genre), including that entrenched in the notion of primitive structures, or archetypes⁸³. Any repeatability is more akin to a Derridian ‘iterability,’ which involves the “possibility of being carried into ever changing contexts and put to ever different uses” (Thomson 2006:301), as demonstrated in the meticulous genealogical work carried out by Zipes (1993) on *Little Red Riding Hood*. Given this, it becomes necessary to consider the processes of retelling, and all of the possibilities of ‘destinerrance’ that this implies (Thompson 2006).

Storytelling is more than a formal, self-autonomous mechanics of narrative, or ghostly simulacrum of differing repetitions; just as it is a fallacy to depict fairy tales as mere fabulous content, transferred unscathed through various media of storytelling. Rather, to return to Benjamin (1999), fairy stories are embodied, materialistic performances, resonating with ethical and political ‘concern.’ Benjamin (*ibid*), drawing on the Russian storyteller Nikolai Leskov, equates storytelling with practicality, or tactile experience, comparable to the work of a potter. He implies that this gifted teller of fairy tales is an artisan with a ‘close’ relationship to life, enabling an authentic dwelling. ‘Crafting,’ in Benjamin’s account, is thus a way of making (or being close to) a reality that is rich, embodied, sensuous, practical—and steeped in tradition. Like a medieval chronicler, Leskov’s narrates stories that are “passed on from mouth to mouth, reworked through the experience of the listeners” (Leslie 1998:8). The “attentiveness to reality” that informs the artisan’s work is vital, for “only words born from and connected to the immediate experience of the events, or poetically distilled from them, can reveal their meaning” (Luban 1994:101). These stories, furthermore, have “retransmissions, after-lives” as they are heard by, and resonate through, the bodies of their listeners (Leslie 1998:5). For Benjamin, with his apprehension of the ruins of

⁸³ Benson (2000: 119) reminds us that, “despite the sense of teleology which underpins” certain “narrativisation[s] of the history of the fairytale, this particular storytelling “retains a distance: [the fairytale is] a liminal text ... its unexplainability and unrecuperability, are, paradoxically, essential.”

time and tradition, fairy tales convey a sense of meaning and authenticity in modern life. However, storytelling is no straightforward work of recovery of times past, but a fragmented piecing together of a re-conceptualised ‘present past’ (Herzog 2006).

A storyteller is, then, a collector or, in Arendt’s (1983:193) imagining, a ‘pearl diver’: someone who gathers broken and discarded odds and ends, and makes of them a new meaning and beauty. This gathering is an ethical act, where “a collector of Benjamin’s type looks at objects in a new way, against the chronological and systematic order that the conformist tradition of the victors imposes on history” (Herzog 2006:10-11). Reading against the grain of history allows the storyteller to expose absences and “invoke the fate of the defeated and the forgotten, of the dead who lie prostrate in the triumph processions of the victors and have no place in big commemorations” (*ibid*). This is memory-work and not soothsaying, for at its best it must always remain partial and distorted, the colliding slivers of accounts of those who are dead and cannot speak their own stories. Time is not retold: it is *redeemed*, for ‘collecting’ bestows significance on the tragic past and its attendant future. The storyteller’s “chief task ... is to dig under the rubble of history and to recover those ‘pearls’ of past experience, with their sediment and hidden layers of meaning, so as to cull from them a story that can orient the mind in the future” (Benhabib 1994:113)⁸⁴.

Writing at the time of the Second World War and, in Arendt’s case, the rise of the totalitarian Soviet State, it was imperative for both philosophers that they invoke the silent lives of those millions who had disappeared in pogroms and death camps. Their crafted theoretical narratives work as a summoning magic⁸⁵. It is worth reminding ourselves that Benjamin names fairy tales as the most important and authentic of stories, for these are tales heavily laden with exactly such devious magic, wherein “little people learn how to liberate themselves through crafty cunning” (*ibid*). As Disch (1993:665) observes, “a well-crafted story shares with the most elegant theories the ability to bring a version of the world to light that so transforms the way people see that it seems never to have been otherwise.”

An enlivening media of transformation, storytelling is presented here as an ethically saturated, epistemological act. Further, it has political potency (it becomes praxis), as it enables public space or, in Arendt’s terms, the *polis*: “the ‘exemplary validity’ of stories links people together, creates communication, hence opposes the destruction of the public world” (Herzog 2006:17). Arendt specifically draws on the *fabulation* of

⁸⁴ See DeSilvey (2007a, 2007b) for a practical and theoretical demonstration of such memory-work with a geographical focus.

⁸⁵ Appropriately, the Old English word “craeft” means “power, force, or strength (OED 2012).

stories, their openly acknowledged, distancing objectivity, and ‘situated impartiality’ (and fairy tales are especially pertinent), to compile a new kind of “critical enterprise whose purpose is not to defend abstract principles or objective facts but to tell provocative stories that invite contestation from rival perspectives” (Disch 1993:667). Stories testify to the plurality of human existence, where “plurality names the condition of human multiplicity, interconnectedness and perspectival differentiation” (*ibid*). This plurality is carefully crafted in those stories with multi-perspective viewpoints, encouraging listeners to “look upon the same world from another’s standpoint” (Arendt 1993:51). Fairy tales, again, are pertinent here, with their frequently subversive subtexts. Hans Christian Anderson’s *The Emperor’s New Clothes* springs to mind, or the courageous Scheherazade of the *Arabian Nights*, who weaves a web of marvellous stories to transform the anger of a King and spare the lives of the maidens of his kingdom. Likewise, the strange refrains that pervade fairy tales could be construed as discordant perspectives within each story. Tricksters and crones, in particular, undermine the assumptions of the narrators and those more communally situated refrains (such as hero/heroine figures) in fairy tales, and offer disruptive, even taboo, geographical possibilities.

Yet in this theory of story-as-polis there is one key weakness: it posits a vision of the storytelling encounter as that of an immediate, oral, authentic, present, *dwelt* relationship between an abstracted figure of the storyteller(s) and the geographically defined city polis, and so performs the very ritual of mythopoeia that Nancy denounces. Such mythopoeia is tragically blind to the imminent “incoming of the other” (Caputo 1997:108). In this common collective space of myth, the totalitarian agenda that Benjamin and Arendt confront (the silencing of those defeated and absent) is tragically propagated. For to tell of a polis is to draw, socially, politically and legally, a community/commonality into a ‘citadel,’ with fortress walls that proffer a hostile front to those strangers who choose to reside without (and within) its gates. However, to acknowledge these Others, the absent⁸⁶, departed or defeated, or those who simply refuse to share in an organised community or civilization, is to threaten the transcendental figure of the mythic storyteller, and fracture their politically and ethically circular and complete audience. The absent Other is, after all, that which cannot be drawn into the scope of community, nor even defined by the narrative of those present; but must remain hidden and unspoken, an eternally subversive subtext undermining the story. As Nancy (1991) notes, the difference between European liberalism and

⁸⁶ One obvious ‘absent’ in this account is the nonhuman (not to mention the inhuman). Agamben’s (1998 in Spinks 2001:24) insight on the political as a “border ... between the human and the inhuman” is suggestive of this point.

European fascism (or communism for that matter) is one of form, not myth—and accidental at that. Indeed, “the horror particular to our own age” is that the distinction between these two seemingly different ideologies is becoming increasingly blurred (Spinks 2001:27)⁸⁷.

2.2.2 Storytelling as witnessing

Nancy’s (1991) warning reverberates with the wider concerns of poststructuralism. Above all, he is addressing “the question of relation,” and, essentially, the problem of subjectivity, which troubles all representational epistemologies, and remains as a hidden assumption, or a stubborn trace, in many ‘nonrepresentational’ relational ontologies (I am thinking of vitalist accounts in particular) (James 2005:337; see also Barad 2007). For Nancy (1991), a properly ethical community, and the possibility of politics itself, is one that does not tend to the mastery and totalitarianism of the relationality of self-identified subjects or beings. To conceive of such requires us to make fundamental ontological and epistemological shifts. Ontologically, we need to turn from understanding relationality as founded upon connection (be that structural or immanentist), to an “*aporetic* ... understanding of relation and relationality” (Harrison 2007:591, emphasis added). Epistemologically, it means recognising not merely the impossibility of representation (that is representation as “failure,” as in the failure to render the stories of the dead), but the non-relational as a *necessary* “falling short”: an “ellipse (...) which lies at the heart of, and indeed constitutes, the relational” (*ibid*). In turn, this entails an understanding of non-relationality beyond that which is commonly “derived from a model of sufficiency” (Blanchot 1988, in Harrison 2007:602). Thus, where storytelling performs a ‘collection’, re-membering, and *polis*, with the intent to *restore* to order and life, to *return* something to itself (a story, a subject, a way of being), to tell a *truth* (however approximate, fractured or devious), and to *hold together* a people in solidarity, it necessarily effaces “the interval between representation and alterity,” reinstates the storyteller as a “heroic-volitional subjectivity ... to bridge [this] gap,” and so ultimately propagates the mythic community (Harrison 2007:599-600). Benjamin’s (singular) and Arendt’s

⁸⁷ Again, we can return to Agamben (1998 in Spinks 2001:250-6), and his account of the ambivalence of the place of ‘bare life’ in the ‘political’: “there is politics because man is the living being who, in his own language, separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion.” For Agamben (1998 in Spinks 2001:24), “the original political relation is the ban’ in which a mode of life is actively and continuously excluded or shut out ... from the polis,” and not the common (mythic) belonging suggested in the figure of the storyteller (*ibid*). To continue this argument, “the goal of modern democracy is to find a form of political life to accommodate bare life,” the realisation of which lies in the concentration camp (Spinks 2001:26) This “unhappy identification of freedom and subjection ... [which] marks the point of ambivalence where democracy becomes indistinguishable from the nightmare of totalitarianism” (*ibid* 26) is not confined to the history of Nazi Germany or Stalin’s Russia: consider the status quo of refugees, illegal immigrants, the prisoners of Guantanamo Bay, etc. These examples of ‘bare life,’ excluded from the category of biopolitical life by Liberal states, bear testament to the ‘sovereign exception’ (that is the power held by the figure of the sovereign, and perhaps here the storyteller, to draw the line between what constitutes political life/bare life) upon which ‘force of law’ the *polis* is predicated (see Spinks 2001 and Sauer-Thompson 2005). I will develop this line of thinking further in chapter 5, with regards to Batman and the trickster figure of the Joker.

(plural) storytellers continue to speak the language of myth, which is always “a primordial language: the element of an inaugural communication in which exchange and sharing in general are founded or inscribed” (Nancy 1991:48).

The primordial language of myth founds a community of immanence: that is of “the self-presence of individuals to one another in and by their community” (Fynsk 1991:xv). We could add that the self-presence of individuals is the self-presence of *human* individuals (and an idealised human figure at that): the Same recognising, and relating to, the Same (Nancy 1991). It is this very self-presence of immanence that Nancy holds accountable for the inherent failure of the ideal of community:

It is precisely the immanence of man to man, or it is *man*, taken absolutely, considered as the immanent being par excellence, that constitutes the stumbling block to a thinking of community. A community presupposed as having to be one of *human beings* presupposes that it effect, or that it must effect, as such and integrally, its own essence, which is itself the accomplishment of the essence of humanness ... Consequently, economic ties, technological operations, and political fusion (into a *body* or under a *leader*) represent or rather present, expose, and realise this essence necessarily in themselves. Essence is set to work in them; through them, it becomes its own work. This is what we have called ‘totalitarianism,’ but it might be better named ‘immanentism’ (*ibid* 3).

Whilst the Benjaminian and Arendtian storytellers remain in a state of immanence, Morrison (2005), in *Beloved*, offers us an alternative fantastic storytelling, which simultaneously gathers and fragments the authoritative storytelling voice, and thus disrupts the mythic community. Following Benjamin⁸⁸, Morrison invokes the disremembered slaves of the American empire; however, her storytelling offers the fractured subjectivity of testimony, which crystallises as an ‘anarrative’ of “broken words” (Harrison 2007:591). She does not so much craft, chronicle, gather, or summon the fragments of a suppressed past; indeed, her telling *cannot* evidence the horror and violence of the slaves’ transatlantic passage. Instead, Morrison hovers in the spaces of these absent long dead, in a move that is more akin to a Derridian *hauntology* (Derrida 1994)⁸⁹. From this tenuous, mournful position, she acts as a witness to their suffering; and like all witnesses, her “words are to be found wanting ... they fail to deliver or deliver nothing or, at least, nothing communicable or representable” (Harrison 2007:593, 605; also Wylie 2007). Her storytelling steps outside of the self-possessed linear narrative form to experiment linguistically, over four pages, with tortuous fragmented and unpunctuated sentences, ungrammatical statements, and nonsensical affective text. Whilst tedious to read, Morrison’s (2005:284-291) tactic allows her to

⁸⁸ Nutting (1997) posits Morrison as a perfect example of the Benjaminian ‘wise storyteller.’

⁸⁹ Morrison’s words are not a re-remembering, as is made clear by their temporal structure of haunting (as opposed to presence in time). Indeed, her approach exemplifies Harrison’s (2007:602) conceptualization of witnessing as: “an immemorial relation. Asymmetric and diachronic, it comes to pass in a ‘lost time,’ in a past that was never present.”

preserve a sense of loss and incompleteness in her account in a reverential commemoration, but not redemption, of the slaves who did not make it to the shores of America:

All of it is now it is always now there will never be a time when I am not crouching and watching others who are crouching too
I am always crouching the man on my face is dead his face is not mine his mouth smells sweet but his eyes are locked

...there is no one to want me to say my name I wait on the bridge because she is under it there is night and there is day

again again night day night day I am waiting ...

Morrison's storytelling-as-witnessing is not seeking to render an authentic account of the past, or draw those departed into a co-presence with the living; rather, it is responding to a call from the absent Other, the "Sixty Million and more" to whom she dedicates her work (*ibid*)⁹⁰. This "structure of address" (Harrison 2007:600) is a common occurrence in fairy tales, where numerous disremembered bodies refuse to be silenced, and call out to those still living as witnesses to the injustice of their loss. Morrison (2005) is clearly aware of the impossibility of calling these Others into 'our' community, for she cites the Apostle Paul prior to her story:

I will call them my people;
which were not my people;
and her beloved,
which was not beloved
(Romans 9:25)

Taken in the context of these Sixty Million, we have a sense of the need to respond to that *which is not ours*, together with our ultimate inability to fulfil this need. As Harrison notes, drawing on Butler (1990, in Harrison 2007:601), this is "an asymmetric and diachronic call and response structure, a 'relation without relation or without relation other than to the incommensurable.'" Or in Morrison's (1994, in Caldwell 1994:242) more poignant words: "I couldn't get Beloved's voice ... I just couldn't get there. I wrote around it." It is pertinent, indeed, that Beloved, the ghost of the book, returns "with no lines on her palms and no history to speak of" (Caldwell 1994:242).

⁹⁰ Morrison (2005) does not respond to a singular human Other (although, like Levinas, her account at times privileges the 'face'). Instead, she enfolds human, inhuman, and superhuman, and answers the call of a plurality of ghosts: both as incomplete human bodies and resonating non-human affects. These ghosts are inseparable from the waters in which they drowned, the ships on which they died, and the emotions and affects of the transatlantic crossing; they resonate in *place* (or 'of place,' or even out of place), and are more-than singular human individuals to whom we owe allegiance.

2.2.3 Storytelling as interrupted community

Thus far, I have grafted a Derridian and Levinasian inspired “unsettling of places and selves” (Wylie 2007:171) onto Nancy’s theorizing of mythic community to counter the problem of the self-present (immanent) relationality of the storytelling communal project. Nancy (1991), however, takes a different approach to rethinking the subject and the relational. Eschewing the Derridian and Levinasian quasi-divine (transcendental), opaque, ethical Other, who calls the self into being, and so destabilises subjectivity (in this case of the immanent selves of storyteller and the storied community), Nancy’s concern lies with an ontological relationality-in-common. Thus, for him “the ontological, the ethical and the political are *co-originary*” (James 2005:343)⁹¹. Nancy turns to the Bataillain notion of community in finitude, and the Heideggerian ecstatic *Dasein*, to develop an ontological account of *lived* community, which interrupts the mythic (immanent) community, preventing its full closure. By this account, the storyteller is not an incomplete witness, but a self-defeating figure, who, despite his/her best effort to narrate a history of origins, and thus effect an original community, will always be undermined by the ontological plurality of being, and the self-defeating nature of myth.

To explain: for Nancy, drawing first on Bataille, community inheres in our shared, lived experience of mortality or finitude, whereby “*Dasein* first knows community when it experiences the impossibility of communion or immanence ... before the dead other” (Fynsk 1991:xv). In Bataille’s words (1985, in Fynsk 1991:xv), “if it sees its fellow-being die, a living being can only subsist *outside* itself.” This shared relation to finitude consists of a quasi-transcendental original experience which “exceeds a metaphysics of the subject, and ... precedes empirical concerns” (James 2005:337). As such, death is in and of its own sake: it “*cannot be put to work* in order to produce community as a subject or identity (a nation or people)” (*ibid* 338, emphasis added). To illustrate this, we can momentarily return to Benjamin and Arendt’s storytellers as figures who redeem the dead by chronicling them in the story of the living. These storytellers give death ‘meaning’ (a form of sacrifice), and thus subsume it in the myth of community. Whilst both Benjamin and Arendt strive to crack open the homogenous politics of a Volk community, the latent nostalgia for the dead in their accounts prevents their complete success. Their invocation of the dead does not interrupt (suspend or break) the myth of Volk, but is rather an activity of “demythologizing,” which cannot escape the economy of myth. Demythologizing “distinguishes

⁹¹ James (2005:343) explains difference between Nancy’s and Levinas’ thinking of relationality as follows: “Levinas would situate the ethical relation prior to ontology in a relation of the Self to Other, in which transcendence precedes and exceeds any economy of finitude. For Nancy existence as shared finitude implies a relation, at once ethical and political, whose structure is that of pre-subjective singularities positioned, as it were, ‘side-by-side’ in an exposure each to the other.”

between ‘myth’ and ‘faith’ and depends on the possibility of positing something like ‘faith,’ whilst leaving untouched the essence of myth itself” (Nancy 1991:47).

Turning, next, to the Heideggerian notion of *Dasein*’s fundamental excessiveness (*Dasein*’s “ecstatic-temporality of being-in-the-world”), Nancy is able to structure Bataille’s account of human finitude as an opening-out of subjectivity, whereby “each singular existence [exists] as a relation to, or being-toward death which unties subjectivity” (James 2005:338). Drawing these two lines of theory together, he posits an *a priori*, ontological community as:

A multiplicity of singular existences who are ‘in common’ only on the basis of a shared mortality which cannot be subsumed into any communal project or collective identity ... Community reveals, or rather *is*, our exposure to the unmasterable limit of death, and thus our being together outside of all identity, or work of subjectivity (*ibid* 339)⁹².

Ontological, or lived, community, as nothing more (or less) than the sharing of finitude, exerts “a ceaseless instability within the experience of community” (*ibid* 339). As such, it does not merely demythologise, but *interrupts* storied community (Nancy 1991).

Given that myth *is* community, and vice versa (“there can be ... no community outside of myth”), we see the same auto-interruption at work within myth:

The phrase ‘myth is a myth’ harbours *simultaneously* and *in the same thought* a disabused irony (‘foundation is a fiction’) and an onto-poetico-logical affirmation (‘fiction is a foundation’).

This is why myth is interrupted. It is interrupted by myth (*ibid* 55-57).

Thus far, we have explored what Nancy (*ibid* 54) designates the “onto-poetico-logical affirmation” of myth; that is its founding of a fictive, primordial community (“being engenders itself *by figuring itself*”). However, there remains in myth the possibility of recognising its status as story, that is fiction, or non-truth. This ‘disabused irony,’ which we encountered earlier as a binding myth of superiority (“‘we,’ teller and listeners, know better!”), immediately undermines itself, and the community it calls into being, by simultaneously noting its own fabrication

⁹² Contrast this to Arendt’s *polis* which consolidates itself on the memories of past heroic forbears, thus mastering death for the sake of communal identity and instruction. Here, the political community is a “community of memory,” and the storied *polis* “[establishes] ... a space where organized remembrance could take place, and where, as a result, the mortality of actors and the fragility of human deeds could be partially overcome” (D’Entrèves 1994:76).

(“‘we,’ teller and listeners, know *better!*”)⁹³. Again, returning to the storytelling of fairy tales, we recognise this interruption of myth, and hence mythic community, at work within individual tales, through the multiple, discordant voices, of trickster, crone, etc., that speak through tales (see above). The position of the fairy tale narrator, moreover, is likewise contradictory: neither here, nor there, but somewhere in-between ‘reality’ and ‘fiction’ (see 2.1.1). Thus, whilst fairy stories bind community, they simultaneously unbind; the anti-tale is always already present within the tale itself (see 1.3.4). It is not just that the tales proffer ‘empty’ positions to be filled by a crafty teller (which would lead us back to an immanent community); rather, fairy tales are themselves devious stories, which ‘tell’ from multiple perspectives, and which refuse any one geographical utopia or final settlement. Fairy tales as polyvocal stories, even in their most censored forms, necessarily open us (or the communal) to the incoming of the Other.

To sum: I have theorized fairy tales as geographical stories, noting both how they comprise transforming, and transformative, affective spatiotemporal refrains, and detailing the mythic (communal) geographies of the storytelling encounter. It is useful, now, to relate this geographical understanding to some of the common definitional approaches provided by contemporary fairy tale scholarship. I choose to highlight four such particular definitional emphases, whereby fairy tales are viewed primarily as: recursive or iterative cultural narratives, a classical literary genre, enchanting or marvellous stories, and anti-tales⁹⁴.

2.3 Defining fairy tales

2.3.1 Fairy tale iterations

The inseparability of tale from storytelling, and thus from mythic community (see above), requires a more sophisticated understanding of fairy tales than that of the popular, standardised folkloristic typologies of Aarne-Thompson (1961) and Propp (1928), which prioritise the formal, text-

⁹³ As Nancy (1991:61) notes, “the formula for irony ... is fundamentally the same as the formula for the identity of myth (and for its mythic identity).”

⁹⁴ This classification is of my own devising. It is not intended to be comprehensive. Thus, much fairy tale scholarship further engages psychoanalytical and folkloristic (formal or structural) frameworks, and many accounts draw on multiple ‘definitions’ of tales (indeed, there is no definitive classification(s) of fairy tales, and the genre itself is tricky, seeping into folk, legend, fable, etc.). My classification draws on recent fairy tale theorizing that raises the most interesting issues for a *geographical* understanding of these tales. Through these approaches we gain insight into the recursive nature of fairy tale geographies; the historicalness of the tales; the vital element of wonder, which distinguishes fairy tales as a genre, and lends them their affective potency; the excessive and uncontrollable nature of these stories. Besides providing an important interdisciplinary context for my own theorizing in this chapter, these varying approaches bring greater depth and subtlety to an account of fairy tales as geographic refrains.

derived morphological and functional components of the stories. Likewise, psychoanalytical accounts, whilst helpful with their interpretation of key symbols, and less static than the structural accounts above, reduce fairy tales to expressions of unconscious desire (Heisig 1977), or patterns rooted in a collective unconscious (Von Franz 1996), neglecting the role of the historically situated teller, the inter-subjectivities between teller and community of listeners, and the ‘marvellous’ opacity of the tales. Highlighting the *recursive* nature of these cultural narratives, in comparison, draws tale and telling together, and upholds the dynamic (as well as enduring) qualities of these stories, after folklorist Roberts (1990:11):

We must recognize that culture-building is a recursive, rather than linear, process of endlessly devising solutions to both old and new problems of how to live under ever-changing social, political, and economic conditions. While culture is dynamic and creative as it adapts to social needs and goals, it is also enduring in that it changes by building upon previous manifestations of itself.

This ‘dynamic’ approach attends to the ways in which fairy tales embody and perform historical gendered, racist, class, ageist, and moralising discourses, and propagate these through embedded narrative tools such as mimesis, framing, and the ‘objective’ narrator (Waugh 2006). Furthermore, contextualizing fairy tales within socio-historic trajectories demystifies any claims to ‘primordial’ import; the emphasis, instead, becomes relational: between successive retellings, and between specific tellers, tales, and audiences. This inseparable triad of tale, teller and audience can be addressed as part of wider economic, political, social, and moral circulations that contribute to (and are shaped by) the storying process in question; highlighting, in turn, the interplay between fairy tales and other texts and discourses (e.g. Bacchilega 1999; Tiffin 2009), and the utopian excesses of specific tales (e.g. Zipes 2002). Understanding fairy tales performatively also allows us to attend to the materialistic and embodied aspects of tale and telling, in counterpoint to excessively linguistic, textual or discursive accounts of fairy tales (e.g. Kérchy 2011). In sum, by underlining the iterative nature of fairy tales, we gain insight into their historical specificities and material-discursive circulations, and are able to approach these stories as both situated, and mobile and lively.

To illustrate: Disney films operate within—and constitute—a particular political/social/economic/environmental system, materialised through such novelties as Disneyland theme parks and Disney toys (often in collaboration with other corporations, such as MacDonald’s)⁹⁵. This diffusion

⁹⁵ See Zipes (1994) and Deszcz’s (2002). Whilst admirably demonstrating the expansion of the Disney fairy tale beyond film/animation to a wider mass commodity, materialised in Disneyland, and through economic agreements between MacDonald’s and Warner Brothers (a toy with your burger?!), I am dubious about both of these scholar’s assumptions of prior, ‘uncontaminated,’ or more authentic versions of the tales. Although it is pleasing to imagine the raw power of the blood and guts fairy tales of the distant past (who

of fairy tales from their filmic/textual performances to a wider industry of 'Fairy Tale,' highlights an important aspect of these stories: their readiness to transform. More sporadically, fairy tale transformations can arise through film fan sites (fanzines), blogging practices, hypertext worlds, rebellious spin-offs, ironic and carnivalesque parodies of Disneyland itself, etc. These myriad transformations straddle a range of variously materialised media, and expose the shifting origins of fairy tales, in a 'demystifying' process that fairy tale scholars are keen to encourage (e.g. Bacchilega 1999; Zipes 2002). Not only does it become impossible to speak of one definitive fairy tale text, performance or telling, but in the embracing of a recursive approach, the very status of fairy tale as a 'genre' can be questioned (Haase 2004). Indeed, Derrida (1980:59-70) notes how 'genre' acts as an interrupted or impossible closing "that excludes itself from that which it includes." As a problematic "content without edge," offers a contradictory membership where participation can only occur "without belonging" (*ibid*).

The Derridian notion of a "madness" underwriting the "law of genre" (*ibid* 63,81), which calls all judgment into question, speaks of a need to conceptualise fairy tales in more fluid terms: as flowing through and comprising a hybridity of genres (e.g. fairy tale embedded in fantasy, with gothic/horror strains, in a TV retelling of a novel, etc.) in the wider, living, mobile fabric of mythic society (Tiffin 2009). Indeed, reducing the plurality of fairy tales to the homogenous 'Fairy Tale' (whether essentialised as a singular form or repetitive structure), strips life from these subversive and transformational stories, rendering them ahistorical, static objects to be dissected and theorized in ways that are more amenable to research. Recognising this, it becomes vital to ensure that my own taxonomy is one that can accommodate the indeterminacy of meaning in fairy tales, and even to the point of contradiction; for, above all things, fairy tales are powerfully utopian stories that have, across their iterations, consistently resisted institutionalisation and determinable meaning, and open the immanent folk community, as we have seen, to the incoming of the Other (Zipes 2006).

knows nowadays that the Grimms evil stepmother from Snow White dances to her death in red hot iron shoes, a strange entertainment for the guests who are attending her daughter's triumphant wedding banquet?), I would caution that all fairy tales, at all times, are embedded (and, indeed, embed) in various forms of social, political and economic exchange. Thus, to portray contemporary fairy tales as passive capitalistic fetishes would be to deny their inherently transformational, and at times subversive, qualities. Even Disney's heavily regulated fairy tale kingdom offers transgressive geographical purchase: consider Banksy's Guantanamo Bay inmate installation in the Anaheim, California theme park in September 2006, or Carter's (1997) 'Pantoland.'

2.3.2 Classical fairy tales

Dynamic approaches that attend to the historical, shifting and transformational aspects of these recursive material-discursive stories go some way to overcoming the problems of more static morphological, functional, or psychoanalytical interpretations of these tales. However, three further approaches to fairy tales have also been important to the inter-discipline of fairy tale scholarship. As Yolen (2002) notes:

Folklore is protean. It speaks to us in many tongues – some psychoanalytical, some historical, some insightful, some healing, some provocative and some just for fun.

The next ‘tongue’ I want to adopt is of a more classical school of thought. In this tradition, ‘fairy tale’ is differentiated from ‘folktale’⁹⁶, and defined as a literary adaptation of earlier oral folklore, popularised in the salons of the seventeenth century Parisian aristocracy, with their burgeoning fashion for ‘wonder tales’ and witty repartee (see Haase 2004; Windling 2000):

The ‘classic’ fairy tale is a *literary* appropriation of the older folk tale, an appropriation which nevertheless continues to exhibit and reproduce some *folkloric* features. As a ‘borderline’ or transitional genre, it bears traces of orality, folkloric tradition, and socio-cultural performance, even when it is edited as literature for children or is marketed with little respect for its history and materiality. And conversely, even when it claims to be folklore, the fairy tale is shaped by literary traditions with different social uses and users” (Bacchilega 1999:3)⁹⁷.

The term ‘fairy tale’ is an English translation of the French *conte de fées*, coined by the Parisian noblewoman Madame d’Aulnoy (1892) in a collection of her fairy tales of the same name. One of *les précieuses*, those educated, witty women who sought intellectual stimulation in the salons of the Parisian elite, Madame d’Aulnoy’s stories form part of a culture of “lively conversations and playful word games” within an entertaining adult “world of galanterie” (Wilson and Wilson 1991:64). Key to their success was their emphasis on the marvellous or wondrous:

⁹⁶ However, note Benson’s (2003) and Warner’s (1995) understanding of the literary-oral exchanges of fairy tales, which renders a definition based on either one media form or the other distinctly problematic.

⁹⁷ Whilst many fairy tale scholars prioritise seventeenth century French texts, and date the genre from the coining of the term by Parisian Madame d’Aulnoy, they also note the indebtedness of these *conte de fées* to earlier traditions, tracing them back to both medieval courtly tales of romantic quests and love (e.g. Arthurian tales), and, in particular, the Italian ‘folktales’ of Giovan Francesco Straparola’s, as well as oral folklore (Zipes 2012). Warner (1995), moreover, sees the origin of *Beauty and the Beast* in the ancient myth of *Cupid and Psyche* included in Apuleius’ (~158 AD) *Metamorphoses*. What is recognised by all is the impossibility of setting a definitive origin to fairy tales—and especially when cross-cultural dissemination is taken into account. For example the *Arabian Nights* dates to 1500 AD, and the Panchatranta (ancient Hindu fairy tales of AD 200-300) are considered by some to be forerunners of the European fairy tales of the 17th century (Heiner 2007). Further, the division of oral folk tales from literary fairy tales is contentious at best. Zipes (2012:xii), for example, “responds,” rather belligerently, “to some deplorable scholarly endeavours that have sought to dismiss the fairy tale’s oral roots and reduce it to a genre that privileges print over orality,” and dedicates no less than two appendices to refuting such approaches, and providing a more nuanced history of the oral genre.

these are stories embroidered with magical incidents, shape-shifting protagonists, supernatural beings, etc. Distinct from modern fantasy literature, a genre that developed in the late eighteenth century, the tales make no pretence at ‘reality’; their chronotope is specifically non-linear, being out of accord with the space-time of the ‘everyday’ world (Nikolajeva 2003).

This classical approach to fairy tales allows us to locate these stories in a temporally and spatially specific context, and provides important insight into how fairy tales became institutionalised as a genre alongside nationalist, feminist, and class struggles (chapter 6). Finally, it makes for a neat genre categorisation, facilitating the research of these stories. However, this account is nonetheless highly problematic, as it delineates a dubious ‘authentic’ origin, posits a suspicious binary between real and imaginary worlds, fails to account for the transformational possibility of these texts, and underplays the embodied and affective nature of the intersubjective storytelling performance. Even more damning, it denies the appropriation by the aristocracy of many of the fairy tales that were orally ‘collected’ from nurses and servants, to whom the tales might have represented more accurately the harsh realities of life. As Warner (1995:225) concludes:

The more one knows fairy tales the less fantastical they appear; they can be the vehicles of the grimmest realism, expressing hope against all the odds with gritted teeth. Like ‘pardon tales,’ written to the King to win a reprieve from sentence of death, fairy tales sue for mercy.

Indeed, the many stories about evil stepmothers, incestuous fathers, and murderous husbands, amongst other horrors, may directly represent the harsh realities of seventeenth century peasant life.

2.3.3 Marvel, enchantment, and wonder

A historical-realist (representationalist) account of fairy tales, e.g. as ‘pardon tales,’ itself fails to do justice to the more inventive feminist aspects of this particular body of fairy tales, written as they were by “a group of nonconformist (and somewhat scandalous) upper-class women” (Windling 2000). Filled with magic, wonder and marvels, these stories served another purpose to a grim representation of reality; they provided a source of hope and emancipation, and a vision of an alternative, utopian future where the powerless turn the tables on their oppressors and reverse their fate (*ibid*). The salons of *les précieuses* crusaded on behalf of ‘women’s issues,’ such as the right to determine one’s own choices in life

(including marital); glorified the principle of meritocracy over inherited social class; and more generally acted as sites of social and political agitation (Hannon 1998)⁹⁸. Key to this drive for political and social freedom is the theme of metamorphosis, which permeates many of the tales (*ibid*). Far removed from the drudgery and routine of everyday life⁹⁹, the enchantment of the tales could be seen to lie in their magical promise of continual transformation, which lends them something of a recurring mystery. Indeed, Tolkien (1944, in Pennington 2002:81) notes that fairy tales precipitate a sense of estrangement or ‘eucatastrophe’, which is “the good catastrophe that achieves the ‘effect [of] joy or consolation’ ... the primary human desire for ‘wonder,’ a magical estrangement from the ordinary.” Similarly, Lewis (1966, in Pennington 2002:81) views these stories as “additions to life; they give, like certain rare dreams, sensations we never had before, and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experience”¹⁰⁰. It would be incorrect to attribute this mystery to mere escapism or idealism, for the infinite mystery of fairy tales acts as a performative magic, transforming natural and social orders, and providing a glimpse of strangely altered realities. Anthropologist Brody (2001:13), for example, notes how Inuit fairy tales continues to surprise and delight with each retelling, such that they can never become familiar or understandable:

These are stories that defy any complete understanding. To tell and to listen to them is to experience the delight and enigma of incomprehension. Mysteries are repeated, not explained. The ultimate wonder of the world remains.

Fairy tale is one of the few genres that explicitly claim *not* to represent or ‘know’; to the contrary, fairy tales evoke the opaque language of myth in order to make an aesthetic and an ethic out of the unknown and the unknowable¹⁰¹. Whilst scholars such as Bacchilega (1999) claim that fairy tale’s deliberate falsification (and consequential distancing and objectivity) is a non-innocent pretence at naivety, there is equally much enchantment in these tales with less devious meaning. The existence of animals who talk, for example, is hard to reduce to (fabled) allegory, or to a wish for a more ‘authentic dwelling’ with the natural world, or even to a cunning narrative/plot device. Similarly, the polyvocality of these stories makes a mockery of the reduction of fairy tales to singular pedagogical or ideological agendas (such as those common scholarly accusations of capitalist or patriarchal agendas). Even the ‘heroic’ protagonists of many tales showcase, on closer examination, many

⁹⁸ This is a controversial point. Whilst Hannon (1998) and Zipes (2006 esp. 29) would emphasize the subversive nature of the *contes de fées*, other feminist accounts highlight their ambivalence, and conclude that these tales are more nostalgic and conservative than transformative (e.g. Seifert 2004).

⁹⁹ Windling (2002), however, notes how the lives of some of these female and feminist Parisian writers were equally as fabulous as their tales.

¹⁰⁰ This discourse of estrangement, with its emphasis on the utopian as opposed to the alienating, must be understood in the context of both Tolkien’s and Lewis’ Christianity, whose worldview (speaking broadly) claims the unnaturalness of the present world, eventually to be transcended to a more heavenly state of being. To be estranged from the present reality of life, then, is a positive moral choice.

¹⁰¹ See Pennington (2002) on the opposition of mimesis and fantasy; also Tiffin (2009).

‘conventionally’ undesirable qualities: lying, cheating, laziness, cunning, foolishness, limited imagination, etc.; qualities which in some tales bring failure and punishment, but in others result in the winning of a bride, groom, kingdom, or other forms of security and freedom. It is impossible, knowing this, to speak of a clear-cut, universal morality in fairy tales. Again, crones, tricksters, and the little old men who vanish on passing, are no more demonic figures from a bygone, superstitious era (Warner 1995) than they are marvellous testaments to the universal limitations of knowledge and representation. As we saw above, fairy tales are opaque stories: they do not primarily stand for, or represent, anything; they are rather *resonant*, affective, and transformational (Tiffin 2009).

The enchantment of fairy tales can further be located in the ritualised repetitions of narrative structure and plot, especially in units of three¹⁰², which act as a sacred refrain or chant. The simplistic language of fairy tales, when caught up in repetitive phrases, produces at once a contrary somnolent and quickening effect: somnolent because it reassures us with its familiarity, and lulls us into a sense of security, like a nursery rhyme¹⁰³; quickening, because repetition turns the prosaic into the poetic, imbuing simple words with a wondrous opacity and delight. As such, fairy tale narratives both enthrall and enchant. It is useful, at this juncture, to turn to Bennett’s (2001) vitalist account of enchantment to better understand these fairy tale effects. For Bennett (*ibid* 1), enchantment is a peculiar state of being (or ‘becoming’), which precipitates an “affective attachment to [the] world.” Through enchantment we are forcefully affected, “struck and shaken” (*ibid* 4), and caught up in a paralysed state of “wonder,” where wonder involves a “temporary suspension of chronological time and bodily movement” (*ibid* 5). To be enchanted is thus “to participate in a momentarily immobilising encounter; it is to be transfixed, spellbound” (*ibid*). We can hear an echo of the Romantic state of awe in this notion of transfixion; however, Bennett (*ibid*) is keen to distance her theory of enchantment from Romantic aesthetics, emphasizing that enchantment calls for participation and attachment, which contrasts with the passive, distancing effect of the Romantic aesthetic (also Morton 2007). The immobility of wonder does not entail timelessness (as in the timelessness of a transcendental, god-like position, or conversely the loss of a temporal self entailed in the state of absolute fear); instead, we are “caught up and carried away” in a temporal moment of “pure presence” (Bennett 2001:5). Here, we find ourselves in sensory overload, as “the world comes alive as a collection of singularities,” and we are drawn into the uniqueness and particularities of things-as-they-are; that is as sensuous, opaque, and wondrous (*ibid*).

¹⁰² We might ask whether this repetition is related to the Holy Trinity of Christianity, or pagan lore (e.g. the female ‘holy trinity’ of maiden-mother-crone), or if it is merely a semiotic pleasure?

¹⁰³ This reassuring rhythmic quality also ties in to Tatar’s (1993) earlier observation of the role of fairy tales as work time stores, i.e. told to the rhythm of spinning or weaving hands, etc. (see 1.1.1).

Bennett (*ibid*) summarises the phenomenology of enchantment as “a shot in the arm, a fleeting return to childlike excitement about life”—apt descriptions, given the Indo-European etymology of ‘wonder,’ which derives from the word ‘smile.’ Fairy tales are indeed stories that “smile.” Even those that draw us into the depths of pain, such as the Grimms’ *Fitcher’s Bird*, still convey childlike wonder. They surprise us with unexpected conjunctions, coupling the supernatural with the homely, as in a persistent magical red stain on a humble egg. They revise our outlook through the very precision of the gruesome, which transforms murder into a collage of dismembered bodies. They reward our faith with the joy of the marvellous, as in the re-membering of unjustly dispatched women. Finally, they delight us with metamorphosis, as in the transmogrification of a girl, a barrel of honey, and a feather bed, into the extraordinary Fitcher’s bird:

When everything was ready she dipped herself into a barrel of honey, then cut open the bed and rolled around in it until she looked like a strange bird, and no one would have been able to recognise her. Then she walked out of the house (Grimms 1857, no.46).

Again, the pared down language of fairy tale, together with its repetitiousness, hints at the orality of the genre, and intensifies the extraordinary, as in the paragraphs that shortly follow the metamorphosis scene:

On the way some of the wedding guests met her, and they asked, "You, Fitcher's bird, where are you coming from?"
"I am coming from Fitcher's house."
"What is his young bride doing there?"
"She has swept the house from bottom to top, and now she is looking out of the attic window."
Finally her bridegroom met her. He was slowly walking back home, and, like the others, he asked, "You, Fitcher's bird, where are you coming from?"
"I am coming from Fitcher's house."
"What is my young bride doing there?"
"She has swept the house from bottom to top, and now she is looking out of the attic window" (*ibid*).

A later version of the tale not only repeats the dialogue between the Fitcher’s bird and her antagonists, but renders it in rhyme form:

“O, Fitcher’s bird, how com’st thou here?”
“I come from Fitcher’s house quite near.”
“And what may the young bride be doing?”
“From cellar to garret she’s swept all clean,
And now from the window she’s peeping, I ween” (Grimms 2002:187) [this rhyme is then repeated].

The cadence of the language reminds us of the etymological connection of the word ‘enchant’ to the late fourteenth century French *enchanter*: bewitch, charm, cast a spell (OED 2012). Just as the youngest daughter in her Fitcher’s Bird guise charms and bewitches the wedding guests to their death, the sonority of this phrasing enchants those of us who listen. Bennett (2001:6) reads the etymology of ‘enchantment’ a little differently, after Deleuze and Guattari, as “the French verb *to sing: chanter*.” Linking enchantment to their notion of the sonorous refrain lends a geography to enchantment: “to ‘en-chant’ [is]: to *surround* with song or incantation; hence, to cast a spell with sounds, to make fall under the sway of a magical refrain, to *carry away* on a sonorous stream” (Bennett 2001:6, emphasis added). Bennett (*ibid*) thus emphasizes the territorializing nature of the refrain, which, like the trilling of bird song, marks the possession of space (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:344). There is also a looser, de-territorializing geography here—a ‘sonorous stream,’ which carries us along lines of flight to a new “territorial assemblage” (*ibid*). Perhaps this is the very importance of fairy tales as enchanting stories: they unfold new geographical arrangements and possibilities, and ways of being:

The repetition of word sounds not only exaggerates the tempo of ordinary phrase and not only eventually renders a meaningful phrase nonsense - it can also provoke new ideas, perspectives, and identities. In an enchanting refrain, sense becomes nonsense and then a new sense of things (Bennett 2001:6).

Further, enchantment’s affective force shakes us out of taken-for-granted relationships with things into new appreciations for, and assemblages with, the minutiae of life. Enchantment is affirmative: a “saying ‘yes’ to the world” in its unique particularities (*ibid* 4), which “nurture[s] the spirit of generosity that must suffuse ethical codes if they are to be responsive to the surprises that regularly punctuate life” (*ibid* 1).

Bennett’s aesthetics of enchantment casts fairy tales in an ethical light; as enchanting stories, they provide an ‘ontowindow’ onto the ‘lively primorida’ which comprise life, and in the process they affect and transform us, by instigating greater attachment to the world, and offering us hope (*ibid*; also Anderson 2006; Thrift 2007). Yet it is important to sound a note of caution in this ‘hopeful’ portrayal of fairy stories, for the enchantment of storytelling is not merely a matter of appreciation, delight, and attachment: we cannot discount the immense suffering often implicit in the serendipitous flow of affect (Dale 2002). As Carter (2006) demonstrates, the disruption of linear space-time, ghostliness of certain

fairy tale landscapes, and sadomasochistic cruelty of this genre also enthralls, especially in the multi-sensory media of film and hypertext¹⁰⁴. There is no way to ensure a spirit of generosity will arise from these crueller, or diminishing, affective relationships. Likewise, we must wary of the potential engineering of affect in fairy tales (Thrift 2007), and further note that affect is itself historical, for: “the capacity to connect, affect, and relate ... is shaped by an already structured political and ethical field that is not as malleable and open to possibility as we might hope” (Cameron 2012:11). Even as we celebrate the wonder of the tales, we must be careful to situate these stories in specific socio-historic contexts, and understand the varying ways in which they work; for better, but also for worse.

2.3.4 Anti-tales

The less enchanting affective relationships constituted by fairy tales have been most commonly theorized through Jolles (1929) neologism, ‘*antimärchen*.’ For Jolles (1929, in McAra and Calvin 2011:4), the *antimärchen* exists alongside the fairy tale as an excessive subtext, which parasitically overturns the conventions of the genre:

Rarely an outward opposition to the traditional form itself, the anti-tale [*antimärchen*]¹⁰⁵ takes aspects of the fairy tale genre, and its equivalent genres, and re-imagines, subverts, inverts, deconstructs or satirizes elements of them to present an alternative narrative interpretation, outcome or morality.

Whilst the fairy tale is portrayed as a potent genre of hope in enchantment theorizing (providing a “future-oriented departure toward utopia,” or “an escape valve from an unhappy and ugly reality”), the anti-fairy tale is presented as counteracting this naive optimism (Mieder 1987:91). Thus, for Mieder (*ibid*), the *antimärchen* is ‘realistic’—a truthful representation of the disenchanting, disillusioned state of humankind today: “it is the anti-fairy tale that appears to give a clearer symbolic view of what the human condition is really like.” Whilst the “questioning” movement (*ibid* 92) of anti-fairy tale may be part of the overall structure of the fairy tale itself, subverting the tale from within (“the fairy tale contains its antipode in its very essence”), Mieder argues it has become more important in “modern” society, which is fundamentally pessimistic (*ibid* 91). As such, “it

¹⁰⁴ I am thinking here particularly of Del Toro’s (2006) *Pan’s Labyrinth*. Although the classic definition speaks specifically of literary tales, their wonder is sustained (and maybe heightened) across all media forms, and extends beyond a western preoccupation with ‘text’ to a more ‘visceral possession’ (see Davies 1991). Fairy Tales address the listeners at a pre-cognitive and even visceral level, drawing on ritualistic patterns in the fairy tale texts, which emerge as recognizable vocal/linguistic refrains.

¹⁰⁵ As McAra and Calvin note (2011:4), “the terms ‘anti-tale’ and ‘anti-fairy tale’ (or *Antimärchen*) are used interchangeably” in much fairy tale scholarship, although they may have more specific meanings in particular contexts. Here, I distinguish between them only in historical terms: Jolles’ coined the phrase *antimärchen*, Mieder prefers ‘anti-fairy tale,’ and more recent fairy tale scholarship, after Calvin (2011), has preferred the more streamlined term ‘anti-tale.’

is only natural that such negative reinterpretations have become popular,” and that the anti-tale has consumed the fairy tale in many retellings (*ibid* 99). Despite this, he (*ibid* 100) perversely finds hope in the “shock therapy” of the anti-tale:

By effectively alienating the adults from their fairy-tale dreams through perverted fairy-tale motifs in literary texts or cartoons, the hope is always expressed that this shock therapy might recall the emancipatory goals of fairy tales. The tale of *Hansel and Gretel* and its many reinterpretations certainly are ample proof that such disenchanting reactions are at least small moralistic attempts to bring about such a change.

Reinforcing his viewpoint, more recent anti-tale research has noted the increasing prevalence of the subversive ‘subtext’ of the anti-fairy tale, such that anti-tale theorizing has become an important focus of contemporary fairy tale scholarship. Unlike Mieder, however, anti-tale scholarship refuses to delineate a regressive account of history, wherein the enchantments of (‘authentic’) oral folk telling have given way to the disenchantments of cynical contemporary life¹⁰⁶. Likewise, the *antimärchen* is not regarded as existing *apart* from the fairy tale, or as a sub-genre; rather, Bacchilega (1999:148) regards the fairy tale as *necessarily* structured for dissent:

The articulation or conflict of different ideologies within individual tales is inevitable and ... thus, the anti-tale is implicit in the well-made tale itself.

Anti-tales, then, are ‘anti-mythic’ properties of fairy tales themselves, a vital contributing factor to the plurivocality of the genre.

Such anti-tales are not restricted to self-conscious postmodern re-workings of older narratives such as, most famously, Carter’s retellings. Rather, they are as likely to erupt ‘affectively’ from within ‘traditional’ fairy tales, problematizing the assumed moral closure of these stories. Perrault’s *Red Riding Hood* of 1697, for example, places the wolf in an ambiguous position by refusing to accord him a definite history, geography, nature, and morality. The Grimms’ *Frau Trude* and *Fitcher’s Bird* are likewise inconclusive, and lack the expected fairy tale happy ending. Even the more puritanical Grimms tales, such as *Snow White*, is tainted by the inclusion of the bizarre and inexplicable¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁶ See Bennett (2001) on the problems of the modernist disenchantment story.

¹⁰⁷ The dwarfs in *Snow White* occupy a tantalizingly vague position; for example see Girardot (1977) for a psycho-sexual folkloristic interpretation, or Solis (2007) for a queer understanding of these troublesome beings.

Whilst Bacchilega's (1999) account of the anti-fairy tale could potentially render this concept a formulaic narrative device, McAra and Calvin (2011) emphasize the myriad ways in which anti-tales manifest, attributing the subversive power of the anti-tale to its *protean* nature: its slippery, ungraspable 'magic.' They argue that the prefix 'anti-' "should not necessarily equate with being *against* something," nor should it be understood in simplistic oppositional terms at all: "the anti-tale is not *opposed* to narrative, in a purely abstract and formalist way, but is 'anti' in terms of an amoral or cruel depiction and/or subversive re-assembly" (*ibid* 5). Instead, they propose that we look to Hopkins (2010) notion of "a 'dark poetics' ... a tale with malevolent undercurrents which lurk just beneath the surface" for definitional inspiration (McAra and Calvin 2011:5). As such, they bring the concept in closer line both with gothic and fantastic genres, which "transport [t] ... reader[s] to an extraordinary domain or 'alternative' reality" (*ibid*). From a methodological angle, they further posit the anti-tale as a useful deconstructive tool in the analysis of fairy tales (also Knight 2011). Finally, they highlight the representational authenticity and "coping mechanisms" of the anti-tale, in much the same way as Mieder above. However, there are clear difficulties in defining the sub-genre, or subtext, of anti-tale, beyond its fuzzy overlap with fairy tale itself. Indeed, Martin (2011:21), in her careful genealogical work on the origins of the "model *Märchen*," suggests that an anti-tale definition can only make sense in the historical context of the Grimms authenticating processes, which derived a 'pure' or 'authentic' form of fairy tale from the multitude of tales available to them, and on which scholars have subsequently based their theorizing:

The Grimms created a genre, other collectors and writers followed, and thus we have the definition of a 'natural' genre, against which we oppose the aesthetic, artificial, inauthentic, and anti-genres."

By this account, the notion of a distinctive 'anti-tale' is a fallacy; an accidental by-product of the Grimms collection and editing processes, such that any story that does not fit their model (including the fantastical French precursors to German fairy tales) comprises the undifferentiated mass we now denote 'anti-tale':

A Grimmian [*sic*] watershed, an enormous variety of deviations from what the Grimms proposed as a norm, from parody to tragedy, from spooky exaggerations to 'sentimental' romanticising, and from esoteric mysteries to popular page-turners" (*ibid* 19).

For Martin, then, there is no such thing as ‘the fairy tale’ (at least not prior to Grimms); and consequently there can be no sensible definition of ‘anti-tale’¹⁰⁸.

Whilst Martin offers an important critique, necessitating further historical excavations of the broader fairy tale tradition, it is worth remembering that genre by *definition* is exclusionary (see the Derridian critique of genre in 1.3.1), and that it is imperative to consider what an anti-tale approach can *afford*. From a geographical perspective, anti-tale theorizing lends insight into the recursive spatialities of subversive forms within fairy tales, which I have theorized in this thesis as ‘refrains.’ Trickster figures, in particular, which subvert myth, narrative, community, and even geography, lend themselves to anti-tale theorizing, which concerns itself most of all with the dissolution of logocentrism, “the logic of order and convergence” that characterizes all narrative, including that of the utopian fairy tale (Hynes 1993:216). Thus I posit a definition of anti-tales here as, primarily, spatial patterns with affective power, which force us out of our seemingly ordered realities into insecure and profane in-between places, where what it means to be human, and to be in community, can no longer be taken for granted.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter I have grappled with the main ambition of the thesis: to theorize fairy tales as geographic stories. I began this task by contextualising my own geographical project within the multidiscipline of fairy tale studies. From here, I laid the groundwork for a ‘geography of fairy tales,’ through explorations into fairy tale scholarship that posits these stories as mythologizing, metafictional, archetypal, resonating, and self-repeating. Focusing more closely on Tiffin’s notion of the resonant properties and mythic language of fairy tale motifs, I drew this together with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the refrain, to theorize fairy tales folk figures as territorializing and deterritorializing spatiotemporal rhythms, or refrains, which organise space (or enact a spacing). I turned next to theorizing these fairy tale refrains as *stories*. Thus, I compiled an account of fairy tale storytelling as the cohering of mythic community through Benjamin’s notion of the ‘authenticity’ of fairy tales, Arendt’s concept of the storying of the *polis*, and Nancy’s insight into the meta-myth of the ‘storytelling circle.’ I next troubled the ‘closure’ of Nancy’s ‘mythic community’ through, first, the notion of storytelling as a *witnessing* gesture, drawing on Harrison’s appropriations of Derrida’s hauntology and Levinasian testimony. Second, I returned to Nancy, and his account of the necessary interruption of myth, and thus of

¹⁰⁸ This discussion taps into wider concerns about genre authenticity. See Benson (2000:118) for a fuller discussion of the authenticating “demythifications” of fairy tale scholarship.

community. I concluded the chapter by bringing my geographical understanding into conversation with some key contemporary definitions of fairy tales in fairy tale scholarship, which approach fairy tales as: iterative texts, classical literary tales, enchanting and ‘marvellous’ stories, and ‘anti-tales.’ In engaging these definitions, and drawing out some spatial implications, I have been able to enrich my own geographical ‘story’ of fairy tales as material-discursive spatial refrains with affective force.

The following chapter addresses these theoretical considerations more pragmatically, by developing a methodology suited to engaging these complex, enchanting, and ultimately mysterious fairy tale refrains.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological concerns

3.2 Research approaches: the diffraction apparatus

3.2.1 Philosophical hermeneutics: textual analysis

3.2.2 'Looking with' experimental collage

3.3.3 Material-discursive genealogies

3.3 Summary

3.1 Methodological concerns

Trickster and crone refrains do not lend themselves to easy understandings. The crone is a blind spot in fairy tale scholarship. Where attempts have been made to render this fundamentally non-relational figure amenable to research and understanding, we see a disappointing tendency to rehabilitate her within human society. This denies her ultimate Otherness, and aligns her along a simplistic moral axis of evil (e.g. unnatural witch) or good (e.g. female deity) (see 6.7). Through such means, the crone has been brought to serve as a figurehead for various pagan, feminist, and ecofeminist utopias, despite the folk wisdom that posits the essential impenetrability of this mysterious old woman refrain. Tricksters present an even greater methodological challenge, with the majority of trickster scholars conceding that this figure cannot be either faithfully or conclusively analysed (e.g. Hynes and Doty 1993; Landy 1998; Pelton 1980). Tricksters elude our grasp, and defy any one singular framework or system of knowing¹⁰⁹. If we could speak at all of a ‘nature’ of the Trickster (as if we could discipline such an amoral creature) it would be as one who inhabits the realms of the in-between: the boundaries of the village clearing, the crossroads, or merely the to-and-fro movements that traverse and space the earth. Trickster forms are equally transgressive: a crossroads between man and beast, man and woman, etc. Finally, tricksters are playful semioticians, transgressing language and meaning making, and specifically *stories* (e.g. Hermes, Coyote, Eshu-Elegbara, Legba, Anansi, etc.)¹¹⁰. They inhibit the very possibility of rational meaning and representation, and prevent any straightforward reading of the fairy tale; and any metaphysics that attempts to systematically order the world according to preconceived frameworks of knowing is ill-suited to appreciating such an unlikely, chaotic being (Hynes and Doty 1993).

Grappling with the enigmatic trickster and crone refrains requires a mixture of experimental methodologies that can counter the inherent perspectivism of any one approach, and proceed in contradictory and speculative steps: methodology as a sensual, embodied, affective and lively ‘mess’ (Law 2004). Two key methodological aims have guided this thesis. First, is the need to access the symbolic and affective power of these enchanting refrains without ‘deadening’ their liveliness and magic by fixing them in one or another representational framework, and reducing them to an exemplar of wider idealistic discourses (see 1.3). As such, I take Lather’s provocative, anti-foundational proposition as the leitmotif of this thesis: to “employ a strategy of excess and categorical scandal in the hope of both imploding ideas of policing social science and *working*

¹⁰⁹ Note the most famous Eshu story concerns his two-sided hat with which he plays with perspective and confuses the protagonists, and truth, of the tale.

¹¹⁰ It is perhaps inevitable that the gods gave such ‘logocentric’ power to the one figure that would respect it least. Thus Marshall (2008:1) remarks of the West African trickster god Anansi: “Anansi is a master sophist and misleads and deceives using the tools which bring him into being: language and storytelling.”

against the inscription of another 'regime of truth'" (1993:677, emphasis added). Lather (*ibid* 675) grapples with the question of validity in research in the context of the crises of representation and authority,¹¹¹ arguing the epistemological focus of social science research needs to shift from representational accuracy ("looking harder or more closely") to attending to the politics of the construction of knowledge, or "seeing what frames our seeing." In this "post-epistemic" world, validity is reframed as:

Multiple, partial, endlessly deferred ... a *validity of transgression* that runs counter to the standard *validity of correspondence*: a nonreferential [*sic*] validity interested in how the discourse does its work, where transgression is defined as 'the game of limits ... at the border of disciplines, and across the line of taboo' (*ibid*).

Lather (*ibid* 685-6) conceptualises methodological validity through a new series of "frames" in this post-epistemic state, including: "ironic," "paralogical," "rhizomatic," and "voluptuous" (excessive)¹¹². Drawing these frames together, she proposes a self-reflexive "double analysis," which "[displaces] fixed critical spaces" to "move toward an 'iterative productivity' ... that is open to permanent dynamism" (2008:55). Iterative productivity results from theorizing through these intentionally self-conscious framings (ironic, paralogical, etc.), to avoid fixing our critical knowledges of the world. This methodology sits well with the theorizing of dynamic and enchanting fairy tales, as it allows us to unfold a sequence of contradictory critical spaces in which we can draw ephemeral conclusions about the transformative refrains of trickster, and crone.

However, Lather's self-reflexive 'double analysis,' with its iterative production of knowledge, still hosts a residual representationalism. Any epistemology that proffers self-reflexivity as a way of 'knowing' fails to get to grips with the fundamental issue of *ontological indeterminacy*, which underpins the *epistemological uncertainty* raised by the crises of representation (Barad 2007:97-131). Indeed, reflexivity is part of the same problematic metaphysics of representationalism, with its ontological splitting of knower (and knowledge) from known (see 1.5). In reflexivity we introduce an extra step of analysis (the self-conscious 'double') in recognition of our own participation in the knowledges produced. However, as with any representation, we are still *reflecting* a preexisting world, even as we acknowledge that we are part of this

¹¹¹ Lather (1993:675) notes of this crises: "in poststructuralist terms, the 'crises of representation' is not the end of representation, but the end of pure presence. Derrida's point regarding 'the inescapability of representation' ... shifts responsibility from representing things in themselves to representing the web of 'structure, sign and play' of social relations."

¹¹² There is not space, here, to delve into Lather's excitingly provocative epistemological framework; suffice to say that she seeks to unsettle knowledges by rejecting "'a novelty of the same' which invents the 'possible from the possible,' in favour of a transgressive 'architecture of the impossible, the altogether-other of our invention, the surprise of what is not yet possible in the histories of the spaces in which we find ourselves'" (Rajchamn 1990 in Lather 1993:687).

reflection. Our participation in knowledge-making affects our discursive knowledges (distorting our ability to reflect accurately); but our knowledges, and knowledge-making itself, are still deemed independent of the material world under scrutiny: they lack material(izing) substance. Self-reflexivity merely adds “mirror upon mirrors,” such that we are caught up in a tautological circuit, which fails to “disrupt the geometry that holds object and subject at a distance as the very condition for knowledge’s possibility ... [and] entails the same old geometrical optics of reflection” (*ibid* 88). Escaping the mirrored hall of representationalism requires us to embrace an alternative epistemological “optical metaphor” (Haraway 1992:16) of *diffraction*¹¹³, which can “record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference,” and offer “another kind of critical consciousness” (*ibid* 273): a *worldly* consciousness.

Diffraction methodologies do not predetermine object and subject, and are therefore capable of “reading insights through [and not against] one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter” (Barad 2007:30). The last point, of *how* exclusions matter, points to the inseparability of ethics from ontology and epistemology. As Barad recognises (*ibid* 58, emphasis added) “*entangled practices are productive*, and who and what are excluded through these entangled practices matter; different intra-actions¹¹⁴ produce different phenomena.” The ‘phenomena’ Barad refers to here are the basic ontological units of her performative metaphysics of ‘agential realism.’ She adopts the term from quantum physicist Bohr’s notion of the radical “wholeness” of the research apparatus and the object of research (*ibid* 118-9). To briefly explain: in a scientific experiment such as the ‘two-slit diffraction’ experiment used to determine the physical property of light (i.e. whether particle or wave), the apparatus of measurement is *productive* of the physical result of the experiment. That is, “the nature of the observed phenomenon [wave or particle] changes with corresponding changes in the apparatus” (*ibid* 106). An experimental apparatus that is constructed to demonstrate light as a wave will prove just that; and a corresponding experiment to determine its particulate properties will likewise successfully demonstrate light to be a particle. This differing result is not a question of epistemological uncertainty, where the experimental apparatus disturbs the light photon, and so affects our ability to measure (*ibid* 116). Rather, the material-discursive arrangement of the apparatus of measurement demonstrates the mutual exclusivity of

¹¹³ Schneider (2005:19) describes the scientific phenomena of diffraction as follows: “diffraction is an optical metaphor ... involving the recording of difference patterns that result as light is passed through a prism or a screen with planes that make the rays change direction, move elsewhere; they are, in short, diffracted.”

¹¹⁴ ‘Intra-action’ is a neologism coined by Barad (2007:33) to overturn “the traditional notion of causality,” and challenge the idea of relationality based on interaction in other performative accounts (e.g. Actor Network Theory). Barad (*ibid*) notes: “the neologism ‘intra-action’ *signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies*. That is, in contrast to the usual ‘interaction,’ which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. ... ‘Distinct’ agencies are only distinct in a relational, not absolute, sense.”

ontological properties. The Newtonian law of identity (A is A and not B) is breached, and we see that light is both particle and wave (A is A and B) under different experimental conditions. An “indeterminacy principle” is at play, for light lacks “an independent physical reality” outside of the phenomenon *in question* (Barad 2007:117)¹¹⁵. I have emphasized ‘in question’ to signify its import: that Bohr’s (1927) quantum experiments led to his recognition of the *materiality of concepts*, including theoretical hypotheses:

Theoretical concepts (e.g. ‘position’ and ‘momentum’) are not ideational in character but rather *are specific physical arrangements*. For example, the notion of ‘position’ cannot be presumed to be an inherent attribute of independently existing objects. Rather, ‘position’ only has meaning when a rigid apparatus with fixed parts is used (e.g. a ruler is nailed to a fixed table in the laboratory, thereby establishing a fixed frame of reference for specifying ‘position’). And furthermore, any measurement of ‘position’ using this apparatus cannot be attributed to some abstract independently existing ‘object’ but rather is a property of the *phenomenon* - the inseparability of ‘observed object’ and ‘agencies of observation’ (Barad 2003:814).

The same is true of the concept ‘momentum,’ which requires an apparatus with moving parts to be meaningful (*ibid*). The conclusion Barad (2003:815) draws from this is: “the primary epistemological unit is not independent objects [things] with inherent boundaries and properties but rather *phenomena*.” Phenomena indicate a fundamentally entangled world:

Phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting ‘components.’ That is, phenomena are ontologically primitive relations - relations without preexisting relata ... relata only exist *within* phenomena as a result of specific intra-actions (*ibid*).

A detailed explanation of agential realist metaphysics is beyond the purview of this thesis¹¹⁶. What is important here is Barad’s (2007:73) recognition of the essentially entangled nature of matter (i.e. existence-as-phenomena), and her methodological innovation of a “diffraction apparatus” to trace this entanglement in our knowledge-making practices. Barad (*ibid* 92-3) defines her diffraction apparatus as “a transdisciplinary approach,” which “[places] the understandings that are generated from different (inter)disciplinary practices in conversation

¹¹⁵ See Schrader (2010) for a sustained example of this differential mattering in the case of the (unsuccessful) successive scientific and ecological experiments to determine (fix) the toxicity of *Pfiesteria piscicida* (the fish killer). Schrader argues, after Barad, that it would be more productive—and correct—to accept the ontological indeterminacy of the *Pfiesteria piscicida*, and turn our attentions to how they materialize as either toxic or not; i.e. toxicity haunts the non-toxic fish (and vice versa), and different material-discursive arrangements or entanglements will bring out one ontological property over the other.

¹¹⁶ Barad’s metaphysics is fascinating and productive material for any social science study. Consider, for example, the implications of her statement: “phenomena are not located in space and time; rather, phenomena are material entanglements enfolded and threaded through the spacetime mattering [*sic*] of the universe” (2010:240); or her redefinition of objectivity: “objective means reproducible and unambiguously communicable - in the sense that ‘permanent marks ... [are] left on bodies which define the experimental conditions’” (2007:119); or her conceptualization of a hauntological ethics (2010). My thesis, nonetheless, is concerned primarily with fairy tales—for their own sake, and not for what they can tell us about any preconceived system of knowing (however exciting or dynamic).

with one another.” Further, it is constructed with full recognition of the dynamism of the relationality between disciplines, and with particular attention paid to:

The iterative production of boundaries, the material-discursive nature of boundary-drawing practices, the constitutive exclusions that are enacted, and questions of accountability and responsibility for the reconfigurings [*sic*] of which we are a part (*ibid* 92).

With the notion of ‘iterative production’ we are returned to Lather’s (2007) performative epistemology. However, Barad (2007) radicalises Lather’s account by refusing to accept the division of subject and object from the outset; further, she questions how this, and other boundaries, are formed. Her agential realist philosophy takes us beyond representationalist thinking, enfolding the ontological, epistemological and the ethical by considering not just the mattering of discourse but, further, the “mattering of mattering,” and the “constitutive exclusions that are made during material-discursive mattering (re)enactments” (*ibid*). Barad’s (*ibid* 88) onto-ethico-epistemological metaphysics inspires the second methodological aim of the thesis: to “[move] away from the familiar habits and seductions of representationalism (reflecting on the world from outside) to a way of understanding the world from within and as part of it.” I implicitly draw on Barad’s worldly metaphysics throughout the thesis, to consider the ways in which academic (and public) retellings of fairy tales and storytelling, including my own, “[make] specific worldly configurations,” (*ibid* 91); and how this differential production matters geographically¹¹⁷.

Drawing these two methodological ambitions together (for a ‘lively’ and ‘worldly’ methodology) requires a research framework capable of engaging the stories on a number of different levels. I choose to read three philosophical ‘insights’ through each other¹¹⁸, to engage fairy tales as: rich, traditional stories that direct our attention in particular ways; affective media that enchant us; and tales that matter differently, according to the ways in which we become entangled with them. First, I approach the fairy tale refrains through Gadamer’s (1975) philosophical hermeneutics. I carry out an interpretive textual analysis of *The Dark Knight*, and *Moss Witch* (my chosen ‘fairy tales’), with a specific focus on the refrains of the trickster (the Joker) and the crone (the Moss Witch). I hope to demonstrate these refrains as inheritors of a social, political, and moral traditions, and gain a practical insight into the geographical limitations, and possibilities, of these traditions. Second, I balance the

¹¹⁷ Differential because of the constitutive exclusions (i.e. wave *or* particle; position *or* momentum, etc.) inherent in the phenomenon, which *ontologically* obscure other possible worldly configurations).

¹¹⁸ That is, as opposed to against each other, where we “[position] one in a static geometrical relation to the other, or setting one up as the other’s unmovable and unyielding foil” (Barad 2007:92).

linguistic bias of hermeneutics by retelling fairy tales as affective media that move us, and which can be engineered for political purposes. This nonrepresentational stance is a way of ‘looking-with’ the refrains, allowing them to affect us in turn (Wylie 2005). Third, a genealogical analysis traces academic theorizing along divergent paths, and attends to the various ways in which fairy tales come to matter geographically; further, it gives insight into the notable absence of a *geographical accounting* in trickster and crone theorizing. In the remainder of this chapter I detail each of these ‘insights’ in turn, and relate them to the broader thesis concerns.

3.2 Research approaches: the diffraction apparatus

3.2.1 Philosophical hermeneutics: interpretive textual analysis

Fairy tales are historical stories, embedded within a social, political and moral tradition, and instantly recognisable within this tradition. Upon hearing the words ‘once upon a time’:

We immediately and naturally think that we are about to hear a fairy tale. *We are disposed to listening and reading in a particular way* and register metaphors in our brain so that they make sense and so we can replicate them in our own way and in our own time (Zipes 2006:xi, emphasis added).

As Zipes (2006) observes, fairy tales involve us in particular ways of understanding; we ‘hear with’ the stories, and bring them to bear on our own situations, in our own historical context. The fairy tale genre “becomes a kind of self-perpetuating institute involved in the socialisation and acculturation of readers” (Zipes 2007:23); and the same could be said of the trickster and crone geographical fairy tale refrains. Grasping this process of acculturation, and the ways in which we are ‘disposed’ by fairy tales, requires an interpretive method¹¹⁹ alive to the interplay of past and present in the process of understanding (Linge 1976). Gadamer’s (1975) philosophical hermeneutics focuses specifically on this question of understanding, offering us insight into the traditions of fairy tales, and a way of making sense out of the often mysterious symbolism of the stories—without closing out further possible meanings. Beyond this, it draws attention to our own prejudices; for, as we are “confronted by the differentness of others ... our own taken-for-granted sense of the world becomes visible to us for the first time” (Phillips 2005:91). Finally, it

¹¹⁹ I use this word in the Gadamerian context, to specifically refer to his notion of making *practical* meaning, as opposed to reproducing truths in the text (a representationalist notion).

invites us to partake of the challenge of differentness within the analytical process, as we “deliberately let into our ontology an awareness of something unexpected, alien, unfamiliar, new or different and ... [are] consciously aware of that difference” (*ibid*). In reaching out to the Other we are transformed. This is a reciprocal transformation, “for both participants change through the process” of understanding (*ibid*).

Hermeneutics has a long and varied history¹²⁰, and it is specifically Gadamerian hermeneutics to which I refer. Rather than a methodology *per se*¹²¹, Gadamerian hermeneutics offers a phenomenological-existentialist ‘attitude’ or ‘approach’ (Holtorf 2000) to (textual) analysis, which addresses the conditions of understanding, and attempts to work practically within these (Gadamer 1989). To begin: it is useful to briefly situate Gadamerian hermeneutics within the wider crises of representation following Heidegger’s ‘post-metaphysical’ reading of Nietzsche, and to contrast his dialogical approach with deconstructionist ‘understanding’ (Madison 2001). Deconstruction asserts the impossibility of understanding, whereby the very concepts of understanding and, consequently, “decidable meaning,” are a remnant of the western metaphysics of presence (*ibid* 20). In deconstruction, “there’s no escaping the play of language” to a transcendental Truth beyond (*ibid*). Objectivity is a mere fallacy of logocentricism (Derrida 1974), and philosophy becomes another form of literature, or fiction (Madison 2001:22). Whilst deconstruction successfully attacks the twin logocentric concepts of totality and essence, it fails to provide a “new coherent ... view of meaning or of the way language functions” (*ibid*). We enter an “apocalyptic paradigm ... where there are no *essential* contents of understanding to be shared” (Eisenstein 1989:270). In contrast to this ‘apocalyptic paradigm,’ philosophical hermeneutics posits the universality of ‘*understanding*’ as it strives for “conversation that builds up a common language” (Gadamer 1980:106). Whilst Derrida (1974) reduces language to a play of *signs* within endless texts, Gadamer (1980) holds a broader view, which includes *conversation*: “language is living language - the medium of dialogue” (Michelfelder and Palmer 1989:18). Gadamer’s “dialogical paradigm” (Eisenstein 1989:270) extends Heidegger’s ontological account of understanding as “the original form of the realisation of *Dasein*” (Gadamer 1989, cited in Schmidt 1995:4) by proposing that the ontological structure of understanding

¹²⁰ I.e. from Plato’s (360-340 BC) critique of *hermeneutic*, which he applies to religious forms of understanding, in contrast to the truth of *Sophia*, to post-Gadamerian uses. One key thread of hermeneutics has been the exegesis of obscure and mythological, especially religious, texts—making this approach especially relevant to a study of mythological refrains and fairy tales. See Palmer (1969) for an excellent summary of the history of hermeneutics. (Interestingly, Palmer also mentions the folk etymology of hermeneutics, and its relation to the trickster god Hermes; again making this an apt choice for theorizing the trickster refrain.)

¹²¹ Method is an inappropriate term to describe the hermeneutical process after Gadamer. Vandermause (2008:71) suggests, instead, that we adopt the phrase “*research comportment*,” although perhaps even this rephrasing fails to recognize the ontological significance of philosophical hermeneutics. Meanwhile, Palmer (1999) remarks: “while I did not find in Gadamer’s hermeneutics a method of textual analysis, it did unfold the ontological being-for-me of the text.” He notes that researchers have applied Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics as a form of interpretation which “expects knowledge to emerge from dialogue and in the form of a ‘an unpredictable discovery rather than a controlled outcome,’” in a manner which is somewhat similar to a Derridian “hermeneutics of suspicion that reads between the lines for where the action going on contradicts the words” (*ibid*).

is “invariably ‘hermeneutical’” (Lawn 2006:2). That is, humans exist *in* understanding, which takes the form of a hermeneutic interpretive event of anticipation followed by modification, in a continually circling motion:

Every interpretation draws on an anticipation of understanding ... [and] understanding is an act of projecting ahead to an anticipated whole, whereby all the parts makes sense within the whole. Both the understandings of the parts and the whole are adjusted in a to-ing and fro-ing against each other until there is harmony between the parts and the whole (Phillips 2007:90).

The hermeneutical circle cannot be overcome, as “there is no possible cognition free from the conditioning influences of these fore-structures” of anticipatory knowing (Schmidt 1995:4). Indeed, “we are *thrown* into a history, language and culture that already exists ... we are always already within a hermeneutic circle of understanding” (Phillips 2007:90). Embedded in history, language and culture, understanding in the analytical event “proceeds from what is historically pregiven” (*ibid*). *Dasein* is always thrown into the world, practically involved, active, and socialised (Lawn 2006:55)¹²². History is thus vital to the process of understanding. Gadamer (1975) clarifies these historical “fore-structures of understanding” (Schmidt 1995:4) as “prejudices”; where “a prejudice is a partial expression in language of the subject matter ... [and] one’s set of inherited prejudices form one’s world *horizon*” (*ibid* 5, emphasis added). Prejudices are “pre-reflective involvements with the world that ... condition ... our reflective and evaluative judgments about the world” (Lawn 2006:38). Indeed, judgment is impossible without these pre-judgments, which we “inherit ... through acculturation in primarily a passive manner,” and which embed us within a tradition (Schmidt 1995:5).

Whilst the notion of prejudice carries negative undertones, as something which obscures us from seeing truthfully, Gadamer (1975) reestablishes prejudice in a more positive light as “pre-judice or *pre-judgment* ... that which makes *any* kind of discrimination possible” (Lawn 2006:1). Prejudice speaks of our (ontological) finitude, the limits of our knowing, and our inability to escape our personal horizon, or tradition more generally, to address the Other. This is not cause for pessimism, however, for the same prejudice which prevents a transcendental understanding of the infinite world, and identification (or empathy) with the Other, is a precondition for our practical existence. We live pragmatically by drawing on the tradition in which we are embedded, and bringing it to bear on our own situations¹²³; and it is through this prejudiced interaction

¹²² The hermeneutic condition highlights our inseparability from the world: “that we are always part of what we seek to understand” (Lawn 2006:38).

¹²³ Gadamer opposes the Enlightenment disparaging of tradition, to assert the essential role of tradition in any understanding (Benson 2005). As Lawn (2006:35) explains: “reason, far from being what stands outside tradition as an impartial test, is what is itself handed down in the tradition”; thus “to dismiss tradition as the opponent of reason is to miss the point that reason might itself be a feature of tradition.” Gadamer (1989:36) elevates tradition even further, by equating it with language itself: “tradition is not simply a

with the past that we are able to open up a space of encounter with the Other (Palmer 1999). This encounter is structured within language, for understanding (interpretation) is a matter of “our possession by language” (Linge 1976:xxix)¹²⁴. Indeed, “the central thesis of philosophical hermeneutics is: ‘Being, which can be understood, is language’” (Gadamer 2004:468). Language is an opening out to the Other, given it is “always a matter of saying something *to* someone, addressing or being addressed by the other, hearing and responding to the other’s word” (Caputo 2002:513). As a process of ‘addressing’ from (and to) the Other, hermeneutical understanding is necessarily dialogical; and truth and meaning, in consequence, become a matter of a creative, *shared*, production. Thus hermeneutic ‘truth’ is an inseparable part of the dialogical process of human understanding, whilst meaning is “nothing other than what results from such a process, namely, the existential-practical transformation that occurs in the interpreting subject (in his or her world orientation) as a result of his or her active encounter with texts, other people, or ‘the world’” (Madison 2001:26). Truths are not foundational or transcendental, to be ‘discovered’ or ‘uncovered’ in the reading of a text, for “there is no truth in itself” (Schmidt 1995:3). Rather, they are constituted in “the ‘event’ of understanding,” as part of “the ‘play’ of understanding” (*ibid*).

To recap: in the intersubjective event of understanding, truth is always a matter of participation in a “question-answer dialogue,” where “questions bring the object or issue into a state of indeterminacy,” drawing us further into the conversation (Phillips 2007:91)¹²⁵. Vitality, the dialogical encounter requires an attitude of openness or “good will” (Gadamer 1989:33); and the success of dialogue hinges on “‘give[ing] in’ to language, to be carried along by the conversation for the purpose of letting meaning emerge in an ‘event’ of mutual understanding” (Michelfelder and Palmer 1989:1). Language is no longer at our disposal (*ibid* 2), but rather exists as an infinite, excessive and ludic force, which has transformational (or therapeutic) possibility (Palmer 2001). Indeed, the hermeneutical dialogue fosters an ethical potential for learning and transforming *together* in “an existential encounter involving mutual testing and risk-taking” (Dallmayr 1989:84). The encounter expands our horizon “through the conscious assimilation of the horizon of the other” (Phillips 2007:91) in a process that Gadamer (2004:537) refers to as the

process that experience teaches us to know and govern; it is *language*.” As with language, there is no escape from tradition: we are firmly embedded within tradition, and it is a precondition of any understanding (Lawn 2006).

¹²⁴ Linge (1976:xxviii-xxix) observes: “since our horizons are given to us prereflectively in our language, we always possess our world linguistically. Word and subject matter, language and reality, are inseparable, and the limits of our understanding coincide with the limits of our common language. In this sense, there is no ‘world in itself’ beyond its presence as the subject matter of a particular language community.”

¹²⁵ Interestingly, it “the experience of the unexpected” (*ibid*), that initiates the conversation, and not our self-interested agency. That is, “the other ... demands to be recognised, listened to and agreed with” (*ibid*)—a notion which challenges representationalist (including reflexive) subject-object binaries, with their privileging of the subject position.

“fusion of horizons.” During this fusion we do not transcend our own horizon, or enter into another’s horizon (both are impossible); rather, “we deliberately allow ourselves to be challenged by differentness” (Phillips 2007:91)¹²⁶.

The ‘risk’ of the understanding event resonates with the Derridian concept of the “coming or ‘in-coming’ (*l’invention*) of the other,” as it is only in the opening (making vulnerable) of the self that the Other can approach (Caputo 2002:513). The fusion of horizons is not a ‘takeover,’ where we ‘claim’ (and tame) the Other in order to understand, but rather the possibility of a “structural friendship ... an implicit vocative or invocation, which takes the form of an apostrophe that says ‘O my friends’” (*ibid*). Philosophical hermeneutics thus opens out an “ethics of hearing,” or an “ethics of friendship,” which is furthermore a “*politics* of friendship, for every polity depends for its very life upon a civility” (*ibid*, emphasis added). This ethico-politics takes shapes as a form of ‘play,’ and this is especially apparent in the encounter with art (including fairy tales), where to understand we must “[allow] oneself to be lifted into its play” (Grondin 2001:44). As we enter into this play we ‘resonate’ with the artwork, and become enchanted¹²⁷. We are “struck” by the art work, and:

At the moment of our being ‘struck,’ the text [or artwork] is now no longer a ‘thing’... that dumbly submits to a ‘contemplative’ examination as trace and artefact. Through this sudden fusion of horizons, this text [or artwork] opens out into a ‘personal’ dimension that allows it to speak to us within the realm of a mystery encompassing both the reader and the text. This mystery is that of our own mortality (Paslick 1994:xii).

As the artwork comes ‘alive,’ we risk ourselves in the dialogical game, for “we are not so much the ones playing as the ones played, perhaps even out-played” (Grondin 2001:44). For Grondin (*ibid*), ‘play’ is a loaded term, which does not indicate entertainment or diversion, but rather a “sacred seriousness,” in which we give over our sovereignty to the game: we “[fall] into a play that overcomes us, and pulls us into it, where our whole being is at stake”¹²⁸. The play of art or music, for example, “concerns us; it speaks to us ... it is ‘art’ only if there is this addressing” (*ibid* 45). Again, we are reminded of Derrida’s and Levinas’ notion of the address of the Other. However, contrasting with their radically asymmetrical

¹²⁶ Beyond the immediate understanding event, this has repercussions for the wider historical condition, whereby tradition is opened to an infinite outside which it does not, and never can, own. Further, tradition, like language, is a construct that is kept alive through dialogue with the past: “tradition does not exist of its own accord, but ‘needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated’” (Gadamer 1989, in Phillips 2007:91).

¹²⁷ Grondin (2001:45) draws a further comparison with the state of enchantment when he remarks “the play of art will never be conceptually grasped; we may only participate in it to the extent that we allow ourselves to be moved by its magic.”

¹²⁸ See also 4.1.6 on Geertz’s (1972) anthropological notion of ‘deep play,’ which offers a similar account of the sacred state of absorption, loss of sovereignty, and, finally, transformation, in play.

accounts (Caputo 2002), the temporality of “taking part for a time” in the hermeneutical address enables a reciprocal “completing together ... [a] going along with” (Grondin 2001:45). This going-along, or togetherness, has the enticing temporality of ‘festival,’ which “has its being in its accomplishment and the community, in which it is celebrated” (*ibid*). Festivals are “fulfilled,” or ‘become,’ by being celebrated; and this entails “a potential commonality. One cannot celebrate alone” (*ibid*). There is a ritualistic sense to the ‘festival,’ with its ‘coming together,’ reverential resonance, and temporal interplay of past and present (“perishable” and “enduring”) (*ibid* 47)¹²⁹. Further, in this commonality our mortality comes to the fore, and we become aware of the temporality of our “acting, thinking, and speaking,” which belongs not to us, but to the temporality of *tradition*: of “mutual agreements, morals, and customs ... [which] are not just roles that we play, but ... also forms of life that constitute our being beyond our willing and thinking” (*ibid* 48). Thus ritual is an essential element not just of festival, or the play of art, but of “every accomplished understanding” in dialogue (*ibid* 49).

Caputo (2002:517), however, cautions us against taking on too readily this Gadamerian festival “logic ... of ‘agreement,’ of *entente* and *entendre* that is absolutely insulated from misunderstanding.” For Caputo (*ibid*), the logic of festival entails a problematic homogeneity—notwithstanding the contingent, and strictly temporal, nature of this coming-together. Indeed, when we turn to dialogue at a smaller scale (an individual interacting with a fairy tale refrain, for example) we must be wary of the self-identicalness that haunts the encounter (*ibid*). For, even as someone wishes to engage, to be understood, to risk the self, “some force in him or her is also striving *not* to be understood, approved, accepted in consensus” (Derrida 1997, in Caputo 2002:517). The “hermeneutics of friendship” must “not exclude the possibility of miscommunication, the *structural* possibility of misunderstanding,” which may itself be productive (Caputo 2002:517; also Derrida 1989). Further, ‘good will’ itself may not be ‘good’; it may “will otherwise ... like the force of the unconscious, or the play of traces” (Caputo 2002:518). Given this, we may easily fail to establish the common ground of conversation (Simon 1989), and might better conceptualise the play of understanding in reverse: “not so much a good will willing to be understood as a being willed by the Good to respond to the approach of the Other” (Caputo 2002:521).

It is arguable that the criticisms raised above, which imply a residual metaphysics of presence in philosophical hermeneutics, arise out of a radical difference in perspective and objective. There is a fundamental rift between Derrida’s deconstruction and Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics in that they are orientated toward different ends: “the latter seeks to break up the fixed, determinable meaning of metaphysical concepts by

¹²⁹ As Grondin (2001) notes, in festival we need to mark or “retain the moment, which we also know does not allow itself to be held.”

returning these concepts to speech. The former would aim at a more thoroughgoing dissemination, at disrupting the determinateness of meaning as part of the project of uncovering what is entirely other than meaning and truth” (Michelfelder and Palmer 1989:9). Whilst noting the deconstructive critique, I employ an interpretive (hermeneutical) approach to textual analysis, which aims not so much to disrupt meanings in the hopes of uncovering what is Other (*ibid*), than to engage in a ‘playful’ conversation with the fairy tale tradition, to compile a story of tricksters and crones within the contemporary context. Embracing the enchantment of fairy tales as an event of ‘greeting,’ ‘play,’ ‘festival,’ and ‘ritual,’ I strive to be ‘caught up’ in, and overcome by, their excessive language, such that my horizons ‘fuse’ with that of the stories, and their mystery takes on meaning and relevance to my own contextualised situation¹³⁰. Broad trickster and crone themes derived from the fairy tale texts (e.g. wandering, liminality, ageing, and entanglements with nature) became the starting points of the hermeneutic circle, from which a to-and-fro movement of interpretation leads to a narrowing, and consequently greater ‘grasp,’ of pertinent geographical issues and concerns (e.g. defacement, ageing as loss, and the queering of home).

3.2.2 ‘Looking with’ experimental collage

Philosophical hermeneutics offers productive purchase for an interpretive understanding (explanation) of fairy tales and the processes of storytelling. However, as I noted above, there are occasions when the hermeneutical dialogue fails, or is intentionally misleading (as in trickster tales), and when a ‘common ground,’ drawn from a ‘common language,’ cannot be established (as in crone stories). Further, it is difficult in the hermeneutic moment of interpretation to be fully cognisant of the multitude of voices which reach out to us from the tales, and which may fracture, or otherwise interrupt, the dialogical process of understanding (see 1.3.4 on anti-tales). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we must be wary of the linguistic bias of Gadamer’s account¹³¹. Philosophical hermeneutics insists “Being, which can be understood, is language” (Gadamer 2004:468), and casts *Dasein* as an ontological hermeneut. The encounter with the Other is structured in conversation; a conversation that is conditioned by linguistically embedded, historical prejudices. Again, our understanding is posited as an essentially linguistic matter, which rests on our (us and the Other) “speaking only a single language” (Michelfelder and Palmer 1989:10)—a notion that is immediately problematic

¹³⁰ See Palmer (1999) for more on the meaning of relevance in philosophical hermeneutics. Palmer (*ibid*) understands relevance in Gadamerian hermeneutics as a practical matter: “the relevance of a tool that is suitable for a given task.” Beyond this, he identifies three further meanings of relevance as “current meaningfulness (the temporal relevance of the contemporary); critique (which calls “one’s worldview into question”); and transformation (where “a thing or a text we encounter ... redefines what we are doing, such that we understand it and ourselves in a new light, a new way”) (*ibid*).

¹³¹ A charge that can also be leveled at deconstruction, and at all post-structural approaches.

in the context of polyvocal, affective fairy tales. Philosophical hermeneutics is fundamentally blind, then, to the linguistic trickery and excesses of these stories, perhaps because it continues to privilege discourse over materiality (see 3.1), failing to recognise the materiality of the dialogic interpretative event. To reiterate the vital insight of agential realism above: “theoretical concepts ... are not ideational in character but rather are specific physical arrangements” (Barad 2003:814). We cannot deny the materiality of concept formation, language, and understanding; or even the materiality (and materializing) of matter *beyond* language (*ibid*). If we do so, we risk slipping back into a representationalist state of outsidership, discursively reflecting *on* a dialogic situation; and may ultimately fail to be affected by the enchanting tales.

Drawing on NRT as the second ‘insight’ in my diffractive grating, I engage fairy tales not only within dialogue, but also as materially and visually expressive media. The second research approach I offer is therefore performative and affective: a *retelling* of the fairy tale refrains, which explores the geographical enchantments of these stories through the medium of collage. I hope by doing so to engage “the becoming made possible by stories, their capacity to cultivate perceptions and inclinations that are not provoked through didactic or expository prose” (Cameron 2012:14). I self-consciously align my approach with nonrepresentational, post-discursive ‘narratives’¹³², which strive to foreground the liveliness of the research matter at hand: in my case, the lively fairy tale refrains (see 1.3, 1.5). NRT approaches engage affective narratives at the performative level, as “a means of interpreting and disseminating knowledges,” rather than at the interpretive level, as the “object of study” (Rose 2003:212)¹³³.

My collage is necessarily experimental, as there is a paucity of affective or experiential performative research in human geography to date, although this is changing with the ongoing challenge of NRT to cultural theory (Latham and Conradson 2003). Indeed, within the “turn towards the cultural in human geography” there has been “a strange gap between theory and empirical practice” (Latham 2003:1993). One might even note a touch of hypocrisy in the “valorisation of qualitative methodologies,” and latterly the valorisation of the ‘performative’ and the ‘affective,’ given cultural geography has been characterized above all by “methodological timidity” (*ibid*). Even those geographers theorizing the ‘affective’ or ‘nonrepresentational’ often continue the dubious practice of “bringing back the ‘data,’ and then re-presenting it (nicely packaged up as a few

¹³² I use the word ‘narrative’ in the loosest sense, as storytelling may take a fundamentally destructive, *anarrative* form, as I suggest later with reference to trickster stories and the destruction of meaning. There is also a question of the relationship between collage and (linear) narrative. Can collage, with its queer disruptions, slippery evasions of “temporal and geographical determinacy,” and close relation to ‘found imagery’ (Marwood 2009), be meaningfully described as narrative?

¹³³ Rose (2003) is referring specifically to the visual here, and not to the affective more widely; however, her phrasing remains pertinent to the matter of hand.

supposedly illustrative quotations)” (Thrift 2000:3). There are a few important exceptions to this trend, which provide inspiration for my own retelling practice. Pratt (2000:639), for example, experiments with ways of writing ethnography differently, “beyond the documentary and the confessional,” to better “provoke productive tensions within the audience/reader, between identification and dis-identification.” Pratt’s writing performances echo the evocative writing practices of anthropology, where writing-as-research has had greater purchase, from Geertz’s (1972) ‘thick descriptions,’ to Richardson’s (2000) ‘writing-stories,’ and the ethnodrama, ethnopoetry, etc., of Ellis and Bochner (1996). The New Journalist legacy of fictocriticism has similarly inspired the anthropology of Muecke (2002) and Taussig (2006:vii), with the latter employing “defective storytelling as a form of analysis.” More pertinently to this thesis, the fairy tale inter-discipline has closely engaged a number of postmodern ‘retellings’ (e.g. Atwood 1993; Byatt 1998; Carter 1996; Coover 1969, 2004; Donoghue 1999) that have proved especially fruitful for exposing the underlying assumptions and narrative strategies of fairy tales, whilst still retaining the flavour and ‘magic’ of the stories. However, the crossover between fictional and academic ‘performances’ remains sparse, and tends more to re-present the ‘affective data,’ than rigorously attempt affective research practices.

Returning to the sub-discipline of cultural geography, there have been interesting forays more recently into visual research performances, and I situate my own collage practices within these wider debates on visual methodologies after the ‘cultural turn’ (Rose and Tolia-Kelly 2012). As Rose (2003:212) notes, “Geography is unique in the social sciences in the way it has relied and continues to rely on certain kinds of visualities and visual images to construct its knowledges.” Despite this, the visual remains under-theorized in the discipline (*ibid*)¹³⁴. Specifically, we have failed to grasp *how* geography “is a form of visual knowledge” (*ibid*), and how “particular kinds of visualities structure certain kinds of geographical knowledges, knowledges - and thus visualities - that are always saturated with power relations” (*ibid* 213). Rose is referring here to the politics of visibility¹³⁵; the ways in which images, and visibility work in exclusionary ways to enact social difference. In particular, she problematizes our “disciplinary visualities” (*ibid* 214); that is, the uses to which geographers put images, such as slides, in academic conferences, and the politics of this use. More recently, the visual and the material have been brought together in studies that recognise that “the politics of *doing* the visual are as material as matter is visual and that both are engaged beyond the ocular” (Rose and Tolia-Kelly 2012:3). Particularly

¹³⁴ Geography’s engagement with the visual is comparatively meagre compared to the wealth of ‘visual culture’ research in anthropology and material cultures (e.g. Dikovitskaya 2005; Mirzoeff 1999; Pink 2006). Even the impressive inter-disciplinary collaborations have rarely featured geographic research—Heywood et al (2012) handbook is a rare exception to this.

¹³⁵ ‘Visibility’ is a term employed by Hal Foster (1988, in Rose 2003:213) to describe “how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein.”

interesting are those accounts that “explore practices of looking at and with material objects, and ... the consequent seeing, envisioning and registering” (*ibid*; also Bragg 2011; Yglesias 2012). Such research attends to “ecologies of the visual” (*ibid* 4), including the consequences of visual practices “for those people caught up in those practices, as researchers and as those researched” (*ibid* 9). However, even as these accounts decry the marginality of “*visual* processes of becomings, enchantments and vibrancy” in social science (*ibid* 2), they are less adventurous in restructuring their own research practices.

NRT, in comparison, has argued more persistently for experimentalism in geographic research (including the presentation of research), with a few key theorists searching for “styles” capable of grappling with “established methodologies and ways of writing human geography that *transcend the anxious culture of critique* which has marked so much of the turn to the cultural” (Latham 2003:2012, emphasis added). Thus Latham (2003) explores written and photographic fieldwork diaries and time-space graphs in the hopes of “opening [the] methodological horizons within human geography.” McCormack (2005:121), meanwhile, experiments with “a *diagrammatic* style of thinking,” positing this as the most appropriate way to “[give] conceptual consistency” to “the affective power of practice and performance.” In his encounter with eurhythmics, for example, the “concept of the diagram is put to work ... in a way that is *generative of a space of enactment that admits and is animated by the affective, excessive power of the nonrepresentational*” (*ibid* 121-2, emphasis added). Importantly, McCormack (2012) has developed this diagramming technique with full awareness of the politics of abstraction. He challenges the prevailing geographical scepticism towards research abstractions, such as diagrams, and even the ‘line,’ arguing the underlying assumption “that there is a necessary opposition between the lived and the abstract ... fails to grasp the messy complexity of the space of the lived”; and particularly the lived, differential, corporeal *body* (*ibid* 2). Whilst I use diagrams at times in my research, the medium I employ in my retellings is collage.

Collage as a geographical research method (and object of geographical critique), has received little attention within cultural geography¹³⁶, even within geographies that theorize other marginalised visual practices, such as the montage narratives of comic book visualities (e.g. Dittmer 2010, 2011), and montage practices in urban geography research (e.g. Allen and Pryke 1994; Clarke and Doel 2007; Doel and Clarke 2007)¹³⁷. Powell’s

¹³⁶ Exceptions to this include occasional references to the collage practices of psycho-geographers (Wollen 1999), and brief engagements with collage through mapping (Powell 2010; Rose *et al.* 2009), and as part of wider engagements with place (Biggs *et al.* 2011).

¹³⁷ Discriminating between montage and collage is highly contentious, especially given that both mixed-media practices adopt many of the same techniques. Montage involves a singular composition of juxtaposed images (whether photographic, paper based, or other media) on one single image plane, as in a graphic novel. Collage is made by laying up

(2010) account of the use of collage maps in an urban fieldwork project in the El Chorrillo district of Panama City, Panama, is an important exception. Powell's (2010:539) interest lies with "visual research and its effectiveness in rendering vivid critical social issues," and more specifically with the use of contemporary mapping practices as a site-based qualitative research method for urban planning and community development. Eschewing aesthetic conventions of geophysical mapping¹³⁸, Powell (*ibid*) engages more "contemporary aesthetics of mapping"¹³⁹, that depict "polyphonic voices, experiences, and stories embedded in places" (*ibid*). These maps engage "diverse narratives and experiences" to highlight the environmental and social issues of this impoverished district and current uses of public space, and to effect political change (*ibid*). Such mapping practices chime with the utopian political storytelling of geographers Gibson-Graham (2006) and Maynard-Ford (2011) (see 1.2), but in an evocative "multisensory, and thus ... embodied" visual medium (Powell 2010:539). Interestingly for my purposes, new developments in mapping, such as the mapping used in the urban development project here, use artistic media, including collage, to draw out:

Abstract or metaphoric representations of place and space; reconfigurations of place to address nonlinear perceptions of place and space; the play of scale, borders, and symbols; and the cartography of concepts (e.g. identity) rather than physical places (*ibid* 40).

Collage proved particularly useful in a study of the varied textures of Panama City—a city which is "ensconced and revealed in multiple layers" (*ibid* 550; see figure 2). Here, collages served both as lively orientating devices in the final research output (guiding the reader through the research booklet), and to give "a physical ... as well as a subjective, lived space sense of place" to the mapping practices of research (*ibid*). It proved a particularly appropriate medium for evoking the confusion of the researcher as "an outsider observing the community" (*ibid*), and the confusion of the city spaces. Finally, collage was able to compel a different, more attentive way of looking, that switches between the general (the collage as a flattened 'image') and the particular (details of texture, flashes of the underlying map, and photographic details of the city) (*ibid*).

images or other media over a surface, to give increased density and texture. Both collage and montage are 'disruptive' media, however whilst in montage "reality seems to stutter" (Doel and Clarke 2007:899), allowing us to insert critique in the 'gaps' (e.g. Dittmer 2010), collage "emphasizes the diversity and fragmentation of [experience]" (Rose *et al.* 2009:2103).

¹³⁸ Powell (2010:539-40) comments on these conventions: "typically maps are thought of, and used, as a directional tool, a graphic means of representing places that are held to particular conventions of scale, scope, symbol, and legend"—in short they act as a geophysical, utilitarian "orientation device."

¹³⁹ This includes social mapping (e.g. Cairns *et al.* 1995; Serriere 2010), concept mapping (e.g. Novack and Gowan 1996; Prosser 2008), and cognitive mapping (Lynch 1960; Seyer-Ochi 2006). See Powell (2010:540) for more detail on each of these forms of mapping, and on the cross-disciplinary and academic-public collaborations of this new "visual genre" of mapping.



Figure 3. Collage map depicting structural elements of El Chorrillo's lived environment (Powell 2010:551).

The fundamental advantage of this collage is that it undermines the homogenous discourses of urban planning and development, academia, and visuality more generally, to strongly evoke the fractured and multi-sensual nature of vision, space, and this particular city place; and the cacophony of narratives and experiences of city residents. Collage thus “makes uncertainty a method of creation” (Kuspit 1983, cited in Powell 2010:543).

This ‘uncertainty’ and heterogeneity made collage a particularly favoured medium for early twentieth century modernist, and especially cubist and surrealist artists “experimenting with ways to ... break down the notion of an autonomous work of art, which existed for its own sake, without any social or critical function” (Marwood 2011)¹⁴⁰. It is celebrated as “one of the most important techniques of the twentieth century” (Banash 2004) for its narrative *difference*:

Its particular power, [is] its severing of narrative and syntactic relationships. Unlike traditional modes of narrative and visual art, collage technique is based on radical parataxis¹⁴¹.

There is a danger, however, that in using collages within a literary-based theoretical body of work this radical visual method is reduced to mere “illustrations that are then explained through text” (Powell 2010:540). Indeed, “visual methods and data manifest as the written word in academia ... rather than as stand-alone images” (*ibid*). The affective power of “playful and engaging” images (Latham 2003:2009) is undermined as the collages that were intended as lively geographical expressions are recuperated within ‘deadening’ theoretical discourses. Furthermore, the textured, heterogenous surface, and ironic and playful allusions, may be lost as collages are ‘flattened’ to fit into authoritative theses or conference PowerPoint form—in effect stripping collages of their emancipatory ‘bite.’ We are returned to the hierarchical space of image presentation in academia¹⁴²; and, further, to the critiques of solipsism and irrelevance in NRT storytelling-as-research practices (Cameron 2012; Daniels and Lorimer 2012; Latham 2003; see 1.3 and 1.5).

¹⁴⁰ Braque and Picasso are the artists credited with coining the term ‘collage,’ and popularizing it as a modern art form; although techniques of collage have been employed since the invention of paper in 200 BC China.

¹⁴¹ Regretfully, there is no space here to consider the history of collage as a visual method, or its significance to geographical ways of thinking. This will have to be the subject of another thesis.

¹⁴² For example, consider Rose’s (2003:216) fierce critique of the hierarchical power relations that structure the use of slides in conferences (where the evocative visuality of slide content is dulled in the asymmetric political relationships of the slide show).

Despite these criticisms of visual research methods, and especially visual presentation, I am eager to pursue experimental collage within this thesis. Collage has been an important medium in fairy tale history (e.g. Hans Christian Andersen's collages ~1874; Maher 1990; Rego's earlier pieces; Konoike 2001-2002; Zurn 2009), and has occasionally featured in academic fairy tale research, as in the collage and sequential illustrations of Zaiden (2010)¹⁴³. Beyond collage, Zipes (2010) stresses the wider importance of visual media forms to fairy tales (e.g. puppet shows, costumery, animation, live-action, puppetry, woodcuts, montage, cartoons, digital imagery, etc.), and the reciprocal importance of the fairy tale genre to the development of certain visual media, for example early cinema. My collage retelling therefore draws not only on the evocative potential of the medium, but also on the visually-rich enchantment of the fairy tale genre. Within the context of cultural geography, and especially NRT, I am keen to draw on fairy tales' engagement with images to push methodological boundaries and further the "creative dialogues between already-established forms of human geographic writing [and visioning] and ... novel approaches to doing human geography" (Latham 2003:2012). I concur with Latham's (*ibid*) call for "a broadminded openness to methodological experimentation and pluralism within human geography," and accept that this may open me up to the charge of "methodological naïveté." I firmly believe that it is only by taking risks that we can explore such enchanting material as fairy tales and storytelling with greater sensitivity, respect, and integrity. Furthermore, in response to the sceptics (above), I would argue that collages can be 'evaluated' according to their rigour, their innovativeness, their ability to 'evoke' geographies, and affect us, etc.¹⁴⁴. Vaughan (2005:12-14), for example, suggests "eight prerequisite qualities" for evaluating a collage methodology, which includes: creative practice; juxtaposition; interdisciplinarity; link to daily life; situated artists/researcher; cultural critique and transformation; open-endedness; multiple, provisional and independent products; products that reflect, reveal, and document the process"¹⁴⁵.

My collages have been constructed using a mixture of paper and digital media, with most collages originating in the former medium, then later scanned into the free software GNU image manipulation programme, GIMP, where they have been worked further, using a number of digital tools to add atmospheric depth to the paper collages (e.g. renderings, lasso, contrast, transform tools, saturation, lens flare, etc.). On occasion, I have collaged straight into GIMP itself, for a less textured, dreamlike or 'pictorial' effect. The collages are based loosely around the themes that I

¹⁴³ I am referring here to Zaidan's practice based thesis *The Adventures of MetaMan: The Superhero as a Metaphor for Modern Western Masculinity (1940-2010)*.

¹⁴⁴ Indeed, such skepticism says more about our assumption of the "irreconcilability between artistic practice and scholarly research" (Vaughan 2005:2), and our general unfamiliarity in the geography discipline with visual techniques, visual literacy, and collage. What is needed is not a damning of such methods for their unintelligibility (see 1.3; also Blacksell 2005; Braun 2008), but a willingness to *learn* new methods of research (including techniques, vocabularies and ways of evaluating), and experiment with ways of doing geography in a more lively and 'worldly' manner.

¹⁴⁵ Although Vaughan (2005:12) notes the danger of drawing any classification too tightly, given that collage "is a praxis and cannot be subsumed under a fully elaborated theoretical system."

have drawn out through prior hermeneutical and genealogical analyses (around which I have structured the subsections of my trickster and crone chapters).

Through collage, I hope to evoke the geographical enchantments, and explore the spatio-temporal arrangements, of the trickster and crone refrains, which are all too often downplayed in academic ‘storying.’ This research method offsets the linguistic bias of the hermeneutic interpretative approach, and draws attention to the materiality of language, by incorporating words, and word fragments, as well as iconoclastic images of writing, within the collages (e.g. figure 8). I attempt to counter those pessimistic accounts of the inevitable recuperation of the visual into the “logocratic academy” (Taylor 1994:xii), by demonstrating collage’s validity as a way of knowing that can undermine the logocentric force of representational language in turn (Eisner 1997, 2002; Vaughan 2005). As we dwell on collages, we become increasingly aware of the heterogeneity, contradictoriness, and playfulness of this multimedia, multi-surfaced imagery (Powell 2010:551). Collage may tell myriad, even contradictory, stories, as it “accommodates multiple texts and visuals in a single work” (Vaughan 2005:1). As such, it offers us a “model for a ‘borderlands epistemology’: one that values multiple distinct understandings and that deliberately incorporates nondominant modes of knowing” (Harding 1996 in Vaughan 2005:2). I engage visual retelling together with more traditional forms of interpretive and genealogical analysis in the hopes that, in the interplay of these various approaches we can tease out tentative, inconclusive, or ambivalent geographies whilst bringing the mystery and wonder of the stories alive, in a fresh, more geographically aware, manner.

3.2.3 Material-discursive genealogies

“Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men” (Foucault 1980:153).

Genealogy, developed by Foucault (1975) into a fully-fledged archaeology of discursive knowledge, and taken up by Deleuze (1983) in his notion of ‘difference,’ is the inspiration for my third research approach. Genealogical analysis, after Nietzsche (1887)¹⁴⁶, is an engagement with values and power: an ethical stance upon ‘epistemology’ that exposes its totalising and aggressive tendencies. Initially it is best explained by what

¹⁴⁶ It is worth noting that Nietzsche never employed this term himself to describe his historical philosophy, despite later genealogists citing his writings, and especially his “oppositional tactics,” as their chief inspiration (Ransome 1997:7).

it contests: the dialectical method of western metaphysics¹⁴⁷. The dialectical interpretive effort to reach a state of resolution and ultimate truth can, for Nietzsche, only ever achieve a point of stagnation where “reason tries in vain to overcome its oppositional nature” (Pecora 1986:38). Nietzschean genealogy counters this reactionary and negative search for truth and strives for a:

Joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation. *This affirmation then determines the noncentre otherwise than a loss of centre.* And it plays without security (Derrida 1978, in Pecora 1986:38).

Derrida’s reference here to a ‘playing without security’ refers to the negation of certainty that is central to Nietzsche’s philosophy. Indeed, Nietzschean genealogy does not attempt the search for a foundation upon which to ground truths, but instead it toys with the notion of origin, turning it back on itself:

Genealogy means both the value of origin and the origin of values. Genealogy is as opposed to absolute values as it is to relative or utilitarian ones. Genealogy signifies the differential element of values from which their value itself derives. Genealogy thus means origin or birth, but also difference or distance in the origin (Deleuze 2006:2).

Given “the search for descent is not the erecting of foundations” (Foucault 1980:153), genealogy can be distinguished from a legitimising and valorising tracing of *pedigree*, where the value of a pedigree lies in the moment of origin, and “each of the steps in the succession must be value-preserving” (Geuss 2008:275)¹⁴⁸. In comparison, a genealogical ‘history’ avoids “generally ... unbroken lines of value-preserving succession, but will rather be characterized by an overwhelming contingency, and dominated by violent forms of human action based on pervasive delusions” (*ibid* 277). Genealogy reframes these legitimising pedigrees as a product of a ‘will to power.’ Nietzschean ‘wills to power’ do not necessarily equate to a singular human being but can just as well refer to a larger organisational body, such as the Christian church (Nietzsche 1887), or, at a broader scale, the institutionalisation of the subject in eighteenth and nineteenth century western societies (Foucault 1976-1984). Such legitimising ‘wills’ clash over the interpretation of ‘meaning,’ and eventually the strongest will ‘overcomes,’ determining the direction in which a ‘truth’ develops. Interpretation, then, is not a rational, disinterested task, but “is the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction” (Foucault 1980:154). The wills that are overcome are never fully erased,

¹⁴⁷ Nietzsche saw his own critique of dialectics as a *positive affirmation* of the will to power as opposed to a reactive, countering, and thus negative dialectical movement.

¹⁴⁸ There is an element of this pedigree in the founding of community, e.g. see Nancy’s (1986) critique of community in 2.2.1 - 2.2.3.

however, but remain as traces within the new ‘complex’ of meaning, which forms as a synthetic crystallisation of dominant and suppressed wills—an amalgamation that proves “‘difficult to dissolve, difficult to analyse, and ... utterly undefinable’” (Nietzsche 1980, cited in Geuss 2008:282). In Foucault’s (1976-1984) reworking of genealogy, this amalgamation takes the specific form of a series of competing discourses, inscribed upon physical bodies.

Genealogy, then, is a *political* practice of countering these regimes of truth through, first, “descent,” which “[exposes] a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body”; and, second, “emergence,” which generates “a place of confrontation ... a ‘non-place’” from which to critically deconstruct values (Foucault 1980:153). Through this twofold tactic genealogy “[historicises] ... supposedly universal categories” and exposes “how power actually operates in our society” (Rabinow 1986:4, 6). A genealogical analysis reverses traditional linear (‘monumental’) temporalities to expose the key historical moments of the naturalisation of ‘truth,’ as we see with Nietzsche’s famous genealogy of Christianity:

[Nietzsche’s] genealogy works backward in time, recounting the episodes of struggle between different wills, each trying to impose its interpretation or meaning on the Christianity that existed at its time, and thereby disentangling the separate strands of meaning that have come together in a (contingent) unity in the present (Geuss 2008:282).

The ‘re-historing’ of the genealogical movement does not attempt to superimpose a ‘truer’ account of events or a ‘better’ system of values; rather, it works parasitically within other regimes (or myths), attacking their established claims to ‘truth’ by exposing the hypocrisies and contradictions within their internal discursive logics.

Interestingly, these genealogies share common ground with the materialist, performative approach of agential realism (see 3.1), which effects a similar untangling of scientific and social practices of truth and meaning making (e.g. Barad 2007, especially chapters 5 and 6; Barad 2010; Schrader 2010). Here, attention is directed not just to the discursive, but also to *material* constraints and exclusions in the manifestations of meaning (Barad 2007:34). The genealogical line becomes further entangled: instead of working backwards to expose the histories of universal or natural ‘truths’ (albeit with pauses and diversions, to disrupt the formation of a new ‘pedigree’), agential realism offers us a more complex ‘broken’ (or quantum) genealogy of space-time-matterings. For example, Barad (2007:34) traces the mattering of the ‘foetus’ as distinct (or not)

from the ‘mother’ through ongoing material-discursive arrangements (such as “the development of new reproductive technologies, including new visualising technologies”), and across a range of different spaces and times. Her research (*ibid*) acknowledges nonhuman entanglements in the mattering of the foetal body, breaking with the narrow genealogical focusing on “human bodies and social factors” in order to “[take] account of the productive nature of the natural as well as cultural forces in the differential materialisation of nonhuman as well as human bodies.” In her paper on quantum entanglements, Barad (2010:240) goes further, to consider the ways in which *time and space* come to ‘matter’ within electron entanglements, drawing our attention through her performative, disruptive writing practice, to the falsity of “rhetorical forms that presume actors move along trajectories across a stage of spacetime (often called history).” The diffractive methodology of agential realism is thus a radicalised, post-historical (non-linear) genealogy, where spacetime is understood to be contingent, and entangled within material-discursive regimes of truth.

In this thesis, I draw both on post-Nietzschean and more materially aware ‘genealogical’ analyses, to perform a ‘critical historicism’ (Rabinow 1989:27) of the values and ‘logics’ behind academic material-discursive accounts of the trickster and crone refrains. I hope to expose the fundamental instability of theoretical ‘grounding,’ including my own ‘regimes of truth.’ This practice is thus a performative pseudo-history: a history without origins or ends that mocks the teleological ‘will to power’ of the “logocratic academy” (Taylor 1994:xii). Ultimately a genealogical analysis is an ethical practice: of holding theory, including my own theorizing, accountable for the geographical matterings of fairy tales. The ‘undoing’ of such logocentric linearity is especially pertinent to fairy tale research, given these mythic stories are all too often romanticised as original, or primordial, tales of communal being. Even those historical accounts which deliberately seek to undermine this primordial pretence, and break the magic of these enchanting stories (e.g. Bacchilega 1999; Zipes 2002), fall repeatedly into their own spell: enclosing fairy tales within a magic mirror of one or another chosen (and often very relevant) ‘meaning,’ such as the patriarchal or capitalist repression of women. Genealogy undermines such critical attempts to locate meaning ‘underneath’ the magic of the tales, and reveals the ‘empty’ heart of fairy tales, where nothing—no meaning, no truth, and no fault—pre-exists (grounds) our interpretive endeavour (Foucault 1980). The trickster and crone geographical refrains have no essential or ‘natural’ meaning. This is not to say that these refrains do not matter, or that we cannot speak *with* meaning (or even objectively, see 3.1). Rather, drawing on agential realism’s radical genealogical movement I hope, in carrying out a genealogical analysis, to draw attention to the “reproducible and unambiguously communicable ... permanent marks ... left on bodies” by these fairy tale refrains, as they are differentially theorized (Barad 2007:119).

3.3 Summary

This chapter has grappled with a key research ambition: to investigate which method, or methods, is best suited to communicating the symbolic import *and* enchantment of the tales, and evoking the geographies of fairy tales and storytelling. I begun by confronting the problem of how to theorize the lively and subversive refrains of the trickster and crone, noting that any singular account would ‘fix’ these fairy tales, and strip them of their geographical enchantment. I detailed my two main methodological concerns in light of this difficulty: to pursue a lively and ‘worldly’ methodology that looks beyond representationalism, to consider how material-discursive theorizing (including my own theorizing) enacts different matterings of the fairy tale refrains in question. Drawing on Lather’s discursive performative, and Barad’s material-discursive performative, epistemologies¹⁴⁹ for inspiration, I constructed a research ‘apparatus’ comprised of three key ‘insights.’ First, I engaged Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics for its productive interpretative potential, including its openness to the enchantment of the material at hand. Subsequently, I drew on nonrepresentational storytelling in cultural geography, and proposed a visual ‘retelling’ method of paper and digital collage, which is capable of addressing the fairy tales as lively and affective media, and which offsets the linguistic bias of the previous research approach. Finally, I engaged genealogy, after Nietzsche, and the more radical ‘genealogy’ of agential realism, to trace the material-discursive matterings of these geographical refrains within academic ‘storytelling,’ and destabilize the ‘meanings’ made of fairy tales (including my own).

In sum, I combine these three individually powerful research approaches with full awareness of their areas of commonality and conflict, to provide a unique and multifaceted study of fairy tales, which pays close attention to the politics and ethics of the geographical mattering of these stories. In doing so, I hope to respond to Lather’s (1993:677) epistemological and ethical provocation, to embrace “excess and categorical scandal” to avoid the policing and cementing of fairy tale scholarship into a new “regime of truth.” In keeping with this ambition, my methodological approach is as much disposed to celebrate and speculate on individual fairy tales, as it is an attempt to shape an enchanting geographical landscape of fairy tales and storytelling through the geographical refrains of trickster and crone.

¹⁴⁹ Or in the case of Barad, ‘onto-ethico-epistemology’ (see 3.1).

Trickster

“More has probably been written about ‘tricksters’ than about any other single category or character that appears in the myths and folktales of the world” (Carroll 1984:105).

Chapter 4. Genealogy of trickster scholarship

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Trickster studies and fairy tales

4.3 Research considerations

4.4 Interdisciplinary genealogy of trickster studies

4.4.1 Psycho-social theories

4.4.2 Structural theories

4.4.3 Cultural-hermeneutical theories

4.4.4 Trickster humour

4.5 Tricksters as geographical refrains

4.6 Summary

4.1 Introduction

Tricksters, as the name suggests, are the most devious characters of fairy tales, and “the distinctive feature of trickster tales (like Trickster himself) may well be their ability to confound classification, including their *and* our traditional narrative categories” (Babcock-Abrahams 1975:165). Trickster figures raise the challenge of “expressing that which cannot be thought of” (*ibid* 186) in two senses: they give birth to the previously unthought (beyond consciousness), and force us to consider the unthinkable (beyond taboo). As such, they effect a deeply unsettling space-time experience, which has transformational potential. As social rebels and taboo-breakers, tricksters promise liberation from existing sacred, social and political conventions, and their tales evoke the utopian sense of freedom that inheres in the anarchic overthrowing of order. Disorder pervades trickster tales. For example, tricksters perform disturbingly profane geographies of hybridity (they are shape-shifters with indeterminate bodies), criminality (in their pursuit of self-gratification), and amorality (they refuse to be bound by communal laws and conventions), which are secretly compelling (Pelton 1980). Thus we can celebrate with the profane Winnebago or West African tricksters who make a mockery, through ‘unnatural’ hybrid forms, scatological parody and vulgar sexual or gluttonous behaviour, of social and sacred customs and taboos. We laugh (albeit with horror) with the huntsman/werewolf who annihilates Rosaleen’s superstitious grandmother in Jordan’s (1984) *The Company of Wolves*, overthrowing centuries of oppressive Christian lore with one rake of his claws. We surreptitiously admire the Grimms’ Bruder Lustig, who defies good and evil, tricking St Peter and the Devil alike, and still secures a place in heaven. Perhaps we even feel a secret envy for Nolan’s (2008) sociopathic Joker, whose chilling criminal antics confront Gotham’s social and political hypocrisy, and expose Batman to be a creature of naïve and idealistic delusions¹⁵⁰. However appropriately just or humorously ridiculous the trickster’s violent ‘playfulness,’ we must ultimately reject this devilish creature, and his profane landscaping, fully aware that he represents death to all notions of order, and the sacred, moral, social and political; and (if unchecked) death to the very possibility of human life (see 2.1.3).

There is a rich body of academic scholarship that engages trickster figures, and ‘materializes’ this refrain in various ways. This chapter provides a broad genealogical analysis of this theory, tracing myriad regimes of trickster ‘meaning,’ from psychoanalytical understandings, including

¹⁵⁰ We might ask whether the Joker’s ability to compel is only possible in a ‘postmodern’ age where the foundations of metanarratives, and their attendant values, have been steadily undermined. Audience complicity may have always been vital to trickster tales, however, just as a delight in cruelty is inherent in carnival (see Williams 2000). Thus Fernandes (2008:992) notes: “members of his society derive satisfaction from witnessing the sociopathic trickster violate social norms, often in fact to the benefit of others, which can give him the status of a folk hero.”

Radin's (1956) seminal publication *The Trickster*, to developments in postcolonial and indigenous studies. Interestingly, trickster scholarship repeatedly overlooks the geographical significance of the trickster figure. Where it has dealt with the moral, social, cultural, political, narrative, and *spatial* disorders of trickster tales, it has failed to make a *causal* link with the geography of the stories¹⁵¹. I argue in the final section of this chapter that the trickster's disorderly behaviour is not just spatially articulated in, but *enabled* by, the strange to-and-fro movements, crossroads, and other liminal spaces (discursive and material) of trickster stories. I build this geographical conclusion over seven key sections. I begin with fairy tales scholarship, noting how this interdisciplinary body of research has compiled a strongly gendered account of the trickster, with female figures and female cunning taking an unusual centre stage. From here, I outline the three key research considerations that have dogged trickster scholarship, including the problematic ubiquity of this figure, the ethical issues of 'poaching' indigenous trickster mythology to bolster Euro-American theorizing, and definitional issues stemming from the deeper epistemological debate of universalism versus particularism. With these in mind, the chapter progresses to consider psycho-social, structural and cultural-hermeneutical interpretations of trickster tales, and finally trickster humour, which has tended to get lost in these three 'meaningful' accounts. Finally, I propose we turn away from broadly abstractive, structural, discursive, and psychoanalytical accountings, to understand trickster narratives as *affective geographical refrains*. From a geographical perspective, trickster refrains are powerful and compelling; they draw us out of our seemingly ordered and communal 'realities' into more tenuous, insecure and profane in-between places, where what it means to be human, and to be in community, can no longer be taken for granted.

4.2 Trickster studies and fairy tales

Trickster figures are not the ubiquitous heroes and heroines of fairy tales, but they are vital to the enchantment of these stories, as they energize the genre, and contribute significantly to its appeal. The shifty wolf of *Little Red Riding Hood*¹⁵² and the cunning namesake of *Puss in Boots*, for example, both popular figures in Perrault's seventeenth century *Contes des Fées*, continue to inspire retellings to this day, as storytellers have

¹⁵¹ This is a strong claim to make, as certain theorists have paid direct attention to the geographies of trickster stories (notably Marshall 2012; Pelton 1980; Roberts 1990), and many trickster theorists consider the spatial disorderliness of this figure. However, spatial 'interruptions' and disorderliness is usually taken to be a *consequence* of trickster behaviour, and not a precondition to it, which is the argument I am making here. Furthermore, I propose that we flesh out these trickster geographies beyond abstract spatial references to 'borders,' 'crossings,' 'boundaries,' 'liminality,' etc., and beyond convenient backgrounds for the stories and trickster experiences. In some ways I am echoing the literary geography debate (see 1.3), where geographers have accused literary scholars of reducing space, and geography, to a 'cipher.'

¹⁵² Interestingly, links have been made between the narrative structure of the wolf's refrain, 'all the better to ... you with etc.' and the Norse legend *Drymskviða*, with Thor taking the part of the wolf, and Locki providing the justifying refrain (see Opie and Opie, 1980).

sought to further develop and understand their trickery within the context of contemporary societies¹⁵³. Trickster figures have become something of a postmodern fixation (Reder and Morra 2010), and yet they are ancient folkloric figures that appear in the precursors to European fairy stories (the courtly tales of the eleventh century) with entire tale cycles devoted to their trickery (think of the conniving medieval French figure, Reynard the Fox). Williams (2000), for example, observes four generic trickster types amongst Renaissance tales (women, priests, anthropomorphic animals, and outlaws), whilst Warner (1995) details the historical connection between women storytellers (especially of fairy tales) and trickery. Within fairy tales scholarship, the focus has centered on female trickery¹⁵⁴. Warner (1995) cites numerous examples of female tricksters including: crafty old crones in league with the devil; anthropomorphized Mother Geese, whose subtle knowledge challenges patriarchal and ecclesiastical dogma; and scurrilous gossips, who threaten the order of society through their ‘malicious’ prattling. Weaving is another female art¹⁵⁵ that has historically accompanied storytelling, and for Rowe (1999), this juncture of storytelling-weaving engenders a specifically *female* semiotic. Rowe’s (1999) concept of the female semiotic complements the semiotic mastery and dexterity associated with tricksters (Spinks 1991). Her supreme example of the female semiotician is Scheherazade, the frame-teller of *The Arabian Nights*, whose covert cunning “transforms the place of her victimization into a base from which to seduce, charm, interest, and most importantly *change* [the king]” (Landay 1998:3).

A complex of storytelling-weaving as female trickery offers a provocative counterpoint to the normative perception in much trickster theory that “all the standard tricksters are male” (Hyde 1998)¹⁵⁶. We discover ‘him’ in patriarchal societies, which endow ‘him’ with the dual freedoms of mobility and the public realm, and furnish ‘him’ with the characteristics of a wanderer, conman, and agile orator. The customary patriarchal bias disavows the existence—and possibility—of trickster females, with their more restricted mobility and speech (Landay 1998). This is partially due to a historical denial of other forms of freedom and ways of being public, suggesting that “trickster is not gendered—only cultural perceptions of

¹⁵³ Carter’s (1979) *The Company of Wolves* is an especially insightful retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood*, which locates the girl Rosalie as the trickster of the tale.

¹⁵⁴ Due to limited space I have chosen to focus primarily on female tricksters here, as they feature more prominently in fairy tale literatures. I touch on the religious and profane characteristics of male and female trickster figures, and the marginal and outlaw status of liminal animal tricksters, such as Brer Rabbit and the Signifying Monkey, later in this chapter.

¹⁵⁵ Note the etymology of ‘art,’ and its closeness to craft, craftiness and cunning (OED 2012).

¹⁵⁶ Hyde (1998:335) gives three possible reasons for his claim: first, that tricksters belong to patriarchal mythologies; second, that female tricksters were ignored by early trickster scholarship; third, that “trickster stories articulate some distinction between men and women, so that even in a matriarchal setting this figure would be male.” Further, he claims that hermaphrodite tricksters, pregnant tricksters, and male tricksters who shift to female form do not attest to “‘uncertain sexual status’” (*ibid* 336). Instead, “the male is the ground, the point of departure,” and also the point of return, in the case of trickster figures (*ibid* 336). Fairy tale scholars, such as Rowe (1999) and Warner (1995), would strongly contest this point, and situate trickery firmly within the female realm. We see here an interesting fracture in the genealogy of trickster studies, along fairly clear-cut gender lines. This has interesting consequences for the material-discursive geographies of trickster tales, which tend to be public, given the predominance of male trickster scholarship. Domestic settings for tricksters (the courtly bedroom of Scheherazade, for example), are all but invisible in trickster scholarship (Landay 1998).

the freedom and mobility necessary to *be* trickster” (Lock 2002). There are plentiful female “madcaps, screwballs and conwomen” who display the same blend of tenacious tricksterish courage and cunning as male figures in fairy tales, but who must be sought in more private spaces. As Landay (1998:3) observes:

When scholars have looked for trickster figures using definitions based on the assumption of the trickster’s masculinity they haven’t found female figures who fit. In order to identify female tricksters in American (or any) culture, therefore, we must turn from the margins of dominant society to the centres of women’s space - the parlors, kitchens, and bedrooms of domesticity.

So we find Scheherazade telling her fabulous myriad of tales while physically captive in Shahryar’s bedroom but linguistically and narratively capitalizing on the exploits of the heroes in her tales. From her position in the private sphere of domesticity (the sphere to which women are relegated), Scheherazade enacts a covert strategy of *influence*.

By directly addressing female trickery we can expand the geography of tricksters beyond the ‘outside’ realms of byways, ‘networked’ crossroads and marketplaces, to more intimate threshold spaces, such as the quasi-public sphere of Warner’s (1995) scurrilous gossips¹⁵⁷. Feminist reinterpretations of fairy tales have further addressed the linguistic and narratological properties of tricksters, broadening their semiotic mastery from confrontational sparring rhymes (Abrahams 2006), to a subtler yet equally influential female ‘weaving-voice’¹⁵⁸. Finally, theoretical (and public) depictions of trickster embodiment have tended to overemphasize the masculine, which has led to a problematic gendering of profane spaces. Always overwhelmingly vulgar, the trickster has been presented repeatedly as a *phallic* figure, despite ‘his’ mythic experiences of pregnancy and childbirth¹⁵⁹. A feminist approach extends the trickster’s grotesque and sacrilegious comedy by celebrating the scatological (which is gender neutral), and locating a stranger humour in what is even more taboo: female ‘waste,’ that is the unproductive and bloody menstrual cycle (Steinberg 1988:7)¹⁶⁰.

¹⁵⁷ It is equally possible to locate female tricksters in more public boundary-crossing localities. For example, the Biblical Strange Woman and Wisdom ‘tricksters’ of Proverbs 1-9 inhabit the streets and marketplaces (Camp 1988:18). Nonetheless, female trickery is more usually confined to the domestic realm. Consider Fuch’s (1988) example of Tamar and Rachel’s trickery in the Bible, which takes place within the dynamic of the (extended) family home.

¹⁵⁸ See Abrahams (1962) on ‘Playing the Dozens’ (a problematically racialized account), and Gates (1988) on ‘the signifying monkey.’ In contrast, see Rowe (1999) on the ‘voice’ as image in female storytelling-weaving trickery, and Landay (1998) for a more general account of female tricksters.

¹⁵⁹ This is also true of clowns and jesters (court tricksters). Hynes (1993:43) notes: “the phallus is still discernible in the jester’s bauble, with its miniature human head or heads at one end and animal bladder at the other.”

¹⁶⁰ Steinberg (1988:7) in a study of Israelite tricksters, comments on Rachel’s bodily cunning in Genesis 31:33-35, where she outwits Laban and masks her thieving: “by claiming ‘the way of women is upon me.’” It is worth mentioning that Bal (1988) and Ashley (1988) strongly contest the ascription of trickster status to such Biblical women. Makarius (1993) considers female blood to be the *source* of the trickster’s power (see 4.3.3).

Before celebrating female trickery too eagerly, “an evaluation of the *result* of trickery” must be made (Bal 1988:150). Both Fuchs (1988) and Bal (1988:150) fear “female [trickster] success is invariably recuperated to promote the interests of patriarchy.” Scheherazade saves her neck only to become a dutiful wife and mother of Shahryar’s many children. Again, Loki transforms into a pregnant mare to distract the giant Svadilfari; but as soon as the task is accomplished, ‘she’ reverts to the male god form. Of course this argument of ‘results’ stems from the greater question of *function* that divides trickster theory: does trickster behaviour *upset* the social order, or *reinforce* communal ties, norms and morals? This fundamental duality of thought (radicalism versus conservatism) rests in a simplistic visualization of tricksters as a singular character (the Trickster) in a transparent story; a perspective that denies trickster’s their common cultural hermeneutical role (Bal 1988; Pelton 1980; see 4.3.3). Certain theorists go further, to posit tricksters as an ambiguous ‘state of being’ from which the fundamental dualisms of culture and morality emerge, and in which they subsequently break down (see 4.3.2). Contesting Fuchs (1988) and Bal (1988) above, I posit the ‘success’ of trickster figures exceeds questions of whether or not they pay for their trickery, and who benefits most from their actions. Fairy tale tricksters consistently achieve *narratological* mastery, whatever their eventual fate in the story plot. They overcome their marginalized status in the tale both in literal terms (as frame tellers, chance-met companions, and secondary characters, with relatively little time ‘on stage’¹⁶¹), and in moral terms (as the underhand deceivers or anti-heroines), to shift the direction and ‘meaning’ of a story, engage the audience’s interest, and ‘compel’ our admiration and laughter, albeit not our moral sympathies (see Williams 2010).

Trickster ‘power’ registers both on a plot and narrative level; beyond this, tricksters reach directly out of the tale to monopolize the mechanisms of telling on a meta-narrative level. For Spinks (1991:184) the trickster is thus “both a narrative figure and a narrative force.” We see this with Scheherazade, who occupies a ‘bookends’ position within *The Arabian Nights*, driving its narrative, plot events and ‘meaning.’ Further, Perrault’s (1697) wolf, although we are encouraged to spurn him in the culminating proverb¹⁶², makes us laugh through his skillful wordplay, and remains the most vital figure of the story¹⁶³. Indeed, the trickster escapes narrative discourse and tale to stand outside of both, delimiting their boundaries (Doueïhi 1993; Gates 1989). This privileged metafictional position can be better understood within the context of ritual, where tricksters play a

¹⁶¹ Whilst mythic trickster tales and cycles put the trickster figure in the centre of the story, the trickster is often the foil for the hero or heroine of a fairy tale, and rarely has as many ‘lines’ in the story.

¹⁶² Perrault (1697) ends the tale with the following moral: “children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say ‘wolf,’ but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.”

¹⁶³ All the more memorably when the story is acted out.

central, mediating role (Carroll 1981). Similarly, fairy tale research of tricksters has drawn on European religious encounters with these figures, especially the medieval feast of fools, and carnival¹⁶⁴. Jung (2003:159) for example, “is struck” by the similarities between the trickster and: the “carnival in the medieval Church, with its reversal of the hierarchic order”; the medieval concept of the devil “as *simia dei* (the ape of God)”; the simpleton of folklore; and “the alchemical figure of Mercurius.” Tying together religion, ritual and alchemy, Jung (*ibid*) concludes that the trickster is a ‘pagan heritage,’ and one of the ‘original’ forms of mythic archetype (*ibid*). Griswold (1983) similarly gives a ‘progressive’ account of this figure on the stage, tracking the evolution of the trickster from Devil, to buffoonish Vice, and eventually to cunning Gallant in sixteenth century Jacobean City Comedies. This suggests a gradual secularization, accompanied by the trickster’s growing importance, as trickster roles develop from that of background foil or threat, to scapegoat public entertainer, to admirably adroit young man around whom the play is formed (*ibid*). In each case, the trickster figure assumes a metafictional position, stepping beyond the frames of the story to address the audience directly and advertise the play: “it was the Devil who ran around the towns prior to the performance of plays, drumming up business” (*ibid* 671).

4.3 Research considerations

For Trickster there can never be resolution, no matter how many Euro-American scholars put their shoulders to the wheel (Ballinger 1991:31).

By the 1980s the figure of the trickster had become an academic fixation, and even dedicated researchers such as Carroll (1984:105) sardonically remark, “tricksters are so ubiquitous that Jung ... has been led to conclude that they reflect an archetype buried in the mind of all human beings.” The popularity of trickster scholarship neither confirms their ‘existence,’ nor their ubiquity across folklore and myth, and many scholars have been scathing in their condemnation of trickster studies. Carroll (*ibid*) notes that “unfortunately, at least part of the ubiquity of the trickster results from the fact that modern scholars tend to use an extremely broad definition of the term,” and indigenous theorists Reder and Morra (2010:vii) posit the ‘trickster’ as a European ‘invention’: “no Indigenous community had ‘tricksters’ - the term is the invention of a nineteenth century anthropologist.” Beidelman (1993) denounces the cultural simplicity and generality of the term, and Fagan (2010:5-6) insists it has become a vague and pointless “cultural label” applied to indigenous tales and cultures as a “marker of difference,” in an attempt to control the unfamiliar;

¹⁶⁴ It is worth noting that Lock (2002) sees a fundamental division between clowns and the fools of carnival, and tricksters. The former are constrained within a temporary social game, whereas the latter’s play cannot be confined, and leads to a radical shift in society as it challenges the powers that be: “unlike the fool, the trickster aims to change the rules of the “real” world; he is the lowly outsider who is at the same time powerful enough to transform and reconstitute the inside, or indeed to obliterate the existence of ‘sides.’”

and as a lazily de-historicized metaphor for a “postmodern state of mind.” Within fairy tale studies, tricksters have earned an entry in Haase’s (2008) fairy tale encyclopedia, where they are defined as “one who engages in trickery, deceives, and violates the moral codes of the community” (Fernades 2008:992); but there is trepidation *vis-à-vis* the assumption and application of any such trope or figure (Zipes 2012).

Each of these scholars is quick to note the ethical assumptions that underpin the presumption of a figure or category known as the ‘trickster.’ Foremost amongst these is the inherent danger of a (often inadvertent) neocolonial maneuver to apply a western framework of knowing onto indigenous stories and marginalized western folklore. Such neocolonial appropriations often take the form of a pan-tribalism, with their idealization and mythicization of oral telling and humour (Fagan 2010). Neocolonial accounts of ‘the Trickster’ contribute to the mystification of trickster knowledge, in ascribing a fixed but incomprehensible nature to the figure: a mistake that stems from divorcing this figure from the material-discursive context in which it makes its appearance. As Doty and Hynes (1993:18) note, “the confusion of categories may be more a problem indigenous to western classifications than one innate to trickster materials.” Sensitively grounded trickster research and rigorous historicizing of the tales prevents their reduction to mere ‘tropes’ and ‘symbols’ (Fagan 2010). This is vital given the racialized history of trickster studies, where the tales have been viewed as manifestations of ‘primitive’ psychic development, or uncivilized society; and more specifically of “negro inferiority,” e.g. in terms of tricksterish speech (Abrahams 1968)¹⁶⁵. Similar sensitivity needs to be shown to the *gendered* nature of trickster scholarship, with its historical privileging of the male, and tendency to cast women as victims (Ashley 1988). This debate touches my own research on Nolan’s (2008) retelling of the Joker trickster figure, in the Batman film *The Dark Knight* (chapter 5). The Joker symbolically and affectively draws on a longer Afro-American lineage of ‘masking,’ ‘passing,’ minstrelsy, and black *male* aggressiveness. Any theoretical claims as to his ‘state of being’ must therefore be made in full consideration of this problematic trickster genealogy.

A second consideration ties into the greater “epistemological debates about universals and particulars,” which has split trickster research between two extremist camps (Hynes and Doty 1993:5). The first assumes a universal trickster archetype, or designates universal trickster characteristics (such as liminality), and applies these to a variety of disconnected situations. The second rejects globalizing terms in favour of piecemeal individualistic studies across different cultural contexts, and engages in a “‘trickster purism’ that would limit the change and adaptability essential

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, Abrahams (1968), Radin (1956) or Jung (1971). It is important to note that each author contributed enormously to the budding field of trickster studies, and that any accusation of racism would be anachronistic.

to many different tricksters” (Monsma 1996:84). This latter group, including most famously Beidelman (1993:175), denounces comparative studies within the field:

The category of *trickster* may be merely the product of a series of false translations, much as terms such as *family* and *witchcraft* seem incomparable cross-culturally when taken out of context.

Beidelman (*ibid*) raises an important point as to the dangers of divorcing trickster figures from their specifically relational, immediate contexts (one especially pertinent to the ethnographic study of oral and performed telling and ritual), and of assuming trickster (and mythic) status from the outset of research. This careful ethnographic approach may fall short when researching those trickster tales which, “through immigration, travel, or colonization occupy sites *between* cultures and embody, therefore, traits from the myths of various cultures” (Monsma 1996:85, emphasis added). It is worth remembering that trickster figures necessarily cross boundaries and establish borders, inhabiting the “sites between cultures” (*ibid*). Indeed, their “power is derived from [their] ability to live interstitially, to confuse and to escape the structures of society and the order of cultural things” (Babcock-Abrahams 1975:148). Trickster texts offer meta-discursive commentary on story and society, even as they relate story to society, thus “[revealing] the processes by which humans construct and reconstruct cultures” (Monsma 1996:84). Trickster texts are therefore always already performative and historicized—“more of a reading than a writing”—which lends them to comparative interpretation (*ibid*).

For Pelton (1980:15), the epistemological crises of trickster studies rests on a more fundamental clash between idealism and nominalism, the former tending towards the “Pure Idea,” and the latter treating the trickster as “an intellectually impenetrable surface.” Rather poetically, he warns:

It seems necessary to avoid, on the one hand, the trimming of the material at hand to fit a ready-made norm and, on the other, the dilettantism of the encyclopedist, who buzzes from culture to culture collecting, arranging, and displaying the exotica he has gathered (*ibid* 14).

Perhaps we can also relate this wider epistemological debate to Babcock-Abrahams’ (1975:155-6) injunction that all too often trickster tales are relegated to the ‘abnormal,’ or the ‘antisocial’ (i.e. the non-normative), and tricksters feature as some kind of marginal ‘intruder.’ This tendency

encourages the isolation of ‘the Trickster’ from its cultural horizon, and results in either a museum display of ‘curiosities,’ as Pelton (1980) notes above, or reduction through the application of universalizing theory.

In my account of Nolan’s (2008) Joker-trickster (chapter 5), I attempt to navigate these antagonistic waters by embracing a cultural hermeneutics approach, which provides social context and insight at the narratological level. I combine this with a collage methodology, which attends to the affective performance of the trickster tale, and a (fragmented and speculative) genealogy of the Joker-as-trickster. In so doing I hope to follow Hynes and Doty (1993:6) in:

[Tacking] back and forth from the particularities of specific tricksters within their respective belief systems, on the one hand, and the meaningful interconnection between particulars and elucidating generalizations, on the other hand.

Whilst I speak of a geographical ‘refrain’ of the trickster, with application beyond one immediate fairy tale or storytelling context, I am eager to distance my work from universalizing accounts, including psychoanalytical theorization of the trickster as a proponent of the sex drive, or a ‘steam valve humour,’ and analytical psychological notions of an archetypal Shadow or mythologem in the individual and collective unconscious. The Joker of *The Dark Knight* (2008) has a spatiotemporal importance that extends beyond the immediate filmic manifestation in specific ways, ‘materializing’ through wider post 9/11 cultural ‘fears’ and performances, as we see in the rapid spread of Alkhateeb’s (2008) Obama-as-Joker image (see 5.3.1). My research aims to address the transformation immanent to tricksters whilst grounding the Joker in his spatial-historic, material-discursive context. Pelton (1980:18) offers a particularly useful model in his research of West African trickster figures:

The knotty logic of the trickster is best unraveled by keeping him firmly situated within the cultural context. In this way Ananse’s primordial foolery, Legba’s rampant sexuality and mastery of language, Ogo-Yurugu’s rebellion and banishment to the wilderness, and Eshu’s never-ending disturbance of social peace might best take on the ironic dimensions that I began to see as the deepest purpose of the trickster’s ambiguity. At the same time, looking clearly at the trickster on his home ground would unveil the common, though analogical, imaginative process that shapes him in each culture, without obscuring the special African ability to gaze carefully at the ordinary and discover within it the transcendent.

Thus far, I have traced a genealogy of fairy tale trickster scholarship, and highlighted some of the problems of identifying, categorizing, and researching trickster figures, including underlying ethical issues, and the question of whether trickster scholars in fact ‘create’ this figure. In the remainder of this chapter I want to look beyond fairy tale tricksters and scholarship to, first, give a brief account of the historical uses of the term

‘trickster’; second, present a brief interdisciplinary genealogy of the leading theoretical ‘regimes’ in the field; third, propose a geographic understanding of tricksters; fourth, apply this geographical understanding to Nolan’s (2008) Joker, from *The Dark Knight*.

4.4 Interdisciplinary genealogy of trickster studies

“It is precisely the trickster’s earthiness, his popular inelegance, and his delightful inconsequence that have made our intellectual equipment for dealing with him look as ponderously inept as a steam shovel grasping for a grasshopper” (Pelton 1980:19).

Doty and Hynes (1993:14) note that the term ‘trickster’ appeared in the English language in the eighteenth century, where it was used “not as an anthropological category, but to designate morally one who deceives and cheats.” In scholarly discourse, Brinton (1868, in Landay 1998:2) is credited with being the first to ‘identify’ this figure in his *Myths of the New World*, an anthropological study of “the contradictory figure of Native American tales and myth who is both fooler and fooled, heroic and base.” By the nineteenth century, the term was well established in folkloric and anthropological scholarship. It achieved widespread popularity beyond academic circles with Radin’s (1955) book on the Native American Winnebago trickster cycle, which included explanatory papers by Kerényi, relating the trickster to classical Greek mythology, and Jung, interpreting the trickster as a mythologem in the collective unconscious. Since then, the term has been the subject of considerable academic debate, in an appropriately trickster-like manner. Perhaps the sole property on which all scholars agree is the ambiguity and contrariness of tricksters—a factor that ensures ‘successful’ analysis will need to:

Transcend simplistic categories, allowing both for flexibility with which to confront polarities, dualities, and multiple manifestations and for complexity with which to grapple with the ambiguity, border-occupying, paradox, marginality, peripherality, liminality, and inversion portrayed by various trickster figures” (Doty and Hynes 1993:25).

Clearly, “there is no one mode of trickster studies, no one classical model of the figure” (*ibid*). However, there are a number of lines of theoretical convergence on the representations and meanings of this figure/category. Rather than ‘reinvent’ my own genealogical history, I will turn to three of the more comprehensive taxonomies of trickster theory provided by Ashley (1988), Babcock-Abrahams (1975), and Hynes and Doty (1993), and augment these where necessary. Ashley (1988:112) offers the broadest classification with three distinct groupings: psycho-social, structural

and cultural-hermeneutics. These categories are, of course, not discrete; the comic, the sacred, and the profane, for example, are common themes to all, and psychological and social references are made within cultural-hermeneutic theories, and vice versa¹⁶⁶.

4.4.1 Psycho-social theories

The ‘psycho-social’ category in Ashley’s (1988) taxonomy is “particularly obvious in discussions of trickster-type tales or other narrative forms which tend to be antisocial rather than normative” (Babcock-Abrahams 1975:156). Sociological accounts, to begin, are the more straightforward, taking a perspective of tricksters as “weak, relatively powerless creatures who attain their ends through the application of native wit and guile rather than power or authority” (Levine 2007:103). Steinberg’s (1988) study of female Israelite tricksters could be regarded in this light, as it positions Biblical women as the underdogs of Ancient Israel’s patriarchal society, and forced to resort to deceit in order to survive. Likewise, Griswold (1983) attributes the rise of the City Comedy Gallant on the Jacobean stage to the experience of impoverished and disinherited younger sons who had nothing but their wits between them and destitution and social ruin¹⁶⁷. Certain interpretations of Afro-Caribbean trickster slave narratives conform to this category, for example Abrahams’ (1968) regards the trickster as a totem for what he sees as the disenfranchised young men of Afro-American culture. However, this functionalist understanding can be reductive at times, counterpoising weak and strong, right and wrong, etc., in simplistic dualisms that cannot address the ambiguities of the tales. Tricksters are demoted to social mechanisms (Hynes and Doty 1993), and the rich and humorous narratives become mere “coded tales of social protest” (Ashley 1988:104). Further, such explanations problematically evoke a clearly bounded social group with trickster status, which is subsequently identified with victimhood¹⁶⁸. Cunning and lying becomes equated with the socially marginal; a point of view that denies the deviousness of the powerful, and disregards the efficaciously transformative role of parody and satire in trickster humour (*ibid* 105).

Psychological accounts of trickster tales are functionalist in a different sense, deriving the trickster’s meaning from its (it is usually an anstracted figure in these accounts) ‘role’ in psychic development, both individual and collective. This category includes Radin’s and Jung’s ‘moral

¹⁶⁶ My theoretical genealogical construction makes constitutive exclusions as it parses trickster theorizing into three narrow categories, and so must be considered within, or as a further development, to this tripartite genealogy (see Barad 2007; also 3.2.3).

¹⁶⁷ Griswold (1983:669) ascribes the emotional appeal of the trickster to his status as “the perpetual underdog who sometimes beats the odds,” in a classic example of a sociological account.

¹⁶⁸ E.g. Afro-Americans (Abrahams 1968).

psychology' approach (see Ashley 1988: 109-110), and could be extended to trickster research that draws on Freud's and Bergson's theorization of humour as social or ritual vents or distractions "through which pressures engendered by a system of beliefs and behaviours can be dissipated" (Hynes 1993:206). I will examine the role of comedy in trickster tales later (see 4.4.4); for now it suffices to say that attempts to limit the playfulness and power of trickster humour are highly problematic¹⁶⁹. Abrahams (1968:172) offers a variation on this social vent theme when he ascribes trickster humour to aggressive and self-destructive 'antisocial desires':

Trickster functions primarily as a release valve for all of the anti-social desires repressed by the men who tell and listen to his stories. He behaves as the members of the society would behave if they were not constrained by fear from acting. Vicariously, sympathetically, through the acts of this egocentric sensualist, man expunges the pressures that might otherwise destroy both his ordered world and himself.

Abrahams reduces the trickster here to both a sociological and psychological function. Whilst his argument is heavily racialized and gendered, it is only one step removed from those sociological accounts of 'powerless' tricksters, which ascribe victimhood as a motivation for tricksters' often sociopathic cunning (e.g. Steinberg 1988).

A significant body of psychological scholarship posits the trickster not as victim, but rather as an archaic *speculum mentis*, or mirror image of humankind, "within which the central unresolvable human struggles are played out" (Hynes 1993:208). Radin (1969, in Ashley 1988:109), for example, sees the trickster as a "primordial being, obsessed with hunger and sexuality," which holds up a mirror to our present human state, "reminding [us] of the evolution of morality on which civilization rests." The trickster's humour performs the 'court jester' role of deflating human pride by dwelling on the uncontrollable, the nonsensical, and the comic in our lives, "[making] it possible for us to gain a sense of proportion about ourselves" (Singer 1972, in Hynes 1993: 209). Humour, here, is harnessed for didactic ends. In comparison, Freudian theory suggests tricksters "embody in dramatic form the ongoing battle between the id and the superego," wherein "the trickster constantly oscillates back and forth between self-gratification and cultural heroism" (Hynes 1993:209). There are myriad neo-Freudian approaches that depict the trickster as "caught in a struggle between the pleasure principle and the reality principle" (*ibid*). Hynes (1993:209) cites both Abrahams (1968)

¹⁶⁹ Babcock-Abrahams (1975:161-5), for example, criticizes "Freud and Bergson's notion of the joke as an attack on control" as yet "another functionalist 'steam valve' interpretation," and "monological interpretation."

and Pelton (1980) on the regressive infantilism of trickster stories, with the latter celebrating the open-mindedness of trickster stories that “put an adult mind in a child’s heart and a child’s eye in an adult head.”

Countering this endless struggle between pleasure and reality, id and superego, Jung (1959) introduces an element of psychic transformation into trickster theory. For Radin (1969, in Babcock-Abrahams 1975:163), drawing heavily on Jung, the Winnebago trickster thus represents, and accompanies, a process of social and individual development:

The symbol which Trickster embodies is not a static one. It contains within itself the promise of differentiation, the promise of god and man. For this reason every generation occupies itself with interpreting the Trickster anew. No generation understands him fully but no generation can do without him. Each had to include him in all its theologies, in all its cosmogonies, despite the fact that it realised that he did not fit properly into any of them, for *he represents not only the undifferentiated and distant past, but likewise the undifferentiated present within every individual*. This constitutes his universal and persistent attraction.

Radin’s explanation relies on Jung’s (1959) archetypal theory of the collective unconscious, which places the trickster at the first step of the collective civilizing process. Here, the trickster is a psychologem, or “archetypal psychic structure of extreme antiquity,” which reflects the “undifferentiated human consciousness” (Jung 2003:165). This primitive stage of human consciousness is marked by the trickster’s “stupidity and grotesque scurrility,” and general “unconsciousness” or “mental darkness” (*ibid* 167-8). However, it is not enough to locate the trickster in our common primordial origin, for Jung (*ibid* 172) argues that we can never annul the traces of our human ancestry. The trickster remains an important figure in the individual and collective psyche, as evidenced in folklore, myth and fairy tales. Indeed, this figure is *consciously revived*, both out of the “the strength and vitality of the state of consciousness described in the myth,” and “by the secret attraction and fascination this has for the conscious mind” (*ibid*).

Jung’s (*ibid* 69) trickster is a curious blend of the sub- and super-human, bearing traces of our bestial past and godly aspirations. This explains its contradictory profane (bodily disunity and buffoonery) and sacred status in narratives. As a “primitive ‘cosmic’ being of *divine-animal* nature” (*ibid* 170), the trickster has a doubling effect, with “both a potential for regression into unconsciousness and a call toward true wholeness” (Pelton 1980:229). Repeated activation of the trickster myth is cathartic, evoking (and thus reliving) our earlier human condition in order to prevent our slippage back into this primitive state: “what the repeated telling of the myth signifies is the therapeutic amnesia of contents which ... should never be forgotten for long (Jung 2003:170). Yet, even as we remember, we paradoxically strive to forget our shared “animalistic” origin; and

whilst the civilizing process eventually renders the trickster harmless, forcing its ‘darkness’ down to the unconscious level, this mythologem has not been vanquished. It is quick to reappear in “critical” or “doubtful” situations, as a “projection upon one’s neighbor,” opening out “a world of primordial darkness” between self and other (*ibid* 173)¹⁷⁰. For Jung (*ibid* 176) humans are riven by this dual condition of remembering and forgetting:

Outwardly people are more or less civilized, but inwardly they are still primitives. Something in man is profoundly disinclined to give up his beginnings, and something else believes it has long since got beyond all that.

This tension is typical of the “polaristic structure of the psyche” (*ibid*). Indeed, the collective myth of the trickster eventually yields the psychological figure of the Shadow¹⁷¹; for when the mythic trickster retreats, it reappears individually as a reflection in the ego, which “is split off from ... consciousness and consequently behaves like an autonomous personality” (*ibid* 177). As we increasingly repress and neglect “the original mythologems,” the trickster reappears “as a corresponding projection on other social groups and nations” (*ibid*). Jung complicates this adversarial account, however, by reminding us that both collective trickster myth and individual Shadow contain their polar opposite, in line with the dualistic nature of the psyche. The trickster is at once primordial darkness *and* savior, as we see in the Winnebago cycle.

Jung’s account clarifies the “ethical charge” carried by the “amoral or antisocial behaviours” of tricksters in tales, where subtle associations between common marginal trickster figures (e.g. women) and adverse characteristics (e.g. deceptiveness or deviancy) are often unconsciously insinuated (Ashley 1988). In the case of Biblical female trickster figures these connections encourage an implicit representation of women as morally deviant, reflecting “an epistemological economy which predicates moral judgment on a character’s sexual identity” (Fuchs 1988:68). This argument could easily be extended to other generic trickster figures: certain animals that are repeatedly anthropomorphized as tricksters, and condemned for this, in fairy tales¹⁷²; or certain marginalized ethnicities, and other ‘strangers’ and ‘outcasts’¹⁷³. However, Jung’s psychological

¹⁷⁰ Jung’s statement is poignant given that he personally witnessed the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany.

¹⁷¹ In its individualistic form, Jung (2003:168) terms the trickster the “Shadow.” He argues that the shadow is descended from the collective trickster figure, which is broken up under the processes of civilization and dispersed into folklore; but also *personalized*, so that “the main part of him [the trickster]... is made an object of personal responsibility” (*ibid*).

¹⁷² I do not have space to delve into the association of tricksters with animals here; however, it is worth noting that, through shapeshifting and the attribution of bestiality to trickster figures, certain animals become damned by human society with devastating consequences. Cats, wolves and foxes, and other ‘cunning’ predators, are especially liable to demonization as tricksters (e.g. the various wolves of *Red Riding Hood*).

explanation of the trickster, and Radin's subsequent anthropological uptake, have been subject to fierce criticism on the grounds of their psychological and social essentialism, negative representation of the trickster figure, determinism, racism, and methodological failings (e.g. Babcock-Abrahams 1975, Pelton 1980). These complaints can be mitigated with more sympathetic understanding. For example, whilst Jung posits a universal trickster figure in the guise of an archetype, he notes elsewhere that archetypes are not fixed structures (Jung 1959). Rather, they are propensities within the (collective unconscious) human mind, learned and inherited possibilities of behaviour and response, which manifest in very different ways according to socio-historic context (*ibid*). The racist charge is an anachronistic one, which refuses the historic context of Jung's writing. Indeed, Jung equally regards the trickster as a useful, even therapeutic figure, which complicates his more (arguably) racist and derogatory associations of scurrilous, primitive etc., and puts him 'ahead' of his time. Further, both Jung and Radin make space within their evolutionary accounts for the cyclical recurrence of this figure, drawing it closer to Pelton's (1980:17) notion of "a pattern of entelechy"¹⁷⁴ than he might like to admit. Pelton (*ibid* 230) does concede, however, that the problem of Jung's evolutionary account lies not in a failure to accept the recursive nature of the trickster, but to posit this as a means to civilization, and not as a valid cultural end in itself¹⁷⁵.

In detaching the trickster from a broader social context, Jung fails to recognize that the trickster does not determine social structure; rather, "the contradictoriness of the trickster *is rooted in the social patterns out of which his imaginative forms spring*" (Pelton 1980:231, emphasis added). Thus tricksters' therapeutic property, for Pelton (*ibid* 233), lies in their continuous reopening of the 'order of things' to facilitate social renewal: "to remember Ogo [Dogon trickster] is to perform sociotherapy because in re-membering, every dissolution becomes a potential renewal, and contradiction itself is included in the social order." Jung accounts for certain elements of "productive chaos," such as "creativity, play, spontaneity, inventiveness, ingenuity, and adventure," as his trickster mediates between the undifferentiated and the differentiated, and:

Not only helps us encounter these yet-to-be-focused energies but also ventures forth in an ongoing exploration and charting of the inchoate, the 'otherness' that always resurges to challenge our neat and organized sense of personal control (Hynes 1993: 210).

¹⁷³ Consider the proliferation of Jewish tricksters, such as the boy-man Joha, or the trickster Rabbis (Cray 1964; Koen-Sarano 2003; Rogin 1998). Note that trickster gods (e.g. Hermes) are often the protectors of strangers, thieves, rascals and other social deviants.

¹⁷⁴ I.e. "the realisation or complete expression of some function; the condition in which a potentiality has become an actuality" (OED 2012).

¹⁷⁵ Pelton (1980:231-2) notes: "Aware of synchronicity, Jung still believes that linear history is paramount ... The Dogon, on the other hand, believe that time is radically synchronic. Of course they experience its passage and even recognize a certain unrepeatable quality to the events of the first times. Yet [Ogo] ... remains a perpetual image of the simultaneous presence of all time, especially the beginnings." For the Dogon, then, it is not so much the case of the transformation of meaningless into meaningful, but trickster is instead "a ceaseless revealer of their human situation" (*ibid*). Theirs is not a "linear and evolutionary movement" but one that is "spiral and epigenetic" (*ibid*).

His trickster thus retains an element of ongoing mystery and ‘otherness.’ However, this ‘otherness’ is sanitized, as Jung is revolted by the trickster’s vulgarity:

[He] cannot take seriously the trickster’s irreducible grossness as the representation and reaffirmation of social concreteness ... it is not the abolition of logic that the trickster represents, but the expansion of its categories (Pelton 1980:234).

For Pelton (*ibid*), West African tricksters bring the despised Other *into* the social order, and their transformations do not indicate a linear ‘civilizing’ progression (from disorder to order, or from the profane to the sacred). Rather, they are mediators and transformers “*because* their passage beyond these boundaries continually provokes intercourse between what is outside man and what is inside him” (*ibid*, emphasis added). Returning to Babcock-Abraham’s (1975) critique, Jung, in denying the ‘scurrilous’ a place within civilization, situates the trickster in the *asocial* realm, rather than the normative. Given this, his theory necessarily “minimize[s] and, consequently, [fails to] account for the ambiguity, the paradox that is at the centre of any symbolic form ... thus [avoiding] the entire thorny problem of symbolic inversions, negations, and reversals” (*ibid* 157). Jung locates the trickster in the primordial, both in terms of humankind’s undifferentiated past, and undifferentiated present (for the place of the primordial is as much present as past, existing in the sphere of the unconscious). There is an implicit directionality to his concept of the primordial, which makes the trickster a figure to be looked *down* on, or moved *away* from, in order to achieve a more civilized (albeit never completed) psychological and societal state.

In sum, Jung, together with the other psychological and sociological trickster theorists, fails to deliver a normative account¹⁷⁶ of the complexity and paradox so fundamental to this figure (Ballinger 1992). Each in their different ways inscribes an abnormality to tricksters, differentiating them from ‘mainstream’ society, and placing them in a position of social marginality and vulnerability. From a normative perspective, such vulnerability points instead to a necessary and ongoing creativity in the ever-varying human condition from which culture is formed:

Trickster’s tales ... express the generative situation of ambivalence and contradictions that the very basis of culture engenders. Seeming undifferentiation and ambivalence are characteristic of mediating figures, and it may well be that the mediating figure of Trickster does not represent a regression to a primal, undifferentiated unity but is created in response to a present and constant perception of opposition, of difference essential to human constructs (*viz.*, Lévi-Strauss) (Babcock-Abrahams 1975:163-4).

¹⁷⁶ That is, tricksters are social, political, cultural, and moral *abnormalities* in their accounts, and their importance to, and inseparability from, society is never fully understood (see 5.4.2 and 5.4.3).

The marginality of the trickster is not a product of powerlessness, but a consequence of the trickster's location at the heart of the generative processes of culture—for “that which is socially peripheral or marginal is symbolically central and predominant” (*ibid* 155).

4.4.2 Structural theories

Structural theories of the trickster, most famously those of Lévi-Strauss (e.g. 1974), and Leach (e.g. 1962), recognize that “the trickster's place on the boundaries of every sort of relationship is no accident, but a profoundly intended design” (Pelton 1980:239). Indeed, “structuralist theory ... finds itself upon ambivalence and ambiguity” (Ashley 1988:105). For Lévi-Strauss (1974), myth, like all human thought, is composed of complimentary binary oppositions that tend toward resolution, or the *illusion* of resolution, through the work of a third, mediating term. The “normal” pair of polar terms that underpin mythic systems (known as “original categories”) are mediated by a third term, which occupies the middle ground between these pairings (Ashley 1988:105). For Leach (1974, in Ashley 1988:105), “this middle ground is abnormal, non-natural, holy. It is typically the focus of all taboo and ritual observance.” Leach (*ibid*) cites “fabulous monsters, incarnate gods, virgin mothers” as figurative examples of this deviant middle ground. Each of these anomalies is characterized by ambiguity, “[giving] rise to ambivalent responses, even when they are performing socially valuable deeds” (Ashley 1988:106). Mediating figures are therefore *morally* contrary: both sacred and profane. Whilst Ashley (*ibid*) argues they are “morally neutral, somehow outside the language of moral norms,” she still ascribes to them the *threat* of moral ambiguity. Standing outside of the moral order (‘beyond good and evil’), tricksters represent the ultimate danger to society: they are the taboo-breakers that desecrate the most sacred in pursuit of their own gain.

Lévi-Strauss (1974) accords the symbolic term of the trickster a privileged place as a mediator within mythic oppositions of Life and Death. He bases his theory on the North American trickster tales of Coyote and Raven, for which he constructs a chain of symbolic oppositions emanating from the original life-death distinction, initially between herbivorous and carnivorous animals, and finally between agriculture and warfare. Lévi-Strauss (*ibid*) argues that animals are normally categorized into two opposing groups: herbivorous and carnivorous. Trickster animals, however, assume an ‘abnormal’ place in the system as carrion-eaters, bridging these two positions “since carrion-eating animals (like herbivorous animals)

do not kill, yet (like carnivorous animals) they eat animal flesh” (Carroll 1981:302). Abstracting backwards from this initial mediation, trickster animals ‘resolve’ the irresolvable binary between life and death, through this supplement of symbols. Further, they:

Openly express [the] dilemma in such a way as to provide some sort of cognitive model that allows the individual to lose sight of the inherent contradiction that the dilemma entails (*ibid* 307).

A crucial snag to this theory lies in Lévi-Strauss’ overlooking of alternative North American trickster figures, such as Rabbit. When these are added to the mix, the mediating category of ‘carrion-eater’ is no longer applicable. Carroll (1981) argues further that coyotes and ravens are not solely carrion eating animals, either biologically, or in stories¹⁷⁷. Working outside of this “false premise” (*ibid* 305), Carroll (*ibid*) pays closer attention to the ‘empirical realities’ of North American trickster tales in order to derive an alternative structuralist binary based on the trickster’s fundamental dualistic, solitary nature as a ‘selfish-buffoon’ and ‘culture-hero.’ Carroll (*ibid*) draws on Freud’s (1930) theory of civilization for explanatory insight, which posits a dualism between civilization and the sex drive: “the maintenance of civilization ... depends upon the renunciation of our instinctive impulses toward the immediate gratification of our sexual desires.” He reminds us that sexual pleasure in Freud’s account is derived from “a variety of activities, but most notably by eating, defecating, *and* engaging in sexual intercourse,” and that North American trickster tales are (in)famous for their gluttonous, sexual and scatological humour (*ibid*). For Freud, Carroll (*ibid*) argues, “myths are seen as projective systems in which those sexual impulses which are repressed during early childhood are expressed”; and this might account for the ubiquity of the selfish-buffoon aspect of the trickster in mythology worldwide. Augmenting Freud’s (1930) account with Lévi-Strauss’ (1974) understanding of myth’s mediating role, it becomes possible to view the trickster as mediating a very different fundamental dilemma: between our contradictory desires for the survival and destruction of culture. Tricksters, again, occupy both positions in the polar dualism, being both associated and dissociated with culture. Tricksters found culture (stealing fire for humankind, creating ‘people,’ etc.), and are simultaneously responsible for its demise (bringing death to humans, destroying the primordial harmony of human society, etc.). Again, Carroll (1981:309-10) notes tricksters’ mediating and resolving role in this structural dilemma, as they:

Provide a conceptual model that allows the human mind to evade the perception of this dilemma by simultaneously establishing a second association between immediate sexual gratification and the *origin*, not the absence, of culture.

¹⁷⁷ Carroll’s (1980) point is that coyotes and ravens also scavenge and *hunt* for food—an arguably pedantic point in the context of Lévi-Strauss’ theory.

Abstracting further from this particular mediation, the trickster eventually reconciles the fundamental binary of destruction and creation.

Structuralist trickster theory invites critiques of ‘demystification’ and ‘materialistic reductionism’ (Pelton 1980). Whilst it addresses trickster ambiguity, it “fails to seize the trickster’s meaning because it finds trivial just that hum and buzz of implication ... which is his project as well as his matrix” (*ibid* 241). Structuralism's abstractions result in a “highly formalistic” mediation “either confined to binary oppositions within the work itself or abstracted by a leap of faith (if not logic) to a general mediation between nature and culture and to universal structures of the mind” (Babcock-Abrahams 1975:156). The trickster function of mediation is derived from isolating trickster from tale, and especially the *discursive* elements of the narrative. This enables a vision of the trickster as a contradictory ‘character’ within an unambiguous plot, “thus taking trickster narratives only at their referential (face) value” (*ibid*). Narrative theorists assert that, to the contrary, the vital importance of trickster tales lie in their unique linguistic textuality, where: “there is a flagrant juxtaposition of the discursive, signifying aspect of the narrative and the referential, signified aspect of the text as story” (Doueihi 1993:206). As Doueihi (*ibid* 193-4) notes, this juxtaposition enables the tricksters’ meta-discursiveness and metaplay, which structuralist theory cannot appreciate in its search for (theoretical) resolution:

This approach [i.e. structuralist], which treats language conventionally, as a transparent medium for the communication of some meaning or another, consequently leads to the search for some univocal meaning to which the trickster and his stories might be reduced.

Favouring a highly abstracted account of the trickster figure, structuralist scholarship likewise tends to downplay the cultural and historical particularities of trickster tales (Ashley 1988:106)¹⁷⁸, and neglects the richness of the ritualistic and religious aspects of the trickster. Whilst they do address the “myth-making processes of the human mind itself,” they pursue this through a Platonic agenda of the ‘Pure Idea,’ forming “molds into which all reality must be poured” (Pelton 1980:12-15). When the trickster is decontextualized in this way, the rich symbolic inversions of the tale are limited to a matter of instrumental logic. However, Babcock-Abrahams (1975:157, emphasis added) warns that this is a false reduction:

Symbolic inversions are not simply logical reciprocals; if you consider them as such you tend to neglect both the transformations which occur within such inversions as well as the comic dimension of many such reciprocal forms. And you avoid *the* question: what happens when such marginal figures as fools and tricksters become central to the action and still retain the ability to ‘dissolve events’ and ‘throw doubt on the finality of fact?’

¹⁷⁸ Ashley (1988:106) remarks of these structuralist accounts: they “have little interest in returning [the trickster’s] mythological logic to any particular social context.”

Two important trickster qualities are overlooked in this reduction: the transformational (an aspect of the divine), and the comic. This could be attributed to “how greatly estranged the comic and the holy have become since the Renaissance and the Reformation” in western thought (Pelton 1980:11). In subduing embodied comedy and foolery, the holy all too easily becomes a ‘superior’ matter of transcendental rationality, with its attendant “leveling tendencies of ... ‘the univocal mind’” (*ibid*). For Pelton (*ibid* 13), this “attests to the [western] struggle ... to know what it means to speak about the sacred.” Trickster tales, which unite holy and comic, speak directly to the sacred, in part because they serve to remind us “there are times when even the boundaries of the sacred directions seem inadequate to contain experience ... when life asserts itself over ritual” (Ballinger 1991:31). At these epiphanic moments, the comic emerges, and the trickster grins at us, “making us laugh at the patness of our beliefs” (*ibid*). We can only attain the highest possibility of human sacredness when we laughingly accept our limitations in the face of reality, for “the grand design of the gods is not always of an appropriately human dimension” (*ibid* 30).

4.4.3 Cultural-hermeneutical theories

Ashley’s (1988) third classification, ‘cultural hermeneutics,’ comprises a body of research that focuses on the *performance* of the trickster in tales; and specifically attempts to theorize the rift between sacred and profane in western thought. These theories adopt a hermeneutical methodology, eschew ‘feature-spotting,’ and address both the functioning and meaning of trickster tales (Pelton 1980:16). Tricksters are engaged from within their religious and ritualistic context, and the textuality and expressiveness of the tales forms a vital component of the research. There are two distinct lines of enquiry within this ‘regime of truth.’ The first projects tricksters as eternally disordered patterns within the wider order of society, which “[evoke] the polysemous quality of life” (Hynes 1993:212). The second (developing the first) projects the trickster as an active hermeneut of myth, who dissolves society and order through linguistic and symbolic dexterity and virtuoso wordplay. Each account refutes the abstractions of the psycho-social and structuralist ‘regimes’ above, and attempts to embed trickster tales firmly within their “social and mythic contexts” (Pelton 1980:3). Furthermore, they adopt a normative perspective that refuses to consign the trickster to “a residual category, rejected from our normal scheme of classifications,” but rather harnesses the ambiguity of this figure to the vital work of social chaos and creativity (Douglas 1966, in Babcock-Abrahams 1975:155).

Turning to the first line of enquiry, tricksters are celebrated as “agents of creativity who transcend the constrictions of monoculturality” (Hynes 1993:211-2). They usher in a different state of being (or *difference* within the human condition), wherein the sacred and profane are generated together. This is a restless but fecund in-between place, characterized by constant transformation of form and understanding. ‘Mediation’ is not a middle point between two rigid binary opposites, but an “open passageway” of “exchanges,” that eventually lead the trickster back to the heart of society (Pelton 1980:225). The typical geography of in-between and threshold spaces in the tales reflects this. Anansi, for example, lives on the boundary of villages, and Eshu resides at crossroads and marketplaces, both of which are sites of crossing and exchange. Like the sacred centre of Elidae’s (1957) imagining, tricksters “transform because they touch all forms and all times simultaneously” (Pelton 1980:226). This is the source of their power, accounting for their ‘problematic’ ambivalence, common polymorphic properties (for example, their shifts from human to animal or from man to woman), the masks they don¹⁷⁹, and their inwards and outwards two-facedness¹⁸⁰. A western representational metaphysical framework of understanding struggles with this trickster illogic of irreducible (in)difference and Otherness, which ushers in ““a wholly different kind of world”” (Cox 1969, in Hynes 1993:212). However, attempts have been made by key anthropological and cultural thinkers to elucidate an ‘Otherly’ perspective, which can attest to “the importance of ‘marginality’ or ‘liminality’ in symbolic processes, or negative patterns of culture, and of antistructure as well as structure” (Babcock-Abrahams 1975:158). Geertz (1972) offers us the concept of ‘deep play’; Douglas (1966), the centrality of marginality; Makarius (1969) highlights the powers of taboo-violation and teaches us that the sacred is a product of profanity, especially the profanity of female blood; and Turner (1969) proffers *communitas* as a temporally and spatially radical state of communal liminality. I will briefly examine each of these in turn, and then critique them through the work of trickster scholars Babcock-Abrahams (1975), Pelton (1980), Camp (1988), and Williams (2000), each of whom have drawn on and amended or augmented these theories.

Geertz (1977, in Babcock-Abrahams 1975:158), first, is fascinated by the ‘counteractive patterns’ of the Balinese cockfight, which contain “the elements of a culture’s own negation.” Having been inadvertently caught up in a cockfighting event during his anthropological fieldwork, he is initiated into a ‘magical space,’ distinct from that of everyday social life. He labels this ‘deep play,’ borrowing the terminology from Bentham (1748-1832). A consummate logician, Bentham condemns deep play, and (in Ackerman’s 1999:18 paraphrasing) dismisses it as:

¹⁷⁹ Williams (2000:2) notes that, in the western tradition at least, “although by the Middle Ages tricksters have ceased to practice such dramatic shape-shifting, remnants of polymorphy are to be found ... in the love of disguise typical of many of the tricksters and pranksters of literature of that period.”

¹⁸⁰ E.g. many of the West African and subsequent Afro-American tricksters have two faces, symbolizing their simultaneous connection to past (origin) and present, and their situation on the boundary of inside-outside.

Any activity in which ‘the stakes are so high that ... it is irrational for anyone to engage in it at all, since the marginal utility of what you stand to win is grossly outweighed by the disutility of what you stand to lose.’

The players in a deep play situation are utterly absorbed within this irrational space, to the point that they lay their (rational and public) selves “on the line” (Ackerman 1999:18). A dissolution of the order of things, including the self, follows, which mimics the ‘originary chaos’ of metaplay¹⁸¹, and “ruptures the shared consciousness, the societal ethos, and consensual validation - in short, the very order of order itself” (Hynes 1993:215). Countering Bentham’s censure, Geertz celebrates deep play’s power to challenge the “logic of order and convergence” (*ibid*). Deep play operates outside of privileged profit (work) economies; it has no purpose beyond gleeful, or ironic, expressiveness. Indeed, it “makes *nothing* happen,” stripping symbolic meaning away from life to “[evoke] ... a laughter of truly disillusioned delight” (Pelton 1980:265-6, emphasis added).

From a western framework of understanding, the (indigenous) trickster is necessarily paradoxical, as “the societies that imagine him do not accept the distinction between word and event, art and reality, made by Auden, Geertz, and, indeed, our whole post-Cartesian culture” (*ibid*). The trickster points to the utter seriousness, or sacredness, of play; and through a “metasocial commentary,” opens up the community, society, and culture to endless diversity and the ongoing creative possibilities of the virtual (Hynes 1993:215).

Douglas’s (1966) concept of ‘dirt’ and the ‘peripheral’ shifts the theoretical focus from an exceptional situation of play, to inscribe the trickster within the wider, *enduring* structures of society. Her contribution to trickster studies lies in her declaration of the centrality of the marginal to social order (Babcock-Abrahams 1975). Dirt is a relational (and not residual) category, in Douglas’ account; it is the “margin of mess” that defines the boundaries of any social order or system (*ibid* 152). This includes “not only matter, but experience itself out of place” (a ‘metaphorical dirt’) (Pelton 1980:249). The trickster as a marginal figure delineates the boundaries of the social system, and mediates between the inside (sacred order) and the outside (profane disorder). He is thus responsible for the creation and spacing of community. This is the “paradox of central marginality”: that the trickster’s location on the outside opens up the very possibility of the communal, a factor which “makes the trickster such a powerful and disturbing force within a community” (Williams 2000:4). Trickster tales do not merely symbolize the ambiguity of social order; rather, they hermeneutically expose “the necessary ambiguity with which people regard ambiguity” (Pelton 1980:249). Ambiguity, as we

¹⁸¹ Hynes (1993:214), drawing on Geertz’s (1972) notion of ‘deep play,’ argues: “there is an ‘otherness’ to play that we might call metaplay.”

have seen, is a doubled phenomenon, which is both rejected by, and essential to, the ordering of society. Whilst dirt is instrumental to the construction of community (Douglas 1966), it, in turn, perpetually threatens to collapse or dissolve the created order from whence it originates (Pelton 1980)¹⁸². Thus, the trickster is part of a meta-social process, which brings the “contradictory and the anomalous” back within the bounds of the social order, performing the ‘community’ anew at each retelling (*ibid* 252).

Makarius’ (1993) theory of the trickster likewise acknowledges the central ambivalence of order, i.e. that “the trickster only synthesizes because he first disrupts” (Pelton 1980:246). However, it draws on the force of taboo and profanity, rather than excessive dirt, to create sacred order. At the heart of (tribal) society’s ritual and magic is “*the magical violation of prohibitions,*” and it is from this premise that Makarius (1993:68) posits the trickster as the powerful magician who violates taboo for the good of all. Blood, the ultimate and common source of all taboo, is essential to his power¹⁸³:

When it is not invested with a specific significance that wards off danger, spilt human blood is considered to be *the* malignant, frightful, and dangerous element among all human beings (*ibid*).

There is a “particularly acute fear” attached to uniquely female forms of blood: “the blood of the menses, defloration, and childbirth” (*ibid*). Such blood is taboo; however, its impurities are harnessed for the good of society when turned against external threats (*ibid* 69). Again, we are offered a glimpse into the ambivalent powers of women and the potency of female blood, when Makarius (*ibid*) cites examples of menstruating women running through the fields to save them from vermin, or healing children by wrapping rags soaked in menstrual blood around their necks to ward off sickness. At this point I am reminded of the Grimms (1815) rendition of the *Goose Girl*, where the ‘old mother’ gives her daughter a white cloth, stained by three drops of her blood, to ward off harm.

The efficaciousness of blood can serve a darker magic. Breaking the blood taboo in dire need, in order to draw on the singular powers of blood to prevent harm to the community and banish bad, can lead to an occult fascination with the positive (in terms of gain) powers of blood mastery.

¹⁸² Pelton (1980:250) notes that Douglas links dirt and water because of their ‘dissolving’ properties. However, there is a difference of form: “water flows, but dirt merely abides.” Both return the immobility and repetitiousness of stagnant order to formlessness, which is “an apt symbol of the beginning and of growth as it is of decay.” (Douglas 1966, in Pelton 1980:250).

¹⁸³ Interestingly, Makarius’s trickster is male, despite his utilization of female blood.

Here, blood is seen to provide benefits for the individual wielder of this taboo magic (Makarius 1993). This process of ‘extension’ is, for Makarius (*ibid*), improper (based on wrongfully supplementing the positive from negative uses of blood) and “unconscious” (the illicit violation must be carried out in secrecy). As such, it carries grave dangers: it is “‘high voltage’ power” (*ibid* 71). In times of emergency, (tribal) society has no recourse but to fall back on the prohibited blood magic of the trickster-magician figure; and, for Makarius (1993:84), it is from this moment of profanity that the sacred derives:

Sacredness has nothing to do with virtue, intelligence, or dignity: it derives from his [the trickster’s] violations, which make him the possessor of magical power - that which is identified with ‘the sacred.’

It is *through* his role as taboo-breaker, that the trickster figure attains semi-divine status and becomes godly: “a quality that no ridicule or abomination succeeds in effacing” (*ibid* 68)¹⁸⁴. However, drawing on three Polynesian mythic trickster tales (of Manabozo, Maui, and Legba), Makarius (*ibid*) notes that this is always a partial divinity, because it is accompanied by rejection from both communities, divine and human, who are threatened by the trickster’s continual profanity. The price of (occult) empowerment is banishment. Perhaps this explains the historical reluctance to openly equate trickster qualities with feminine willness. Whilst trickster-like qualities are often implicitly conferred on women in folklore and fairy tales (e.g. Camp 1988), to express the equivalency openly would be to acknowledge these women as powerful contenders to, and *constitutors* of, the patriarchal social order. Alternatively, it would cast already marginal females as witches (and unnatural threats to the natural order), and expose to them to the penalty of death¹⁸⁵.

Makarius (1993) is able to unite the ambivalent features of the trickster with the making and breaking of the sacred order of community. This offers a valuable corrective to those who either celebrate the trickster’s creative freedoms, or regard them in the light of a social steam-valve. However, she limits the trickster’s power to the violation of (blood) taboo, and fails to address power that arises from multivalency. As Ballinger (1991:34) notes:

What makes the Trickster mythically powerful is that he embodies all, reveals all raw reality. He has the power of reality in his hands, prodigal though he is, for like the sacred centre, all flows into him and in his travels he touches all directions.

¹⁸⁴ There are many mythic examples of tricksters emitting themselves to the ranks of the gods through the violation of blood taboo; consider, for example, Hermes, who sacrificed two of the sacred cattle of Apollo in his quest for divinity, and in doing so invented the practice of sacrifice.

¹⁸⁵ Note that the triple-faced Hecate is the Ancient Greek goddess of thresholds, crossroads, and witches, and shares many trickster characteristics in common with Hermes.

It is questionable whether the metaphor of a mythical magician could be extended to the fairy tale tricksters discussed above, especially those with a more secular genealogy. Further, Pelton (1980:247) has claimed that Makarius' explanation overemphasizes the individualism of tricksters, and underplays their "ironic humour." This mistake is exacerbated by the commonly assumed correspondence between rogues, clowns and solitariness:

We must remember that tricksters or cultural clown-figures are not, as they would be considered in our culture, individually motivated deviants, but socially sanctioned images or performers (Hynes and Doty 1993:7).

Tricksters may work alone, but they always work towards the community. They are "the [openers] of passages, but these passages lead always to the centre of the social world with all its density of clans, lineages, and customs" (Pelton 1980:247).

Turner's (1969, 1970, 1975) theory of liminality is better equipped to address the role that ironic and grotesque transformation plays in the reaffirmation of social order. In contrast to the theorists above, Turner (1974:101) denounces associations of social with structure, and psychological with non-structure, which, he argues, leads to "a false dichotomy between the individual as subject, and society as object." His interest lies instead with the "*interstructural* situations" of society (Pelton 1980:33, emphasis added). Turner (1970) draws his concept of liminality from Van Gennep's (1960) passage model of ritual, and uses this to identify three stages in the ritual process of (social or individual) maturation: separation, margin (or limen), and aggregation. For both Van Gennep and Turner, ritual implies *ontological* transformation in "the transition of an individual from one state to another" (Deflem 1991); and this transformation carries therapeutic, functional, and generative weight (see Whalen 2004). The crucible of transformation is the segregated stage of liminality, where initiates enter an inter-structural phase of being through three mechanisms: "the communication of sacra" (or secret symbols that "represent the unity and continuity of the community"); the "ludic deconstruction and recombination of familiar cultural configurations" (where "familiar objects are ... presented in distorted, deviant or grotesque forms"); and the "simplification of the relations of the social structure" (Deflem 1991). The liminal process unfolds a sacred space, into which the initiates enter in disguise. Having physical—but lacking social—reality, they are both connected to deity ("the unbounded, the infinite, the limited"), and to death ("undoing, dissolution, decomposition") (Turner 1970:71, 99). This notion is, of course, reminiscent of Makarius' (1993) semi-divine trickster magician, who occupies a likewise threshold space on the boundaries of community and the outside

wilderness/underworld realm of death. Thus, the liminal process plunges one into a state of “neither here nor there ... betwixt and between all fixed points of classification” (Turner 1975:232).

There have been various reinterpretations of this liminal threshold since Turner’s seminal account. For Shield (1991:84), liminality is defined by its “ill-defined margins.” Babcock-Abrahams (1975:155) imagines an interstitial space, “like the spider inhabiting the nooks and crannies of social spaces”; and certainly fairy tale tricksters do make use of the small slips and gaps in their social environment (and social conventions) to bring about their (nefarious) ends. Further, these cracks and crevasses correspond to the breakdown of “normal structures of patterns of relating” (*ibid*), as is evidenced in key instances of “social rupture or discontinuity” such as “pilgrimages, carnivals, religious conversions, life transitions, holidays” (Whelan 2004). Political, psychological, and epistemological ruptures can also be included in this litany; thus, Bhabha (1994, in Whelan 2004) evokes the “in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated” in his postcolonial theory, and Bigger (2012:212), focuses on (dis)embodied experience and the “in-between state of mind, in between fact and fiction ... in between statuses” in his psycho-social account.

There is a broader sense of ‘marginality’ creeping into this account of the limen. Turner (1974) himself equated the limen with the marginal, implying a peripheral geography with the seclusion of the liminal ritual stage. Again, Turner’s ‘exiles’ and ‘strangers’ (1974), Ballinger’s ‘wanderer in the wilderness’ (1991), and Babcock-Abrahams’ (1975) ‘spider’ and ‘vagabond,’ all lend a sense of outsidership and structural inferiority to the limen. This is perhaps a natural conclusion of the widening of Turner’s theory in two ways. First, Turner’s (1967:100) own expansions to the third mechanism of the liminal process (leveling of societal structure) results in a negatively defined¹⁸⁶ “community or commonality of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions,” which he subsequently names “*communitas*.” Examples of this are the comradeship experienced by soldiers at war (Whelan 2004), or the “excessive and illicit behaviour” of carnival participants (Williams 2000:10). ‘*Communitas*’ can be experienced in different forms as “spontaneous and immediate,” a normative organization of marginal equals, or as an ideological gathering, which penetrates the structures of society (*ibid*). In each case, *communitas* has a distinct spatiality: it “breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority” (Turner 1969:128). In its rupturing motion, the *communitas* opens the inside to the outside. From the perspective of ordered society, those in *communitas*

¹⁸⁶ Negative because it can only be defined in relation to structure, as its inverse.

are a threat or danger to society: “he who is in *communitas* is an exile or a stranger, someone who, by his very existence, calls into question the whole normative order” (Turner 1975:100).

Turner initially derived his theory from close examination and participation in Ndembu ritual, but subsequently extrapolated it to “the complex industrial world,” identifying quasi-liminal, or *liminoid*, phenomena in cultural events and leisure time, such as hippy gatherings in the 1970s (see Deflem 1991). There is a key difference between the tribal liminal and modern liminoid: the former is discontinuous, reaffirming society, and is generated from its own centre; whilst the latter is continual, originates as a challenge from those outside of the hegemonic sociopolitical structure, and is transformative (*ibid*). Nevertheless, the notion of the ‘liminoid’ has been roundly criticized for its generalizations of a specific ritualistic process, and for simplification (e.g. Bigger 2009; Geertz 1972). Indeed, various scholars have chosen to reject the term ‘liminality’ *per se*, in preference for a wider social and geographical concept of ‘marginality’ (e.g. Babcock-Abrahams 1975; Shields 1991), or to refocus liminal theory on the ritualistic process (e.g. Bigger 2009). Many trickster theorists, however, have found theoretical purchase in the concept, and especially in the generative properties of the limen (Doty and Hynes 1993). Pelton (1980:36-7), using the West African example of Anansy, argues that the trickster becomes a “personified limen,” who “rejects cultural norms and looses the forces of nature,” in order to “release the power of both to produce, not another primordial world, but the world which is *now* in existence.” This loosening of forces is a necessarily chaotic business, both:

Messy and metaphysically ambiguous because that figure will be opening up the purely structured to the yeast of antistructure ... pulling ‘the most unyielding matter - disease, ugliness, greed, lust, lying, jealousy - into the orbit of life’ as it is lived daily (Doty and Hynes 1993:21).

Indeed, the trickster’s cunning lies in the way he ironically and chaotically pieces together life into different, unnatural (grotesque), arrangements, in order for us to see things anew¹⁸⁷.

As the arch-assembler, the trickster’s power is more likely derived from “wandering in paradoxical reality rather than living in the cracks of classification where all life can be squeezed from him” (Ballinger 1991:33). The trickster is not so much an interstitial being, but a glutton of worldly experience: “as he travels defying the norms, Trickster swallows all, classification and cracks, in his ravenous and extravagant appetite

¹⁸⁷ Hynes (1993:42) refers to the trickster as the “sacred and lewd bricoleur.”

for life” (*ibid* 34). Tricksters make new realities out of the piecemeal experiences of life, in a “‘metasocial commentary’ or ‘hermeneutics in action’” (Doty and Hynes 1993:21). Simultaneously, their spontaneous assemblage results in often monstrous, “distorted, deviant or grotesque” forms (Deflem 1991), which convince us that “ways of acting and thinking alternative to those laid down by the deities or ancestors are ultimately unworkable and may have disastrous consequences” (Turner 1970:106). Whichever explanation we prefer (and their contradictoriness is surely a necessary product of the ambiguity of the limen), the trickster’s piecemeal assembling brings the sacred into the ordinary:

The trickster is the image of man individually and communally seizing the fragments of his experience and *discovering* in them an order sacred by its very wholeness ... At the same time that the trickster discloses the radically human character of the whole cosmos, he shows the holiness of ordinary life (Pelton 1980:255-6).

The ritual process of the liminal therefore carries an excess of meaning, over and beyond the symbolic reaffirmation of the social order.

Thus far, tricksters have materialized as eternally disordered figures or states of being, which create the sacred from the excessive and profane. They are evocative beings, and their affectivity is their driving force and seat of their power, as in the case of the fear evoked by the blood taboo, the strong revulsion provoked by dirt, or the cognitive dissonance effected through the monstrous masks and fearful artifacts of the liminal state. However, the main thrust of this (largely anthropological) ‘regime’ of scholarship lies with ‘present,’ ritualized, and oral encounters with tricksters, and their immediate effects. The second line of hermeneutic enquiry grapples with the perennial texture of *literary* trickster storytelling. It posits the very “knowing and doing” of culture takes place through performative “acts of semiosis,” such as those which characterize trickster tales (Spinks 1991:xvi). The cultural ambivalence of tricksters becomes, in this account, a product of their distinctive linguistic ‘uncertainty.’

Trickster tales are distinguishable by their sophisticated wordplay. To Bal (1988:137):

Trickiness lies in their semiotic meaning: they are a sign of the sign. They represent the essence of language, the very language their existence depends on for their representation.

As literary hermeneuts, tricksters circle through culture, making *and* interpreting it. It is worth remembering the folk etymology of ‘hermeneutical,’ which derives from a notorious trickster figure of western mythology: the self-made god Hermes, messenger of the ancient

Greek gods, and deity of oratory, literature, poetry and wit (Hyde 1998; Palmer 2001). Hermeneutic wordplay engages with “the process and practice of signification ... [seeking] to make the symbolic modes (of cultural signs) less opaque and ‘real’ by returning to the process of the semiotic” (Spinks 1991:185). In doing so, it opens the symbolic system to excess, for trickster semiosis is “unlimited semiosis: excess, laughter, contradiction and above all the ability to modify signs” (*ibid* 186). Trickster tales are linguistically self-conscious, forcing the audience to attend to their own processes of meaning making. As a “semiotic *tour de force*” (*ibid* 190), tricksters radicalize cultural categories and enable ‘different’ geographies.

Spinks (1991) focuses his theory of ‘marginal signs’ largely on the cognitive dissonance that tricksters create through their word play. The trickster, for Spinks (*ibid* 189), is primarily a playfully generative form of semiosis, albeit this is a dubious “sense of play ... uproarious, childlike, low-brow and in bad taste.” Trickster aggressively smashes through cultural signification and subjective perception: “Trickster plays a head game, and his intent is to ‘fuck over,’ as the street people say, the heads of his audience” (*ibid*). There are many social benefits to this ‘head game,’ for example Spinks (*ibid* 7) equates tricksters’ “toys” to the “tools” with which we build new orders and realities. The trickster enables creation, discovery, misdirection and mistakes in the signifying system (*ibid*). As ‘marginal signs’ (existing at the margins of the signifying culture, and breaching the boundary between culture and non-culture), tricksters embody an “epistemological buzz, not so much because they clatter false, but perhaps because they whirr with too many possibilities” (*ibid* 6). This has a twofold effect: to allow the sacred ‘undifferentiated’ into our differentiated and closed systems of doing and understanding; and to counter hubris, “[reminding] us of the fragility of our knowledge systems, the limitations of our references, the approximations of our understandings and the self-relevance of our ‘realities’” (*ibid*). The cost of the latter (hubris) is an unwelcome state of estrangement and disorientation, which undermines the logically defined ego and individual subject¹⁸⁸. These fractured subjectivities are the mainstay of Native American trickster literatures. According to Vizinor (1990:279), they form “unstudied landscapes, wild and comic rather than tragic and representational, storied with narrative wisps and tribal discourse.” The comic narratives of the Native American tricksters are communal and chancy: “comic world views are communal; chance is more significant than ‘moral ruin’” (*ibid* 282). A vital attribute of the comic is plurality; and comic trickster tales offer a noisy “concordance of narrative voices” (*ibid* 284). Whilst the Native American trickster enables (social) comedy, he or she is not its product; indeed for Vizinor (*ibid* 286), the trickster cannot be tied to any

¹⁸⁸ Spinks (1991:6) describes trickster texts as an “epistemological buzz,” which reminds me of Barthes’ (1975:12) concept of the “vertical din (the verticality of language and of its destruction)” of bliss in the pleasurable text. Further, the disorientation of trickster tales is reminiscent of Barthes’ (*ibid*) notions of the ‘blissful’ text.

signification, social, historical, political or economical. It has no real “presence in the narrative,” but rather is the “‘nothingness’ in a narrative voice, an ‘encounter’” which is conducive to creativity. Despite, or perhaps because of, this non-signification, indigenous trickster narratives are socially and politically liberating: “the trickster unties the *hypotragedies* imposed on tribal narratives” by the “silence and separation” of science and social science discourses (*ibid* 282-3). The trickster acts as an aggressive anti-racial, anti-colonial impulse within these tales (*ibid* 285); and this is especially evident in Afro-American black vernacular, which similarly draws heavily on mythic trickster figures and their tales (Abrahams 1962). Thus Abrahams (*ibid* 209) draws attention to the infinite creativity of ‘playing the dozens’: a verbal contest amongst male, “lower class Negro adolescents [*sic*],” where ‘playing’ and sounding’ contributes to a larger linguistic game of some semiotic mastery. The “boys [*sic*]” involved hurl insults at each other in rhyming or pun form; generally slurs on the sexuality of their families and especially mothers (*ibid*). The language of ‘playing the dozens’ is not an everyday language, but that of an-Other space, similar to deep play (see above). Here, “changes in pitch, stress, and sometimes syntax, provide the signals of contest” (*ibid* 211), and open out a ‘battlefield’ in which the witty rhyming can begin.

Abrahams’ (1962:209) neocolonial thesis recuperates the semiotic trickery of ‘playing the dozens’ to a liminal stage marking the crossover from childhood to manhood, a searching for ‘manly identity,’ preparation for gang life, and a social steam valve—or, at worst, “a neurotic symptom” of the (black) race. Gates (1989), in contrast, offers a more insightful understanding of Afro-American trickster wordplay, both in oral and literary forms. For Gates (*ibid xix*), “the black vernacular has assumed the singular role as the black person’s ultimate sign of difference, a blackness of the tongue.” Key to this privately encoded but communal ritual are two “signal trickster figures”: Esu-Elegbora, and the Signifying Monkey (*ibid*). These separate but related trickster figures form “points of conscious articulation of language traditions aware of themselves as traditions, complete with a history, patterns of development and revision, and internal principles of patterning and organization” (*ibid*). In other words, they are meta-discursive narrative figurations. The first, Esu, is a linguistic “copula” that connects:

Truth with understanding, the sacred with the profane, text with interpretation, the word (as a form of the verb *to be*) that links a subject with its predicate. He connects the grammar of divination with its rhetorical structures (*ibid* 6).

Esu performs self-reflexive interpretations and ‘double-voiced utterances’ in the black vernacular. The latter involves the drawing on dual white and black antecedent texts to furnish a new black vernacular literature through repetition and revision. This includes typological revisions, the

production of a ‘speakerly text’¹⁸⁹ (with a dynamic discourse, which functions as an unusual ‘presence’ in the story, neither a character of the plot nor a traditional ‘narrator’), ‘talking texts’ (which speak to other black voices in texts), and ‘rewriting the speakerly’ (via pastiche as homage) (*ibid xxv*). The signifying monkey adds an intertextual ‘wandering’ to tale telling, and “serves as the figure-of-figures, as the trope in which are encoded several other peculiarly black rhetorical tropes” (*ibid xxi*). Monkey as a ‘wandering signifier’ endows tales with a ‘multiplicity of meanings,’ through a “process of cultural transmission and translation” (*ibid 19*). Together, these black vernacular ‘signal figures’ enact a powerful anti-systemic performance, much like the Native American tricksters of Vizinor’s (1990) account (above). Fundamentally, black vernacular that draws on the tricksters Esu and the signifying monkey offer poesis as praxis to challenge the logocentrism of (western) language, which fixes meaning from an outside, objective point, through the eye of the all-seeing narrator.

Tricksters further undermine the ‘logos’ of a text through their unique dual perspective: they occupy two simultaneous positions in tales, and shift between these throughout the duration of the story (Doueichi 1993). Trickster is thus at once a *character* within the story (an object told by a story), and a metafictional transcendental *narrator* (a subject who interprets facts and generates meaning about the same story) (*ibid 200*). ‘Doubled’ tricksters, with their “shifting perspective,” unsettle the language of story: “the narrative allows itself to be read as a story at the same time that it reveals itself to be a semiotic place” (*ibid 199-200*). This dualistic trickster space, “between discourse and story” (*ibid*), is sacred, because it is here that the processes of signification—and therefore meaning—take place. In the trickster’s realm, everything is already a sign with the power to ‘mean something’; that is, tricksters make *meaningfulness* possible (*ibid*). Ultimately, this meaningfulness is tied to the trickster’s profanity: this is the figure who is too chaotic or schizophrenic to exist at the unifying place of the primordial “ahistorical moment of being or presence,” which characterizes the sacred place of western myth (*ibid 195*). However, the trickster’s trick is to expose this very myth of primordality, casting doubt on the possibility of presence, the ‘out there,’ and the unified subject implicit in this myth (*ibid 198*). Trickster tales unfold “a different order of reality, one that makes possible both an ordinary, conventional meaning (the face-value, referential meaning of the discourse as story) and a level of meaning that is extraordinary, unconventional, and sacred (*ibid*). Or as Pelton (1980:3) observes, trickster stories offer us a linguistic puzzle, which strikes at the very roots of what is means to be sacred:

The problem, I am convinced, is finally one of language. The trickster speaks - and embodies - a vivid and subtle religious language, through which he links animality and ritual transformation, shapes culture by means of sex and laughter, ties cosmic

¹⁸⁹ As opposed to Barthes’s (1991) ‘writerly’ or ‘readerly’ texts.

process to personal history, empowers divination to change boundaries into horizons, and reveals the passages to the sacred embedded in daily life.

In sum, cultural hermeneutic scholarship paints a two-sided image of the trickster figure, depending on the anthropological or linguistic histories of the researcher involved. Trickster research that draws on orally derived, empirical anthropological scholarship, portrays a profane trickster who, nonetheless, is vital to the formation of sacred society. Whether through deep play, ‘pollution,’ blood rites, or their liminal position in society, tricksters open out organized society to the disorganized, unstructured Other. Tricksters are powerful beings of the outside, who bring ‘excess’ to the heart of the community, and without whom community would soon stagnate and fail. Linguistically inspired scholarship, on the other hand, posits tricksters as hermeneuts, or semiotic ‘effects.’ For these latter theorists, tricksters “point to ... the linguisticity of our constructed world and the illusoriness of that construction,” and as they do so, “trickster stories open onto the sacred” (Doueïhi 1993:198).

4.4.4 Trickster humour

Whilst psycho-social, structural, and cultural hermeneutic trickster accounts all note the comedic value of trickster tales, they do not theorize comedy directly¹⁹⁰. Yet, arguably the most fundamental characteristic of tricksters, and certainly the most engaging aspect of trickster tales, is their world-transforming humour. Unfortunately, many scholars have fallen into the trap of divorcing humour from ‘seriousness’ in their understanding of trickster tales, and subsuming the former to the latter, which has “tended to lead students of the trickster to treat his seriousness so ponderously that they have turned this most gleeful of mythic figures into a solemn philosophical statement” (Pelton 1980:2). This is a real danger for trickster studies (and specifically for this thesis) as there is a long western scholarly tradition that reserves humour for the unimportant and inconsequential matters of life, or harnesses it in the service of more ‘important’ ends. This oversight stems in part from Enlightenment thinking, with philosophers such as Meier (1947, in Doty and Hynes 1993:28) criminalizing “indecent” laughter in the face of “great and important” things. Again, the Romantics, with their fascination with all things ‘folk,’ aimed for a seriousness quite antithetical to trickster tales (*ibid*). For the Romantics, folk culture was of vital importance, and thus could not be trivial at the same time; and yet the etymology of the terms ‘important’ and ‘trivial’ suggests that these words may have more in common than first appears. ‘Important,’ is related to the verb ‘import,’ a term derived from the Latin *importā-re*, “to carry or bring in,” and *portāre*, “to carry,” (also the Old French *en porter*, and the Latin *inde portāre*

¹⁹⁰ With the exception of Vizinor (1990), who constructs a somewhat limiting oppositional account of trickster humour as the antithesis of western ‘tragedy.’

“to carry away”) (OED 2012). It was coined in the early 15th century, and referred to conveyance, particularly of goods and information from abroad (*ibid*). ‘Trivial,’ meanwhile, derives from the Latin *trivium* (referring to the “the lower division of the seven liberal arts, comprising grammar, rhetoric, and logic”), and carries two linked connotations (*ibid*). The first is of crossroads, specifically where three roads meet; and the second is of vulgarity or the commonplace, which characterizes said crossroads (i.e. a place accessible to all people) (*ibid*). There is something trickster-like about roads, the carrying of goods and information by merchants or strangers and, of course, crossroads.

There have been various attempts to re-theorize (trickster) humour in a more favorable and nuanced manner. Most famously Bakhtin (1968, in Doty and Hynes 1993:29) offers a corrective to Romantic folk discourse, through “his extensive demonstration of the sociopolitical aspects of carnivalesque humour.” We can also seek inspiration from pre-Classical agrarian rituals, and (drawing on Aristotle) specifically the phallic revelries of spring rites and harvest festival (Williams 2000). Again, humour is celebratory, profane and fundamentally religious: the comedic is essential to the very functioning of the seasons and human life. From within trickster theory we find five key ways of interpreting trickster humour. First, the tales present themselves as “deeply satisfying entertainment” (Hynes 1993:202). This is largely a product of the narrative formation of trickster tales, their “dramatic timing, and narrative tension” (*ibid* 203). The unexpected bricolage carried out by tricksters in stories, and the irreverence of their profanity, also adds to the “inherent humour” of the tales (*ibid*, also Pelton 1980). However, this humour is not satisfying enough, for it is invariably recuperated by the same theorists in the search for a ‘deeper’ meaning: “beyond the *surface humour*, there is a deeper type of insight, irony, and transformation at work in the trickster myths” (Hynes 1993:205, emphasis added). Humour is drawn into the service of the didactic: it is harnessed “to another level, linked to another gift, one that evokes insight and enlightenment” (*ibid* 206). This deeper level is that of ‘metaplay,’ which marks the second theorization of trickster humour. Here, laughter resides within the sphere of play. Valsiner (2001) expands this sphere indefinitely, claiming “life is play”; and he means this quite literally. In his psychological account, life consists of the juggling of human roles or masks in an “ongoing dialogue not only with the social reality as that is, but as it could be” (*ibid*). Metaplay as the indeterminacy of life, also features in Spinks’ (1991) account of the trickster as the ultimate semiotician, whose playfulness generates literal meaning. Laughter is somewhat of a tag-on, here, part of the ‘fun’ game of creation, or a childlike triumph in breaching the supposed limits of the possible.

The third theory of trickster laughter is more sinister, reducing the trickster's gleefulness to a "ritual vent for social frustrations" (Hynes 1993:206; see 4.1.4). Carnival and the medieval feast of the fools are spaces in which the impoverished and oppressed can temporarily vent their accumulated anger, without threatening the social order. Indeed, Williams (2000:11) notes that the social order is maintained even within carnival, in the form of the *charivari*, "the ritual designed to humiliate publicly those who in the eyes of the community had transgressed agreed limits of behaviour." *Charivari*, a noisy affair, was directed against cuckolds, wife-beaters, adulterers etc., and employed shame as a "function of social control" (*ibid*). This brings to mind other cruelties implicit in carnival humour. For Bakhtin (1968, in Williams 2000:11), carnival rests on the regenerative 'grotesque body,' and exists in a "banqueting chronotope," where "the 'material bodily level' is used to renew scriptural content." There are two humours implicit in this: slapstick/farce, and satire (*ibid*). Williams (*ibid*) draws a clear line between these two, associating the former with the more harmless 'prankster' figures of fools and clowns, and the latter with deviant tricksters. The former comprises the "voluntary bodily democracy" of the carnival, categorized by physical comedy and buffoonery (*ibid*, my emphasis). This is carnival's playful side, which beckons the onset of Turner's (1975) *communitas*. Simultaneously, carnival humour takes a darker form in satire, which carries sadistic elements. Such cruelty has a 'leveling' effect through a *forced* production of a bodily democracy, wherein high culture is made to recognize "the common physicality of human life" (Williams 2000:15). Satire is targeted humour, where pleasurable appreciation of the satirist's wit is "tempered by fear" that the same wit may be directed at oneself (*ibid*). Bakhtin (1984:12) summarizes carnival laughter as "gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and decries, it buries and revives." His phrasing clarifies the ambiguity of carnival, which, as we have seen, can be conservatively directed toward social reaffirmation and the reassertion of order, or may radicalize the existing system and crack open a (limited) possibility of new ways of doing and being (or becoming).

These theories of metaplay and carnival tend toward the conservative in one fundamental way: they describe a non-normative situation, a world set apart from the seriousness of everyday life. This is problematic for Lock (2002), who argues that, however serious the play (that is, however deep the players are drawn into the game), it cannot "produce results in the world beyond the game." Thus, "the jester who baits the king, the fool crowned as 'Lord of Misrule,' observe strictly demarcated guidelines that confine their comic play to its own sphere, contained within the status quo" (*ibid*). Fools, clowns and jesters are merely figures of orthodoxy, their "comic play acting as a lubricant of the status quo" (*ibid*). These figures may delimit the boundaries of social life, but are unable to step beyond these boundaries. For Lock (2002), tricksters are distinct from the socially re-affirmative clowns and fools of carnival because their humour is socially *transformative*. This is difficult to grasp in the context of

trickster scholarship that draws its chief inspiration from Freud's, Bergson's or Douglas' philosophies of humour (Williams 2000). However, laughter works in many different ways beyond those conceptualized by western scholars, and we must be "on our guard lest our own cultural biases against humour keep us from recognizing other ways a culture's laughter could function" (Doty and Hynes 1993:29). For example, trickster humour amongst Native Americans often initiates ritualistic ceremonies (*ibid*); something that is hard to understand from the perspectives discussed above. This suggests a fourth possible trajectory of 'humour as ritual,' which is as yet to be fully theorized¹⁹¹.

Finally, I want to suggest one further way to address the humour of trickster tales: through the notion of 'delight.' This word crops up throughout trickster theory, most directly in Bandelier's (1890) quasi-fictional account of ancestral Puebloans as 'the delight makers'¹⁹². Again, Pelton (1980) subtitles his research on West African tricksters *Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight*, and Snyder (1977, in Hynes and Doty 1993:22) refers to a "delightful, Dadaistic energy" of trickster tales. Delight in these accounts is affective: it moves, enchants, energizes, seizes, and *transforms*. Tricksters 'succeed' in fairy tales when they compel their audience, and enliven the story; and the motivating force by which they achieve this is the affect of 'delight.' Links could be made, then, between the delight of trickster narratives and narrativity, and the affectivity of fairy tale enchantment (see 2.3.3)¹⁹³. For Bennett (2001:4), "to be enchanted is to be struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the familiar and the everyday." Indeed, what else is the trickster but a marvellous, energetic figuring of language, narrative and story, which drags us forcefully from our 'normal' expectations (including that of a fairy tale happy ending), into a disturbing, exciting, liberating world, where we cannot help but laugh. Tricksters, mean or mild, are lively and enlivening; and they alone, amongst fairy tale figures, force us to celebrate all aspects of living, including the vulgar, the dangerous, the horrific, and even the tragic finality of life.

4.5 Tricksters as geographical refrains

"The logic of order and convergence, that is, logo-centrism, is challenged by another path, the random and divergent trail taken by that profane metaplayer, the trickster" (Hynes 1993:216).

¹⁹¹ I have not attempted to develop this theory, as to do so would be to fall into the trap that Fagan (2010) and other indigenous scholars have recalled: that of the inadvertent neocolonial gesture.

¹⁹² Available online at Project Gutenberg (2006).

¹⁹³ Enchantment can, of course, have a 'darker' side, as we see in chapter 5, with the enthrallment of the Joker; and delight itself may be either a lighthearted, joyous affect, or a sadistic pleasure *at* the humbling of a person (as we see in carnivalesque, above).

The previous section constructed a genealogy of the key regimes of trickster scholarship, with this figure materializing variously as a socially vulnerable individual or group; a primitive state in humankind's psychic development; an undifferentiated state of being from which order and society are formed; a linguistic and narrative effect; and a figure of profane humour, who evokes a cruel, disorderly, delightful, and sometimes transformative, mirth. Each of these theories is (to greater and lesser extents) attentive to the affective power of the trickster figure/state. For example, psycho-social theories nod at the overturning of social order, and the infantile regressions evoked through the jubilation and scurrilous aspects of trickster stories. The cultural-hermeneutical model is largely preoccupied with the trickster's performative aspects, and overtly labels the trickster as a 'social effect,' which 'affects' us. Narrative theorists focus on techniques of affect, which render the trickster an unstable and destabilizing being or 'becoming.' Despite this, attempts to "take into account the full narrative and performative textures of the tellings" often fall short (Hynes and Doty 1993:7). Where this happens, trickster research falls into one of two traps: it reads the trickster symbolically as a transparent manifestation of individual or social beliefs and desires within a specific cultural context; or the trickster is overly abstracted, and its affective properties are divorced from the very socio-historical context that shapes the trickster's performance and lends it transformative power.

A more important failing of trickster theorizing, and central to this thesis' concerns, lies in its geographical oversight: each of these 'scholarly regimes' adopts implicit geographies that deserve closer attention. Douglas (1966) and Turner (1969, 1975) make the clearest geographical statements with their respective theories of marginality and of the 'betwixt and between.' However, even psychosocial theories hint at a spatial quality of trickster tales, as with the progressive dimensions of Jung's (1959, 2003) primordial perspective, and the domestic (yet ironically socially marginal) Biblical trickster women of Steiner's (1988) account. Despite these pointers, there has been little overt engagement with trickster geographies. Conversely, the discipline of Geography has shown a disappointing disinterest in folklore and fairy tales, including the figure of the trickster. My 'retelling' of trickster tales argues that the geography of this figure underpins the socio-political traits discussed in the theories above. Further, I posit a sustained study of 'trickster geography' can yield interesting insights, and avoid some of the definitional contradictions and dilemmas that have dogged trickster research. In turn, the spatial possibilities offered up by the trickster figure could contribute to recent work in cultural geography on the limits of representation and knowing, problems of logos, the destabilizing of the subject and community, and the more enduring concern with the Other, and how we can ethically address this figure of infinite difference.

From a geographical perspective, the trickster is first and foremost a spatial pattern with affective force. Trickster narratives force us out of our seemingly ordered realities into the insecure and profane in-between places, where what it means to be human, and to be in community, can no longer be taken-for-granted. Thus, the tricksters of fairy tales undermine the sacred myths upon which fairy tales are built. Scheherazade, spinning tales from Shahryar's bed, herself a tale spun by others, raises a metafictional spectre, which forces us to confront the question of what is fact, what is fiction. Lost in the Chinese box structure of *The Arabian Nights*, we cannot appeal to an 'origin' point; and the 'once upon a time' of the fairy tale is no longer an Edenic place in our common past, but a rhetorical construction that tricks us into a sense of community (see 2.2.1). Scheherazade is one of a long lineage of women tricksters whose craftiness ensures the continuation of our ancient folklore as it is passed down through generations—or so the story goes. Indeed, she figures strongly in this myth of an authentic, oral (and often rural) word-of-mouth tradition, which sees women as the bearers of a folkish wisdom that links us to our 'real,' primordial heritage. Then, there are the wilder, more violent (male) tricksters, such as the wolf rapist and murderer of Perrault's (1697) *Red Riding Hood*, who threaten us from the edges of society, venturing out of the woods to eat little girls who would dare to stray from the narrow path, and helpless grannies who are taken in by their chalk-softened voices. Yet the spin of this tale, its final trick, is to situate the wolf not outside of the borders of society, but deep within its heart. Hence Perrault's concluding rhyme, which transforms the wolf from a bestial creature of the wild woods to a dangerously smooth and cultured sophisticate¹⁹⁴, and which returns us to the perennial space-time fascination of the trickster: the eternal movement between periphery and centre of society.

In moving across this societal threshold of centre-periphery, tricksters rupture the boundary that separates sacred from profane, initiating a state of excessive excitement, chaos, fear, and violent disorder. Take Eshu-Esu's double-headed hat, which drives a new boundary through the heart of a hitherto peaceful community, and specifically divides the two farmers who "swore undying fidelity to one another but [neglected] to acknowledge Eshu" (Davis 1991). Cracking open the myth of social cooperation based on socio-cultural commonality to engender strife, is the mainstay of trickster narratives. Indeed, "the betrayal of community norms goes even deeper, for the trickster also consumes and contaminates everything that he sees as being valuable" (Abrahams 2008:9). The trickster provokes thoughtfulness about the differences that trouble the heart of community, and further reaffirms our (human) need for community—but a transformed community, which is alive to its tenuousness and its founding myths. At the end of the Eshu-Esu story the farmers' friendship is strengthened, as they learn to acknowledge the god of disorder,

¹⁹⁴ A transformation echoed in the rakish huntsman-predatory wolf complex of Jordan's (1984) *The Company of Wolves*.

“exchange, or crossed purposes [and] ... crossed speech” who resides at the heart of cooperation (Davis 1991). The French folkloric figure of Reynard the Fox, the amusing charlatan with whom we laugh and simultaneously condemn, plays a similar pedagogical role, in drawing attention to the hypocrisy of community through his derisive and catastrophic antics. Living apart from society, but able to move freely within it, Reynard alters our (the audience) perspective on what it means to be in fellowship (Williams 2000).

4.6 Summary

Geographically, tricksters destroy the myths of origin (‘once upon a time’), cooperation, and closure (‘happily ever after’) inherent in fairy tales. In this way, they perform ‘anti-tales’ (McAra and Calvin 2011). The trickster landscapes community: he maps, traverses, and demolishes its physical and conceptual geographies. One particularly malicious contemporary trickster figure that achieves this violent reshaping of community is the Joker from Nolan’s (2008) Batman film, *The Dark Knight*. The following chapter draws on the ‘regimes’ of trickster scholarship explicated here, to grapple with the ways in which this complex comedian both enables and disavows mythic community in Gotham City through his relationship to its heroic heart: Batman. It is not my purpose in this study to argue that the Joker figure is conclusively (or inconclusively) a ‘true’ trickster¹⁹⁵. Rather, adapting Camp’s (1988:33) argument, I suggest “the abundant points of connection afford the trickster paradigm some interpretive value with respect to [the Joker].” This study of the Joker leads me to define the trickster figure as a geographical refrain with a recognisable—but never stable—temporality and spatiality, which simultaneously destroys and constitutes, civic community.

¹⁹⁵ A notion that would erroneously imply some kind of trickster norm or benchmark, again invoking a decontextualized universal trickster figure or state of being.

Chapter 5. *The Dark Knight* as anti-tale: unma(s)king the mythic community

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Mythic community of Gotham

5.3 Joker: the destruction of mythic community

5.3.1 Graffiti 'bombing' and defacing the symbolic city

5.3.2 Ecological gothic

5.3.3 Urbicide

5.3.4 Itinerancy

5.4 Summary

5.1 Introduction

The thesis now turns to Nolan's (2008) Batman film, *The Dark Knight*, employing an anti-fairy tale framework to address the mythical and subversive layers of the tale. The focus lies with the larger-than-life character of the Joker, who is central to the 'film space' despite being off-screen for much of the story. This trickster-like figure takes over the traditionally heroic Batman tale to "present an alternative narrative interpretation, outcome or morality" (McAra and Calvin 2011:4). Particularly striking is the way the Joker violently landscapes the city and disrupts mythic community and dwelling in Gotham City, employing a variety of techniques to achieve this end. First, the Joker uses comedy and self-contrived artifice to establish himself as a compelling force. A vibrant, yet enigmatic figure of nowhere and no-place, he exists at the crossroads of both the narrative, and Gotham City, and undermines their teleological, mythic closure. The Joker develops an embodied narrative, which is riddled with semiotic and affective eruptions. As a "one man show of verbal play and sadistic theatre" (Landesman 2008) he offers a rich contrast to the sterility of Batman's more Manichean mythology and language. Further, his liminal position as both teller and told, destabilizes the narrative, and shifts us back and forth between enchantment and disenchantment. Second, the Joker pursues affective destructiveness to violently restyle the urban. He acts as "agent of chaos" (Nolan 2008), delighting in the materialistic pleasure of violence for violence's sake. An animating force of destruction, the Joker drives the film forward through aural and physical aggression, opening out a 'deep' temporality of immersion, and childish 'play,' which is incomprehensible, even irrational, to the audience, but nonetheless compelling. Iterative graffiti bombing based around his horrific 'Glasgow smile,' and defacements of the urban fabric, take this affective destruction further, sabotaging the ordered symbolism of the city, and destabilizing the 'rule of law.' Interestingly, this smile slips off the film marketing posters to penetrate a wider Anglo-European political, and racist, imagination, through the subsequent 'graffitiing' of Alkhateeb (2008). The Joker's graffitied smile bears the savage force of urban terrorism—which is exacerbated by his acts of urbicide. Threatening the built environment and its infrastructure, the Joker undermines the durability of the urban fabric, and assails the possibility of 'dwelling-together,' a mythical notion of harmony, which grounds the *polis*. Together, the Joker's destructive gestures become "a form of creativity, an 'anti-art'" (Lewisohn 2008:19), which threaten the very possibility of the communal. In sum, in deploying these varied, and violent, techniques, the Joker takes the Batman myth to its contradictory limits, and problematizes common assumptions of communal space, fairy tales, and storytelling.

5.2 Mythic community of Gotham

Fairy tales disguise their nature *as* stories, and present imaginative worlds as fact. That is, the language of fairy tales is naturalised and eternalised to become the depoliticised speech of myth (Barthes 1972:143). This is the irony of fairy tale narratives: we neither believe in them, nor do we question them. Entering their mythic landscapes is stepping into a ‘once upon a time’ vagueness, which “[denies] [its] historical and systematic development” (Zipes 1994:6). The deceptively simple narrative construction of these stories flattens the tales into a one-dimensional imaginative landscape, which has little purchase beyond an entertaining wonder. Returning to the Grimms’ (2007:72) *Hansel and Gretel*, consider its strange ending: “my tale is done, there runs a mouse, whosoever catches it may make himself a big fur cap out of it.” Seemingly simplistic, this sentence functions on a metafictional level to draw an audience together into an ironic sense of disbelief and superiority. The orality of the text heightens this effect: the Grimms’ address the audience as if they are *speaking* to them directly. Further, the folk orality hints at a longer lineage of listeners, part of the same community (see 2.2.1). Nancy (1991) warns us that this sense of oral antiquity is invested in a western myth of presence. That is, a ‘sense of being-with-others’ is achieved through narrative strategies that unify a fairy tale audience into a mythic community (*ibid* 51). Founded on a narrative of common identity (‘reunions’ and not ‘exchanges’), this community defines itself *against* those who do not belong, and so must deny dissent and difference, however utopian its aims (*ibid*).

The Batman/DC franchise is a seventy-one year old ‘geek’ community based around a mythic superhero, Batman. This community can be viewed within the broader context of the superheroes comics industry, compete with ‘Golden,’ ‘Silver,’ ‘Dark,’ and Present Ages (Jones 2004; Coogan 2006). The Dark Age (1985 - late 1990s)¹⁹⁶ has been particularly defining for the community, as it revolutionised superhero comics. ‘Revolution’ is an apt term as the comics became increasingly bloodthirsty and gruesome, and “one ‘grim’ and ‘gritty’ psychodrama after another was met by a jaded audience who demanded increasing levels of depravity” (Voger 2006:9). Reflecting the cynicism of the day, superheroes became, for the first time, fallible and vulnerable men and women:

The colourful, heroic champions of my youth were [now] draped in more sombre tones, their actions motivated by more personal devils rather than their philanthropic incentives of before. Mania, fervour and obsession seemed to have replaced ‘truth, justice and the American way’ (*ibid* 4).

¹⁹⁶ Voger (2006:9) dates the ‘Dark Age’ of comics from mid 1980s to late 1990s. He holds “three groundbreaking series” (*Crises on Infinite Earths*, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, and *Watchmen*) responsible for “irrevocably [igniting]” this “grim” period of comic book history.

Together with an overhaul of the superhero figures and narratives, the Dark Age saw a restructuring of the comics industry, which was heralded by a number of notable ‘landmarks’ including the first black superhero (Black Panther in 1966), the defiance of the Comics Code Authority¹⁹⁷ in Lee’s (1971) *Amazing Spider-Man* #96-98, and the first inter-publisher crossover stories by Marvel and DC in 1976 (*ibid*). ‘Realism’ is a vital component of this restructuring, with skilled figurative artists contributing to a ‘weightier,’ more ‘believable’ mythology:

Alex Ross brings to his work an unparalleled sense of the real. His heroes - both super and mortal - have weight; they exist in space, and that space is affected by them in ways never before seen on the page’ (*Entertainment Weekly*, in Kidd and Spear 2005).

Consequently, the industry has expanded to accommodate this new style, through new forms of comic book, graphic novels, which are more capable of addressing ‘serious’ political and historical issues. These have entered more popular, mainstream, and critical imagination, for example, Speigelman’s (1980-1991/1996) graphic novel, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* became the first comic book to win the Pulitzer Prize¹⁹⁸.

In parallel with these wider developments, the Batman/DC franchise has been transformed from the celebratory heroism of the wartime and post-war 1940s and 1950s comics, to the more ‘realistic’ tone of the 1970s and 1980s (Voger 2006). Indeed, the Dark Age was in large part precipitated by Miller’s (1986) seminal four-issue comic book series, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, which saw an old and tired Batman reluctantly abandoning retirement to fight crime, once again, in “a near-future Gotham City gone to rot” (Miller 1997). Batman has, for the first time in his lengthy multimedia history, a female Robin to aid him in his fight against crime. Still, she has little influence on his plans, and he remains very much the ‘lone warrior.’ “As civil society crumbles around him,” Batman loses control of his self-imposed rules, to become a dark vigilante (*ibid*). This leads him to an eventual catastrophic showdown with Superman, who has sold himself, and his powers, to the corrupt American administration, and who is tasked with the challenge of bringing ‘in’ the deviant Batman to account for his crimes. The series ends with Batman’s death (self-induced with chemicals), and rebirth (with the help of Robin and more chemicals), as the chilling commander of a ‘sons of

¹⁹⁷ The Comics Code Authority was an act of self-censure “set up by publishers in 1954 to assure American that comic books were squeaky clean,” in response to a moral crusade against these supposedly ‘evil’ stories in the 1950s (Voger 2006:12).

¹⁹⁸ Speigelman’s graphic novel biography of his Jewish father’s experiences of Nazi Germany and Auschwitz was the first comic to win public renown, when it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. It is credited with reestablishing comics as a ‘serious’ genre (see Witek 1989 on the importance of *Maus* to the comic book industry).

Batman's army, planning to "bring sense to a world plagued by worse than thieves and murderers" (Miller 1997: 158). Batman claims at one point that he is 'the law.' At this moment, he has truly become the Dark Knight.

Nolan's (2008) film *The Dark Knight* borrows Miller's title, and positions itself within this grim period of Batman's history. Like the comics, it draws on a wider myth of American military, technological, economic, and especially political and moral, superiority¹⁹⁹. Klaven (2008), for example, provoked uproar by drawing conservative associations with Nolan's Batman, in his *Wall Street Journal* review:

There seems to me no question that the Batman film *The Dark Knight*, currently breaking every box office record in history, is at some level a paean of praise to the fortitude and moral courage that has been shown by George W. Bush in this time of terror and war.

Klaven (*ibid*) specifically celebrates Bush's moral superiority here, and further suggests that it is only within the superhero comics industry, and the fantasy genre more widely, that 'traditional' values such as courage and heroism are currently upheld:

Why is it, indeed, that the conservative values that power our defence — values like morality, faith, self-sacrifice and the nobility of fighting for the right — only appear in fantasy or comic-inspired films like "300," "Lord of the Rings," "Narnia," "Spiderman 3" and now *The Dark Knight*?

There are undeniable similarities between Batman's and Bush's anti-terror strategies, (e.g. the temporary 'suspending' of civil rights through sonar and mobile phone spying to locate and capture the Joker, and strong-arm interrogation tactics). Further, Klaven (*ibid*) identifies a paradox in one of the central issues of the film: the hypocritical way we spurn heroes, such as Batman, who secure civic law and order by breaking it:

When heroes arise who take on those difficult duties themselves, it is tempting for the rest of us to turn our backs on them, to vilify them in order to protect our own appearance of righteousness. We prosecute and execrate the violent soldier or the cruel interrogator in order to parade ourselves as paragons of the peaceful values they preserve²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁹ Note also the presence of the American "mono-myth" of the ever-receding frontier (see Finigan 2010; also Campbell 1988).

²⁰⁰ On this, Klaven (2008) comments: "Like [Bush], Batman is vilified and despised for confronting terrorists in the only terms they understand. Like [Bush], Batman sometimes has to push the boundaries of civil rights to deal with an emergency, certain that he will reestablish those boundaries when the emergency is past." Klaven is tapping into a wider post 9/11 debates on what measures we can 'ethically' take to preserve American (and western more generally) security. His positioning, that state-sanctioned violence is acceptable in upholding the law, may seem unsavory, but is also ruthlessly honest; in a way which Nolan's (2008) Joker himself might appreciate. See White (2008:6) for a discussion on the ethics of "killing to prevent future killings," which he argues underpins the "Batman moral story."

However, he ignores areas of dissimilarity: Bruce's *moral downfall* in the film, followed by his redemptive sacrifice of the heroic status of Batman; and, the power of the Joker, which escalates with Batman's every counterattack, to the point of driving Batman into eventual hiding and moral darkness (or at least ambiguity). Landesman (2008), a *Sunday Times* reviewer, identifies *The Dark Knight* as an *anti-conservative* film, which preaches that preventive and reactive anti-terror policies merely provoke further terrorism. Most importantly, the film questions the appropriateness of old-fashioned 'heroes' in the face of contemporary threats to civic order:

Heroes, in our egalitarian age, no longer embody the dream of the superior individual who is greater than humanity; nowadays, superheroes must be as flawed and screwed up as we are ... Things have come to such a sorry state that, as we shall see, even Batman (Christian Bale) is not allowed to be the hero of his own movie (*ibid*).

The Dark Knight opens allegorically, with an urban landscape of shiny skyscrapers, "these glistening towers of power," bearing "the deathly pall of 9/11" (*ibid*). As the camera zooms into one particularly large skyscraper, it evokes the momentous 9/11 terrorist act (*ibid*). Yet, the Joker makes an unlikely terrorist, with his more 'chaotic,' anarchistic or pyromaniacal world burning. Landesman (*ibid*) suspects Nolan is merely capitalising on tragic world events to lend the film unseemly gravity: "this heavy-handed, wearisome 9/11 connection is the artistic equivalent of a fake tan: it provides the film with instant, spray-on seriousness." Ironically, others such as Kerstein (2008) have praised the film for this very attention to 'serious issues.'

Kerstein (2008) sidesteps the prickly issue of the film's politics, and returns to the question of its phenomenal and unprecedented success. Rather than repeating common explanations (the precedent set by *Batman Begins*, Heath Ledger's increasingly troubled behaviour and untimely death, a great marketing campaign, etc.), he suggests that *The Dark Knight* speaks for a worldwide audience riven by the "terrorist issue," to become "a society so divided on the issues of terror and how to fight it that, for the first time in decades, an American mainstream no longer exists" (*ibid*). The film, for Kerstein (*ibid*), is an allegory for our "tortured" existence in:

Our current age of terrorism, the challenge it presents to traditional ideas of heroism, and America's own ambivalence in confronting this challenge. In the film's deeply uncertain depiction of an all too human superhero, Americans are watching their own tortured and conflicted relationship to the war on terror laid bare before their eyes.

Meanwhile, Denby (2008) takes a more cynical and view on this ‘allegory,’ which taps into the tension and impotence so many feel in this insecure “time of terror”:

The thunderous violence and the music jack the audience up. But all that screw-tightening tension isn’t necessarily fun. *The Dark Knight* has been made in a time of terror, but it’s not fighting terror; it’s embracing and unleashing it - while making sure, with proper calculation, to set up the next instalment of the corporate franchise.

The Dark Knight has significantly enlarged the ‘Batman’ community, constituting a highly differentiated, worldwide audience that exceeds ‘comic book fan’ or ‘mainstream’ categorisation. The viral marketing alternate-reality game alone created a “transmedia experience with over 10 million participants in over 75 countries that played across hundreds of web pages, interactive games, mobile phones, print, email, real world events, video and unique collectibles” (42Entertainment hosted by FilmSchoolRejects.com 2008). This revolutionised the way films are marketed, to “[usher] in a new era of interactive, highly targeting marketing that can easily drum up tons of advanced buzz” (*ibid*). Further, this strategy proved both cheap and highly effective (*ibid*). 42Entertainment (2012), the company behind the *Why So Serious* marketing campaign, propose five key “insights,” which inform their work: “the world as platform,” “the power of community,” “the law of attraction,” “hidden in plain sight,” “local to global.” These testify to the importance of building stories through people’s “daily lives” (*ibid*)²⁰¹. Their aim, to create a group of “people thoughtfully drawn in – by story, by community, and by buzz – [to] become a powerful and loyal audience that will drive others to the experience,” who eventually self-organise to form a large-scale “cohesive, active, and self-sustaining community,” resonates with the workings of mythic community (*ibid*).

The Dark Knight opens with Batman’s initiation of a new landscape of law and order in Gotham City, with the help of his police ally, Commissioner Gordon (figure 4). Together, they have been so successful, that the mob is desperate enough to hire the freakish Joker to kill Batman and restore their sovereignty over the city. On one level this film presents itself as another ‘comic book film,’ where good hero fights evil villain for the sake of a princess and kingdom. The audience is introduced to a classic fairy tale: a world of wonder; albeit this wonder is a product of dubiously smart technology, rather than inexplicable ‘magic.’

²⁰¹ See 42Entertainment’s website page, <http://www.42entertainment.com/see.html> (accessed 24/4/2012).



Figure 4. Batman landscaping of Gotham City. Collage.

The characters remain stock figures, and clearly recognisable²⁰². Batman is a heroic mythical Arthurian figure, guardian of the peace and protector of the law (Nash 1992). True to fairy tale tradition, he has ‘helpers,’ the wise old man (Bruce Wayne’s butler, Alfred), and the magic helper, (technological wizard, Lucius Fox)²⁰³. There is still the dream of ‘fulfilling the quest’: establishing a ‘safe’ Gotham (a ‘once and future’ Golden Age), so that Batman can retire (*ibid*). Here, the comparison to fairy tale seemingly ends. Nolan self-consciously distanced himself from the Hollywood fantasy tradition, and broke with Burton’s (1989) *Batman* retelling, to explore Batman’s psychological depths, re-humanize the Joker²⁰⁴, pursue grand spectacle, and employ real city filming for a gritty ‘urban’ effect²⁰⁵. The film develops a ‘dark’ affectivity (figure 5), conforming to the characteristic moral ambiguity of contemporary prestige film, where “today’s audience ... [seems] to genuinely associate gloom and nihilism with realism, insightfulness, and overall good quality in film” (Nava 2008).

Fairy tale as a genre is characterized by its “self-awareness, its presentation of itself as story rather than mimesis, as artefact rather than reality” (Tiffin 2009:13), and Nolan consciously strives to work outside of this peculiarly self-conscious narrativity. In a further distancing from fairy tale, this film has the all the spectacle to be expected from a mainstream Hollywood blockbuster. Gotham City, for example, is carefully orchestrated though Nolan’s innovative use of IMAX technology for action sequences, and the filming of wide-angle cityscapes (see Nolan 2008). For Zipes (2008:240), this might preclude the film from any meaningful fairy tale analysis, because, to him, fairy tale “refuses in the name of humanity to glorify spectacle”²⁰⁶. The film, however, escapes Nolan’s ‘spectacular realism,’ to seep between genres, including fantasy, action, crime, documentary, drama, and thriller. There are moments of the self-conscious structure, motifs and patterns that evoke what Tiffin (2009:1) describes as the ‘text’ and ‘textuality’ fundamental to the ‘geometry’ of fairy tales. Tiffin’s (*ibid*) quasi-structural definition confronts the “fairy tales’s ability to mutate and recreate itself over time and context [as] ... reflected in the ... excursions into the novel, poetry, the comic book, and

²⁰² We can imagine each of these characters along traditional fairy tale lines: Batman as hero; Rachel as princess, and the object of the hero’s desire; Joker as a trickster figure; Lucius Fox as a wizard; Alfred as wise old man; Harvey Dent as the (first) prince who fails the test; the mob as the various ‘baddies’ on route, who offer initial challenges to the hero. The citizens of Gotham remain largely nameless, with few exceptions. Generally they play an instrumental role in moving the plot forward. Characterization is at times secondary to story, with the main characters driven by the narrative, as it coalesces around the Joker.

²⁰³ In this sense the film differentiates itself from many comic book versions, in which Batman is more of a detective figure, and there is no need for a technological ‘helper.’

²⁰⁴ Nolan (2008) was keen to make the Joker a human figure, vulnerable and fallible. Although he succeeded in one way (the Joker is no caricature of a super-villain), this figure draws on a long lineage of mythic tricksters, and thus has archetypal (or affective) force.

²⁰⁵ Noting that fairy tales *simplify* stories, and work with a “tendency to the extreme” (Tiffin 2009:14). This offers them “heightened and powerful symbolic force” (*ibid*).

²⁰⁶ Zipes’s (2008) comments on the opposition between ‘fairy tale’ and ‘spectacle’ inhere in the wider myth of orality in fairy tales, where storytelling is an intimate word of mouth, authentic, and embodied encounter, and so cannot be visually spectacular (also see Benjamin 1999).

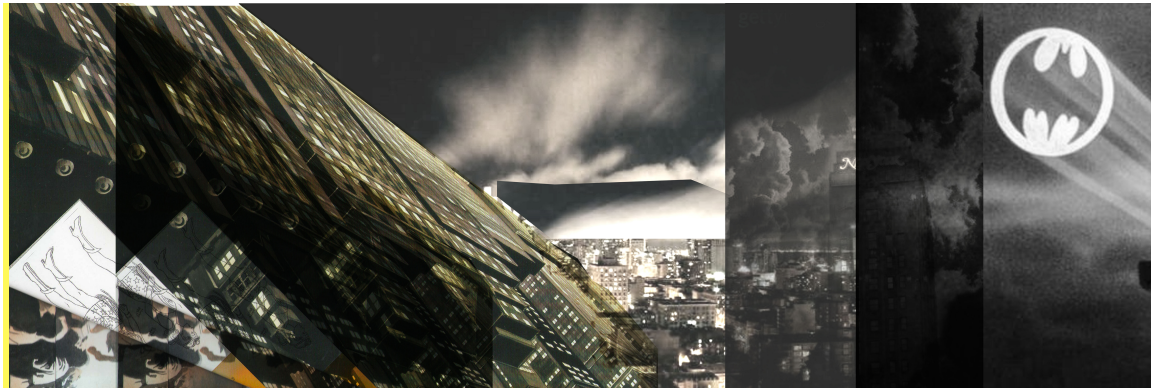


Figure 5. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: dark affectivity and threat. Collage.

live-action and animated film and television.” Nolan (2008) may claim to be overcoming the unrealistic world of the comic book film, however, his suppression of fantasy is incomplete. The film runs away from his directorship, in this regard, and the return to fantasy is completed with the introduction of the powerfully performed Joker.

The Joker recalls “the language of archetypes” and complicates the realistic narrative, refusing its mimesis, so that it “cannot be read symbolically - it is marvellous narrative, not allegory” (Tiffin 2009:15). As such, this figure is powerfully *affective* (figure 6). Indeed, Heath Ledger received international acclaim, complete with 2008 Academy Award for Supporting Actor, for the way he draws the audience into his “mesmerising” (Denby 2008), but insanely incomprehensible, performance. Film critics have been unanimous in attributing the film’s box office success to the Joker, naming the figure as “the movie's animating force” (Morgenstern 2008 *Wall Street Journal*). Denby (2008 *New Yorker*) and Landesman (2008 *Sunday Times*) go further, to argue that the affective power of the film rests solely on his shoulders:

“Suddenly, the screen comes alive in what is a one-man show of verbal play and sadistic theatre. Yet when Ledger isn’t on screen, *The Dark Knight* goes on for so long, it should be called *The Long Dark Knight of the Soul*. It has no sense of fun, no spirit of joy or play.”

The Joker refuses the discipline of interpretation and derides questions of human psychology²⁰⁷ in line with typical fairy tale narrative: “the fairy tale has no real interest in human subjectivity or psychological characterization of the individual” (Tiffin 2009:14). Indeed, he openly mocks psychological readings of himself, and the film. For example, he offers a comical parody of the psychoanalysts’ couch through the thrice-told story of his scars. His affective presence empties the Batman story of any ascribed intent, and unfolds a world where “motifs have resonance rather than meaning” (*ibid* 15). In other words, he cracks open the door onto the Other time (to paraphrase Tolkien), that of the self-conscious temporality of myth. However, the Joker is not content to merely lead us into this mythic time-space/world. Instead, in true trickster fashion, he works us in and out of the mythic, exposing its artifice (in a typical fairy tale manner), but then *interrogating* this artificiality, and subverting the fairy tale as he does so²⁰⁸. The Joker opens up a landscape of uncertainty: he doesn’t *belong* in this myth of civilization and its discontents. His narrative intrusion transforms Gotham, and our understanding of myth and storytelling, to something unrecognisable and morally ambiguous.

²⁰⁷ Which are so vital to Nolan (*Gotham Uncovered* 2008).

²⁰⁸ Batman, in contrast, attempts repeatedly to lead us back into the ‘real’ world, with his troubled psychology, his everyday concerns about law and order, and his symbolic references to the post 9/11 era in which we (the audience) find ourselves.



Figure 6. Heath Ledger as the Joker, *The Dark Knight* (2008). Image from Byrne (2008).

The Joker dissolves the mythological appearance of both Gotham City and Batman (who resides at the heart of this myth), and the film assumes an unsettling ‘anti-tale’ ambience.

Anti-tale scholarship is a recently emerging area of interest in fairy tale studies (e.g. Calvin 2011; Kérchy 2011; McAra 2011; McAra and Calvin 2011). Here, ‘anti-tale’ is largely equated with disenchantment, through Jolles (1930) seminal concept of ‘antimärchen.’ For McAra and Calvin (2011:4) anti-tales are not so much a binary opposition to the enchanting fairy tale, as a parasitical reworking of the myth of fairy tale, which “[presents] an alternative narrative interpretation, outcome, or morality.” There is a potential theoretical danger, here, of a deterministic model of fairy tale history, wherein fairy tales are portrayed as the old, enchanting forms of a more innocent age, and anti-tales as a cynical postmodern response. Mieder (1987:92), for example, falls into this evolutionary trap, when he suggests “these traditional stories [fairy tales] survive today in the form of questioning fairy tales”—an argument that ultimately reinforces the mythicization of fairy tales, as opposed to ‘breaking their magic spell’ (Zipes 1979). Mieder’s theoretical stance is embedded in a larger discourse of disenchantment, made (in)famous by Max Weber (Bennett 2001:56-90). However, McAra and Calvin (2011:4) are quick to remind us that anti-tale as a genre has always existed alongside fairy tales: “the anti-tale was found to be contemporaneous with even the oldest known examples of fairy tale collections.” Excepting Disney’s predictably happy endings (which drew heavily on the Grimms’ retellings), fairy stories are as likely as not to have unhappy plot endings, and involve ambiguous, beguiling characters (Martin 2011). Fairy tales carry a moral code distinct from the wider concerns of society (Tiffin 2009); the fool of one plot suffers, whilst that of another gains, and kindness reaps great rewards, whilst cunning, and even cruelty, may achieve the same. The anti-tale exists, then, as a kernel of potential within the fairy tale, driving the genre to its limits, and offering a meta-discursive commentary on its wonder. It is a form of ‘incompleteness,’ which impels repeated tellings, and lies behind the impulse to derive new meaning from old stories:

Semiotically speaking, the anti-tale is implicit in the tale, since this well-made artifice produces the receiver’s desire to repeat the tale anew: repetition functions as reassurance within the tale, but this very same compulsion to repeat the tale explodes its coherence as well-made artifice (Bacchilega 1999:23; see 2.2).

The Joker constitutes such an anti-tale compulsion in *The Dark Knight*, functioning as a meta-discursive figure that both enchants and disenchants the Batman story. He repeatedly wrenches open the attempted closures of the tale, challenging Batman’s moral and logical hegemony over the mythic community of Gotham. He destabilises the story landscape by exposing the hypocrisy of the yearning for a purified civic

community, based on law, order, and commonality, which lies at the heart of the Gotham/Batman myth. Further, the Joker destabilises storytelling and narrative itself, shaking the logocentric grounds on which the audience amasses all understanding and morality. Unlike the temporary space of carnival, the Joker's play has a permanent effect: the destruction of innocence, so that Gotham as a once-and-future 'noble' city ceases to be a believable myth²⁰⁹. Likewise, the myth of a peaceable civic community, founded on common identity (a 'being-as-togetherness,' see Nancy 1991) and rooted in the City of Gotham, is threatened with the corruption of its key politico-mythic symbol, the 'White Knight,' Harvey Dent. Even Batman's triumphant heroism becomes uncertain, as he is forced to don an antisocial mask to protect the city he loves from implosion. Tragically, he "lives long enough to see himself become the villain," in Harvey Dent's prophetic words. Whilst the Joker fails at the plot level (his failed 'social experiment' and eventual capture), he succeeds on a narratological level, rocking the foundations of civilization and story. Ultimately, he demonstrates that we (humanity at large) can never be citizens 'in common' (with common identity, aims and values), and that the notion of a potential 'realised' community is nothing other than a 'bad joke.'

The Joker employs a variety of techniques in his role as "agent of chaos" (Nolan 2008). He metafictionally straddles the story to hijack the plot from Batman, the 'traditional' hero, with the help of "a few cans of gasoline," aggressive graffiti, and destructive 'gestures of war' (on a plot level). Further, his repeated affective interruptions (bodily intrusions into the narrative) and his ironic meta-commentary (addressed to the audience) disturb the artifice of storytelling, and trouble the thin line between truth and fiction. In sum, the Joker unfolds a liminal landscape of anti-tale uncertainty from around the figure of Batman. We begin to see the workings of a trickster mastermind in his opportunistic adaptability, and are drawn to admire him, even as we damn him for his parodic distortions of the most cherished western myths of common humanity, and the possibility of harmonious and grounded dwelling.

5.3 Joker: the destruction of mythic community

"You see, I'm a guy of simple tastes, I enjoy ... dynamite, and gunpowder, and [spoken loudly] gasoline uh, da, da, da ... and you know the thing that they have in common? They're cheap" (Joker, *The Dark Knight* 2008: 1:38:30).

²⁰⁹ See Nash (1992) on Batman as a mythic Arthurian figure.

There is no way to re-present the chilling menace behind the Joker's words in the burning of money and man scene (chapter 27 of the 2008 two-disc DVD). The audience believes him wholeheartedly when he claims that his tastes are simple, and recognise their simplicity as the celebration of violence for sheer destructiveness' sake: violence as power, style, affect, and pleasure. In the same scene, the Joker derides the "Chechnyan's" (a mobster) love of money, and elevates himself to a "better class of criminal" (1:39:21). Crime, for the Joker, is "about sending a message" (1:39:52), and this message is just as simple: crime as civic violence, or in the Joker's own words, "everything burns" (1:34:54).

This differentiates the Joker from other characters in the film, whose desires' conform to a more instrumental economy. Batman's goal of order in Gotham City, and the establishment of a civic state in which he can peacefully dwell (and heal his divided psyche), is driven by his underlying insecurity (a product of the violent rupture of his childhood). Batman's ambition derives from his belief that he can return the city to a pre-criminal state, associated with his innocence prior to the death of his parents²¹⁰. This notion is predicated on the mythic conviction that the natural state of humankind is peaceful, and that a return to a harmonious past, a primordial Eden, is achievable through hard work and considerable personal sacrifice. Geographically, there is the sense of Gotham as an internalized frontier city, and Batman as the 'Clint Eastwood' outlaw hero who must continually strive to push back the forces of corruption and savagery that threaten the civilization that the city represents (see Finigan 2010). Yet Batman's crime-fighting desires are suspect as the audience wonders, with Rachel, whether Batman (the mask) has subsumed Bruce Wayne (the man), so that this longed-for future has become the means to (and not the end of) an eternally deferred cycle of crime and punishment:

Rachel (VO): "When I told you that if Gotham no longer needed Batman we could be together, I meant it ... But I'm not sure the day will come ... when you no longer need Batman" (1:33:27).

The mob, in contrast, desires a return to the 'status quo' of the immediate past, when they 'ran' the city, and made money to beget more money, in a never-ending cycle of an infinitely postponed pleasure (an impossible return, as the Joker remarks).

²¹⁰ Batman's vision of a 'Golden Age' of Gotham is clearer in Nolan's (2005) prequel to *The Dark Knight*, *Batman Begins*, and in the comics (e.g. Miller and Mazzucchelli 1986-7/2005 *Batman: Year One*).

There is a different temporality to the Joker's criminal pursuits, as his delight in crime and violence derives from their immediacy. His is a truly materialistic pleasure, founded in the innate qualities of a present thing: the spectacular combustibility of gasoline, the 'big bang' of dynamite, and the affect of fear and chaos inherent in both. This is incomprehensible to Gotham's citizens, police force, and mobsters; and even to Batman. Only Alfred understands, which is fitting for his role of supportive guardian or 'wise old man.' He warns Batman that the Joker is (unlike Batman himself) not *after* anything. Again, there is an implicit temporality and spatiality to this expression, with 'after' evoking the delay and distance of a far-removed fairy tale world, as in the refrain 'happily ever after.'

Alfred equates the Joker's actions to those of the 'irrational' bandit who nearly destroyed the local government system in Burma. In his (allegorical) story, the bandit robbed caravans of precious stones, but could not be caught, because no one admitted to trading with him. One day Alfred came across a child playing with "a ruby the size of a tangerine" (51:34). Batman questions why the bandit threw the stones away, and Alfred replies:

Well, because he thought it was good sport. Because some men aren't looking for anything logical, like money ... they can't be bought, bullied, reasoned or negotiated with. Some men just want to watch the world burn (52:04).

The great irony of such world burning, and perhaps the thing that makes it so terrifying, is that it is *cheap*. Gasoline is inexpensive, easy to acquire, and easy to utilise. 'World burning' is too straightforward and immediate a gratification to be part of the common logic that places value in scarcity, monetary cost, and effort. "Look what I did to this city with a few drums of gas and a couple of bullets," the Joker boasts (1:45:20). There is childish glee in his sliding, skipping, and 'silly noises' when he burns the money and, later, when he blows up Gotham General Hospital. The fallibility of the child is also present, in a humorous moment when the hospital explosion fails partway, and he has to restart it by fumbling (frustrated) with the detonator. Such motions and sounds are well suited to the infantile thrill of starting an illicit fire. Caught up in his buoyant celebration of destructiveness, it is all too easy to admire or laugh along with the playful spectacle, and forget the busload of fifty people who are 'missing,' or the man tied to the stack of money, who will burn with it, off-screen²¹¹.

²¹¹ This forgetfulness is encouraged by Nolan's decision to burn the accountant, Lau, off-screen. Although we are well aware of the horrifying death he faces (and also the busload of missing people, later), we are still able to laugh with the Joker as he lights the fires.

The music accompanying the main scenes of violence is instrumental in propelling us into this immediacy of triumphant excitement that characterizes the Joker's world. Strong repetitive minor chords herald the dual explosion of the Major Crime Unit and the warehouse where Harvey Dent and Rachel have been kidnapped. At 1:31:00, as the chords crescendo with the Joker's 'phone call,' and as Batman and Commissioner Gordon race to the scene of the crime, we gain a sense of his absolute power. The score mimics and mocks traditional 'car chase' film music, in which 'good' inevitably triumphs. At this point the Joker has wrested control over the 'heroic' in sound and, on the aural level, the film is directed from his perspective.

The music shifts again when Rachel declares her love, and Batman reaches Harvey (the simultaneity of these on-screen events is achieved through cross-cutting editing). The Joker has tricked Batman, and the audience, into thinking it's Rachel he is rescuing. At this point, the movie returns to the Joker's "why so serious" theme (Zimmer in Nolan 2008), which sounds menacingly in the background. Composed of two clashing notes, played on the cello and electric guitar, this sound is physiologically stressful. For Nolan, the tones represent "the idea of tension; extraordinary tension—just mounting and mounting" (Nolan 2008). However, tension in this case is a subtle thing. Compared to Batman's strident, and Harvey Dent's more tragic, theme, the Joker's theme is relatively quiet. A soft, painfully discordant pattern, it curls around the ear, penetrating the subconscious mind with the quiet, compelling intimacy of a whisper²¹²:

One of the keys to the score was that it had to be a very personal performance. Everything had to be very close to you. It had to whisper in your ear more than scream. One of the great things about the Joker is he draws you in. He keeps drawing you in into the performance, he keeps drawing you into his world, he keeps drawing you into his ideas (Zimmer²¹³ in Nolan 2008).

The world the Joker unfurls around us, propelled by Zimmer's non-communicative score, is one of a *delirious* intimacy, entirely foreign to our understanding (figure 7). It is a nonsensical auditory place of "complete insanity," comprised of "razor blades and piano wire and pencils tapping tables and floors and things" (Nolan 2008). We (the audience) are alien to this ruthless world, and the unbearable tension of the sound therein threatens our sanity and changes us, just as the Joker threatens Batman's control over the city and changes the traditional narrative of the good-

²¹² Compared to background static or white noise, which irritates and repels, the Joker's discordant theme is cleverly compelling, despite its painful intensity and tension.

²¹³ Zimmer and Howard collaborated on the film score (unusually, for two such big figures in film music). Zimmer wrote the Joker music, whilst Howard focused on Harvey Dent's tragic-heroic theme.

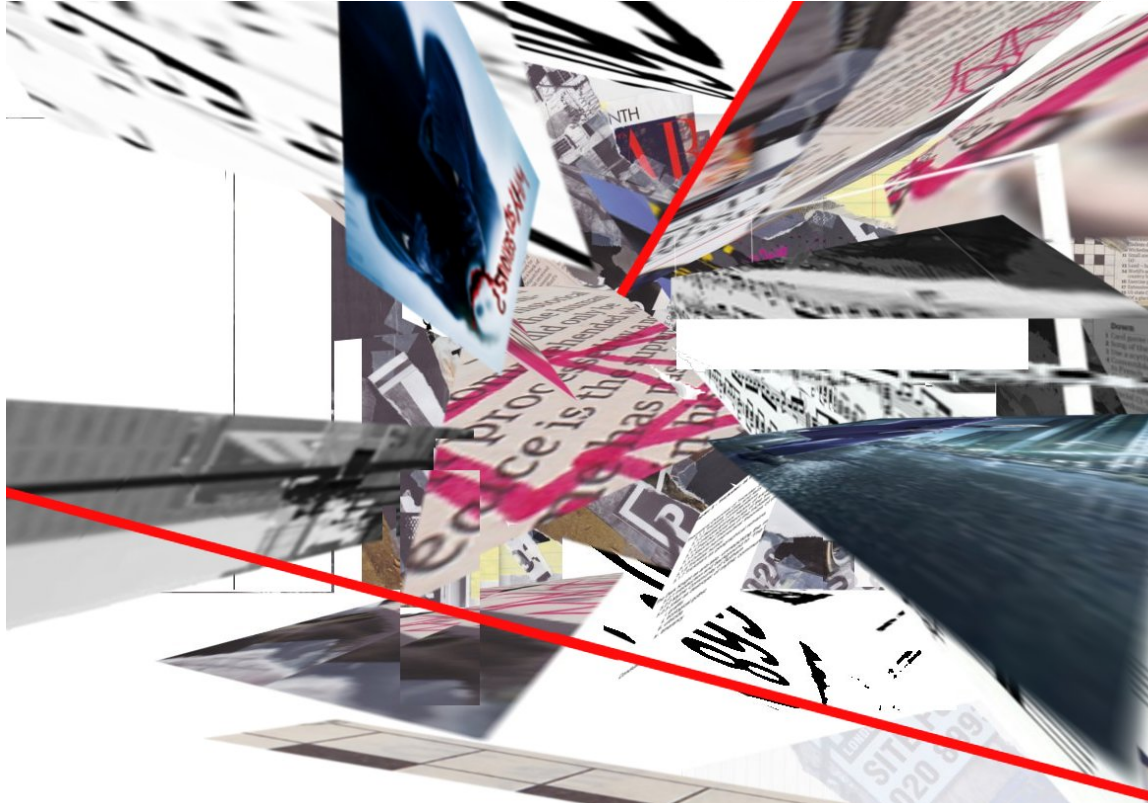


Figure 7. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: delirious intimacy. Collage.

versus-evil story²¹⁴. The Joker's 'whispered' theme achieves two key results. First, its soft sophistication overturns 'bad guy' assumptions, and fixes the film from the 'villainous' perspective: "it [throws] everything away you associate with the bad guy, and [works] on coming up with a fresh approach" (Nolan 2008). This tactic is comparable with Hitchcock's film-making, which would draw heavily on Hollywood Thriller conventions, and then break with these, and audience expectation, to induce a state of panic (Kendrick 2010). In opening "disturbing new pathways" in his 1960 film *Psycho*, for example, Hitchcock managed to initiate audiences into a new type of narrative structure, one so shocking that they lost the control which forms an essential part of the enjoyment in classical narrative cinema (*ibid*)²¹⁵. Mass communication theory suggests "viewers are *primed* by the structural and symbolic components of previous films to expect certain things and not expect others and to have certain emotional reactions to typical scenarios and situations" (*ibid* 5). This can involve long-term, external priming, reliant on (subconscious) memory, itself "composed of a network of constructs about social objects and their attributes" (*ibid*). Alternatively, short-term priming, internal to the film itself, allows the Director to utilise the opening scenes to prepare the audience for what is about to happen later. *The Dark Knight* has occasionally been likened to *Psycho* by fans, partly due to Zimmer's score, which breaks with primed expectations of comic book villainy. The Joker is subtle, cunning, compelling: the antithesis of the 'thuggish anarchist' that perpetuates action and comic book-conversion movies²¹⁶. Admittedly, there is a more familiar lineage to *The Dark Knight*, with Hitchcock's (1960) *Psycho*, Kubrick's (1971) *Clockwork Orange*, Burton's (1989) *Batman*, and Harron's (2000) *American Psycho* setting the film precedent. Precedents likewise exists in other 'media,' such as the widespread television coverage of the destruction of the twin towers (see Sánchez-Escalonilla 2010 on popular Action and Fantasy films post 9/11), the punk scene, especially Sid Vicious, and certain 'Dark Age' Batman comic series, such as Frank Miller's (1986) *The Dark Knight Returns* and Alan Moore's (1988) *The Killing Joke*. Nonetheless, Nolan's musical directing checks easy presumptions of a comic book or fantasy film, as the film score overturns the heroic narrative of Hollywood Action-Thriller, through the bizarre intimacy and unintelligible theme of the Joker. The Joker's (villainous) attainment of 'centre stage' in the film is achieved through this predominance of 'aural affect' over 'conscious reflection':

²¹⁴ Nolan (2008) first heard Zimmer's experimental score on an international flight, and found it to be "some of the harshest and most incomprehensible sounds ever to enter my ears. By the time the plane landed I was a different person."

²¹⁵ Of course, Hitchcock's success lay in the way he opened the film with a well-known celebrity actress, and played on audience expectations to establish her as the heroine—only to brutally interrupt this expectation 45 minutes later and induce panic with the shift in narrative structure that takes place in the infamous shower scene.

²¹⁶ Denby (2008) makes an interesting comparison between Ledger's Joker performance, and "Marlon Brando at his most feline and insinuating." Commenting further on the high pitch and fast past of the Joker's voice, with its "odd, devastating pauses and saturnine shades of mockery" (*ibid*), we get a sense of an effeminate quality to the Joker's 'badness.'

In music or the visual arts, language (the realm of consciousness) is omitted, allowing the information to bypass consciousness and act directly on this 'larger' part of our minds. It's a loaded data stream operating at speeds, orders of magnitude larger than language. It's a kind of shorthand that only the subconscious can decode, and it does so quickly and efficiently (Barsamian 2008:298).

Even as we are primed to intellectually damn the Joker for his wanton destructiveness, we are spun into his delirious web and seduced by his triumphant auditory supremacy. The crudeness of his 'gasoline and bombs' weaponry takes on sophistication in his capable hands, and we begin to trust in his mastery. Worse yet, our subconscious rapport lies with this sociopath, and we feel entirely removed from the fate of those innocents (including the women and children of the boat scene, the usual 'pity objects' of Action films) entangled in his violence.

Second, the 'why so serious' theme tune evokes a strong sense of chaos, which renders the Joker entirely incomprehensible, preserving his mystery, enchantment, or 'otherness,' even at moments of greatest intimacy. "Anarchy" (as the embrace of chaos) forms Zimmer's (2008) central auditory motif, and he attempts to build its "fearlessness" into his music. We sense that Batman's triumph will hinge on understanding this; yet his rigid code of honour, grounded in instrumental rationality, limits his comprehension. It is only much later, when his 'princess' is lost and his 'kingdom' is in jeopardy, that he thinks to ask Alfred how they finally caught the ruby bandit. There is a poignant reluctance to Alfred's reply: they burned the forests down. This stark statement evokes the clumsiness of US military policy against guerrilla warfare, terrorists, and nomadic insurgents, and specifically the napalming of Vietnam. To catch the Joker, Batman must deploy his own 'fire power'²¹⁷ in a grossly asymmetrical manner and, as we see later in the film, civic freedom is the greatest causality when such overwhelming power is loosed in the service of law and order. More disturbingly, Batman displays his instrument of antiterrorism to Fox with a pride in its "beauty" (01:51:07), which is every bit as frightening as the Joker's love of violence. Fox's misgivings, and Rachel's eventual abandonment of Bruce, casts further doubt on Batman's 'self-sacrificial' nobility, and we wonder whether he, like the Joker, has become addicted to adrenalin-rush of power²¹⁸. If this is true, then these figures are separated by a very thin line, where one employs unlawful violence to destroy the civic community, and the other protects the civic

²¹⁷ 'Fire power' in a metaphoric sense: Batman constructs a 'sonar' screen to trap the Joker. In doing so, he trespasses on the privacy of the very civilians he seeks to defend. This is an overt reference to Bush's 2001 USA Patriot Act.

²¹⁸ Rachel is the moral compass of the film; the only character who is true to the principles of law and justice.

community in order to utilise communally legitimated (but still ‘unlawful’) violence²¹⁹. As Fox counsels Batman, his power to spy on “thirty million people ... is wrong” (1:51:31).

The threat the Joker poses to Gotham’s citizens is differentiated from Batman’s by its seeming *irrationality*, and not by the scale of his violence, or because of a pacifistic distaste for brute force in the film world. Force must be tempered by ‘reason’ for it to be acceptable to Gotham’s citizens. As the Joker cynically observes:

“Nobody panics when things go according to plan. Even if the plan is horrifying. If tomorrow I tell the press that, like, a gang-banger will get shot, or a truckload of soldiers will be blown up, nobody panics, because it’s all part of ‘the plan.’ But when I say that one little old mayor will die, well then everyone loses their minds ... Introduce a little anarchy” (1:45:28).

This could easily be interpreted as the Director’s comment on the hypocrisy of contemporary American civic society, made visible in the panic that ensued on the collapse of the twin towers (still recent at the time of filming). Again, in his dubiously comical nurse suit and repulsive makeup, the Joker dares to voice the unspeakable truth of this hypocrisy, gaining our reluctant admiration, even as he cold-bloodedly bombs Gotham General Hospital. Further, the traditional responses to this civic peril (reasoning, fighting back, fleeing) are powerless to prevent the Joker’s revelations, as he tells Batman under violent interrogation: “you have nothing to threaten me with!” (1:26:32). The mob, in “letting the clown out of the box” (01:37:53) undermines the structures of law and ‘rational’ ideology that order the city (both its ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ sides), and chaos, the “theme” of the movie (Nolan 2008), ensues.

There are three further ways in which I want to address the Joker’s destruction of the myth of civic community, each geographically pertinent. First, there is an uncanny likeness between his ‘profanities’ and the play of creation and destruction that characterizes graffiti writing. The Joker defaces the material fabric of the city and ‘unmasks’ the symbolic systems that rest upon those surfaces, giving them the illusion of depth. His graffitiing returns our attention outwards, to the ‘exterior’ of things, discrediting the supposed depths of our moral and political systems (i.e. the state/ civic integrity, control, and historical meaning that are thought to underpin Gotham’s civic society, criminal and legal alike). Second, there

²¹⁹ Batman’s power becomes increasingly violent in the latter stages of the film. His interrogation of the Joker is brutal (though less than it could have been; Nolan originally filmed Batman kicking the Joker’s head, but this was later cut). He shatters Falcone’s legs to get information out of him, again indicating a shift to a crueler, darker, even Mobster, side. Further, he makes deals with the very criminals he is hunting, for example employing South Korean ‘smugglers’ and unknown thugs to catch Lau in Hong Kong. His most noble moment is in fact as Bruce Wayne: when he protects Coleman from death. In putting on the Batman costume, somehow he loses his humanity.

is a correspondence between his actions and the violence of urbicide, as theorized by Coward (2006, 2007, 2009), which sets out to destroy urbanity as the fabric of communal dwelling. The Joker is a ‘deconstructive’ figure, a parody of Pelton’s (1980) trickster-as-‘arch-assembler.’ Through his violent architectonics, or “gestures of war,” he disassembles and reassembles the material architecture of the city (Woods 1993). However, this violence cannot be celebrated as a ‘postmodern’ creation of “freespaces” (*ibid*), or the liberating ‘dérive’ of the psychogeographies of the Situationists (Debord 1972, 2006). Rather, the Joker’s parodic violence harms the possibility of a durable, and *plural*, citizenry. Finally, the Joker interrupts the mythic community on a narratological level through the disorderly semiotic eruptions of his storytelling. His repeated affective interruptions (or bodily intrusions into the linear narrative) bring the materiality of embodiment to our awareness, and blur the line between truth and fiction. His ironic meta-commentary, addressed to the audience, further disturbs the artifice of storytelling, and locates the Joker in the traditional dual-aspect trickster position, “between discourse and story” (Doueihy 1993:200). As both an object (character) within the story, and a narratological master (a metafictional subject), he propels us into a disorienting “shifting perspective” (*ibid* 199) characteristic of liminality. In this “different order of reality” (Pelton 1980:3) nothing is simple. “Ordinary, conventional meaning (the face-value, referential meaning of the discourse as story)” is broken down, and the Joker opens out new “[levels] of meaning that [are] extraordinary, unconventional and sacred” (Pelton 1980:3; also 4.4.3).

5.3.1 Graffiti ‘bombing’ and defacing the symbolic city

Graffiti writing is made conspicuous by its absence in the film’s *mise-en-scene*, including from those “anonymous and temporary spaces for passage, communication and consumption ... [lacking in] identity, history, social or semantic urban relationships,” which comprise the ‘underbelly’ of the city (e.g. docks, industrial wastelands, subways, areas of urban decay, etc.²²⁰) (Neef 2007:419). Graffiti writing, a phenomenon that began in New York in the 1960s, with taggers such as Julio 204 and Taki 183²²¹, has experienced an unprecedented

²²⁰ Lewisohn (2008:7-8) remarks: “A bleak environment of metal, bricks and mortar is a good starting point for a work of art,” and Tucker (2009) notes the importance of ‘blank walls’ as a canvas for graffiti art. For graffiti writer Does (MindGem 2009), urban decay is the ideal canvas for graffiti, as exemplified by one Hall of Fame: “a desolate place under the railway, overgrown with plants and trees and long walls decorated with interesting pieces.”

²²¹ There is a great deal of controversy surrounding the origins of graffiti writing in New York. The main consensus is to draw a line between gang graffiti, and the graffiti writing (characterized by tagging and bombing, etc.) of the 1960s, so that this new “tradition should not be dated before the late 1950’s and early 1960’s when this kind of autograph graffiti and the community of writers sharing its legibility specifically arose” (Stewart 1991:172). This controversy is important: it impacts on the definitions of graffiti as style, criminal, territorial, antiestablishment, etc. Kramer (2009:250) does the most to highlight the slippages in theory when histories and origins of the diverse types are occluded or merged. E.g., he distinguishes between ‘latrinalia,’ political graffiti, racist graffiti, and so on” (*ibid*). I will follow him, by focusing primarily on “graffiti writing culture,” with

international uptake, to become endemic to the inner city, so that it is possible to speak of a “secret society or secret language of the city” (Lewisohn 2008:45). This makes its ‘disappearance’ from the buildings, walls, and urban spaces of Gotham City all the more peculiar, especially given Nolan’s (2008) openly stated ambition to create a “realistic” film, drawing on the urban fabric of a ‘real’ city (Chicago). Graffiti writing burgeons on the marketing posters that preceded the film’s release, and occurs in three vivid instances within the film: on a Gotham Times Newspaper, graffitied by the Joker (54:24); on the carnival van the Joker appropriates to intercept Harvey Dent (1:13:01); and on the Joker’s ‘terrorist’ video, which he broadcasts on Gotham’s GCN channel (1:49:03). This count could be extended if we include the bodily ‘graffiti’ the Joker sports, and inscribes and paints onto his victims: the whitened face, and scarred and reddened mouth, contributing to a caricature of a hysterical smile. Reduced to these few incidents, and carried out solely by the Joker, graffiti becomes a symbolically and affectively significant part of this figure’s anti-mythic repertoire or domain.

Graffiti writing is a specific form of graffitiing, distinct from street art²²². It is based around the literary ‘tag,’ or stylised autograph, which is sometimes manipulated to the point of illegibility; and often includes a territorial marker, such as the street number on which the graffitist lives (i.e. Julio 204). The Joker’s tag in the film is his uncanny and threatening smile, which evokes both a trickster’s Cheshire catlike knowing grin (Nikolajeva 2009), or the more horrific criminal ‘Glasgow smile.’ His smile takes two forms: a mouth contrived out of Batman’s figure in full cape, or a simple red smile (figure 8). Considerably simpler than many graffiti tags, and seemingly non-territorial, it nonetheless echoes their terse typography²²³:

In essence, graffiti writers, through the use of tags, are reducing content down to a bare minimum ... Graffiti writing has a very specific aesthetic: it’s about the tag, it’s about graphic form, it’s about letters, styles and spray-paint application, and it’s about reaching difficult locations” (Lewisohn 2008:23).

“its origins in the late 1960s,” in tandem with hip-hop and rap cultures (*ibid*). This is the movement that spawned the 1970s and 1980s subway graffiti, “before finding new spaces in which to exist during the 1990s” on the crackdown of subway illegal writing (*ibid*).

²²² There is a hierarchical rift between the two, where graffiti writing is derided for its ugliness and aggressiveness, but street art is applauded for its thoughtful ‘irony.’ The latter has consequently been accepted into the wider institutions of ‘art,’ through gallery exhibitions, competitions, etc. Note that this opposition is not only externally imposed, by art curators, legislators politicians, etc., but evidenced internally, with “oppositions and status distinctions amongst graffiti writers” (Kramer 235:250).

²²³ Street art, in comparison, is a form of graffitiing composed of pictorial ‘pieces’: large and often beautifully depicted, legible images that draw the attention of passersby, and aim to politically engage the public (i.e. the popular works of Banksy or Shepherd Fairey).



Figure 8. Joker's graffiti writing. Film Posters. *The Dark Knight* (2008).

'Wildstyle' tags offer the most creative possibility in graffiti writing. Comprised of energetically interlocking letters and other connective elements (for example arrows), "pieces done in wildstyle are often completely undecipherable to non-writers" (Art Crimes 2010). Large wildstyle pieces have a 3-dimensional quality to them, and are known as 'burners' because, with their "good bright colours, good style," they "[seem] to 'burn' off of the wall" (*ibid*)²²⁴. The Joker's smile, whilst significantly cruder, has this 'burning' quality. It leaps off the grey and white newspapers and dark film posters to sear our field of vision. The curved arc smile is particularly effective, its pared down simplicity bearing the 3-dimensional depth of a blood red wound on the surface it marks. Like other graffiti tags, the curved smile is affective, and "has no real purpose, other than its own existence" (Lewisohn 2008:18). Indeed, the greatest condemnation levelled at taggers is their refusal to enter into 'meaningful' dialogue with the viewing public (*ibid*). Solipsism, secrecy, and 'code' is characteristic of this form of graffitiing, and writers interviewed in the seminal documentary *Style Wars* (1983) make clear that their graffiti is for 'themselves,' a daredevil measure of their existence in, and mark on, the entirety of the urban fabric of the city: "it's a matter of bombing, knowing that I can do it" (*ibid* 0:6:25).

Marking the city is an act of urban take-over, and "writers have a specialised vocabulary, often metaphors for war and violence, such as 'bomb,' 'hit,' and 'kill'" to describe their daredevil manoeuvres (Cooper and Chalfant 1988:27)²²⁵. The term 'bombing,' which denotes the prolific nature of tagging, i.e. the practise of repetitive writing, proffers a hint as to the attitude in which these tags are made, and forms part of the wider "anti-language which substitutes the tag for the proper name, and phrases like 'nasty,' 'the death,' 'vicious,' 'bad,' and 'dirty' for the standard terms of approval in evaluation" (Stewart 1991:175). This warlike logic puts graffiti writing squarely in the domain of criminal activity and vandalism (figure 9). For some, it represents a 'folk culture' of seemingly aggressive and (ironically) illiterate subgroups that are "supposedly without conceptual or political agenda" (Pearl 2009). There is an element of this folksiness about the Joker, who has been likened to the nineteenth century American minstrel performers.

²²⁴ The Art Crimes glossary can be accessed online at http://www.graffiti.org/faq/graffiti_glossary.html (last accessed 16/05/12).

²²⁵ There is an important difference between graffiti writing and gang graffiti, which I will discuss later. The former is characterized by *mobility*, whilst the latter makes strong territorial claims (Stewart 1987, 1991).

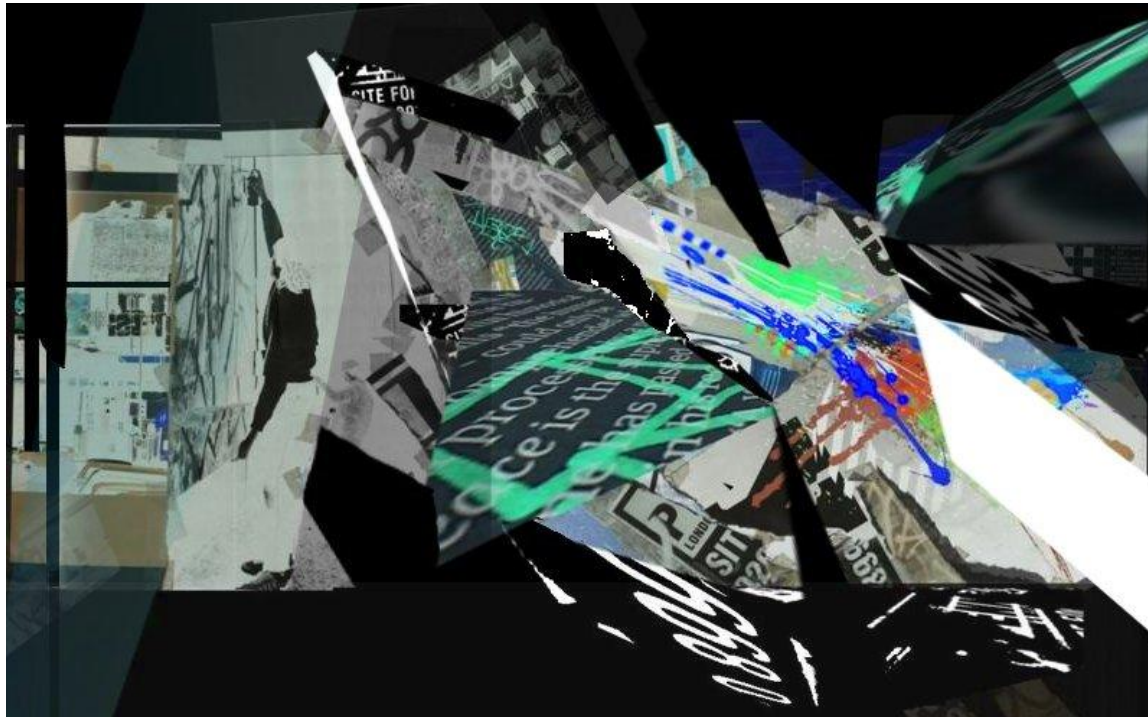


Figure 9. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: graffiti as violent urban restyling. Collage.

According to Gabbard (2004:43), since the obsolescence of the minstrel shows, “Blackface moved comfortably into American movies.” Hollywood films appropriated African American culture, with white, especially working class, figures embodying fantasies of African American masculinity²²⁶. Citing Lott, he observes:

For the white minstrel man, ‘to put on the cultural forms of ‘blackness’ was to engage in a complex affair of manly mimicry ... To wear or even enjoy blackface was literally, for a time, to become black, to inherit the cool, virility, humility, abandon, or *gaité de coeur*, that were the prime components of white ideologies of black manhood’ (Lott 1995, in Gabbard 2004:37).

The legacy of this appropriation is visible in the Joker, whose exaggerated and unseemly pallor, Glasgow smile, and clown army evokes black hoodlum crime and the ghetto. Ross (1980) notes that Jack Nicholson is clearly acting out minstrel mimicry in Burton’s (1988) *Batman*, with graffiti and rap rhymes, all accompanied by a ‘funky’ soundtrack. His ‘white face’ masks the blackness at the heart of Gotham City. The grinning mouth is a product of lynching—all that is missing is the rope.

The racial possibilities of the Joker figure in *Batman* have been exacerbated by the recent infamous image of Obama-as-the-Joker (figure 10). Alkhateeb, a 20-year-old student from Chicago, is credited with designing this image. In an interview with *The Los Angeles Times* (18 August 2009) he claims that it was not intended as a political or racial statement; rather, he digitally painted the clown makeup over Obama’s face on the cover image of *Time* magazine, as a bored “winter’s project.” He then uploaded it onto Flickr, the social networking site. It was downloaded from here and doctored to read ‘socialism,’ before being posted up (paper posters on walls, etc.) around the state—anonymously. Despite various attempts to repress the image, officially for contravening copyright law, it has spread virally, in an ironic parody of the original marketing campaign of the film. Distribution rocketed after Obama announced his \$1 trillion healthcare programme in 2009, although the image made its first public appearance before this policy decision. The image has polarised public opinion in online news discussion forums and blogs. One side of the debate protests the right to ‘political satire,’ whilst the other argues that it is a ‘distasteful’ image, the socialism strapline a mere smokescreen for racist sentiment (the official Democrat party stance). Of course, not so many people are aware of the George Bush-as-Joker image in *Vanity Fair* (July 2008 issue, entitled ‘No Joke’), which

²²⁶ There is an interesting interplay between two ‘races’ here: Black American, and the mimicry of Black Americans by Jewish American entertainers (Rogin 1998). This is especially pertinent to the Joker figure, given the Jewish ‘roots’ of *Batman*, and the intertwined history of the American Jewish immigrant experience, and the early development of the comic book industry (see Jones 2004).



Figure 10. Obama as the Joker (Alkhateeb 2009); Bush as the Joker, 'No Joke,' *Vanity Fair* (July 29th 2008).

preceded this one, and has no such racial charge (figure10). However, there is an uncanny mirroring of the minstrel performers in the Obama portrait, as a commenter on the most vociferous blog, *The Washington Post* suggests:

Fairfax, Va.: It looks to me like Obama is "whiteface," much as the old minstrel show performers used to wear exaggerated racial makeup known as blackface. It's not just the white makeup; it literally looks like blackface around the eyes and mouth, but in reverse colours. The implication seems to be that he is making himself up as white by being elected president.

Whatever the racial or non-racial intentions of the Obama image, the Joker of *The Dark Knight* bears the uncannily doubled face of a trickster figure, who has, like all tricksters, escaped the boundaries of his 'story' to shape a wider cultural imagination. In this case, he carries an urban and racial charge, which fills certain viewers with fear or disgust²²⁷.

Disgust plays an important part in the rejection of graffiti writing, especially where it is deemed ugly or ignorant:

'Anyway, I believe in education. The reason I don't like street art is that it's not aesthetic, it's social. To celebrate it is to celebrate ignorance, aggression, all the things our society excels at. For middle class people to find artistic excitement in something that scares old people on estates is a bit sick' (Jones 2009).

Detective Constable Bernie Jacobs, coordinator of the New York City transit Police Department, similarly denigrates graffiti tagging on New York subway trains specifically for their lack of *beauty*: "graffiti, as the name itself, is not an art. Graffiti is the application of a medium to a surface" (*Style Wars* 1983:3:10). Both of these critics condemn a hidden racialized, classed, and gendered group in their disgust with the ugliness of this writing²²⁸. Jones speaks broadly of an abstracted 'social' that scares old people on estates (giving us a sense of whom these scaremongers might be and a corresponding geography), whilst Jacobs evokes a more generic uneducated criminal, incapable of intelligent (and cultured) 'art.'

²²⁷ Two further points need to be made here. First, that the trickster is a historically efficacious Black American archetype, who traditionally strays out of its social hierarchy to confront society (see Roach 1996, on the Zulu king of New Orleans Mardi Gras). Second, whilst the Joker supposedly embodies black masculinity, he is required to wear whiteface because of the narratological constraints in comics which prevent the co-appearance of black strength and black intelligence (Cunningham 2010). Indeed, there is a dearth of "complex, contemplative, and powerful black supervillains" in comic book history, especially in the DC world (*ibid* 59). Black villains are powerful by means of their fighting skills and weaponry, embodying 'street' or 'hoodlum' imaginaries of the aggressive masculinity of black ghetto culture. Where intellect exists, it is rarely rewarded, as "the black inventor ... is incapable of capitalizing off of his creations," and turns to a life of crime instead (*ibid* 57). Instead, black comic book villains "have been forced to shoulder the burdens of the body itself" (Brown in Cunningham 2010:56). Further, this is the body divorced from mind, in the dualistic western discourse: a body "out of control" (*ibid*). In sum, black villains, when they do appear, are distinguishable "from their [white] counterparts" because "their great power and intellect rarely (if ever) coincide" (Cunningham 2010:56).

²²⁸ Whether this is Afro-American, such as gang-graffiti, or Hispanic, with the 'new' forms of street art.

Such claims display a woeful ignorance of the care and attention graffiti writers devote to their tags. Indeed, they may take years to develop their tags into an aesthetically ‘appropriate’ form, demonstrating a keen awareness of word play and an appreciation of alphabet lettering (Lewisohn 2008)²²⁹—although the Joker’s own parasitical scribbling hardly counts as such.

‘Art’ is thus opposed to ‘crime’ in many critiques of graffiti writing, where legally sanctioned (e.g. through competitions) and more artistic ‘pieces’ achieve a greater degree of social acceptance and appreciation, according to a hierarchy based on ‘taste,’ and the communicative abilities of the graffiti (Kramer 2010:236). Indeed, despite the pleasure graffiti writers take in their artistry, many overtly reject the value of beauty: “they’re out to destroy, they’re out to make a mess; they find the term ‘art’ offensive. They look down on art and are happy to be known primarily as vandals” (Lewisohn 2008:19)²³⁰. The Joker’s smile, like graffiti-writing, lacks beauty according to any recognisable industry standard; it is crude, childlike and destructive, a clear example of anti-art:

Graffiti writing - particularly tagging - or ‘bombing’ - fits very well into the idea of destruction as a form of creativity, an *anti-art* ... It’s about making ugly places even uglier; a beautiful concept to some, but not an easy notion for outsiders to comprehend. The idea of making something uglier than it was to begin with goes against all romantic ideas that art should ‘enrich the soul’ (*ibid* 2008:19).

As the destruction of ‘beauty’ (and noting the implicit morality in this word) graffiti is “a symbol that we’ve lost control” (*Style Wars* 1983: 3:06). Of course, this statement also suggests that certain undesirable elements in society are fundamentally uncontrollable.

Graffiti writing in this material-discourse occupies an always-antagonistic relationship to wider society, exacerbated by the illegal activities surrounding the writing (theft of caps and spray cans, trespassing, etc.). For subculture theorists, this loss of control is something to be celebrated, for it offers ‘emancipatory’ possibility. Thus, Ferrell (2002, in Kramer 2010) condones graffiti for its anarchism (adopting a very broad definition of anarchism as countering all organised systems, including state and religious etc.). Tucker (2009) praises its destructive ‘truthfulness’ in the

²²⁹ The irony of this disgust and derision, then, is that it is based on a misunderstanding of graffiti as a quick and *thoughtless* scrawling.

²³⁰ The distinction between legal, commercial, and illegal graffiti writing becomes vital at this point in the discussion (see Kramer 2010). Legal and commercial artists are necessarily happy to be embraced by an appreciative public. Kramer’s (*ibid*) extensive ethnographic study suggests that there is a noticeably different profile to these graffiti writers. Still largely male, they tend to be older, of variable ethnicity and class, with more to risk in illegal pursuits. They often work at great expense, and “take their aesthetic production very seriously” (*ibid* 244). Most significantly, Kramer (*ibid* 245-6) noted a “desire to participate in society” and to “contribute,” which marks them out from the more antisocial forms noted above.

face of alienated modern society, whilst Stewart (1991:162) notes its transgressive movement within repressive commodity culture, and its “struggle for space and resources within an urban environment.” Miller (2002) locates graffiti amongst the African Diaspora, who utilise it in a counter-colonial gesture (repeating the racial/folk discourse above). Finally, Rahn (2002) confines graffiti writing to adolescent rebellion in the face of disciplinary ‘adulthood,’ evoking yet another ‘folk’ group who stand outside of mainstream society, and who are more than capable of painting a silly red smile. Each of these theorists posits tagging as *resistance*; and specifically the resistance of signs, which form “their own grammatical order as counter-system to the official city signs” (Neef 2007:420).

Grffiti writing has all of the ‘savage’ force of urban terrorism, and performs a similar ‘nomadic’ attack (see Baudrillard 2003; Neef 2007; Pearl 2009). Unlike ‘traditional’ revolution and rioting, graffiti employs guerrilla-warfare tactics (see Pearl 2009) against the symbolic terrain of the city:

Like the riots, graffiti was a savage offensive, but of another kind, changing content and terrain. A new type of intervention in the city, no longer as a site of economic and political power, but as a space-time of the terrorist power of the media, signs and the dominant culture (Baudrillard 1993:76).

As a “radicalisation of revolt on the real strategic terrain of the total manipulation of codes and significations” (Baudrillard 1993:80), graffiti becomes part of the wider symbolic exchange that resists values of functional utility and monetary profit (*ibid* 62). Certainly, the Joker’s smile stands outside of Gotham’s capitalist economy in all senses, including the legal ‘economy’ of law enforcement. Graffiti writing operates beyond “capitalist values of production and exchange” (*ibid*), and Baudrillard (2003) places it on a separate aesthetic register of “poetic exchange and creative cultural activity.” This is the realm of excess: where the excessive expenditure of energy in graffiti (like that of sacrifice) is drawn from its *negativity* of meaning, or its essential lack. The unauthorised marks of graffiti lack symbolic worth; rather, they “operate as non-signs, contrary to the functioning of ‘full signs’; they have ... no difference but they have force; the graffito ‘alone is savage, in that is message is zero’” (Neef 2007:420). As ‘meaningless force,’ graffiti occupies a place in the affective register, “bursting into reality as a scream, an interjection, an anti-discourse” (Baudrillard 1993:78); or what Stewart (1991:5) designates “hysterical writing”:

A writing moving not simply from position to position but between positions as well; a writing refusing, and incapable of, an ‘ordered account.’

The hysteria of graffiti collapses the meaning of language by transforming the viewing process inherent in language from distanced contemplation or socio-political engagement (as in street art), to a dizzying glancing at “snapshots, which, at the moment they are glimpsed, are already gone” (Neef 2007:240). Graffiti writing is essentially a mobile art: we view it from the moving train, from the car as we drive, on walls that we hurriedly pass by. Further, it is formed *in*, and *as*, movement. Thus graffiti writing comprises quick ‘thrown up’ pieces on walls in the night, or on subway trains as they halt at station platforms. Likewise, movement is encapsulated in its vividly directional script, which evokes the gesture of the writing hand and the body as it flows across the urban fabric; or, indeed, the movement inherent in the swinging arc of a terrifyingly simplistic, blood red smile.

With the addition of movement, we can begin to understand graffiti not so much as text, but as *bodily performance*, complete with all of the profanity that only the exposed body can evoke (Stewart 1991). The signature of the graffiti writer is a corporeal gesture, which calls attention to the physicality of people in what is otherwise a disembodied public sphere (Pearl 2009)²³¹. Gotham’s public of *The Dark Knight*, for example, is largely a bodiless, and often faceless, mass, glimpsed momentarily as Batman passes by; or a sea of terrified faces, or non-individuated ‘missing’ people who have fallen victim to the Joker’s next game²³². These subjects exist, further, in a ‘dematerialised’ city of smoothed chrome, glass and marble surfaces, which lack the texture we equate with the living, and most especially with skin (e.g. the bank, penthouse, courtrooms and skyscrapers of Bruce Wayne’s world). In such sterile environments, it takes graffiti to remind us of the materiality of the urban fabric (or, indeed, the urban-as-fabric) and recall us to our bodies. The Joker’s constant reference to his scars has this effect, as our gaze is halted at the surface of his skin, in a morbid, but also genuine, fascination with the ruptures and cuts there. We are forced to ponder, wonder, and wander this fleshy material as living, fragile and mobile. There can be no ‘deep-reading’ of intent beyond his surface skin. Nor is his face quiescent as it bears our scrutiny. Like a museum piece, the Joker’s smile opens up a public, material-discursive realm, which speaks back to us, and refuses our colonising gaze (Neef 2007). Bal’s (1999, in Neef 2007:421-2) ‘museum account’ posits graffiti writing “as the epitome of the process and performance of culture,” where:

²³¹ Note Baudrillard’s (1993:82) equation of graffiti with bodily tattoos: “tattooing takes place on the body. In primitive societies, along with other ritual signs, it makes the body what it is — material for symbolic exchange: without tattooing, as without masks, the body is only what it is, naked and expressionless. By tattooing walls, SUPERSEX and SUPERKOOOL [graffiti writers] free them from architecture and turn them once again into living, social matter, into the moving body of the city before it has been branded with functions and institutions.”

²³² The exception to this is the ferry sequence, when society eventually pulls together against the Joker’s threat.

The basic operation of the museum, 'showing or exposing,' follows the structure of a speech act, a discursive event taking place between a first person (the one speaking, 'I'), who makes a statement about a third person (the object on display, 'it') towards a second person (the addressee to whom the speech act is directed, 'you').

However, this is too static, depersonalised, abstract, and nonmaterial a concept to fully address the violently physical, affective rupture of the Joker's grimacing smile, the excessive energy of his moving script, and the bizarrely un-authored sovereignty of this writer. Indeed, the Joker's graffiti writing is more than an abstracted metaphor for the performance of culture, or even the chaotic texts of non-signs. It is discomforting not because of its ugliness, "bad taste" (Stewart 1991:164), or resistive illegibility, but because its repeatability, permanence, and 'dirtiness' attack core western civic values, especially those of control and purity. Thus, "graffiti can be seen as a *permanent soiling* of the environment simply in its constant replicability, its emphasis upon repetition and replacement" (*ibid* 167). I want to initially attend to the 'soiling' in this phrase; the way graffiti dirties the urban environment in its continuous struggle for space and recognition. Fundamentally, "graffiti makes claims upon materiality" (*ibid* 168). Graffiti writing works with and against the grain of material surfaces, and its claim is that of appropriation, profanity, and destruction: an act of defacement, which "destroys the significance of its material base" and constitutes a:

Threat not only to the surface upon which it is applied; it is considered a threat to the entire system of meanings by which such surfaces acquire value, integrity, and significance (*ibid*).

Graffiti writing on buildings, for example, threatens not just the brick on which it is enacted, but the entire system of privatised real estate (i.e. property value). The Joker's graffitiing occupies various surfaces: a newspaper, a pseudo-documentary film for the news media, a carnival van, Batman's image (it is repeatedly superimposed on this iconic figuration in the movie posters), and faces. In the first instances, the Joker desecrates the system of news reportage, with its projection of truth and meaning. The carnival van, defaced to read "slaughter" from the original "laughter," perhaps hints at the cruelty inherent in humour (see 4.4.4). Yet it is the third and fourth forms of graffiti writing, on the masked face of Batman and the faces of Gotham's citizens, which carry the greatest import. Taussig's (1999) equation of defacement with unmasking offers useful insight here.

Defacement, for Taussig (1999:2-3), is a “mystical process” of unmasking, which “*reveals*”²³³ the “public secret” that lies at the heart of social and political systems and constitutes their fundamental power. The public secret thus forms “the basis of society, social formations, and their attendant knowledges” (Surin 2001:206). It is comprised of “that which is generally known, but cannot be articulated” (Taussig 1999:5). In other words, the secret produces “*social subjects who know what not to know*” (Surin 2001:206). The driving force of this public secret is the State, which naturalises its power through secrecy, and specifically through the repression of what we are not allowed to know (i.e. that its power is in no way ‘natural’). Gotham’s corrupt legal and police institutions, and the productive entanglements of the elite and mobsters²³⁴, are two clear examples of this State secret. More disturbingly, Batman the crime-fighter is also Batman the *lawbreaker*; and both of these roles are essential to maintaining statehood. Gotham’s peace and security rests on Batman’s violence against criminal and undesirable others, in full cooperation with the law; and this is the generally known, but never voiced, secret that threatens the ‘truth’ of the state machine. The state must be seen to be the upholder of the law, and the “normative source from which everything else flows” (*ibid* 207), and so it represses or masks its key figure of control (Batman). It divorces itself from Batman’s dark reality, and condemns its own hero. Thus, Batman and Commissioner Gordon strike a deal, in the final moments of the film, to deceive the public and pin Dent’s crimes on Batman, in the attempt to uphold the illusion of, and ‘hope’ in, the legal institutions of Gotham City. This “contrived illusionism ... effaces the noncontractual elements that underpin the workings of the social contract,” and presents the state as unmasked, or open, in its dealings with the civic community (*ibid* 208). All members of society are complicit in the making and maintaining of this secret, for “without such shared secrets any and all social institutions - workplace, marketplace, state, and family - would founder” (Taussig 1999:7). We can interpret the Joker’s ironic lecture to Harvey Dent about ‘plans’ (1:45:28) as the naming of our²³⁵ shared complicity in corruption and brute force in our everyday lives—as long as this violence fits a ‘reasonable,’ even ‘reliable,’ pattern.

The shared and deliberate ‘knowing not to know’ that underpins State power “[institutes] a pervasive ‘epistemic murk,’ the core of which is an uncanny dialectic of concealment and revelation” (Surin 2001:206). This concealment takes two forms: first, that of *prohibition*, where it is not

²³³ ‘Reveals’ is Taussig’s preferred term, which he differentiates from ‘exposure’ (in the Enlightenment sense), which destroys the secret (after Benjamin). ‘Reveals’ bears connotations of ‘revelation,’ and indeed defacement and desecration are “the closest many of us are going to get to the sacred” (Taussig 1999:1). Previously, he argues (*ibid*), the blasphemy of defacement was tied to the desecration of the face of god in idols. Now, “in secular societies where God has long been put in his place,” defacement brings the “angry God out of hiding,” through the breaching of the public secret (*ibid* 5).

²³⁴ The mob, through Maroni, even aid the capture of the Joker when it becomes clear that he has gone ‘too far,’ disturbing the (im)balance of the status quo in Gotham: “this craziness, this is too much” (1:37:50).

²³⁵ I am referring not just to the citizens of Gotham here, but to the audience who the Joker is directly soliciting in this speech.

permitted to know of a thing (such that Batman's illegal force, which is required to secure the city, and his alliance with Gotham's legitimate police and legal institutions, must be kept from the public). The second form is of *dissimulation*, where we all know that we know, but cannot admit to this (just as the citizens are aware of, but refuse to acknowledge, the role Batman plays in securing their lives) (*ibid*). However, for Taussig (1999:7, emphasis added), the public secret does not rest here, but shelters an even deeper secret within it—a 'surplus' of sorts, which is an *incitement to transgression*, in the form of defacement:

The prohibition that lies at *the heart of the public secret has within it a clandestine incitement* (the primordial secret, if you like) *to transgress the very thing it prohibits ...* This incitement to transgression, the 'surplus' in which the public secret is caught, meshed, and contravened, takes the form of an incitement to defacement, defacement being precisely the uncontainable 'negativity' that unmakes the public secret.

This understanding of defacement as "the uncontainable 'negativity' that unmasks the public secret" (*ibid*) returns us to Baudrillard's (1993) 'negative excess' of graffiti, where the power of the signifying system is "never firmly in place," and "the ideality of the signifying order is always *also* traversed by the event that it can never acknowledge, or represent, but that it is equally unable to expel or render absent" (Shaviro 1990:20). It is the Joker who plays on this defacing excess, with the audience's full support. We want to hear him name the uncomfortable public secrets that we all know (or suspect) but do not speak of; and we delight in his freedom, and its resulting profanities. The Joker's graffitiing, by this account, is provoked by the very systems he transgresses: he is incited to 'unmask' the public secret written into the material surfaces of the city.

In unmasking the public secret, the Joker's defacements cut back and forth between revelation and concealment—the 'uncanny dialectic' mentioned above. His 'smile' does not expose truth (i.e. render it meaningful)²³⁶, but instigates an even deeper layer of 'sacred mystery,' through a *re-enchantment* comparable to sympathetic magic, wherein the copy (voodoo doll) is enlivened by the desecration process:

Defacement ... creates an express lane to the magic of the mimetic, such that defacement of the till-then-inert copy triggers its inherent capacity for life into life (Taussig 1999:24).

²³⁶ Indeed, the Joker recognizes that there are no grounds on which to build truth—hence he lives in a "world without rules" (1:25:50).

Taussig (*ibid*) cites the “spirit mischief” of shamans as another such example of this game of concealment-revelation, which hints at a wider trickster ‘poetics’ in the (sacred) work of desecration. The Joker’s role is not to clarify or overturn (revolutionary wise) the myths of Gotham’s civic community²³⁷, but rather to slash into them, much like the gash in his own face, to reveal an ‘uglier’ beauty. The sacrificial knife is vital to this re-enchantment, for the surplus energy tied up in the transgressive core of the public secret can only be released through *cutting* into its wholeness/holiness (*ibid*). Indeed, it is the site of the face that best encapsulates this place of cutting (defacement, by definition, implies the sacrilegious act of disfiguring the face), for the face is a “heroic trope,” the place of the “ur-appearance ... of secrecy itself as the primordial act of presenting” (*ibid* 3). The soul (depths) is purported to be present, and thus accessible, in the face (surface and mask), such that reading the face becomes a soothsaying activity of “reading insides from outsides” (*ibid*). Ironically, the Joker teaches us that hidden violence is inscribed in the smooth skin of the (un)masked face, and that its purported ‘truthfulness’ “is always a consequence of this violent *making-absent*, of domination enforced by the threat of murder” (Shaviro 1990:18, emphasis added)²³⁸.

The Joker’s face bears his own overt skin-markings, through which he resists this pseudo-reading of the truth. In facing the Joker, we are “brought face to face with, forced to confront, an ‘outside’ which [we] can never claim as [our] ‘ownmost possibility,’ which [we] cannot refer back to [ourselves]” (Shaviro 1990:26). His smile is offered to us as a permanent, unintelligible graffiti, which, like masochistic punk markings²³⁹, reifies the skin’s surface:

Masochistic sexuality makes a fetish of the skin, infusing it with idolatrous power, and granting it an excess of visibility through tearing, bruising or piercing ... defacement is not a process of obliteration, but of a sacrilegious/sacrificial scarification that draws attention to the surface of things, to the skin in all its communicative power (Bloustien 2003).

Like punks, the Joker’s facial scars attack not just the “psycho-biological” skin of his face, but also the wider “social skin” (*ibid*). Their “excess of visibility” (*ibid*) forcefully bring us to the “exteriority of matter, of its irreducibility to thought”; and his ‘burning’ smile (see above) bears “the

²³⁷ Although he approaches an ‘explanation’ in his speech to a maddened Harvey Dent/Two-Face, we sense this is more of a boasting about his own intelligence and prowess, together with a cunning attempt to ‘tip him into madness,’ than a genuine attempt to render his actions meaningful (to *account* for his actions).

²³⁸ Shaviro is referring to the truth of language, here, but his remark is as relevant to the ‘ur-appearance’ of the ‘present’ in the face. The truth of the face makes absent the face-as-it-is, its surface reality, which is rendered a transparent window onto the soul.

²³⁹ Stewart (1991:171) takes this skin-marking further, by equating it to “the tradition of the criminal’s self-marking and mutilation.” Like punk markings, criminals’ tattoos are a form of rebellion “against the imposed environment by inventing a new surface - the body’s exterior - for the inscription of one’s identity, writing upon that surface a set of social relations denied by one’s imprisonment” (*ibid*).

blinding brightness or palpable obscurity of the event” (Shaviri 1990:21- 25). Cutting into its holiness, the Joker forces us to address the face anew, as a sacred and mythical surface. An open wound, or a work of sacrificial self-sovereignty, the face is not removed, but ‘refaced.’ His graffitied smile unmask the public secret that rests on the assumption of an open and honest ‘face’ (or ‘presenting’). Surin (2001:207) refers to such unmasking as:

A desecrating artistry that tunnels into the veins of the state-machine’s power ... a poetics that employs the oscillating movement between metaphor and mimesis as its key operating principle in order to undermine the state’s use of the mimetic faculty.

This tunnelling is comparable to the Joker’s movements through Gotham City, which might as well be underground, as they leave no obvious trace for Batman to see from his aerial lookout. That is, he appears, almost magically, in its various ‘places,’ as he wishes. There is no known origin to his movements, and when he leaves the scene, and the frame of the film, we have little sense of where he is going²⁴⁰. This is in keeping with trickster figures that mock the illusions of time-space control. Indeed, we are reminded of a more literal tunneller, Connolly’s (2006) Crooked Man of *The Book of Lost Things*, another unsavoury gamester who moves between the fairy tale kingdom and our own world by tunnelling, literally burrowing through the soil with his sharp-nailed hands. As they tear open the skins (surfaces) of face and world, both of these trickster-like figures transform city and kingdom, exposing their inside depths to be illusory: just one more mask in their never-ending game of concealment-revelation.

For Surin (2001), this unmasking and re-masking of the public secret is an act of ongoing *revolution*. He argues that Taussig has identified the revolutionary as “the one who queries the Name of the Event but who also wants to rename it in the awareness that it can be named again and again”²⁴¹ (*ibid* 215). At this point I wish to return to Stewart’s (1991:167) description of graffiti as “a permanent soiling of the environment simply in its constant *replicability*, its emphasis upon repetition and replacement,” this time placing my emphasis on the notion of replicability. As the graffiti writers of *Style Wars* (1983) remark their graffiti is primarily about widespread coverage. Hence, New York graffiti writers prioritised subway trains in order to “carry their names from one end of the city” to the other (*Style Wars* 1983:2:37). One interviewee summarises this need for replicability as “going all-city” (*ibid* 5:49), whereby the viewing public are forced to see, but not understand, a

²⁴⁰ Unless he purposefully leaves clues.

²⁴¹ This is different to ‘traditional’ concepts of revolution, which imply the overthrowing of societal order, and the pursuit of utopia.

repetition of “your tag in Queens, uptown, downtown, all over” (*ibid*). For Stewart (1991:165-6), this replicability is a “matter of individuation,” with the most prolific and dispersed writings earning their taggers “the honorific titles ‘King of the Line,’ ‘All City-Insides,’ and King of the City.” As such, “graffiti is an art of the autograph,” which “[serves] purely as a mark of presence, the concrete evidence of an individual existence and the reclamation of the environment through the label of the personal” (*ibid*). As such, graffiti writing enacts a reclaiming—or reassertion—of sovereignty. It rejects the ‘symbolic city,’ and the discerning look that would read hidden depths into, and through, the urban material, to reassert the individuality and opacity (which is the same thing) of surfaces. Illegible, and leaving a permanent trace of the (profane) corporeality of bodily gesture, the Joker’s graffiti smile therefore marks the violent excess of a “bad writing ... exiled in the exteriority of the body” (Derrida 2004, in Stewart 1991:164).

5.3.2 Ecological Gothic

Like the Joker’s own permanently soiled face, the graffitied urban skin refuses the penetration, ‘understanding,’ and symbolism practised upon it by the rationalising logic of Batman and Gotham’s citizens. For the latter, the urban fabric retreats, or withdraws from the mind’s eye and body’s touch, to become an architecture of transparency (aptly composed of panels of glass), whereby: “the various non-living entities [serve] ... as simply the backdrop against which political community is enacted” (Coward 2006:423). Unmindful of their surroundings, Gotham’s citizens (for example the bank hostages, trust fund brigade, and bar crowds) are helpless in the face of the Joker’s violent appropriation of the cityscape. Even the ferry hostages seem alarmingly ignorant of any material affordances that their ‘prison’ might offer for escape. Likewise, when Gotham General Hospital explodes, the crowd’s reaction is one of amazement and stupor in the face of spectacle, as the architecture they take for granted is so easily and impressively demolished. Of course, this is somewhat of a generalisation. Commissioner Gordon, for one, is more awake to the ‘liveliness’ of the urban fabric in his antagonistic relationship with the mob (who interact with the city in more creative ways, by utilising its ‘non-places’ for drug dealing, etc.).

The situation is further complicated in the case of Batman, who holds a strange love-hate for the city, in common with another masked comic crime fighter, Eisner’s (1940) ‘Spirit’ (of Central City). Both are detectives, whose talent lies in ‘reading’ their city. Further, they are a product of their respective cities, which wreak havoc on their lives (to the point of death for both heroes in the comics). The Spirit states his helplessness to

reject ‘her’ unrelenting demands in Miller’s (2008) film adaptation: “my city, I cannot deny her. My city screams. She is my mother. She is my lover, and I am her Spirit.” For both Batman and Spirit, the city is feminine nurturer (“She provides for me, my city does. She gives me everything I need”), weapon (“all the enemy has is gun to knives. I have the entire city as my weapon”), object of desire (“my lover”), and object of fear and pain (she “screams”) (Miller 2008). Batman is unthinkable without Gotham City, which is as important to the Batman/DC franchise as Batman himself, and has an equally long and complex history and geography (Greenberger 2008). Certainly, Gotham City is the one consistent ‘personality’ within a franchise that has seen numerous retellings of all of its major figures. Batman himself has undergone reincarnations of gung-ho crime buster, campy TV figure, angst-ridden public vigilante, detective, and crazy old man. The Joker, too, has been variously storied. Yet Gotham, and Batman’s relationship to the city, remains eerily unchangeable: a fantasy based on a very real fear. In Miller’s (1985, in Voger 2006:22) influential retelling, the city reflects his “real life experiences of New York, particularly [his] experiences with crime.” For Miller (*ibid*):

Crime is taken so much for granted that people live in fortresses and walk around looking and acting like victims, carrying money to bribe muggers, acting as if it is all a numbers game ... whether or not some monster can rob, rape or kill them, for all intents and purposes giving total power over their lives to anyone who’s savage enough to take it.

In some ways, Batman is an extension of this nightmare city, and his tortured nature echoes its own twisted existence. Gotham City suggests an “Ecological Gothic,” with its “horror, the nightmare and the suffering that arise from misalliances and imbalances” of an ecosystem ‘gone wrong’ (Nayar 2009)²⁴². Waste (including humans) is a key theme of this environment, with Batman featuring not just as crime-fighter but also as *sanitizer* of the city (*ibid*). Indeed, his personal story begins with a traumatic encounter with crime, which left him an orphan, and saw him dedicating his future life to ridding the city of violent undesirables, and particularly the organised criminals of the mob. This mob, and the crime-ridden streets of Gotham, are the “city’s (filthy, disease-and-poverty ridden) underside, a repressed parallel world that intrudes into and is in conflict with the ‘true’ one”—that is the *mythic* city that Batman (along with Jim Gordon, Rachel, and Harvey Dent) aims to reinstate (*ibid*, my emphasis). For Batman, then, the city has two antagonistic faces, its daytime face of law and order, and its night-time criminal face. The tension of *The Dark Knight*, according to this narrative, is psycho-geographical, arising “between the surface, ‘civilized’ developments of a city and the

²⁴² Nayar (2009) notes that the concept of the Ecological Gothic shifts the analytical focus from “the dark side of the human nature,” and especially Batman’s nature, typical of the Gothic imagination, to locate it *geographically* “inside the city itself, a dark side that seems to rot the city’s internal systems” (*ibid*). Note that these words evoke Miller’s earlier vision of a city ‘gone to rot’ (see 5.2).

intrusion of the persistent, undesirable, ‘primitive’ darker depths” (*ibid*). This speaks to the wider construction of cities as places to be both desired and feared:

Underlying the production of cities are the hidden workings of desire and fear. In other words, cities are desire and fear made concrete, but in deceitful, disguised, displaced ways (Pile 2002:76).

Nolan’s (2008) *Batman*, caught between these affects, must violently repress the space of the one (criminal) in order to secure a space for the other (civilized). He utilises brute force and technological superiority to achieve this ordering.

Nolan clearly embraces an ecological gothic fantasy of the city, giving the Joker an aggressive urban ‘edge,’ “much more Goth stroke, punk stroke, it’s a much more street kind of Joker” (Hemming, in Chitwood 2008), and locating him amongst Gotham’s ‘waste’—to the point that he evokes the *smell* of the city’s vagrants (*ibid*). The Joker’s power arises from his violent manipulation of the already damaged urban fabric. He harnesses the savagery and decay of Gotham’s criminal landscapes to penetrate the highest echelons of law and society: *nowhere* is safe (and even the fortress of Wayne Enterprises has been compromised). Yet the Joker is not confined to a crime-ridden ‘depth’ in Nolan’s retelling. The film begins where the prequel left off; with Batman’s near-triumph over crime, such that criminals are running scared (refusing to strike deals at night if the sky “looks bad”) and the mobsters are forced to adopt the habits of legal citizens, and meet under cover of daytime. Further, Nolan filmed considerably more of this sequel in “brighter environments, including office settings with fluorescent lights, and big open rooms in daytime with sunlight streaming through windows” (Pfister in Fisher 2008; also Pfister 2008). The “claustrophobic set-design” of *Batman Begins*, “reminiscent of the Tim Burton style manual with the model work of the Narrows (Gotham’s slum) on prominent display,” has been eschewed for the more varied, “real-world environments” of *The Dark Knight* (Hokenson 2010). Ironically, then, the intrusion of ‘darkness’ in the film cannot be attributed to a repressed ecological gothic. Batman’s fears of ‘underground’ crime prove to be unfounded, as his greatest threat lies not with the organised mob, but with the Joker. Indeed, the darkest depth of Gotham is (as the title suggests) Batman himself.

Batman is not withdrawn from the city; nor does the city withdraw from him. However, unlike the Joker, with his more intimate celebration of material surfaces, Batman’s relationship is inherently troubled and antagonistic. He stands a-part from the city, physically, as he looks down on it from the night-time rooftops, and symbolically, as he rejects its “garbage” (1:24:21). Further, he consumes the city by drawing it into his psychic depths. In contrast, the Joker’s graffitied face, together with his trampish, itinerant appearance, speaks of an irreverent rapport with the city; not

because he has tamed or consumed it, nor from any love or need for the city. Rather, the Joker draws his urban ‘charge’ from the imbalances of the city; imbalances that Batman (and Harvey Dent, his legal counterpart) has been instrumental in creating. The Joker releases this charge explosively, and, in doing so, he further destabilises the urban fabric. There is a permanent sense of encroaching chaos in the film, helped by the continuous “deadline structures” of the narrative, which “[accelerate] the action toward a central event or action that must be accomplished by a certain moment” (Corrigan and White 2009: 250). Fairy tales usually employ one or two deadline structures, to underpin the climax of the plot, and provide the film with finality and ‘meaning.’ However, the Joker spins out an endless series of these adrenalin-rushes, fuelling the sense of anxiety in the film, and denying us the relief of closure. Again, Zimmer’s ‘sound of anarchy’ score contributes to the ‘madness’ of the urban affect.

The Joker acts, then, as a gravitational force²⁴³, manipulating the time-space of the city by entralling it in his violent game (figure 11). Whilst Batman sanitises the city in a strategic manner, endlessly purging its ‘dark’ underside, the Joker acts out a random parody, “playing havoc with Batman’s own ruthless quest for civilized order” (Hokenson 2010). Indeed, “he has no plan of his own, but is bent on proving to Batman the error of his own deeply held philosophy and mission” (*ibid*), in a manner which inflicts “hysteria and disunity” (*ibid*) on Gotham’s civic community, criminal and legal alike. He takes the violence entailed in Gotham’s civic community to its limits, by extending his own brand of violence beyond the legitimate ‘plan’ (worth reiterating):

I just did what I do best - I took your plan, and I turned it on itself ... Nobody panics when the expected people get killed. Nobody panics when things go according to plan, even if the plan is horrifying. If I tell the press that tomorrow a gang-banger will get shot, or a truckload of soldiers will be blown up, nobody panics. Because it’s all part of the plan. But when I say that one little old mayor will die, everybody loses their minds! (1:42:28).

²⁴³ Note the Joker’s explanation of his role in Harvey Dent’s downfall: “madness is like gravity. All it takes is a little push” (2:09:40).



Figure 11. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: fragmented city. Collage.

The Joker claims his own brand of chaotic urban warfare is “fair.” The only way to live outside of the lying economy of the ‘truth’ (the world of the mythic community, which Batman secures, the media portrays, and Gotham’s Citizens inhabit) is to play “without rules” in a game dictated by chance. Hence the Joker opens himself up to the very same chance that he allows his victims, inviting his own death at the hands of Batman, and the two-faced Harvey Dent. The Joker’s game is a risky matter of opportunism, and a refusal to adhere to even the most basic convention of honour amongst thieves. Whilst his control of the film narrative makes him seem, at times, like the very force of nature or agent of chaos that he describes himself to be, he is simply a mortal man who has chosen to live outside of the bonds of community, as vulnerable and frail as any Gotham citizen (Nolan and Nolan 2008). He pits his urban terrorism against Batman’s brutal mythically and morally sanctioned ‘control,’ and recognises the similarities between the two, telling the caped crusader (in a hilarious metafictional reference to Jerry Maguire), “You. Complete. Me” (1:24:34). However, this is no metaphoric terrorism in the service of a greater cause (for example ‘freedom’ or ‘utopia’), but the carefree actions of a “dog chasing cars” (1:43:58). Further, he:

Wouldn’t know what to do with one if I caught it. I just do things. I’m just the wrench in the gears. I hate plans. Yours, theirs, everyone’s. Maroni has plans, Gordon has plans. Schemers trying to control their worlds. I’m not a schemer, I show the schemers how pathetic their attempts to control things really are (1:43:60).

The Joker interrupts Gotham City, constituting a new ungrounded urban landscape, where the fate of Gotham’s community, and the infrastructure and built environment of the city, are equally uncertain. Explanations of the ecological gothic, or even traditional gothic notions of tension between ‘depth’ and ‘surface’ (above), seem irrelevant to this chaotic aggression. A different theoretical ‘narrative’ is required now, one that steps beyond the pervasive anthropocentrism of urban and political theory (that renders *human beings* as dwellers in and users of the city/built environment) to demonstrate the inseparability of civic community and material built environment (Campbell *et al.* 2007). Indeed, “there is more to the constitution of a *polis* than the gathering of an *anthropos*” (Coward 2009:120).

5.3.3 Urbicide

Throughout *The Dark Knight*, the Joker targets the built environment of the city, and especially its material infrastructure. He blows up a range of public architecture, including Gotham General Hospital, the Major Crime Unit, an unnamed warehouse (in which he has trapped Rachel and Harvey Dent), and generally, “many things go boom” (Denby 2008). He further threatens the bridges, tunnels and ferries of the city, and targets

other key mechanisms by which capitalist urban communities function: law, media and money²⁴⁴. Urbicide, defined as the “widespread and targeted destruction of the built environment” (Coward 2009:123), and applied most frequently to describe pervasive State violence, does not make for an easy interpretive fit, given the Joker’s more limited terrorist media campaign and attack on the built environment. Nonetheless, the Joker’s violence follows a similar pattern, and its importance is exaggerated at the narrative level, adding to its significance and effect. Fire and gasoline act as repetitive tropes throughout the film, and the Joker’s tense auditory theme (see 5.3) ensures a constant sense of alienation and disorientation, and exaggerates the vulnerability of the urban fabric.

In threatening the built environment and its infrastructure, the Joker takes the Batman myth to its limits, and ‘unmasks’ the myth of civic community, based on the commonality of an American purpose, origin and destiny²⁴⁵. As the city crumbles, Gotham’s civic community splinters, and panicked civilians pursue their own self-interest. Further, the Joker ushers in an uncertain moral landscape that undermines the durability of civic myths (such as that of the ‘heroic’ Batman), and eventually the shared space of the *polis*. The tale of the ‘other’ Gotham (the noble city) as told by Batman, and materialised in Gotham’s imposing architecture, is shattered through the Joker’s urban warfare. Vitaly, the Joker, together with his organised clown army, puts the *existential* nature of urbanity at stake in his ‘explosive’ actions, to engender a state of chaos and disarray that disavows the political. I posit the Joker’s “attacks on the urban environment ... through iconoclasm, sabotage or ‘terrorism’” (O’Hare 2010) go further; to strike at the possibility of civic community in Gotham. As such, Coward’s (2009) proposal of an ‘existential’ urbicide provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding his architectural “gestures of war” (Woods 1993)²⁴⁶.

²⁴⁴ Coward (2006:424) notes: “an understanding of [urbicide] ... must take into account the assault on buildings, logistics networks and communications infrastructure,” including the “fabric that comprises the city and which defines the nature of the lives lived in its environs.”

²⁴⁵ The ‘ecological gothic’ which structures Batman’s relationship to the city, and which sees him purging its ‘criminal landscapes,’ could easily be regarded as a targeted destruction on the urban landscape, both a destruction of “the unpredictability of modern street life, and ... multiculturalism and hybridity” (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2007), and a form of state-sanctioned urban planning (see above). In fact, the mythic community that Batman pursues, which is a purified community of the ‘ideal’ citizen, sharing similar values, history, destiny and origin, etc., can only ever be a product of such urban purification. Hence, we see a pogrom-like effect in Batman’s/Harvey Dent’s simplistic Manichean philosophy, which sees them round up 157 mob criminals to be tried together for the same ‘crime.’ However, Batman never targets the urban fabric; he targets the city’s inhabitants. This differentiates his violence from that of the Joker’s.

²⁴⁶ It is worth noting here that Coward’s (2009) proposal is not the urbicide familiar to international political literatures, which more commonly conceive “urbicide as unmediated opposites of ... the unpredictability of modern street life, and ... multiculturalism and hybridity” (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2007). National or devolutionary war (especially ethnic or nationalist war), state-sanctioned urban planning (generally in an attempt to ‘clean up’ cities), and neo-imperialist urban aggression, forms the bulk of empirical case studies for such urbicide theory to date.

In Coward's (2009) theory, the architectural city is not a mere instrumental (strategic, symbolic or metaphoric) backdrop to human lives, but rather constitutive of political community. Coward (*ibid*) works his notion of existential urbicide through Heidegger's (1927) account of the fundamental worldliness of *Dasein*, who is always already a 'being-in-the-world' (see Dreyfus 1990). *Dasein* is an "oriented Being" (*ibid*) located within "a relational network of everyday things" such as 'ready-to-hand' tools, which themselves (being directional) form 'equipmental wholes' comprised of "the various related bodies and things that accomplish a specific task, or fulfil a particular role" (Coward 2009:57). These equipmental wholes can be located in relation to each other, through a public 'horizon of intelligibility,' which Heidegger terms the 'region.' Thus *Dasein* becomes spatially located within a region wherein "many *Daseins* co-appear and co-exist":

Dasein constitutes items of equipment as ready-to-hand through 'circumspective concern.' *Dasein* establishes relationships by being engaged ... with certain things and unconcerned with others. However, that an item is close to *Dasein* is not sufficient; this item must have a place within the equipmental totality. This place can only be constituted if the item has a directionality that indicates the location in relation to other items. This directionality belongs to items themselves. However, in order for the various equipmental wholes to have a location *vis-à-vis* each other, a horizon of intelligibility must be established according to which all places can be located. This is the 'region' (*ibid* 59).

Heidegger posits, then, a fundamentally shared world, "established by the fact that the places constituted by the things with which it is concerned are essentially public" (Coward 2009:60). The urban built environment is fundamental to this shared spatiality; first, as a region, where the "buildings comprise the environment that orients all the possible places or things within it: a public horizon that gives intelligibility to a variety of equipmental wholes" (*ibid*). As a region, it "orients *Dasein*'s immediate sense of here and there, before and beyond, above and below," that is, his relational being (*ibid* 61). Second, the built environment acts as an equipmental whole: "an ensemble of buildings that refer to each other in various ways ... that enables the accomplishment of various tasks" (*ibid*). Being is "available to all" *through* buildings, which:

Constitute a spatiality [that] always already holds the possibility of the existence of an other within it ... Whether the presence of this other is actual or not, its always present possibility means that the spatiality constituted by buildings can never be rid of the trace of alterity (*ibid* 14-5).

Heidegger (1951) gives the example of a bridge to demonstrate his point. The bridge, spanning a river, 'gathers' a world together by making the banks of the river visible *as* banks. Further, "the hinterlands behind each bank are connected together and thus brought into the same world by the

bridge” (Coward 2009:67). The bridge, then, both performs and *embodies* an act of dwelling²⁴⁷, which “brings mortals together by expressing a durability that transcends individual finitude” (*ibid*).

To recap: the built environment is a fundamentally shared spatiality on which “durable political communities” can be constructed (Coward 2009:13). Further, the durability of communities rests on the more fundamental durability of the nonliving material architecture of the city, which has the potential to outlast any individual human life. Buildings, “experienced collectively ... [offer] the collective the possibility of duration as a community: in short, both a future and a past” (*ibid* 12). This notion of the durability of community resonates with Arendt’s (1958) account of the *polis* as a “community of memory” that:

[Established] a framework where action and speech could be recorded and transformed into stories, where every citizen could be a witness and thereby a potential narrator. What the *polis* established, then, was a space where *organised remembrance* could take place, and where, as a result, the mortality of actors and the fragility of human deeds could be partially overcome (d’Entreves 2008).

Storytelling is vital to her *polis*, and especially ‘monumental narrating’ of heroic actions/deeds (see 2.2.1). Ultimately, such narratives provide a “public space of appearance” (*ibid*) for the possibility of a unified and tolerant heterogeneous community. For Arendt (1998:198), however, the built environment is irrelevant to this living community as:

The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organisation of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.

Coward (2006) argues to the contrary: that the built environment provides for the shared spatiality of the collective, and its destruction is necessarily more traumatic to its citizens than the death of individual members of a community. In explicating this, he refers to the destruction of the Stari Most (a bridge) during the Bosnian War, which was mourned by the Croatian author Drakulic (1993, in Coward 2006:420) *over* the death of an unnamed Bosnian woman:

‘We expect people to die. We count on our own lives to end ... The bridge [however] was built to outlive us ... it transcended our individual destiny. A dead woman is one of us - but the bridge is all of us.’

²⁴⁷ Where dwelling is “the gathering together of the horizons that make *Dasein*’s existence intelligible as Being-in-the-world” (Coward 2009:66).

Drakulic (*ibid*) recognises the death of *community* entailed in the destruction of the bridge, with the community's destiny tied to its concrete (and not mythic) durability.

Applying this logic to *The Dark Knight*, it is Gotham City's built environment that forms the basis of its criminal and legal community. Community and built environment are inextricably linked, and the *polis* cannot be unfolded amongst Gotham's citizens (whether in speech or action) except *through* their city. The Joker, however, lacks such ties to place. He does not belong to the city, he does not 'dwell' in it, and no one knows from whence he came. Instead, he moves into and through the city with a trickster's grace, spreading chaos and overturning Batman's 'plans' by hijacking the city *as a built environment*, profaning it through the defacements of graffiti, or destroying it with gasoline and fire. The institutions of law and order are defeated when he infiltrates their *built* presence (for example, he sets up his own capture to gain entrance to the Major Crime Unit, which he subsequently obliterates). The Joker's chaotic state of being (unattached, lacking origin, history, direction, and meaning) is untenable for the *polis*, founded as it is on the durability of its architecture. As he attacks Gotham's bridges in the later scenes of the movie we are made aware of Gotham as a physical place comprised of inorganic bricks and mortar. The Joker forces us to experience the *materiality* of Gotham City. He demonstrates Gotham to be more than a thinly disguised *symbolic* representation of New York, or a *mythic* realm of heroes (such as Harvey Dent, the "white knight," or Batman) who contribute to the greater myth of American supremacy. His architectonics further teach us that it is the shared nondescript physical spaces (banks, office blocks, police headquarters, hospitals, infrastructure, streets, etc.) that together constitute the plurality of Gotham's 'community.' As Gotham's citizens flee the Joker, we realise they cannot bring the *polis* with them. Their community inheres in Gotham's durable urban fabric, and cannot be transported in this way. As Gotham is reduced to rubble, so is the very possibility of community (figure 12).



Figure 12. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: urbicide study 1. Collage.

The cost of urbicide, then, exceeds *strategic* military destruction of buildings, *symbolic* destruction (i.e. of landmark buildings with representational value), or even *metaphorical* destruction (buildings individually representative of a greater mythic whole) (Coward 2009). Moreover, it exceeds the deaths of individual members of the community. Such acts of violence refute alterity in a totalitarian gesture, however, they are temporally and spatially confined, directed against specific forms of political and social organisation that conflict with the ideology of those carrying out the destruction. Urbicide strikes deeper, at the *existential* roots of community, as it “represents the violent foreclosure of the possibility of the political” by denying the openness fundamental to the human condition (Coward 2009:43). Urbicide is not merely a destruction of the bricks and mortar of cities, whether by war, terrorism, or urban planning policies. Rather, it destroys what cities, and indeed all buildings, make possible: the plurality of the human condition (figure 13).

Urbicide thus poses a distinct threat to the shared and durable space of community. It disavows the alterity intrinsic to urbanity²⁴⁸, where urbanity is the “existential condition of plurality or heterogeneity” (i.e. the shared spatiality identified by Heidegger). Urbicide has a disastrous ‘levelling effect’ on cities. An “architecture of war,” it:

Levels the old cities in much more than a physical sense: it reduces their multilayered complexity of meanings to one-layered *tableaux* embodying the monological, monomaniacal structure of hierarchy at its most logical and terrible extreme: the all-or-nothing polarity imposed by radical ideology and its rational over-determinations” (Woods 1993:8).

The heterogenous community entailed in the built environment is reduced to an exclusionary monological polarity, which establishes a “fiction of being-without-others” (Coward 2006:434). For the Joker, this is the state of ‘being alone’ amidst the wider community, which haunts Gotham’s citizens. Thus, he taunts the isolated and weary Commissioner Gordon: “does it depress you, Lieutenant, to know how alone you are?” (1:25:01). Similarly, he manipulates Batman through his loneliness: “they need you right now ... but as soon as they don’t, they’ll cast you out like a leper” (1:24:59). In both cases, the Joker contrasts ‘aloneness’ to the ‘togetherness’ of others in Gotham’s community: the wider public community in the case of Batman, and the corrupt Major Crime Unit, in the case of Gordon. He evokes a segregated society, composed of a faceless and

²⁴⁸ In Coward’s (2009:15) terminology: “urbicide refers to the destruction of buildings *qua* representatives of urbanity.”

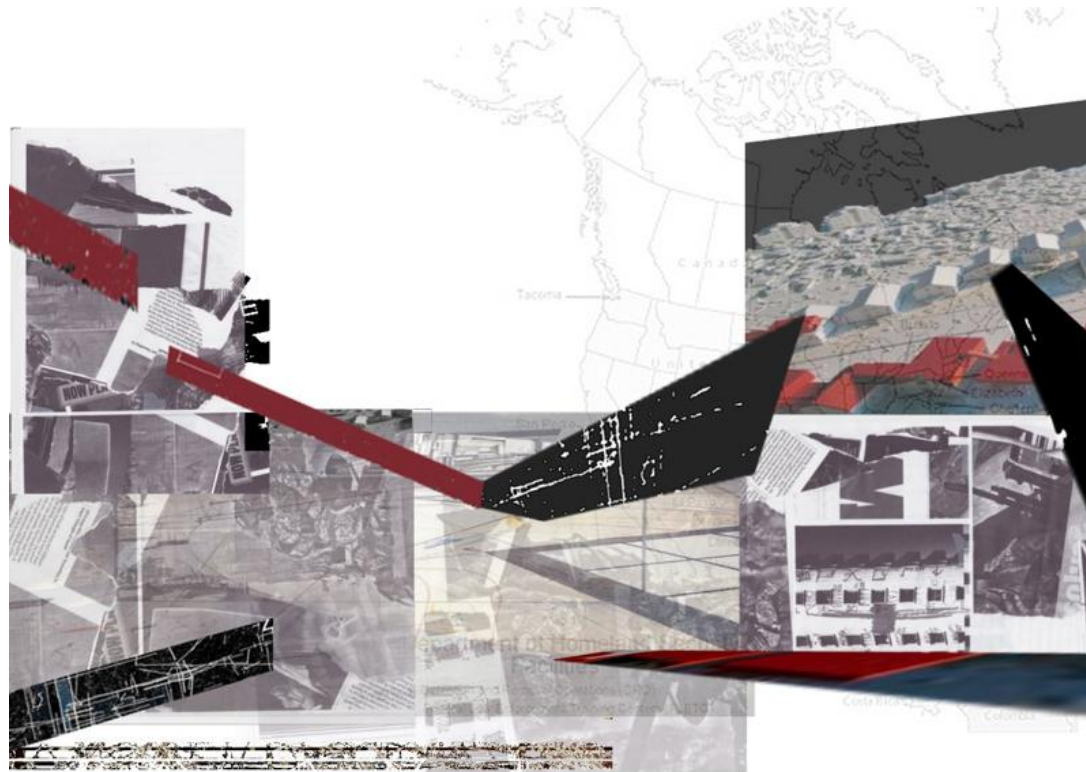


Figure 13. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: uricide study 2. Collage.

undifferentiated “them” (*ibid*). For Coward (2006:434), this polarising ‘self-other’ talk is typical to urbicide, which “[transforms] ... agonistic heterogeneity into antagonistic enclaves of homogeneity”²⁴⁹.

In the penultimate climax of the film the Joker performs this antagonistic divisiveness through a “little social experiment” (1:56:10). He threatens two groups of Gotham’s citizens who are fleeing the city on the ferries. The first contains “sweet innocent civilians” (1:57:16), whilst the latter contains prisoners: “Harvey Dent’s finest” (1:57:13). The ferry sequence is arguably the crux of the film, where the Joker pits himself against Batman one last time—but, for the first time, fails. The Joker claims his ‘game’ will teach Batman and the wider Gotham community the limits of civic society. He sets up a classic ‘lifeboat’ scenario:

Tonight, you’re all going to be part of a little social experiment ... Through the magic of diesel fuel and ammonium nitrate, I’m ready right now to blow you all sky high. Anyone attempts to get off their boat, you all die.
But we’re going to make things a little more interesting than that. Tonight, we’re going to learn a little bit about ourselves ...
There’s no need for you all to die. That would be a waste. So I’ve left you both a little present ...
[The Joker stares out over the harbour, at the ferries. Talking into a cell phone. Holding a detonator, with TWO buttons.]
Each of you has a remote to blow up the other boat. At midnight, I blow you all up. If, however, one of you presses the button, I’ll let that boat live. You choose. So who’s it going to be? Harvey Dent’s most wanted scumbag collection ... or the sweet innocent civilians? [(beat)]
Oh, and you might want to decide quickly, because the people on the other boat may not be so noble (Nolan and Nolan 2008:120-121).

However, his plan is foiled when neither boatload of people can bring themselves to blow up the other, and both resign themselves for death. Batman’s response to the Joker, “what were you trying to prove? That deep down, we’re all as ugly as you” (2:05:20), is inadequate. The Joker’s game seems less an action to prove the corruptibility of Gotham’s citizens, than an attempt to destroy the ties that bind community²⁵⁰. The irony, here, is that the public ferries achieve the opposite of the Joker’s intent: they ‘gather’ the crowd as a community. Whilst each boatload of people cannot physically see the other, they are formed together as a ‘being-in-common’ by this gathering, just as Heidegger’s bridge brings the two discrete banks together *as* banks. Forced to discuss the possibility of their own death, or that of the ultimate Other (criminals who have self-

²⁴⁹ Coward (2006:434) draws on Nancy’s (1991) notion of ‘agonistic,’ here, as “the continual provocation of difference” in the encounter between self and other.

²⁵⁰ The Joker’s initial threatening of the bridges and tunnels, which culminated in this ‘social experiment,’ performs a wider destruction of the civic community through the collapse of the urban fabric, such that Gotham’s citizens are fleeing the city *en masse*. Further, the enclaves of homogenous sub-communities that Coward (2006, 2009) argues are the result of such urbicidal violence, are evidenced throughout the film, e.g. as Gotham’s citizens isolates itself behind self-imposed security bars, and Bruce Wayne’s security-complex (his penthouse) becomes “the safest place in the city” (1:02:37).

consciously eschewed Gotham's civic community), the Joker's 'innocent citizens' at first appeal to common homogeneously structured notions of the moral inferiority of the Other, claiming: "those men on that boat made their choices. They chose to murder and to steal. It makes no sense for us to die, too" (01:57:40). Except, on this occasion, appeals to selectively collective mythic origins, heroes, purpose or destiny (Nancy's 1981 'figurative politics') are belied "in and through the shared spaces constituted by the built environment," i.e. the ferries (Coward 2006:432). No longer confined to a separate, distanced, and hidden location (prison, with its invisible, homogenous geography)²⁵¹, the criminals now share in the same alterity of being as the "sweet innocent civilians" (1:57:16). No matter how much the latter argue for triggering the bomb (all the while avoiding eye contact with each other), no one can bring himself/herself to turn the detonator key given this revelation of shared existence.

Gathered together as a single community, and founded on a like difference through an inherently shared spatiality, this group becomes an agonistic community, and thus resistant to the Joker's manipulations. This reminds us, ultimately, of the traditional trickster role: to divide and unsettle but, in doing so, to *harmonise* and consolidate. Thinking back to the Eshu-Esu story (see 4.5) the trickster's double-sided hat initiates a violent quarrel, but subsequently *reaffirms* our need for, and understanding of, community. In a similar manner, the Joker transforms Gotham's community by bringing its own contradictoriness and hypocrisy—its *mythic* origin—to light.

5.3.4 Itinerancy

The permanence of architecture, infrastructure, and the built environment more generally, is a precondition for dwelling in the city-state. The Joker attempts to render this dwelling impossible, as he attacks the material, physical foundations of the *polis*. Essential to this attack is the Joker's own fundamental disconnect to the city—and story. The Joker is a placeless, itinerant being who is contained neither by the city, nor the same world, as either Batman or the audience. He arrives from nowhere, on the back of his calling card; and unlike Batman, he has no alter ego, or personal history. Indeed he mocks the very concepts, telling a trio of tall stories about how he got his scars in a psychoanalytical and fairy tale parody. He does not seem to have a life beyond his performance of 'the Joker,' as any habitual haunts and material possessions are absent in the film. The police are unable to trace his origins for he has:

²⁵¹ The 'innocent civilians' and criminals do not normally inhabit the same space, as the latter occupy the wastelands of the ecological gothic discussed above, or are shut away in maximum security prisons. It is only on the shared public infrastructure of the ferries, that these two groups become visible to each other, and so can coexist.

Nothing. No matches on prints, DNA, dental. Clothing is custom, no labels. Nothing in his pockets but knives and lint. No name, no other alias ... nothing (Nolan and Nolan 2008:83).

Deprived of an origin story, sacred place, and the ‘happily ever after’ vital to myth, the Joker is rootless: there is nothing to tie him to the tale. This gives him an unusual presence, like that of a vagrant who “has no established home and drifts from place to place without visible or lawful means of support” (Cresswell 2011:239)²⁵². This presence is exacerbated by the Joker’s dishevelled appearance and “lived in makeup”²⁵³, giving a “broken down” and unhinged illusion like “he’s slept in hedge” (Hemming in Chitwood 2008). For costume designer Hemming (*ibid*), dressing the Joker in this bedraggled way makes the audience:

Assume that he may have been dressed like that for years ... He may have always been wearing those clothes instead of putting them on like the Joker has done before. You find him wearing them and your back story is that he’s been wearing them whatever he’s been up to and [during] all the bad things before we see him he’s been wearing those clothes.

There is a paradoxical permanence to the Joker’s appearance (a worn look), given the rootless nature of his existence. Like the vagabond or vagrant, the Joker is ever-present, but never fully *there*. Whilst he may be a ghostly drifter, his vagabondism is nonetheless powerfully embodied and affective, such that we can almost *smell* his decay and corruption (Nolan 2008)²⁵⁴. Indeed, for all his menace, there is a poignancy and pain in the Joker’s performance. As he haunts the story, leaving unsavoury traces of his presence (hanging bodies scored with his smile and painted with his makeup; graffitied newspaper sheets; unpleasant clues for the police, etc.), the film takes on a ‘dense’ affect of loss and placelessness (figure 14). The Joker counters the artifice of more traditional linear storytelling, which derives its relationships from a transcendental, mythic origin, rooted in a symbolic place. In contrast, he pulls apart traditional alliances, and weaves together unlikely and chancy affiliations between people and places.

²⁵² See Cresswell (2011:239-354) on the history and ‘career’ of the vagrant or vagabond.

²⁵³ The Joker’s makeup was carefully researched to resemble, in a medically accurate way, a Glasgow smile. It was applied in an unusually mobile manner (with Heath Ledger contorting his face in various ways as the makeup was applied) to gain “textures and expressions that just painting the face ... would not,” and to give a sweaty, dirty look (Caglione 2008 in Bryne 2008:36). Prosthetic makeup artist O’Sullivan (2008, in Bryne 2008:36) likewise strove for a ‘realistic’ effect. He comments (*ibid*) “the scarring was [designed] to give him the appearance of a smile, or a leer, but also it could be responsible for the character losing his mind.”

²⁵⁴ Nolan (2008) in an interview with *Movies Today* remarks of the Joker’s appearance: “this corruption, this decay in the texture of the look itself. It’s grubby. You can almost imagine what he smells like.”

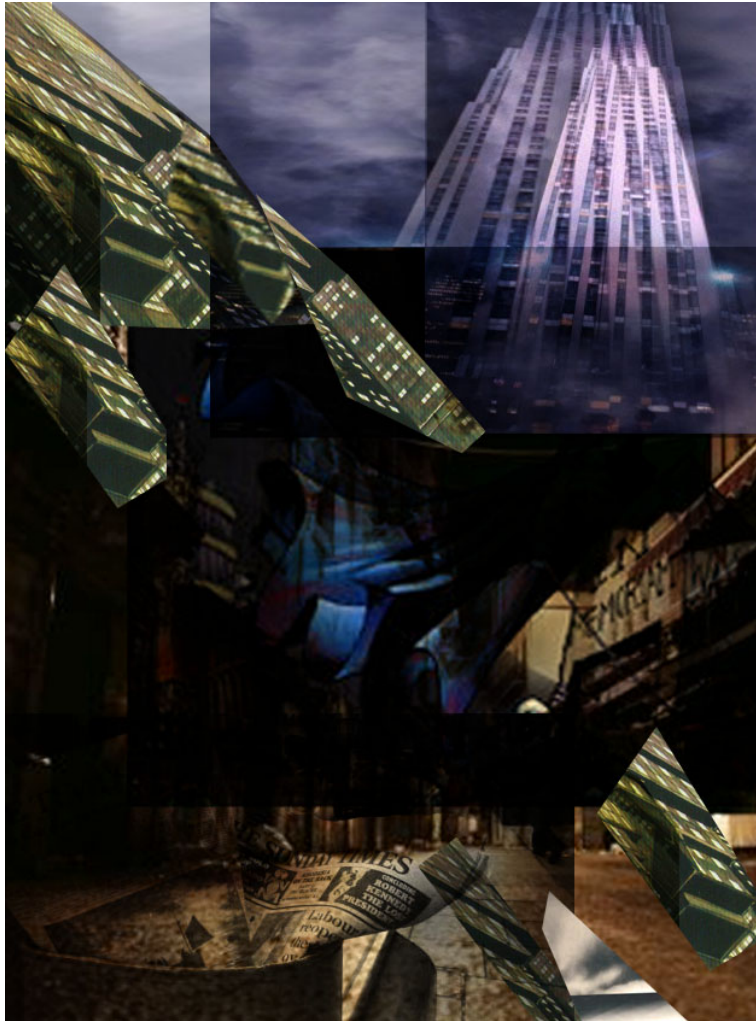


Figure 14. Joker landscaping of Gotham City: placelessness. Collage.

He subsequently spins the newly fractured cityscapes of Gotham into a macabre web, through an image-based narration²⁵⁵. As he moves from scene to scene, disparate landscapes lose their contextual meaning, and are juxtaposed into a confused cinematic pastiche. This is not so much an effect of montage in the film, although the rapid editorial cutting contributes to the urban disorder. Rather, it is as if each of these places loses their distinct identity as they, and we the spectators, are subsumed in the Joker's narration²⁵⁶ (see figure 11 above).

The aural violence (see 5.3), graffiti and defacements (see 5.3.1), and urbicide (see 5.3.2) together make and unmake the city and tale. However, we cannot celebrate this violence as a revolutionary 'freeing' of spaces, or even the purposeless psycho-geographical *dérive* practiced by the Situationists (Debord 2006). The Joker's drift is more sinister than their revolutionary mobility, and his violence is a terrifying *attack* on our fundamentally shared world, which undermines the possibility of dwelling, and alerts us to the hypocrisy and fragility of Gotham's mythic community. As he releases his pent-up violence, the Joker reduces Gotham's citizens, and the film audience to his own 'lost' status: we become itinerant, nowhere beings (vagrants), divorced from the symbolic, mythic meaning of the cityscape, and story.

Whilst the Joker terrifies us with his menace, there is also comical value in the tragic acts that he unfolds. Indeed, a significant part of his subversive force lies in his compelling clowning and black humour, "which [profanes] nearly every central belief, but at the same time ... [focuses] attention precisely on the nature of such beliefs" (Hynes and Doty 1993:2). The Joker's clowning is embedded in the narrative as playful speech, rich in puns and eruptions of nonsense. Somerville (2008:217) likens such dialogue to "a poetic writing [that] opens up a layer of meaning resonant with the eruption of the semiotic in Kristeva's 'madness, holiness and poetry'" (figure 15). Indeed, the Joker's dialogue produces an affective shock, which reverberates through the visceral depth of his narrative. His words are delivered slippery with saliva, and stuttered and stumbling, and are accompanied by giggling, dancing, and general clowning behaviour. The full embodiment of the Joker's speech makes Batman's more symbolic communication seem lifeless. Batman's rigid moral code cannot compete with the Joker's passion and sensuality, and we cannot help but be drawn in by his irreverent laughter as he runs dialogical rings around his nemesis, as in the party scene:

²⁵⁵ There is a human face to this disfigured and chaotically disordered cityscape, in the person of Harvey Dent/Two Face. The Joker invites Harvey, once the "white knight of the city" and its 'public face,' to "throw a little chaos into the equation." He even subjects himself to this (arbitrary) chaos, asking Dent to toss a coin to decide his own fate. Like the fractured disordered cityscape, he creates/fractures Harvey Dent into the schizophrenic Two Face.

²⁵⁶ We are reminded here of Hynes's (1993:42) description of the trickster figure as a "sacred and lewd bricoleur" who ironically pieces together new life in unnatural arrangements, in order to let us see things anew (see 5.4.3).



Figure 15. Joker's landscaping of Gotham City: clowning and profanity/laughter. Collage.

The Joker has another knife pressed to Rachel's neck.
[BATMAN] Drop the knife.
[THE JOKER] Sure. Just take off your mask and show us all who you are...
Rachel shakes her head at Batman. The Joker raises his shotgun to the side and BLOWS OUT the pane of glass next to him. The Joker dangles Rachel out the window.
[BATMAN] Let her go.
[THE JOKER] (laughs) *Very* poor choice of words...
He lets her DROP (Nolan and Nolan 2008:134-5).

Whilst playfully toying with the narration, plot sequence and visual spaces from the 'emptied' heart of city and story, the Joker stands somehow outside of both. He operates in an anti-narrative condition of no-time, no-space (figure 16), and cuts through the more 'rational' stories of other characters in the film. Such bizarre spatiality and temporality locates the Joker in Turner's (1967:93) "betwixt and between" realm of liminality, where he opens out an interstitial space of transformation in the film narrative, both sacred (meaningful) and profane (meaningless, or the destruction of meaning) (see 5.4.3). Indeed, this narrative property of in-betweenness firmly establishes the Joker as a trickster figure. As he draws a self-conscious line between the discourse and story of the film, he "[divides] himself ... into narrator and character, he both tells the story and is 'in' the story," in a way which we have learned to expect of trickster figures (Doueihi 1993:191). Flowing between grammatical persons and tenses, the Joker makes hilarious metafictional references which leak between the world of Gotham City and the world of the film audience, such as his humorous (and disturbing) misrepresentation of Nietzsche: "I believe what doesn't kill you simply makes you *stranger*" (Nolan and Nolan 2008:72). The Joker thus takes over from Batman, the 'fairy tale' hero, to become the master craftsman of narration: a gravitational force embedded within the text as a self-autonomous, impersonal series of strategic moves that drag the story forward. Here, he undermines the teleology of the fairy tale, supplanting Batman's more traditional rhythm of cause and effect. His weaving mechanism, visual defacements, uricide, clowning, and liminal space imbue the tale with a more disorientating 'presence,' built not on a shared sense of (oral) community, but on becoming lost in the affective landscaping of the text. He even brings the very *possibility* of narrative meaningfulness into question, as the tale is broken down from a 'story,' with a central meaning and plot, to something that exceeds this logocentric myth. As the Joker weaves his itinerant way through story and narrative: "language loses its referential meaning and becomes profound. On the other hand, the story loses its solidity and breaks down into an open-ended play of signifiers ... In this game ... meaning is made possible" (Doueihi 1993:199).

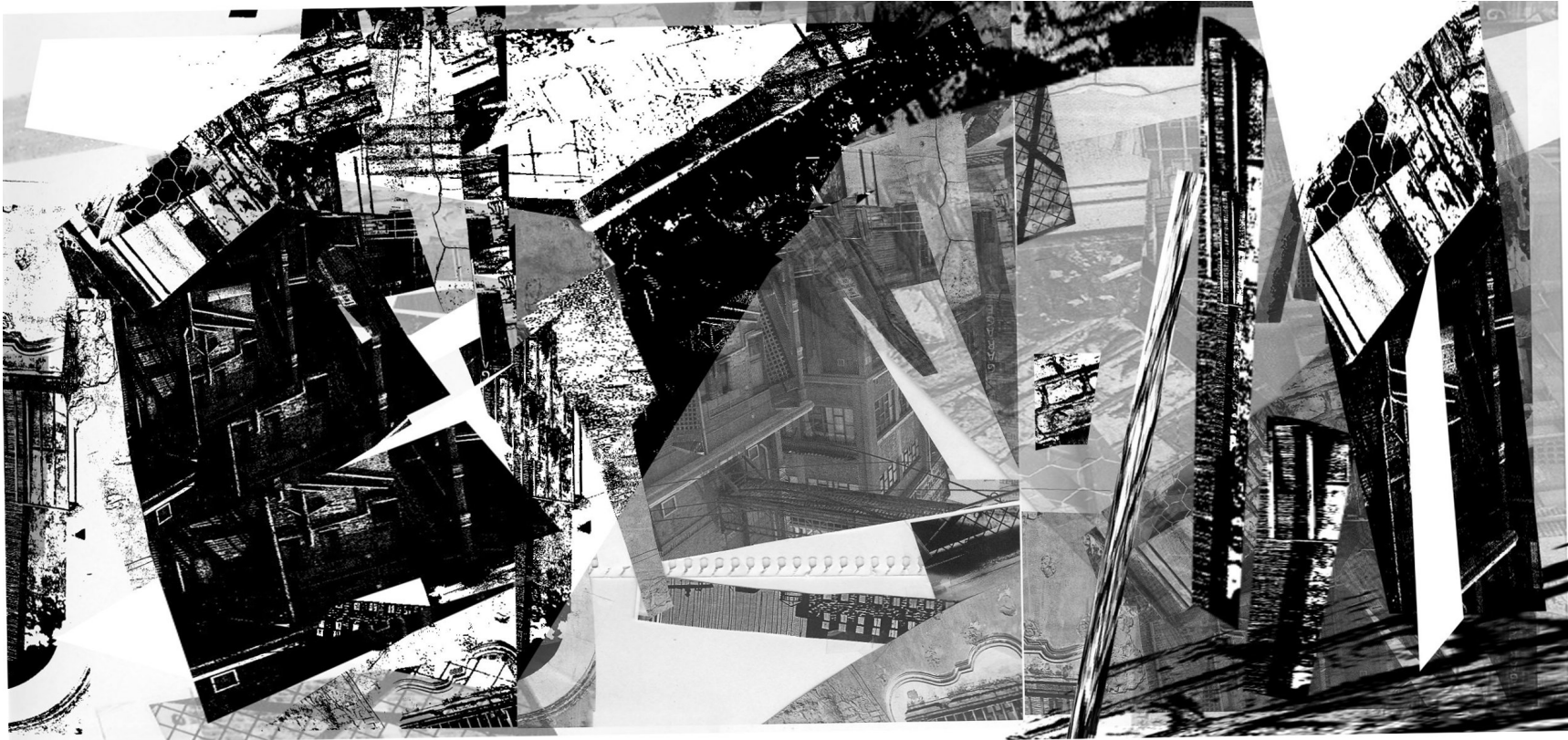


Figure 16. Joker's landscaping of Gotham City: betwixt and between. Collage.

5.4 Summary

In sum, the Joker's narrative exposes and profanes the ways in which we mythically cordon off language and storytelling from the 'wider world,' drawing it into a not-to-be-believed, yet ironically factual, communal realm of enchantment. Infiltrating this fairy tale landscape, the Joker opens up a zone of anti-tale uncertainty in and beyond the immediate filmic text: a stranger, immoral, landscape of interrupted communities and incoherent geographies. In doing so, this strongly affective, geographical trickster 'refrain' takes the heroic Batman myth to its contradictory limits, and problematizes our common-sense assumptions of communal space, fairy tales, and storytelling. In the chaotic Joker's world we can no longer dwell, but must 'erupt' with him, in an endless play of meaning and meaninglessness.

The thesis turns now from a geography of exploding cities and explosive narrative, to one of far-removed wilderness. Here we seek the supposed origins of fairy tale narrative: at the hearth of the nursery, or of a crooked hut made of human bones, deep in the forest. In both cases, the figure presiding over this hearth is an ancient and dreadful crone.

Crone

“Old age is no place for sissies.”

(Bette Davis 1908-1989)

Chapter 6. Genealogy of crone scholarship

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Differentiating crones from witches

6.2.1 Witch lore

6.3 Crones as post-reproductive women

6.4 The etymology of crone

6.5 Crones and fairy tale studies

6.6 Research considerations

6.7 Interdisciplinary genealogy of crone studies: gerontology

6.7.1 Geographical gerontology: the place of age

6.7.2 Feminist gerontology: loss and transformation

6.7.3 Radical gerontology: (r)age

6.8 The crone as a geographical refrain

6.9 Summary

6.1 Introduction

“There was once a little girl who was obstinate and inquisitive, and when her parents told her to do anything, she did not obey them, so how could she fare well? One day she said to her parents: ‘I have heard so much of Frau Trude, I will go to her some day. People say everything about her does look so strange, and that there are such odd things in her house, that I have become quite curious!’ Her parents absolutely forbade her, and said: ‘Frau Trude is a bad woman, who does wicked things, and if you go to her, you are no longer our child.’ But the maiden did not let herself be turned aside by her parents’ prohibition, and still went to Frau Trude. And when she got to her, Frau Trude said: ‘Why are you so pale?’ ‘Ah,’ she replied, and her whole body trembled, ‘I have been terrified at what I have seen.’ ‘What have you seen?’ ‘I saw a black man on your steps.’ ‘That was a collier.’ ‘Then I saw a green man on your steps.’ ‘That was a huntsman.’ ‘After that I saw a blood-red man.’ ‘That was a butcher.’ ‘Ah, Frau Trude, I was terrified; I looked through the window and saw not you, but, as I verily believe, the Devil himself with a head of fire.’ ‘Oho!’ said she, ‘then you have seen the witch in her proper costume. I have been waiting for you, and wanting you a long time already; you shall give me some light.’ Then she changed the girl into a block of wood, and threw it into the fire. And when it was in full blaze she sat down close to it, and warmed herself by it, and said: ‘That shines bright for once in a way.’”

Grimms (2002:177)

The crone is, for me, the most troubling of fairy tale figures. In her state of moral and physical decay, she is the embodiment of indifferent life, offering a violent death to countless unnamed children who have the misfortune to cross her path²⁵⁷. As Frau Trude, above, and the better known cannibalistic “very old woman” of *Hansel and Gretel*, from the same Grimms collection, she appears as a creature not fully human, and entirely beyond redemption. There is something chilling about the punishment that she inflicts in this story despite the implication that it has been justly earned; and we can’t help but tremble with the little girl as she utters the words that will ensure her metamorphosis and subsequent death. The figure of the crone is not all wicked, for she has another, more compelling side: the jovial, yet stern, nursery nurse, descended from a host of other ancient folklore characters (including Sibyls, gossips, the figure of Saint Anne, etc.), who was so instrumental to the imagining and cementing of the fairy tale genre in seventeenth century Paris (Warner 1995). This grandmotherly being makes another appearance in Italy, on Epiphany Eve, as the mysterious, yet homely, La Befana, who carries a broomstick and confers gifts of candy or coal (depending on whether they have been good or bad) on little children. Even with her more comfortable associations as a gift-bearing housewife or pedagogical family figure, there remains something unsettling and suspicious about these latter crones. They may have found a temporary home in society, yet they carry a hint of nomadism and the unknown wilds about them.

²⁵⁷ Although she rewards those able to withstand her.

Despite their terrifying or suspect presence at the heart of many favourite stories, crones have been largely ignored by academic scholarship, or have been subsumed within the wider category of the ‘monstrous feminine’ (Creed 1993), together with other villainous female fairy tale characters, such as ogresses, sorceresses, stepmothers, etc.²⁵⁸. Even within the fairy tale inter-discipline, research on crones is remarkably scarce, and mostly limited to individual figures (La Befana, Baba Yaga, etc.), and key scholars have little to say about what is one of the more tantalizing mysteries of the enchanting genre (Warner 1995; Zipes 2012)²⁵⁹. In this chapter I argue for the geographical importance of the fairy tale crone as a refrain that opens out a state of ‘*temporal wildness*,’ in which we find ourselves entangled with nonhuman others, and the human *as* Other, in a way that contradicts both relational accounts of being, and more romantic discourses of dwelling.

The chapter begins by briefly outlining key crone scholarship, noting the way it conflates this fairy tale figure with the villainous witch, and then subsequently rejects or rehabilitates this complex of the ‘monstrous feminine’ through a feminist discourse I term ‘witch lore’ (a form of ‘witch propaganda’). I argue, to the contrary, that we must differentiate these two figures if we are to fully understand the geographical importance of crone tales. Where the witch is a social being who inhabits and corrupts the patriarchal spaces of community and domesticity, the crone is a wilderness refrain, and hostile to society and to narrow definitions of the ‘human.’ I then turn to the source of this hostility, initially locating it in the crone’s great age and post-reproductive status, as suggested by the etymology of the term. Turning next to fairy tale scholarship, where it does address crones in their own right, it locates their separateness on narratological *and* plot levels. As an unruly narrator, the crone is never fully a part of the tale; and as a liminal being that enables transformation within the story, she occupies a position necessarily beyond human society. Finally, I engage analytical psychology, which links the crone’s moral and psychological disconnection to her subversion of a patriarchal ethic of sharing, suffering, and heroic openness, and her reverence of an alternative ‘natural wisdom’ in fairy tales. I argue that theoretical and creative efforts to rehabilitate the crone, or reshape her for utopian ends, overlook this ‘alternative wisdom,’ and deny her validity as a being *beyond* community and beyond an anthropocentric moral framework.

²⁵⁸ Exceptions to this include radical feminist interest, from mythical and psychoanalytical perspectives, including Walker’s (1988) monograph, Daly’s (1990) ‘croneology,’ and ‘hagiography,’ Este’s (1992) ‘wolf woman,’ and Von Franz’s (1995) engagement with ancient Triple Goddess figures. Each of these examples tends to universalizing accounts, grounding their theory either in an undifferentiated ‘Woman’ figure, or in the controversial notion of the collective unconscious. My intent is to engage more closely with some fairy tale crone figures, and pursue their *geographical* resonances.

²⁵⁹ Warner’s (1995) genealogy of the aged women storytellers of fairy tales, which traces a lineage from the ancient Sibyls, all the way to Angela Carter’s wolfish granny, is a notable exception. Zipes (2012:55-79) recent work on “witch as fairy/fairy as witch,” and his particular focus on Baba Yaga also does much to address this lacuna.

The chapter then turns to theories of ageing to flesh out the geographical import of the crone refrain. I trace varying geographical, feminist, and queer constructions of age as: non-relational, disengaged, ‘other,’ a place of loss, transformative, and ‘raging.’ From these broader debates, the crone takes shape not just as post-reproductive, but also as *post-historical*, *post-geographical* and *post-heteronormative*. In the crone’s realm, anthropocentric assumptions of community derived from the heteronormative family unit and genealogically structured human being and society (as opposed to the beastly and atemporal non-human), can no longer be sustained. Drawing these insights together with geographical theorizing on human/nonhuman entanglements and ‘wilderness,’ I conclude the chapter by defining the crone as an affective geographical refrain that unsettles our assumptions of the human role and place ‘on’ earth, and undermines Christian-inspired notions of ecological stewardship and ‘care,’ theories of dwelling, and certain postmodern relational accounts of being. Each of these philosophies takes as its anthropocentric starting point the place of human community: a place in which the crone can never exist. Fundamentally, the crone undermines this myth of community, and its attendant anthropocentric temporalities. As we are drawn into her centripetal narrative, we enter a world beyond human lives, society, and storytelling, and become part of the eternal mystery—and silence—of fairy tales.

6.2 Differentiating crones from witches

Unlike the trickster figure, the crone has yet to earn an entry in Haase’s (2008) encyclopedia of folk and fairy tales, and is all-too-often conflated with other threatening female figures, most commonly with the broadly defined ‘witch’ (e.g. Lee 2008:1032)²⁶⁰. Indeed, it is difficult to disentangle witch from crone figures, as we see in the case of Frau Trude above, because they share many physical and moral characteristics. The witch commonly appears in fairy tale lore as “an *old hag* with a hooked nose and a mole, wearing a pointed hat and flowing robes, and flying on a broomstick” (*ibid* 1033, emphasis added). Again, “we imagine a woman, *old* and baleful, perhaps with a long warty nose and one clouded eye” (Bosky 2007:689, emphasis added), and popularly envision Shakespeare’s decrepit ‘weird sisters’ as witches (Pratchett 1988). Crones, meanwhile, often have implied magical abilities and demonic connections, for example Baba Yaga’s power of flight, and her associations with Koschei the Deathless. A failure to distinguish between the two figures, however, obscures the complexity of their very different theoretical and

²⁶⁰ See Aguiar’s (2001:42) research, which is typical in this respect. Offering an interesting discussion of ‘the bitch’, that is the wicked women who populate literature, she presents a largely unified category of “hag-crone-witch” who “is to be burned at the stake.” I have singled out her work here because of its pertinence to a study of a troubling female fairy tale figure, and, indeed, she draws many of her examples from fairy tales; however, her privileging of the question of gender over the issue of age is common to fairy tale scholarship more generally.

fictional genealogies, and limits our understanding of fairy tales. In particular, this has led to an over-privileging of gender research over that of age in fairy tale studies. Consequentially, the different geographies of each aspect (witch and crone) have been conflated in this particular duplex of the monstrous-feminine, with the witch's societal relations taking precedence over the crone's more solitary, wilderness habit(at)s. A closer examination of early modern European accounts of witches yields a surprising image of "naked women with free-flowing, uncovered hair cavorting with demons" (Lee 2008:1032). This is a pertinent reminder of two particular witch traits that are largely inapplicable to crone figures: their link to *collective* devil worship²⁶¹, and their capacity to assume a wide variety of seductive human, and sometimes nonhuman, guises²⁶². Whilst they may live to be elderly crones, there are many examples of young, fertile, and beautiful witches in fairy tales, such as the Grimms' stepmother figures of *Snow White* and *Hansel and Gretel*, Hans Christian Andersen's Snow Queen, and C.S. Lewis' own icy witch, Jadis, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*²⁶³. Interestingly, the latter two examples inhabit a similar wilderness landscape to the crone figures I am keen to identify; however, they also evidence strong ties to society and community, with Jadis posing as the Queen of Narnia, complete with court, and the Snow Queen occupying a similar role in her own realm of Spitsbergen.

The complexity of these witch-crone figures is a significant part of their charm, and I do not wish to simplify this by setting up an oppositional divide between seductive witch and older, abject crones in fairy tales, nor deny their frequent overlap. There are many deep points of connection between the two figures, including etymological and folkloric links to divination and midwifery (Warner 1995), and a possibly shared pagan heritage (Zipes 2012). However, I do want to make a strong case for acknowledging the figure of the crone in her own right, as a geographical refrain in fairy tales. Such a self-conscious analytical stance, I argue, will lead us to an important, and currently under-theorized, appreciation of the way fairy tales engage with ageing and with the natural world; and, further, how they constitute a specific type of 'Nature,' which has impact

²⁶¹ As the term 'worship' would imply, witches do not rank highly in the social hierarchy of evil; they are mere servants of the darkness. Compare this to crone figures, from whom darkness and evil emanate. The witch has limited power, which can be exorcised and exterminated—not so the powerful crone. Again, we see reflections of this power differential in their geographical habits. Witches have a fitful relationship to society—they struggle through society, and whilst they dwell on its outskirts, they work to penetrate its heart. The crone figure chooses to live in the wilderness, and indeed, makes this very wilderness possible. Utterly alien, and thus uncontrollable, she opens out a geography *apart* from human society, even as she draws this society into her lair.

²⁶² Whilst crone figures are known to shape shift, the obvious example being granny to wolf in certain versions of *Red Riding Hood*, the repertoire of forms which they assume is relatively limited to predatory creatures (e.g. wolves, spiders, or owls), which reflect their own ravenous natures, in comparison to witch figures, for whom shape-shifting is an important tool of disguise.

²⁶³ Interestingly, Lewis (1955) names Jadis as a descendent of Lilith, who preceded Eve as Adam's first wife. Evidencing further Biblical intertextuality (and Lewis' personal faith), Jadis sins in the same way as Eve, eating the apple of life from the guarded tree at the centre of a magical garden in the first book of the series, *The Magician's Nephew*, which tells of the beginning of the world of Narnia.

beyond the immediate story world. Before this claim can be made, however, it is important to review the wider context of ‘witch-lore,’ and some of the impact this ‘regime of truth’ has had on how fairy tale studies currently envision the figure of the crone.

6.2.1 Witch lore

For Rountree (1997:212), the division of the witch image into “both the hideous hag and the irresistible seductress” is a direct consequence of the binary structure of patriarchal symbolism, and there can be little reason to examine the two sides in isolation (*ibid*)²⁶⁴. The ancient mythological figure of Lilith, both monster and seducer, would be the archetypal example of this misogynistic construction of the divided woman (Creed 1993). Gilliam’s 2005 film *The Bothers Grimm*, similarly demonstrates this logic, with its depiction of an evil crone-queen, made youthful by stolen lives; an idea which has been incorporated into Disney’s latest fairy tale offering, *Tangled* (2011). Here, the witch’s continual rejuvenation is obtained through her young captive’s hair, and her duality is reduced to a product of her envy and desire. Whilst neither Gilliam nor the Disney Corporation explore this notion of jealousy any further, fairy tale scholars and re-tellers have made frequent reference to the patriarchal system through which such envy becomes institutionalized. For example, Calvin (2011:241) observes of Carter’s (1979) famous *Snow White* revision, *The Snow Child*, that the queen’s mirror “cannot be broken... [being] perhaps... supported by a structure outside the text”: a structure he identifies as “the patriarchal aesthetic” (also Bacchilega 1999).

Whilst this is a compelling argument, Rountree (1997) goes further, to attribute the bestial and wilderness geographies of these witch/crone tales, which see grandmother equated with wolf, and living in the heart of the forest, as merely a projection of the ungovernable and ‘unnatural’ (because divorced from reproduction and the patriarchal concern) sexuality of such uncontrollable female figures. However, I would argue that there is a danger, here, of over-feminizing the witch. Rountree (*ibid*) forgets that the term ‘witch’ is not gender-specific, as evidenced by Tolkien’s (1955) striking witch-king of Angmar, and Miyazaki’s (2006) chilling Lord Cob²⁶⁵. Indeed, her argument is symptomatic of a

²⁶⁴ Deploying a mythological line of reasoning, Walker (1985:23) argues that the old crone, as the third aspect of the pre-patriarchal Triple Goddess, merges into the first aspect, the youthful virgin, “because of the cyclical nature of her trinity,” again explaining why we visualize witches as simultaneously young and old.

²⁶⁵ Whilst many historical and fictional witch figures are indeed female, Kent (2005) makes a strong case for the historical suppression of *male* witches in Old and New England, 1593-1680. Miyazaki’s effeminate Lord Cob provides an excellent example of how this suppression continues to take place on gender performative lines, demonstrating that, even when witch figures are ostensibly male, their ‘real’ gender remains somewhat in doubt, and we wonder whether they are, in fact, sexless beings. The New Age religion of Wicca contradicts this trend somewhat, by referring to all acolytes—male and female—as witches, and never as warlocks, wizards, or any other gender-specific name.

problematic, longer term gendering of witches. To better understand this history of feminization, Apps and Gow (2003:118-9) return the witch figure to the context of early modern Christian theology, which held witches to be human beings who had succumbed to the devil's temptations:

The most essential feature of the early modern witch...was her or his subservient relationship with the Devil, who duped men and especially women into worshipping him. The witch was thus by definition weak-minded, a trait that has been associated from antiquity with women. A man accused of being a witch was also, therefore, implicitly feminized.

For Kent (2005:69), however, this explanation rests on “a problematic attempt to insert a masculine subject into a feminist historiography” (also Maxwell-Stuart 2004). Further, it is ignorant of the “very different relationships [of male witches] to the legal, cultural, social and economic institutions of their day” (Kent 2005:70). Male witches were neither gullible nor vulnerable targets in early modern society. Instead, “social embeddedness, not marginality, assertive economic behaviour, not poverty, and intense competition” are more characteristic of their experience (*ibid* 74). The preponderant image of a primarily rural female witch who practices *maleficium* (black witchcraft) is thus a gross simplification, even mythicization, of the historical experiences of male and female witches in Old and New England during the period 1593–1680. Male witches at least, were often middle-class and book-learned urban dwellers, who might even rise to prominent public positions, as in the case of the Elizabethan favourite, Dr. Dee (*ibid*).

It is becoming clear that the plethora of historical witches cannot be distilled to the singular form of the beak-nosed crone with whom we began our exploration. Within fairy tales and folklore witches encompass not just old hags, but young seductresses, bestial beings, and powerful male kings and sorcerers. Yet there is one definitive property that all witches share, whatever their particular manifestation: they engage in witchcraft (Lee 2008:1033; Maxwell-Stuart 1999:171). Whilst ‘witchcraft’ is itself a broad term, encapsulating many practices of magic, some ‘whiter’ than others, it has traditionally been damned as a form of heresy, both illegal and immoral (see Kent 2005)²⁶⁶. Like sorcery, witchcraft enters the realms of taboo by breaking the laws, or bending the limits, of (human) nature (Makarius 1993). Thus, witches transform children into blocks of wood (Grimms 2002), wild swans (*ibid*), or fish (Marillier 2002); they sour a cow’s milk (Kent 2005), turn men into horses (Howey 2003), and perform other unnatural metamorphoses. Furthermore, witchcraft is the practice of a ‘fallen’ human being, in league with the Devil, and so their acts, whether for good or bad, must necessarily be considered malevolent (Maxwell-Stuart 2004).

²⁶⁶ The Witchcraft Act of 1542 declared witchcraft a crime in English Law, punishable by death and the forfeiture of the possessions, chattels, land, etc. of the convicted witch. It was later repealed in 1736. Beyond Christian societies witchcraft has also been damned for its taboo-breaking properties (see 4.4.3).

Since the 1970s there has been a marked attempt to re(ad)dress witches in fairy tale research and retellings, with general opinion oscillating between two contradictory poles: “women’s voices ... have sometimes claimed the wicked heroines as foremothers, [and] sometimes disclaimed them as slanderous fictions” (Warner 1995:8). This reclamation has been influenced by a number of contextual factors, including: the 1951 repeal of the 1542 English Witch Act; the rising popularity of New Age Wicca; the US-led 1970s Goddess movement; ‘thealogy,’ or Christian feminism (e.g. Goldberg 1979); and 1960s and 70s American radical feminism (WITCH stands out here), with its ‘feminist witchcraft’ offshoot (Rountree 2004; Purkiss 1996a; Raphael 1999). Vitality, these different, yet often overlapping, groups have sought to recover the witch as a victim of Christian and wider patriarchal persecution against women and nonconformists generally, and, for some, as a matriarchal pagan figure, supposed to have survived from Neolithic times (Murray 1921; Zipes 2012). The aims of these groups have been manifold, and summarizing each is beyond the scope of this thesis. Broadly speaking, however, they have self-consciously adopted the symbol of the witch as a powerful platform from whence to stage a common attack on “the hegemony of western patriarchy”:

The ‘witch’ becomes a crucial metaphor for herstory, that is, a form of feminist mythology constituting an alternative to the established male-centered master-story (Semprich 2004:113).

One interesting refrain in this political and social movement is the re-association of witches with the ‘natural environment,’ which has resulted in the resurrection of this figure as an ancient nature deity who offers a “naturalistic world vision” (Walker 1985:21)²⁶⁷. In this discourse, witches are idealized as holistic beings that overturn the distancing and objectifying patriarchal worldview (*ibid*)²⁶⁸. This is perhaps clearest in Murray’s (1921) thesis, which identifies the persecuted witches of early modern Europe as sporadic survivors of an organized, pre-patriarchal Neolithic religion that worshipped the theriocephalic (beast-headed) Horned God. This ‘nature thesis’ is echoed in Wicca, American feminist witchcraft²⁶⁹, and the American Goddess movement, with their worship of the Triple Goddess, and reverence for the male Horned God (her consort or child),

²⁶⁷ There is some nuance to this largely self-conscious re-association. Whilst all agree that the Goddess-witch is a holistic being, at home in the natural world, Walker (1985:12) warns: “one of the danger of resurrecting the Goddess archetype lies in its proximity to unscientific and unworkable explanations of the natural world, which must be carefully weeded out.” She stresses the need for a *rational* feminist Goddess spirituality, although such a desire, based on wishful thinking as much as on archeological evidence, seems somewhat ironic, given her anger with logocentric post-Enlightenment patriarchal ‘reasoning.’

²⁶⁸ Walker (1985:21) rather sweepingly notes: “the religion of the Great Mother was theologically very different from that of the Heavenly Father - whose remoteness from the earth was implied by his very title.” Plumwood (1993:10) takes exception to this goddess-talk, which she designates “angels in the ecosystem.”

²⁶⁹ American feminist witchcraft is a form of Wicca that is strongly influenced by second wave feminism (Lozano and Foltz 1990). It belongs to the Dianic tradition of Wicca that “celebrates an autonomous female principle as divine, excluding both the male principle and men” (*ibid* 219). The ultimate aim of this religion is the “elimination of the patriarchal mindframe” (*ibid*). Vital to this, is the replacement of patriarchal values with “a belief system that values women, their creativity, nurturing qualities, and *love for and connection with nature*” (*ibid*, emphasis added).

who together represent the larger life force of nature. Looking more closely at Wiccan influences, nature imagery surfaces at an etymological level, with Grave's (1948) questionable association of the term 'witch' with the Germanic root 'wei-', itself linked etymologically to 'willow' (a tree sacred to the crone/Goddess/witch Hecate), and 'wicker,' suggesting a *natural* quality of pliancy²⁷⁰.

In a similar vein, 1960-70s American feminist scholarship, influenced by wider discourses of domestic and sexual violence, and environmentalism, prioritized two polarized naturalistic images of the witch: as a "wild Hag" (Daly 1978), and as a "gentle, maternal, close to the earth" midwife and healer" (Ehrenreich and English 1973, in Purkiss 1996:19)²⁷¹. The witch emerges in both representations as "feminine, connected with nature, connected with a remote, legendary past, connected with the maternal ... and ultimately deeply and worryingly essentialist" (Purkiss 2009). Starhawk's (1988: 184) attempts to trace the witches of the Burning Times (a fifty year period spanning fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe and New England) to an older Edenic race, offers a quintessential example of this politically motivated mythicization:

Some have said that the Old Race still lives in the forest's hidden centre. Would they shelter her? ... And would they someday swarm out from the woods and wastes, an army of the dispossessed, to tear down the fences of the overlords, the manor houses and the churches, to reclaim their own land for freedom?

This witch 'story' is grounded on a utopian longing for communal living in a free (notably rural and timeless) landscape. The persecution of witches is assimilated with the rape of the environment in twentieth century industrial capitalism; a notion which taps into a Romantic "urban fantasy of a country life," disturbingly familiar to fairy tale historians, with all its "worryingly *Volkish*" connotations (*ibid*). Further, the image lends itself to increasing commercialization through the heritage industry, with the "midwife-herbalist-healer-witch" figuring as "an expression of aspiration," which "[substitutes] often unattainable fantasy for the resolution of women's problems" (*ibid*).

²⁷⁰ Robert Graves's (1948) key work on the Triple Goddess, *The White Goddess*, has been influential in both US and UK Wiccan religions. He notes a further etymological connection between the root 'wei-' and the word 'wicked,' implying the later may have similarly 'natural' origins (*ibid*).

²⁷¹ There is an assumed "'subversiveness' of the midwife-witch" (with her power over the female body), which flies in the face of historical empirical evidence. Indeed, midwives were just as likely to have been employed by church inquisitors in the witch hunts, "search[ing] for witchmarks, or ... determin[ing] whether a convicted woman was pregnant and might be granted a stay of execution" (Purkiss 1996a:21). Thus, women's knowledge of female matters cannot automatically be taken as a sign of female autonomy or resistance to patriarchy, as Walker (1988) seems to imply, and the witch as a figure of untainted nature owes more to academic fiction than historical fact.

The presentation of the witch as a naturalistic force for good draws on the commonly assumed wisdom of *crone* figures, albeit defining that property in a variety of ways²⁷². Walker (1985:101) emphasizes the *healing* wisdom of ancient crone figures such as Medea:

Who came into Hellenic myth as a mortal queen, but who was an eponymous Crone Mother of the Medes. Her name meant ‘Wisdom.’ She was known as an all-healer; our word *medicine* descended from her.

This knowledge of healing is not a matter of intuitive faith, for Walker (*ibid* 7, emphasis added) takes pains to stress the rational intellect of the pre-patriarchal Goddess figure, arguing: “it should be remembered that in the ancient matriarchal view, retrievable from myths and legends, the Goddess was regarded as the sole origin of *orderly, logical thought*.” Further, she warns against the dangers of confusing this Goddess figure with “pre-scientific” (anti-scientific) understandings of the natural world, for “in any direct contest between science and faith, science will win” (*ibid* 6). Fictionalizing this notion, Maitland’s (2009) fairy tale *Moss Witch* illustrates the crone’s scientism in a quasi-comical manner, with the Moss Witch reciting the Latin names of mosses and liverworts to a startled bryologist.

Adding further complexity to this image of the witch as wise-woman, Maitland’s (1983) short story *The Burning Times* sketches a picture of the crone as an older mother with sharp *business* acumen. In contrast, Daly (1978) ties wisdom to *militancy* in her Hagography (a rewriting of hagiography) of:

The Burning Times [which] ‘is a crone-logical term which refers not only to the period of the European witchcraze but to the perpetual witchcraze which is the entire period of patriarchal rule.’ A woman becomes a crone ... ‘as a result of ... having discovered depths of courage, strength and wisdom in herself’ (Daly 1978, in Purkiss 1996a: 13).

Combined, Walker’s healing crone, Maitland’s businesswoman, and Daly’s militant hag seem to offer a promising political platform for women as radical, environmentally informed witches. However, this witch amalgam fails to deliver on a number of grounds. First, references to a powerful female crone of the Burning Times ignore empirical evidence, which indicates that feebleness and social vulnerability left old women

²⁷² It is interesting how these accounts of wisdom differ. Walker’s (1985) equation of healing with wisdom is one we are accustomed to seeing, whereas Maitland’s (1983) older woman is a lesbian figure with knowledge of a woman’s intimate body, and, more unexpectedly, the field of commerce. Daly’s (1978) more militant understanding of wisdom as rage is echoed in Woodward’s (2003) gerontology (see 6.7.2), and is an unusual presentation of the older crone woman.

liable to accusations of witchcraft (Summers 2003)²⁷³. Second, the argument draws indiscriminately on accounts of the Holocaust and its burning imagery, equating the persecuted early modern witches with twentieth century Anti-Semitism in a manner which is arguably unethical (Purkiss 1996)²⁷⁴. Third, the witch thesis ironically echoes the Christian “narrative of the Fall, of paradise lost”—the paradise in this case being “the myth of an originary matriarchy” that predates patriarchal dominance (*ibid* 8). The “witch-story” that Daly and others tell becomes another form of religion:

This witch-story explains the origins and nature of good and evil. It is a religious myth, and the religion it defines is radical feminism (*ibid*).

Participating in the story enables an experience of conversion, “from which the reader emerges as a believer through empathy” (*ibid* 14). Like all religion, the myth of the Burning Times is a self-reflection of its followers. More problematically, myth-making, as we saw in 2.2, constitutes a self-same community, “making it possible to say ‘us,’” and simultaneously describes an ahistorical, persecuting ‘them’: in this case monolithic patriarchy (*ibid* 12). This simplistic division, which casts women as perpetual victims, hardly lends itself to female emancipation and empowerment, or a reconfiguring of equal relationships between men and women.

In sum, the conflation and idealization of the witch and crone figures in post 1970s fairy tales studies and beyond can be partly understood as the problematic raising of an engineered spectre for political purposes. Further, this is a spectre whose potency is limited to the very specific late twentieth century political context in which it arose (*ibid*; Rountree 2004). Theorizing crones as strongly independent or rebellious mythic witches glosses over the material-discursive details of the old women refrain, and diminishes its social and geographical import. Thus, crones, who may indeed exhibit uncanny powers over the natural elements, including water and forest regions, day and night, etc., and who have particularly strong connections to fire (cooking little children in ovens or burning them as logs), and cauldrons (Ugresic 2010), do not often make a study or practice of witchcraft, and are not known for their grimoires, magic books, practiced incantations, and devil-worship. A crone’s power, in fairy tales at least, is neither politically motivated, nor desired and thus accumulated, but an unquestionable part of her ‘essential’ being or nature—a nature that is not utopian, but very much present in the tales, inherently flawed, and immensely threatening to human life. Likewise,

²⁷³ Perhaps this is due to over-reliance on one principal document in the history of witch persecutions: Kramer’s 1487 treatise on witchcraft, *Malleus Maleficarum*. Addison (in Summer 2003:158), a notable early eighteenth century reporter, comments cynically on the persecution of poverty-stricken elderly women, nicknamed ‘Molls’: “I hear there is scarce a Village in *England* that has not a *Moll White* in it.”

²⁷⁴ Purkiss (1996:16-7) observes: “the narrative of the Holocaust has become the paradigmatic narrative for understanding atrocity in the late twentieth century.”

her uncanny knowledge is neither a product of demonic possession, nor studiously acquired, but is a logical consequence of her (a)social positions, either as a (grand)motherly midwife or gossip at the heart of women's private (taboo) matters (Warner 1995), or as a malign marginal figure who lives beyond the scope of the 'normal' human experience²⁷⁵. Returning to Frau Trude, it is interesting to look beyond the singular image of the witch evoked by the Grimms in their retelling. I am not suggesting that we abandon these witch associations, especially when presented in the context of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Christian Germany. Nor do I want to oppose witch and crone figures, or deny their frequent coexistence. However, reiterating my earlier ambition, I want to disentangle mysterious women, such as Frau Trude, from the late twentieth century witch-propaganda and its very specific utopian geographies, to suggest that they have another, less immediately obvious, identity as crones, with connections to the mythic 'dark' goddesses, historical Black Madonnas, and popular storytellers in the folklore and fairy tale imagination. Identifying crones as a refrain in their own right, I argue, returns to them a little of their enchanting mystery, and allows us to draw out commonly neglected, and equally radical, geographical possibilities.

6.3 Crones as post-reproductive women

Turning from the widely accepted image of crones as witches raises some definitional issues. In addressing these, we must temporarily skirt the mysterious to consider the obvious: they are essentially *old* women, and are rarely able to disguise this fact²⁷⁶. Vitality, their age places them beyond the reproductive cycle, and excludes them from the ranks of productive femininity, and productive society more generally. This productiveness has both biological (childbirth) and mythological (Earth Mother) aspects²⁷⁷. As Warner notes, childlessness in fairy tales, as in the

²⁷⁵ I mean this in two related senses: beyond the boundary of community, but also beyond the boundary of human life: this is a figure with strong associations to death and finitude, as will be discussed later.

²⁷⁶ I deliberately emphasize 'old,' as opposed to 'women.' A gerontological perspective gives us important insight into the 'monstrous feminine,' and enables a different geographical 'mattering' of the crone, as I will demonstrate in 6.7.

²⁷⁷ Productiveness here is as much mythological as biological, as it extends from the physical reproduction of humanity (childbirth) to overlap with the equally pregnant concepts of 'Nature' and 'Home' (see Alaimo 1996). Nature is personified as 'Mother Nature,' a fertile Goddess figure (and named in mythologies as such, e.g. Demeter, Isis etc.) who makes of the earth a welcoming and succoring home for humankind. Many feminist ecocritics are keen to retain the potency of 'Reproductivity' and 'Nature' for the feminist movement, and so the third aspect of this mythological triad ('Home'), bears the chief burden of blame in this reductive material-discursive complex: "unless the home is liberated from its status as 'women's sphere' to that of 'human habitat,' the feminist movement cannot succeed" (Merchant 1996:166). Indeed, the 'home' has been condemned on a number of grounds, e.g., as a site of female repression and fear (Johnston and Valentine 1995), or capitalist consumption (Alaimo 1996). The post-reproductive figure of the crone, intervenes in this triple axis, allowing us to re-envision the 'Home' as the non-nurturing, chilling house of death, or of no-return (Hallisey 1987), which is simultaneously a satisfactory dwelling place, and for some, a refuge. Again, this home is not just a place 'out there,' separate from humankind, and unreachable, but a place to which all

Grimms' *Rapunzel*, is often coupled with malignancy (2010:331). Being barren, these crones are moreover exempt from the communal institutions of motherhood and childcare (except for temporary interventions as midwives), and are excluded, often by law, from wifedom and its hosting responsibilities²⁷⁸.

Maitland's (2008) harrowing *Far North: and other dark fairy tales* (originally published as *True North* in 1993, and adapted into a film by Kapadia in 2007) offers a keen insight into the impossibility of reconciling the crone's barren and solitary worldview with that of 'normal' wifedom and family life. The old woman of Maitland's story is driven by an emotional complex of envy, loneliness, revenge, and a sense of entitlement, to kill her youthful female companion, skinning this unfortunate's face and donning it as a mask to entice the young man of the story into *her* bed. The old woman has great skills that have protected the young woman for years, and kept them both alive in such an inhospitable, icy (indeed barren) terrain. Further, she is gifted with an ability to recognize, celebrate, and create beauty (her skins and carvings are admired by the young man for their monetary value, albeit the crone carves them solely in love and celebration of her natural surroundings). Despite this, she has no apparent use or *worth* in the context of family and wider community. Further, the tale of her original eviction from kith and kin gains mythic qualities, with its lack of causal or psychological explanation, and consequential fatalism. This is a woman who is *necessarily* apart from society and homeland.

The eruption of a man into the women's lives is disastrous, reflecting, perhaps, the unequal gender assumptions implicit in the logic of barrenness, where:

The definition of infertility in the context of folktales and fairy tales is broad enough to include couples who have produced daughters but not sons. The Turkish tale *The Magic Mirror* makes it clear that a childless king must have a male heir; if a female is born, mother and child will be executed (Beall 2008:485)²⁷⁹.

heroes/heroines in fairy tales must eventually come, to pass the test of living (see Plumwood 1993 on the 'test'). Interrupting the three strands of female 'productivity' (reproduction, nature, home), the crone offers a potentially radical ground upon which to construct a feminist ecocriticism (chapter 7).

²⁷⁸ From Biblical times, barrenness has been used as grounds for divorce in Judaic law, and a cause for great shame for the woman affected (albeit the Bible also records many cases where a man's love in the face of his wife's barrenness is rewarded by God's blessing) (see Baskin 1989). Barrenness remains a stigma today in many societies, and the driving force for (controversial) fertility treatment. In fairy tale lore, "women suffer cruelly when they are considered barren" (Beall 2008:485). Certainly, the state of infertility is often associated with evil, wrongness, and 'old crones' (Warner 2010). The common fairy tale response to barrenness is desperation; and attempts to relieve this state range from threatening pregnant women (*ibid* 332) to "bargaining with the Devil" (Beall 2008:485). In each case, a barren woman (married or not) exists symbolically, at least, on the fringes of society, and her suffering can never truly be shared. She is always alone in her desperation.

²⁷⁹ Note that it is *always* the woman's fault in a case of infertility. 'Man' in fairy tales is, by definition, always potent.

Daughters or female companions cannot be classed as proper society; and whilst the crone may raise a daughter (as in Maitland's *Far North*, the Grimms' *Rapunzel*, and several Baba Yaga stories), this does not make her state any less solitary or barren. The crone is separated from *male* society, which in fairy tales defines society at large, including the women who service this society. Crone figures are not expected to associate with men, and where they are approached by lost heroes in the wild their attitude tends toward the hostile, for reasons of self-preservation (e.g. McKillip 2003). Returning to Maitland's (2008:14) story, the old woman feels fear when she sees the man approaching on the horizon, for it is he who will age her:

The young woman learned at last that she was beautiful, because his eyes told her so. And as she sunk to her haunches to tend the cooking the old woman knew that she was old and ugly, because his eyes did not even turn from the young woman²⁸⁰.

The young man, in turn, derides the "old hag" as a nuisance, despite her handiness as both huntress and homemaker (*ibid* 18). When she tricks him into bed with her, he is overcome by lust. However, on his realisation of her 'real nature,' he is struck by an excessive "horror, repulsion and guilt" (*ibid* 20). Her actions have rendered the old woman a figure from nightmares, someone to be feared; but it is her aged body that makes her repulsive, a figure of disgust, and spurs the young man's guilt (ironically, her ability to give him great sexual pleasure cannot render her any more desirable)²⁸¹. The conclusion of the story befits the crone's refrain: "and then the old woman was alone" (*ibid*).

It is useful to pause here, and make a comparison to the previously delineated figure of the witch. Witches, who are also commonly mothers, display closer ties to society than crones in both history and folklore (Berger 1999). For example, Kent (2005:73) notes how female witches in Old and New England might well practice in small local gatherings, whilst male witches operated within extended social networks that reached into the public sphere "through relationships that directly mirrored the patronage networks of the masculine economic world." The Pendle Witch Trials (1612) emphasized the collusion of the convicted witches, and the myth of the Burning Times suggests a veritable sisterhood of the persecuted, who were accused by the Church of extensive orgies of devil-worship (Purkiss 1996). Traditional witch lore, as recited by Daneau (1574, in Maxwell-Stuart 1999:173-4) posits the vital element of *assembly* in the practice of witchcraft. Satan lies at the centre of this assembly,

²⁸⁰ See de Beauvoir's (1966) thesis of the 'mirrored' process of ageing.

²⁸¹ This disgust for the ageing female sexual appetite extends well beyond fairy tales to general literature and myth. Indeed, "old women do more complicated symbolic work in literature and myth than males in their third age. Much disgust and joyless moralizing has been provoked by their continuing sexual appetite after the end of fertility" (Warner 2009:23).

and orders the witches to gather around, to worship him and take his orders, receive “venoms,” etc. The influence of witches spreads outwards from this core, to infiltrate and poison the wider society in which they dwell (*ibid*).

The very definition of a witch is communal. Maxwell-Stuart (1999:171) observes: “what caused someone to be called a witch largely depended on the perception of his or her local community, the nexus of neighbors into which the putative witch was bound.” Adding ethnographic depth to this insight, Favret-Saada (1990:192) defines ‘contemporary’ Bocage witchcraft²⁸² of the 1980s as a “peculiar network of human communication, which is what witchcraft is all about.” Witchcraft emerges through social networks, in her account, and comprises a form of communication that fosters a specific kind of *affective* community (*ibid* 195). The popular folklore image of witches likewise places them either at the heart of the community, or seeking to occupy this position by exercising their power against people, through bewitchment. This is their major threat: they corrupt from the inside out, all the while hiding their treachery behind a cloak of spells and enchantments. It is unsurprising that the original Salem witchery was ‘traced’ to an Indian nanny, Tituba, an archetypal ‘dangerous stranger’ at the heart of the Salem minister’s family home²⁸³. In his contemporary fairy tale, Gaiman (2003) similarly locates the insightfully named ‘Other Mother’ within Coraline’s (the child protagonist’s) own home, where she turns life dangerously upside-down through her seductive promises. Contemporary representations and practices echo this cooperative element of witchcraft, with organized covens being the most popular way to worship (Lozano and Foltz 1990). Indeed, Berger (1999:65) describes Wicca as “a circle within a circle,” noting that the modern day coven fundamentally strives for a cohesive community, and is strongly encouraging of family. ‘Home,’ for the witch, is about sharing, and being together in commonality:

We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been ... Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us (Starhawk 1982, in Berger 1999:65).

²⁸² Bocage is a region in France. I use the word contemporary here, because Favret-Saada (1990:191) is struck by the denial of “the very existence of rural witchcraft in present day Europe,” and adamant that this denial rests in the master narrative of progress that characterizes western anthropology, and science more generally.

²⁸³ This nanny bears few similarities to the crone-nurse storytellers that Warner (1995) describes. The latter are of ‘pure’ rural stock, and act as the nation’s moral compass. Whilst strange, even ‘wild,’ they are a product of their locality, and should not be considered outside of this nineteenth century *nationalistic* (of Volk) context.

Interestingly, this community extends to the point of death, which is rendered a shared experience through Wiccan funereal rites (Berger 1999; Lozano and Foltz 1990)²⁸⁴.

Fairy tales from the 1970s onward similarly situate witches, including old hags (e.g. Pratchett's 2003 Granny Aching in *The Wee Free Men*), within mainstream and mundane social organizations. Bosky (2007:711-5) identifies three such fundamentally social "new types of witches": the domestic witch, who sacrifices her powers for the sake of a happy marriage; the younger witch, including both the evil cuckoo in the family nest and charming young protagonist at home and at school; and the business witch, a modern woman dominating the working world. It could be argued that these developments are merely a continuation of more traditional witch pastimes, for "in one way, this is nothing new: cunning folk were paid for their spells ... [and] one charge against witches in many times and cultures ... is extortion of money by threats of supernatural harm" (*ibid* 715). What is different, however, is the relocation of the figure of the witch from the commonly imagined rural, bygone society, to a new usefulness at the centre of contemporary urban and suburban life.

In stark contrast, crone figures always stand apart from such self-organized groups and society as a whole. Further, they have no truck with society's most basic method of communication: commerce (or other forms of exchange). They perform a more solitary geography, living alone in self-sufficiency, and keeping their own company. The crone's social redundancy is largely due to her post-reproductive age; but even less forgivable is her self-sufficiency, and refusal to share her wealth, skills, and resources. Together, these attributes form a strong barrier to participation in the wider community. As *Far North* (2008) successfully demonstrates, the crone has no worth (value), use or meaning as a family or societal member; her carvings might bring great wealth for the tribe, and a place amongst its ranks, but this is not something she desires. The crone figure does not even cast a genealogical shadow, for she refuses to divulge the secret of her birth and upbringing, rather presenting herself as naturally and eternally alone. Where attempts have been made to flesh out a history and social background, she somehow loses her 'cronishness,' as in the case of Card's (1999) reinterpretation of Baba Yaga. Even those old women who are successfully drawn back into society as pedagogical Mother Geese, baby-bearing storks, or old nurses in aristocratic households, remain separated from their young charges by their marginal social position (lower class and imagined rural origins) and uncanny knowledge (Warner 1995). Likewise the midwives (often symbolized as geese figures) and layers out of the dead (with Ibis connotations), who have long been regarded ritualistic threshold figures (*ibid*).

²⁸⁴ These shared death rites, which recognize a common finitude, contrast sharply with the crone's mastery of death, and the solitary geography of infinite loss, of which she stands as emblem (see 6.8).

In all cases, these wild birdlike crones are accompanied by a whiff of wasteland marshes, as they refuse to be fully assimilated into the family or society—or the human. They may be marginal, but they are not marginalized, nor victims in any sense. To pity them, Ugrêsic (2010:2-3) warns, is a great folly:

At first you don't see them. At first they're invisible. And then all at once you begin to spot them. They shuffle around the world like armies of elderly angels. One of them peers into your face. She glares at you, her eyes wide, her gaze a pale blue, and voices her request with a proud and condescending tone. She is asking for your help, she needs to cross the street but she cannot do it alone ... You feel a pang of sympathy for the old lady, you are moved, you do a good deed, swept by the thrill of gallantry. It is precisely at this moment that you should dig in your heels, resist the siren call, make an effort to lower the temperature of your heart. Remember, their tears do not mean the same thing as yours do. Because if you relent, give in, exchange a few more words, you will be in their thrall. You will slide into a world that you had no intention of entering, because your time has not yet come, your hour, for God's sake, has not come.

6.4 The etymology of 'crone'

The antisocial behaviour of crones is written into the very etymology of the term, which gives further insight into the segregation of this figure in folklore and fairy tales:

Crone withered old woman XIV; old ewe XVI. prob. — MDu. *c(a)roonje* carcass, old ewe — ONF. *carogne* **CARRION** (also, cantankerous woman), which may be the source of the first sense (Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology Online [ODE] 2010).

The association with carrion is immediately striking, as it recollects Lévi-Strauss' (1963) carrion-eating trickster who mediates, first, the binary pairing of herbivorous and carnivorous animals, and, more fundamentally, the polarity of life and death (see 4.4.2). The crone's own links to carrion suggests that she occupies a similarly liminal position. Certainly, crone stories include many boundary and threshold markers: bizarre paths that lead to nowhere; round huts on the boundaries of lakes or in the heart of the forest; bathhouses and wash houses; aquatic bird imagery; ovens, wombs, and fire, etc. Like the trickster, the crone occupies a contrary *moral* position as both sacred (a nature goddess or benevolent grand- or godmother who dispenses gifts and wisdom) and profane (a revolting and evil old hag). The term 'carrion' is itself linked to 'carnage,' an old Italian word with connections to meat, slaughter and flesh (ODE 2010). This association underscores the ties between the crone figure and death,

and is perhaps responsible for the recurrence of cannibalism and butchery (taboo killing and the cutting up of human flesh as meat) in crone tales (see 7.4).

Two further etymological associations, ‘cantankerous’ and ‘withered,’ lead us in a different direction. ‘Cantankerous,’ with its implied contrariness and refusal to cooperate, is a term commonly associated with old age, and especially female old age (Woodward 2003:59). It suggests a troublemaker, or uncooperativeness, reminding us, again, that old women have long been the scapegoats for disorder in the community (ODE 2010). ‘Withered,’ the second word of import, reminds us that this fairy tale figure is long past her reproductive prime, and raises an image of the weathered and shriveled skin, wizened posture and sunken features of the very ancient. The term can also be applied to vegetation, bringing to mind the hostile, unforgiving landscapes often associated with this figure. Combining these two senses in a retelling of *Fair Vasilissa and the Baba Yaga*, Downing (1989:163, emphasis added) offers us a striking image of the withered old crone Baba Yaga:

Suddenly a terrifying sound issued forth from the forest: night-birds screamed, the trees crackled, the dry leaves rustled, and out of the dark forest, riding in a mortar, propelled by a pestle, and sweeping away the traces with a broom, came Baba Yaga the witch herself!
And she was as *sinewy, gnarled, and bloodless as the roots of a thunderstruck tree!*

There is a further apocalyptic angle to the notion of withering, where the end of the human race is imagined in myth as a failure of the land to nourish. In second wave feminist discourse this has seen the figure of the crone tied to nuclear wastage, fire, and death: a Mother Earth abandoning her progeny (Caputi 1991; Caputi 1993:217-90). Of course, there are well-established precedents for this discourse, such as the Hindu Goddess Kali’s role as death-bringer at the end of the world. Biblical myth likewise points to the scorching of vegetation in the final days of humankind (famously taken up in Steinbeck’s 1939 *The Grapes of Wrath*). Withering, in this ancient Judaeo-Christian parlance, represents God’s wrath in the face of human sin, where it is not just the people but the land itself that must be purged of human evil (see Jeremiah 8:13; also Christ’s punishment of the fig tree in Matthew 21:18-22). Turning to the older Greek myth of Demeter, it is again her fury upon learning of her daughter Persephone’s rape and abduction by Hades that causes her to curse the earth with the Great Famine. Only the Moirai, the ancient crone-like fates, can deter her from this path of death. Ire and cursing are commonplace in crone tales, and this story of Demeter recalls other vengeful crone figures, as well as fairies and witches who, mistaken for crones or for powerless women, punish out of vengeful spite (see Miyazaki’s 2004 *Howl’s Moving Castle* for a contemporary fairy tale twist). Even where there is a profusion of life in crone tales, as in Baba Yaga’s dense Taiga

forest realm, it is claustrophobic, twisted, and gnarled, with snaggletoothed, aggressive branches that catch onto the Yaga's victims unless placated. This is life in natural abundance but somehow gone 'wrong'; abundant nature becomes "ravenous nature," and supremely dangerous to humankind (Pilinovsky 2004; see 7.4).

6.5 Crones and fairy tale studies

The etymology of 'crone' thus evokes an old woman who is solitary, barren, and deadly to human life, with uncanny liminal powers, and connections to the most hostile and impenetrable of landscapes. However, fairy tale scholars commonly overlook these distinctive characteristics. Indeed, the crone is mentioned only five times in the entire three volumes of Haase's (2008) folk and fairy tale encyclopedia: as a literary motif in Giambattista's seminal *Tale of Tales* (1634-1636), and Coover's postmodern fairy tale retellings, *Briar Rose* (1997) and *Stepmother* (2004); and in reference to the Russian grandmother/witch, Baba Yaga.

Looking to the first of these references, Giambattista (1634) employs ten crone figures in his *Tale of Tales* as an essential plot mechanism in the wider frame tale of Princess Zoza's sufferings and her eventual triumph. As the "ten best storytellers of his kingdom," these ancient females are each invited to recount a pertinent tale to Prince Tadeo and his deceptive slave-bride, which gradually exposes the slave's wicked usurpation and leads to the reassertion of Zoza as the rightful Queen (Canepa 2008:101). Giambattista's crones "grotesquely mirror the more noble storytellers of other collections," such as Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1349-50) (*ibid*). A subtle blend of vulgarity and poignancy lends these repulsive old women an innocent folkloric feel within the courtly setting of the text. In a similar vein to Giambattista, Coover employs the crone as a recurrent literary mechanism in his fiction, drawing on the now well-established link between crones and practices of storytelling. He contrives to embed crone figures within his fairy tale texts as somewhat untrustworthy raconteurs:

The storytelling crone is a classic Coover figure, a manipulative narrator who carries the burden of tradition with a mixture of sardonic humour and world-weary regret. Such an aged character allows Coover not only to incorporate a narrator within the narration, and so to acknowledge the folkloric heritage of the fairy tale, but also to play with a literal embodiment of the tradition ... the [crone] ... serves as a palimpsest of previous lives" (Benson 2008:277).

This “scurrilous narrator” is a “figure of demonized femininity,” and Coover’s attempts to recuperate her form part of his wider engagement with fairy tale “tradition,” wherein he “hold[s] the fairy tale to account for its erroneous symmetries and moralizing, while at the same time finding new fictional potential in its motifs, characters and, above all, in its desire-driven dramas” (*ibid*).

In both Coover’s (1997, 2004) and Giambattista’s (1634) works crone figures serve as literary devices in wider fantastic plots. However, the crone Baba Yaga is the driving force of the Slavic storytelling tradition, and is in her own right an important contributor to the archive of Russian fairy tales (Zipes 2012). Indeed, “no figure in the Russian folktale is better known than the Baba Iaga [sic], and none has attracted so much scholarly attention” (Wigzell 2006:746). Her composite character reflects her importance: she is a disturbing amalgamation of immoral witch, homely and revered granny, and *genius loci* of the Russian taiga forests (Pilinovsky 2008:94). In the latter role, she serves as an omnipresent “(protective spirit) for the values and associations that attach themselves to the archetype of ‘the witch in the forest’ in Slavic tradition” (*ibid*). Interestingly, Pilinovsky (*ibid* 96) likewise prefers the term ‘crone,’ with its moral and etymological ambiguity, to denote this recurrent Russian folklore figure:

However, the best translation of Baba Yaga’s status in English is neither ‘granny’ nor any of the equivalent forms of address that convey a respect for age and status alone. The best translation of Baba Yaga’s name and position is a word with more blended origins: ‘crone.’ Although ‘baba’ is a diminution of the respectful ‘babushka’ or ‘grandmother,’ it is also a referent that can be used as either a respectful term of address or a fierce curse.

For Pilinovsky (*ibid* 135), the moniker ‘crone’ elevates the Baba Yaga beyond a harmless granny, a “natural substitute or enhancement of any one witch,” or a grotesque storyteller (as we saw in Coover’s and Giambattista’s fairy tales). Baba Yaga is more than a literary force: she is a force for the good and evil of the story, and thus someone to be both damned and revered. Her ambivalent morality extends to the natural realm: the subarctic coniferous forest belt bordering the inhospitable Russian Taiga. This landscape, as we see in the tales, echoes the Yaga’s own hostility, although it may also nurture the ‘right’ hero/heroine²⁸⁵.

²⁸⁵ It is no accident that the Baba Yaga’s forested domains are the stage upon which the ambivalent morality of crone stories is enacted. As Harrison (1992:x) notes in his comprehensive study of forests in the western imagination: “if forests appear in our religions as places of profanity, they also appear as sacred. If they have typically been considered as places of lawlessness, they have also provided havens for those who took up the cause of justice and fought the law’s corruption. If they evoke associations of danger and abandon in our minds, they also evoke scenes of enchantment. In other words, in the religions, mythologies and literatures of the west, the forest appears as a place where the logic of distinction goes astray.”

The crone's liminal properties, which we gleaned from the etymology of the term, come to the fore in her role as morally ambivalent guardian spirit. Her forest domain is a region long associated with the underworld, death and retransformations, and is an apt site for rites of passage (e.g. Estés 1992; Johns 2004; Ugrêsic 2010). Zipes (2002:65, emphasis added) observes:

The forest is always large, immense, great, and mysterious. *No one ever gains power over the forest, but the forest possesses the power to change lives and alter destinies.* In many ways it is the supreme authority on earth and often the great provider. It is not only Hansel and Gretel who get lost in the forest and then return wiser and fulfilled.

The crone's power traditionally lies in her ability to initiate change, with Propp (1946, in Ugrêsic 2010:249) characterizing the Baba Yaga crone as "the ... priestess of initiations." Baba Yaga initiates ritualistic moral, social (child to adult), and natural transformations in fairy tales; the little girls and boys who successfully escape her clutches bear little resemblance to the children they were when they first entered the crone's realm. Returning to the Grimms' Frau Trude, we see her perform a similarly important metamorphosis in the story when she strips the disobedient girl of her morally 'dark' human form and turns her, literally, into light. In this case, the little girl has failed the initiation to adult maturity. She must therefore die, and be re-turned to the creative source (fire/womb/primordial Biblical light at the opening of the world, etc.) from whence she came. Fire, an ancient symbol of creativity and often present during initiation ceremonies, is essential to both activities; first, for its light, and, second, as a heat source for the oven. The fire and oven motifs also tap into deeper symbolisms of the womb and rebirth (Ugrêsic 2010). Water is another aspect of this womb symbolism for, far from being antagonistic to fire, the rich waters of the sea and of the womb are likewise primordial scenes of the Great Mother archetype: places of initiation and transformation, and teaming with potential life (Von Franz 1995).

As we saw with the trickster (chapter 4), rites of initiation are highly subversive, and must take place outside of the boundaries of community. This explains why the crone must live beyond human reach, in eerie otherworldly forested or underwater locations, where she resists attempts to be drawn into society and communion with others. At the micro-scale, even the individual elements of the crone's abode have this exiled significance, with Propp (1968) linking the Baba Yaga's rounded hut on chicken legs to Siberian initiation huts on wooden stilts, where young male initiates undergo a (secret) ritual of symbolic death and transformation to adulthood status (also Johns 2004). The death to life (destruction followed by recreation) pattern is built into the architecture of the Yaga's hut: "first they have to be devoured (by the hut itself, whose door puts us in mind of jaws) in order to be born again and join the adult world" (Ugrêsic 2010:258). Baba Yaga's hut acts as a threshold, which divides living and dead worlds (*ibid*); and the Baba Yaga herself is the guardian, guide, and psychopomp of the great initiations.

The crone's transformative powers lend themselves to mythological and psychoanalytical interpretation. We have already seen how this figure has been linked to the mythical goddesses of death and rebirth, such as Demeter and Kali, or the third aspect of the neopagan Wiccan Triple Goddess figure (e.g. Graves 1948; Walker 1985). In her "wild woman" aspect she is foremost a death-bringer in the eternal natural cycle of life. Warner (1995) notes an alternative connection: between fairy tale crone figures and mythical birds, especially geese, storks and other aquatic bird life. Apart from the sexual implications of these birds (*ibid*), they are traditional symbols of spirit and soul, and act as humankind's primary "intermediaries between heaven and earth" (Ugrêsic 2010:302). We can further relate mythical bird-women conflation, such as the Sirens and the Egyptian goddess Isis, to the sinisterly beaky-nosed fairy tale crones (Warner 1995). Drawing on an altogether different companion species, Estés (1992) places the mythical Mexican wolf-woman, La Loba, in the category of crone. La Loba is a collector of bones, and "her speciality is wolves" (*ibid* 23). She collects the bones in her desert cave, and when she has assembled a full skeleton she sings over it in a powerful magical voice that knits the bones together, re-clothes them in flesh, and finally brings the shattered bodies back to life (*ibid*). She is also known to sing over the bones of abused young women, as in the Mexican folktale recorded by Windling (2005). In this tale, arriving after the scene of the maltreated young wife's death in the desert, the "Old Bone Woman" sings over her forsaken bones and, as with the wolves above, brings her to new life (*ibid*)²⁸⁶.

From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the crone is more than a rescuer or resuscitator of the young woman's life: she is a "protector" who guides and guards, or a "possessor" who inhibits, a maiden's *sexual* development (Christians 2009). Adopting a different terminology, Pilinovsky (2004) identifies Baba Yaga as both "challenger" and "helper" in the initiation process to mature sexual adulthood for girls *and* boys. The crone's forest setting plays a vital role in this notion, as a key psychoanalytical symbol of sexual development and peril (*ibid*). In a similar way, underwater realms (think of the Inuit Skeleton Woman, or Miyazaki's 2001 underwater crone) have psychosexual import, given "water is an ambivalent principle: it brings evil ... but also cleansing and renewal" (Ugrêsic 2010:274). It is no accident that many Baba Yaga stories feature tasks in which the heroine must wash out the hut or carry out the Yaga's laundry, or that Miyazaki (2001) situates *Spirited Away* in a traditional Japanese

²⁸⁶ That this life is a new beginning is clear, for the young woman loses all memory of her previous life, and the villagers from whence she came also fail to recognize her. Interestingly, the gathering of bones and renewal of life is also associated with witch activities. Cardano (1557, in Maxwell-Stuart 1999:176), for example, remarks that witches, "at their leader's command ... collect the bones and bring them back to life - an obscene and dreadful sight which astonishes and delights them." The life these bones are returned to is that of an *unnatural*, zombie-like state, and so altogether different to the new beginnings provided by La Loba.

bath house, and Ugrêsic (2010) brings her crones to a modern-day spa: for “the bath is in principle a dirty place, but also a site of purification,” and hence a liminal place of sexual and social transformation (*ibid* 275).

At first glance, then, the crone shares more features with trickster figures than with fairy tale witches. However, her transformative refrain lacks the trickster’s ambivalent connection with society. Unable or unwilling to move through community and undermine its foundations, the crone’s traditional ‘outside’ residence is beyond human reach, and she is presented in many tales as a figure of self-excommunication (Bachner 2010)²⁸⁷. Only those who are actively seeking evil (the little girl of *Frau Trude*), or who are lost and desperate (e.g. Timothy Hunter of Gaiman’s 1991 *The Land of Summer’s Twilight*), or already dead (as in the case of *La Loba*), can ever find her. Compounding her malevolence, the crone is bitterly possessive of her isolated sovereignty (Hallisey 1987). Rather than welcoming her unexpected visitor, Frau Trude draws the little girl who has spied on her into a deadly cat and mouse game to prevent her from leaving and divulging what she has seen. There is a repetition of this hostile play in other crone tales, for example with the trap (the incitement to questioning) that Baba Yaga sets for Vasilissa the Wise, and again with her trickery of Tishka, himself a child trickster. To escape the witch you must outwit her, as physical strength, honor, and even pure goodness cannot prevail against this most crafty and evil of beings (it is not goodness that saves Vasilissa the Wise, but her magical doll talisman)²⁸⁸. Common rules of moral behaviour are nullified in her company, and the game of wits becomes a competition of deceptiveness and lying (or at least evading the truth)²⁸⁹. This is not a riddling deception, punning or playing on words, where the truth is spoken in disguise to undermine the assumptions of the protagonist, as in the trickster’s ludic habit; rather, it invites actions, and especially words, that *conceal* or distort reality, forcing the protagonist to adopt the crone’s own lies, in turn, in order to survive. Thus deception in crone stories plays a *pedagogical* role, with survival the stake in the battle of wits.

²⁸⁷ The crone is beyond physical, but also moral and legal reach of society. E.g. despite her crime (murder), Frau Trude will not—cannot—be punished. We may recognize her action as evil, but it is not *our place* to intervene. The significance of place, morally and physically, is key. Her realm is outside of the human realm in all senses, and we cannot impose our laws upon her radically alternative geography. Compare this to famous trickster tales, where the trickster may be caught and punished in the final moments of the story (chapter 6).

²⁸⁸ Jurich (1986:274) suggests that witch/crone figures can simultaneously be trickster heroines, as her “cunning, her practical ability, may be both admired and resented.” In the patriarchal condemnation of Woman, “any superiority she evinces is rationalized as being not part of her female nature but as being implanted by the devil,” and a woman cannot be naturally clever (and if she is, she must be a witch or a crone, both supernatural and evil) (*ibid*). However, there is another kind of danger in categorizing crones, witches, and other smart-mouthed and subversive women, into one monolithic group of morally justifiable trickster heroines, as it denies the possibility of female wrong, and fails to address the psychological and historical underpinnings of the fear of ageing women, and of the wilderness.

²⁸⁹ An excellent contemporary account of such trickery is McKillip’s (2003) Baba Yaga-inspired tale, *In the Forest of Serre*. Here, the unlucky protagonist, Prince Ronan, together with his fiancée Princess Sidonie and her wizard companion Gyre, take on the “Mother of All Witches” (Brume) in numerous daring and often humorous battles of wits to secure their survival and happiness.

The crone initially beguiles her victims by deceiving them in a very specific manner: presenting herself as a harmless granny through oral (anatomy and speech) trickery. Indeed, other forms of deception are traditionally unavailable to her, for she is incapable of disguising her threatening *appearance*²⁹⁰. *Hansel and Gretel's* witch, for example, terrifies the children at first sight into dropping their load of sweets and cake, but then lulls their fears with her softly spoken invitation: “Oh, you dear children, who has brought you here? Do come in and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you” (Grimms 2002:70). Even more disturbingly, Baba Yaga captures Tishka by *physically* altering her voice, adopting an iron tongue and teeth for the purpose (much like the wolf who swallows chalk to fool the kids in the Grimms’ (2002) *The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids*). Her oral craftiness evokes a long-held fear men have for women’s untrustworthy speech and seductive mouths (and especially tongues). Death was first “brought ... into the world” through such female oral poison, as we see in the primordial scene of Eve’s deception of Adam (Hallisey 1987:15). The fruit that Eve eats and the fateful words that she repeats together form a sin-by-mouth, which renders Woman a “symbolic murderess” in the Christian tradition (*ibid*)²⁹¹. There is a clear echo of this damning myth in Lewis’ (1955) creation story, *The Magician’s Nephew*, and the Grimms’ (2002) *Little Snow White*. In the latter, the stepmother mimics an old farmwoman to trick the young protagonist into eating a half-poisoned apple after herself taking the first bite (from the non-poisoned green side), in a richly evocative scene reminiscent of the original Fall²⁹². Despite her precaution, we know that the crone cannot ever be harmed by the poison, for she is already damned, being venomous snake and woman rolled into one²⁹³.

Eve’s words and voice display a devious seductiveness *because* they are unharnessed from the Christian ‘truth,’ and so deceive by deflecting or seducing (note the etymological similarity between the two words) their victim from their ‘rightful’ path (Hallisey 1987:6). They can be

²⁹⁰ Sometimes sorceress figures do achieve this disguise, as in the case of Marrillier’s (2003) witch-crone in the Sevenwaters trilogy, and especially *Child of the Prophecy*. However, the crone is more usually presented as a gnarled old woman, suffering the common problems of very old age: fading eyesight (for which she compensates with her superb sense of smell), toothlessness, bent back, etc.

²⁹¹ Eve is conflated with the serpent in Hallisey’s (1987) account, who entices Eve with its cunning words: “and the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4-5). Together Eve’s mouth (biting the fruit) and the serpent’s seductive words are at fault. As Warner (1995:47) notes: “since the days of Eve and the serpent ... seduction lies in talk, and the tongue is seduction’s tool.”

²⁹² This fairy tale scene echoes many visual representations of the Fall, for example Cranach’s (The Elder) 1531 painting *Adam and Eve*. Whilst this painting depicts a young and naked Eve rather than the old crone the Grimms evoke, looking closely at her face we see a likewise cruelty in her features, and the hint of a malicious smile, as if she knows exactly what she is doing as she passes the ‘poisoned’ fruit to the innocent Adam.

²⁹³ Many Middle Age artists played on this confusion of woman and serpent by painting the snake with Eve’s head in their various renditions of the Temptation of Adam and Eve. Sometimes the head is that of Lilith, Adam’s mythical first wife, herself a crone with strong associations to childlessness, bitterness, venom and excommunication (Stave 1993). Medusa, with her snake hair, is also evoked in these images. What is key, however, is that the original sin stems from the combined forces of a snake and a woman; and that together, these creatures fuse to form a type of evil against which innocent Adam is powerless to withstand. Perhaps the meaning of the crone can be found here, at the apex of the despised but cunning beast and the female temptress: a terrifyingly potent hybrid being.

contrasted to male patriarchal and heroic ritual traditions of “binding words,” which perform reality, such as the boast, the pledge, the handshake, etc. (the exception being women’s wedding vows, themselves uttered after a man, in a patriarchal tradition) (*ibid*). It is “this exclusion from rituals of the binding words [that] is either cause or effect of male suspicion that women’s words are written on the wind” (*ibid*). Hallisey (*ibid* 6) extends her argument about women’s verbal and oral deceptiveness to the female anatomy, characterized by its “anatomically determined ability to feign or hide their [women’s] sexual feelings.” Warner (1995:42), likewise, links women’s bodies and sexual appetites to their deceitful, unbridled, and heavily sexualized speech, noting a “connection between [women’s] intimate talk and the control of women’s flesh”²⁹⁴. This triple condemnation of the female sexual body, loose speech, and seductive mouth, results in the patriarchal endorsement of women’s silence, epitomized by those fairy tale heroines who are rewarded for their ability to keep mute under extreme provocation (*ibid*)²⁹⁵. Crone figures, however, topple this attempted patriarchal control of women’s bodies and speech, as they contradict both female muteness and chastity; and fairy tales, condemned as the genre of rebellious female tale-telling and (intimate) female ‘knowing,’ are the natural haunt of these vulgar Dames. For this reason, Warner (1990, 1995, 2009), Gupta (2008) and Pilinovsky (2005) attribute the orality of the fairy tale genre to the crone storytelling figure²⁹⁶. For Pilinovsky (2005), the crone conducts a “meta-narrative commentary upon the ways in which stories influence one another in endless rounds of self-referential critiques,” reappearing from tale to tale even after she has been temporarily vanquished, and acting as “a synecdoche for the magic of the fairy tale, which both remains static from tale to tale, and is reborn anew with each telling.” In contrast, Warner (1995:44) draws a tighter historical link between old female gossips, wicked stepmothers, beggar women, Sibyls, and Mother Goose, amongst other suspect crones of fairy tales, through their ‘evil tongues’ and sexual knowledge. She states, “to look fair and speak fair are linked feminine virtues; to look foul and speak foul equally; the hag curses, the scold is ugly” (*ibid*). This logic is clearly apparent in the case of Baba Yaga: “‘Get thee out of my house this moment!’ she shrieked. ‘I want no one who bears a blessing to cross my threshold! Get thee gone!’” (Wheeler 1996).

There is a contradiction here between the ugliness of the timbre of speech (scolding) and the ensnaring magic of the language employed by fairy tale crones, which entrains its listeners into an ironically communal web of story; ironic, because the crone herself stands apart from this community that she binds. There is croneish significance in the semantic closeness of ‘fairy’ with ‘fay’ and ‘fair,’

²⁹⁴ Warner (1995) is speaking not just of gossip, but of sexual talk and the supposed bawdiness of crones.

²⁹⁵ Note that these ‘good’ heroines are *young* fertile mothers or virgins, such as the long-suffering heroine of the Grimms’ *The Twelve Swans*. Their silence goes hand in hand with their fertility, for the transgression of the crone figure is a doubled sin of lewd speech (sexual desire) and infertility. Warner (1995:44) notes that sexual desire in a woman is wrong unless justified by fecundity, and old women thus represent a “violation of teleology” to the patriarchal understanding.

²⁹⁶ Warner (1995:25) cites this orality as a ‘persistent’ quality distinctive to the genre of fairy and folk tales, with their chatty and intimate style.

Both of which may be derived ultimately from the Middle English *'feyen,'* Anglo-Saxon *'fegan,'* meaning to agree, to fit, to suit, to join, to unite, to bind. Thus the desirable has the power to inspire - even compel - agreement, as well as to bind. Binding is one of the properties of decrees, and of spells (Warner 1995:15-6).

Crone magic, for Warner (1995), performs a powerful binding speech, but of a different kind to that of the ritualized male binding words identified by Hallisey (1987) above. Crone words bind *slyly*, and empower the crone in two ways: by entrancing an audience, drawing them into the supernatural realm of enchantment where her magic holds sway; and by uniting a “circle of listeners” *around* the centralized crone figure, with her “direct appeal to the imaginary circle around the hearth” (Warner 1995:25). In the latter case, the evil tongue may be tamed and harnessed to pedagogical and nationalistic aims. For example, La Befana is a figure who blesses good Italian children; and in Perrault’s seventeenth century Paris, fairy tale writers commonly evoked crone narrators to “conve[y] the ancient, pure wisdom of the people from the fountainhead - old women, nurses, governesses” (*ibid* 19). Again, Bolen (2003:4) considers the interesting Roman goddess Hestia, the ‘hearth-keeper,’ in her study of crone figures, noting that, “Hestia makes a house a home, creates sanctuaries, and quietly aids in transforming a group of strangers into a community,” we can see here an instant likeness to the Mother Goose and nursery nurse crone figures of fairytales. It is worth noting the clear class dimension to this tamed crone figure, with her connotations of rural and humble (powerless) people, whose innocence acts as a childlike conduit of morality. Even as Jesus ascribes the Kingdom of God to the ‘little children’ (Luke 18:15-17), so the “postulation of a narrator, a grandmotherly or nanny type, called Gammer Gurton or Aunty Molesworth or Mother Hubbard as well as Mother Goose or some such cosy name,” with her uneducated and simplistic “chatty” style, bears the burden of the historical and moral ‘authenticity’ of these stories (Warner 1995:25). This equation of ‘innocence,’ children, old women, and cosy endearments is in no way coincidental; as we will see later, feminist gerontologists, such as Woodward (1999:xii), have remarked on the:

Pedagogy of mortification at work to teach an older woman to recede into invisibility. It is as if the practice of humiliation by the younger generation produces shame and the corresponding wish to shrink in size.

According to this patriarchal logic of mortification, the older woman of fairy tales symbolically shrinks to the size and status of a child (*ibid*). The final irony, however, is that the ultimate societal power rests with these somewhat foolish and unlikely figures, for they alone in society are able to mediate between high and low classes, teaching the children of the noble the sly cunning of the “little people” (Benhabib 1994:113).

Fairy tale scholarship has largely portrayed a crone who has devious oral and verbal power, and who must be either silenced or tamed to render her more productive, or less threatening, to patriarchal society. Whilst these uncontrollably chatty, scolding or cursing women commonly feature as comical and repulsive narratological figures, the crones who haunt fairy tale woods and under-waters are more likely to be frightening, taciturn and uncommunicative figures. They choose to hold their tongues, preserving their silence not in obedience, but as a matter of secrecy. However, they are not lauded for this reticence, for even women's silence is deceptive, and "mutiny can be conveyed in silence: the military crime of dumb insolence" (Warner 1995:395). The crone figure thus enacts a double bind in the primordial Christian story of female betrayal: "if a woman is as quiet as she ought to be, she might be scheming. If she voices her opinion, she is a shrew" (Hallisey 1987:17). Crones are shrews and schemers, their words and wordlessness equally deadly to *humankind*.

Von Franz (1995) challenges this notion of the orally damned crone figure, however, suggesting silence in crone tales is a powerful act of *loyalty*, and not mutiny. Dishonesty, likewise, becomes a sign of *respect* in these stories, according to an alternative schema of morality. For Von Franz (*ibid*), scholars have repeatedly—and grossly—misinterpreted the crone as a figure of evil (a scapegoat in patriarchal society), and the culmination of projected male fear. Her deceptiveness exemplifies her purported immoral disposition; and the deceit of those who escape her is attributed to a necessary evil²⁹⁷. This interpretive error can be traced to historical retellings of morally ambiguous fairy tales, to better fit a Christian template (*ibid*). Tales that reward deceptiveness:

Shocked later Christian European storytellers so much that many of the modern versions transform it [the motif of deception] and the girl is persecuted *because* she lies. Finally she breaks down and tells the truth, and then the Great Goddess rewards her. But this is an artificial version" (Von Franz 1995:200).

Extrapolating from Von Franz's argument, we can conclude that it is the little girl's *honesty* in *Frau Trude* that costs her life; and that it is naive female honesty more generally that is at fault in crone tales. Had the little girl "refused to name what she saw (the devil's head) and remained steadfastly silent, like the wiser heroines of the aboriginal tale *The Black Woman* or the Russian stories *The Headless Princess* and *Vasilissa the*

²⁹⁷ We find this paradox of the 'rightful lie' in many crone fairy tales. Gretel lies about her brother's state of health to preserve his life, and tricks the witch into her own oven. Whilst the witch dies in this Christianized tale, we know that Gretel's deception is the right ploy to adopt. In a similar vein, Tishka fools the Baba Yaga's daughter into getting into the old witch's oven. To survive a crone, you must become crone-like.

Wise, she might yet have been saved” (*ibid* 199-200). A silence that preserves the witch’s deception becomes a payment to the crone in the coinage of respect: “what looks like lying is rather a gesture of reverence, of respect toward the otherness of this divinity” (*ibid* 201).

This controversial reinterpretation is rooted in an archetypal understanding of the crone as the aspect of the Great Mother most worthy of our fear and respect:

“The witch is an archetypal aspect of the Great Mother. She is the neglected Mother Goddess, the Goddess of the earth in her destructive aspect” (*ibid* 126).

The crone Goddess is a figure of wrath and “great destruction”; yet, in the ‘complete’ archetype her awe-inspiring qualities are counterbalanced by her “light side,” characterized by maternal goodness and life-giving qualities (*ibid*). Thus the terrifying Kali, Demeter, Isis, and the Black Madonnas are also capable of exhibiting love and care. Wigzell (2006:746-7) similarly observes of the Baba Yaga that, “although it is the wicked cannibalistic Iaga who is familiar to most non-specialists, tales also feature a benign Iaga one who may be both helpful and hostile ... her image is profoundly ambiguous.” Our encounter with this ambivalent Great Mother has been distorted by Judaeo-Christian mythology, which has split the complex Great Goddess figure into unconnected good and bad sides (Von Franz 1995; Zipes 2012). As a result, myth, folk and fairy tales feature two diametrically opposed women: the good mother who, as Warner (1995) notes, is usually erased from the tale (for to be female and present is invariably to sin); and the omnipresent evil witch²⁹⁸. Logically, both must make their appearance at the same time; but now no longer in the same figure:

The Virgin Mary, for example, is cut off from her shadow side and represents only the light side of the mother image; consequently, as Jung points out, the moment when the figure of the Virgin Mary became more important was also the time of the [greatest] witch persecutions [in Europe] (Von Franz 1995:126).

According to the tradition of analytical psychology, the Great Mother archetype is not evil *per se*, but is, like all repressed content, made dangerous through suppression, for “evil does not come directly from a wrong attitude in consciousness, but from a neglected archetype in the unconscious, from the witch” (*ibid*). As the Great Mother is rendered unconscious (repressed), she moves beyond our conscious understanding and control. However, rather than resting quietly in this shadowy realm, she “avenges herself” by “attacking the transcendent function, the

²⁹⁸ We return here, albeit from a different angle, to Rountree’s (1997) schizophrenic woman of the patriarchal imagination.

process of becoming conscious, the process toward individuation” (*ibid* 128). That is, repression of the multifaceted archetype leads to a ‘block’ in the psyche, which prevents us from reaching a complete state of maturity.

Yet, even separated from her positive, creative aspects, the witch-crone is not entirely irredeemable for she retains some sense of *shame*, which is a solely human, social emotion (see Scheff 2002)²⁹⁹. Shame, with its related senses of disgrace and bashfulness (ODE 2010), was first experienced in Christian mythology by Eve and Adam, who felt so physically and morally exposed upon eating the forbidden fruit of knowledge that they sought fig leaves to clothe themselves. The Huldra, a Scandinavian crone, similarly exemplifies the workings of shame in myth and folklore. Her name stems from the Nordic “‘covered’ or ‘secret,’” and she presents a false, “‘lovely” front to viewers, whilst her aspect from behind is “‘hideous and hollow like a tree” (Staines 2010:340). Shame involves the act of uncovering: which irrevocably damages the crone’s monumental pride. Hence Baba Yaga commends Vasilissa for refusing to ask about her skeletal-handed servants, saying, “‘it is good that you didn’t ask about the inside things, because one should not carry the dirt out of the hut”” (Von Franz 1995:198). Vasilissa’s wisdom, in contrast to the Grimms little girl’s foolishness, is that she accepts the crone’s right to her shameful secrets, understanding that the Yaga is too powerful for her to challenge. She refuses to name the ‘evil’ that she sees in Baba Yaga’s hut, and, further, denies her own secret protection (the magic doll given to her by her mother), instead, claiming vaguely that she has been helped by her mother’s ‘blessing,’ in a final cover-up of her own (*ibid*)³⁰⁰. The Grimms’ little girl, in contrast, boldly exposes Frau Trude’s devilish secret and, in so doing, shames her and arouses her wrath. Like Vasilissa, she is a child, and unequal to the task of vanquishing a great witch-goddess. The result, unsurprisingly, is her instant demise in the witch’s fire. The little girl is ignorant of the traditional folk insight that “‘one should not poke into the dark side of the divinity”” (*ibid* 199). Baba

²⁹⁹ In Von Franz’s (1995:198-9) words: “‘the Baba Yaga is a slightly split figure, not completely at one with herself. There is a secret something of goodness in her, just enough to make her slightly ashamed of her dark side and to give her a feeling that it oughtn’t to be carried out of the hut. She is not completely a nature demon; there is a tinge of humanity in her domestic character. She is slightly human and so capable of ethical human reactions ... We can conclude from this story that the Baba Yaga is not totally evil; she is ambiguous, she is light and dark, good and evil, though here the evil aspect is stressed.” Scheff’s (2001:255) fascinating research into the role of shame in community (shame as the “‘premier social emotion””) validates this logic.

³⁰⁰ Downing’s (1989:166-7) retelling of *Fair Vasilissa and the Baba Yaga* gives the clearest intimation of the importance of feigned ignorance and deception in crone tales, when he describes the final encounter between Vasilissa and the crone: “‘Vasilissa dearly wanted to ask about the three pairs of hands, but she said nothing. ‘You have grown dumb again, child!’ said Baba Yaga. ‘Do you not wish to know anything else?’ ‘I have asked you enough, babushka,’ replied Fair Vasilissa. ‘You have said yourself that the more you know, the older you grow.’ ‘You are a wise child, Vasilissa,’ said Baba Yaga. ‘I eat up inquisitive little girls and boys. But now I’ll ask you something. How do you manage to perform the difficult tasks I set you to do?’ Vasilissa remembered her mother’s warning to say nothing of the doll to anyone. ‘My mother’s blessing aids me,’ she replied. ‘What!’ cried Baba Yaga. ‘Begone then, blessed child! I want no blessings in my house!’” Vasilissa is therefore saved by her wisdom, her willful ignorance, and her deceptiveness.

Yaga's evilness, which is her power over death (symbolized in the skeletal hands which carry out her transformational tasks), is neither for children to question nor understand³⁰¹.

It is not wise to question the judgments of a deity, and particularly unwise in the case of crones, who are goddesses of the underworld and of the mysteries that take place there (*ibid* 202). As such, they personify the "great secret in all religious systems," which is always accompanied in folklore and myth with "this parallel of not opening the forbidden chamber, or not looking" (*ibid*). It is not possible to enter the underworld and partake of its mysteries and still live (think of the tragic myth of Orpheus who, like Lot's wife in the Bible, is rebuked for looking back into the fires of hell). To survive what is not meant for human sight and knowledge requires deliberate *forgetfulness*: putting the vision behind you and steadfastly refusing to revive it. Of course, sometimes it is essential to open the forbidden chamber, as Von Franz (*ibid* 202) also acknowledges. However, in the cases discussed here (*Frau Trude* and *Vasilissa the Wise*), where the relationship between the two figures (crone and child) is unequal, the door to the underworld must be kept firmly shut. Indeed, only an already-mature figure, such as Ivan from *The Maiden Czar*, has the power to confront Baba Yaga (*ibid* 203-4). In a comical scene, he enters her hut to her typically discerning question:

‘Have you come voluntarily or involuntarily, *my little child*?’ Ivan refuses to play this game, and bangs his fist on the table and says, ‘You old witch, you must not ask a *hero* such questions! I want something to eat and drink, and if you don’t serve me a good meal, I shall box your ears, so that’ (*ibid*, emphasis added).

Although we could cynically attribute Ivan's courage to his supposedly 'heroic' gender, Von Franz (1995:204) looks for the answer in his comparative maturity, prioritizing his age over his sex:

Ivan is a grown-up man, while the girl is an absolutely helpless young creature ... Baba Yaga is not evil at all; she is just plain nature. If you know how to cope with her, she is all right. It's up to you which side of her you experience, and here comes the first intimation in these stories that somewhere the problem of evil has to do with man, that evil is not right out in nature ... but is dependent on man's attitude and behaviour).

³⁰¹ There is a surprising connection between this paradoxical folk wisdom of ignorance and the persecuted Judaeo-Christian figure of Job in the Bible, who tells God: "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth," in what can be understood as "a gesture of reverence" (*ibid* 212). By remaining silent in the face of undeserved affliction, Job is telling God that he will not question his actions, even though they are seemingly iniquitous. Again, folk wisdom resurfaces in Job's acknowledgement that it is not for him, a mere man, to judge—or challenge—God's greater Self (*ibid*).

This assumption is shared by Wigzell (2006:747), who likewise locates the crone's ambivalence in the power dynamic of the relationship she holds with the protagonist. Thus, "the nature of the Iaga (benign, malign or ambiguous) depends upon the figure she encounters, and more particularly the age and sex of that figure."

Vasilissa has an awareness of her own limitations, which are a product of her inexperience³⁰². This knowledge fuels her virtue (the deliberate refusal of naming the truth of the skeletal hands) for she is aware that she cannot defeat the Baba Yaga, and will be lucky to escape with her life. Her prudence contradicts the principle of honesty, which is one of the pillars of the Christian faith:

Contrary to our Christian morals, these stories say that there is a form of tactful lying about the evil or dark side of these great divinities which is not immoral. On the contrary, to be capable of having seen into that abyss of evil and pretend not to have seen it is the highest achievement (Von Franz 1995:200).

'Honesty,' derived from the Old French 'honor,' with its connotations of renown and a glorified reputation (ODE 2010), is historically, and very publicly, tied to the male gender, and more specifically male militancy: "the whole tradition of honor ... has grown up around war and violence" (Noddings 1989:11). The fairy tale *Vasilissa the Wise* subscribes to a significantly different register of morality, however, which we could appraise as a form of "natural wisdom" (Von Franz 1995:200). Natural wisdom is not a confrontational stance, nor an act of valor. Rather, it suggests the opposite: a passive stance of compromise, acceptance, and the "semiconscious adaptation to—or coping with—the powers of evil" (Noddings 1989:49).

The presentation of an alternative moral spectrum, including a differing definition of evil, might well be the purpose of such crone tales. Thus Noddings (1989:48) suggests that "[Von Franz] sees fairy tales in part as attempts to compensate for the overemphasis on masculine prowess in the real world." Specifically, masculinity is trumped by "instinct and love and the feminine principle," and Vasilissa symbolizes "female *unconscious* victory over evil" (as opposed to "male conscious heroism") (*ibid*, emphasis added). There is a danger in this alternative schema of associating feminine morality with a dishonorable and irrational unconscious or instinctive *feeling* (*ibid*). The natural wisdom that Von Franz (1995) identifies is a tacit form of understanding, which preserves one's safety in the face of grave danger. Interestingly, extending the word play,

³⁰² Interestingly, McKillip's (2004) heroine, Sidonie, shows no such gendered bias; she shows considerably more courage and daring in the face of the Baba Yaga than Prince Ronan and the wizard Gyre, and is a practiced manipulator herself. The men of this tale appear relatively incompetent and weak, and far more vulnerable to Brume's machinations. Von Franz's (1995) point, with which I concur, is that it is *inexperience* that renders us vulnerable to the crone.

'tacit' derives from the Latin '*tacitus*,' meaning to be silent (wordless and noiseless) (ODE 2010). Again, we are returned to the virtue of female silence, which so dominates fairy tales. Alternatively, we can ascribe this silence of natural wisdom to a deliberate foregrounding of the good, in order to build a relationship of trust between two unequal characters.

We are moving beyond an understanding of the crone as a monstrous creature with cannibalistic instincts, to an ancient Great Mother archetype. Von Franz's (1995) crone challenges the purported link between female independence and wickedness, and posits fairy tale crones as encouraging a feminine 'natural wisdom,' which compensates for the male principle of heroism and honor. The ties between nature/the natural and the feminine principle is central to this remolding of the crone, but this time in a way which contradicts the earlier, utopian feminist accounts (see 7.2). Here, the wild forests are the hostile domains of an *evil* female being, who is formed through the patriarchal suppression of the Great Mother archetype over history; and surviving the wilderness entails a recognition of this fact, and a respect for the archetype in her *whole* form. Emphasizing this link with the natural, Estés (1992:1) shifts the psychoanalytical focus to highlight our complicity in the endangering of both "Wild Woman" and "Wildlife." She observes, further, that our misunderstanding and devaluation of crone figures as psychologically 'evil' bears much in common with our devaluation of those natural landscapes that prove least amenable to human exploitation:

It is not so difficult to comprehend why old forests and old women are viewed as not very important resources ... It is not so coincidental that wolves and coyotes, bears and wildish women have similar reputations. They all share related instinctual archetypes, and as such, both are erroneously reputed to be ingracious, wholly and innately dangerous, and ravenous (*ibid*).

For Noddings (1989) such Jungian recuperations of the crone as 'natural' associate the feminine principle with *unconscious* (or "instinctual") goodness, such that to be female and to think remains dangerous; and similarly to be female and to speak. She agrees with Von Franz that the crone is flawed: a "mixed deity," both good and bad (*ibid* 50). However, she insists that we *openly* recognize this negative aspect of the crone, and embrace a relational ethics that makes a "conscious effort to subdue evil by living with it rather than stirring it up in misguided attempts to overcome it once and for all" (*ibid*). This involves adopting an attitude of empathy: "attributing the best possible motive to Baba-Yaga, responding to something not-evil that resides in her along with the more dominant propensities for destruction" (*ibid*). It is only a "conscious response [that] can bring out the best in someone" (*ibid*), and not the unconscious goodness described by analytical psychological theory. Thus caring (and daring) enacts a "genuine feminine *consciousness* at work in response to evil" (*ibid*), and ushers in a new moral framework that may yet rehabilitate this troublesome female figure, and welcome her back into society.

One fairy tale that does achieve this rehabilitation of the crone is the Grimms' (2002) *The Three Spinners*. This is a morally subversive tale (as we can expect from a crone story) that challenges the typical validation of female domesticity in the wider Grimms collection (Bottigheimer 1982). The subject of the tale is the work of spinning, in "an age and place in which spinning was yet another task performed by every woman, the task that awaited her when every other household task has been finished" (*ibid* 142). According to the "work ethic" of the times³⁰³, spinning was the archetypal activity for "diligent, well-ordered women" (*ibid* 143), and the spindle itself was "an essential characteristic of wise women" (Grimms 1913-32, in Bottigheimer 1982:143). The fairy story tells of a lazy young girl who does not want to spin, and, in a similar way to *Frau Trude*, opens with a description of her unfortunate disposition:

There was once a girl who was idle and would not spin, and let her mother say what she would, she could not bring her to it (Grimms 2002:63).

We know where this tale is leading, for these words echo those of *Frau Trude* almost exactly. However, there is a twist to this tale, brought about by three feminine lies (Bottigheimer 1982). The mother tells the first lie to the queen, who happens to be passing, and who hears the wretched girl crying. "I cannot get her to leave off spinning" the mother exclaims, trying to hide the truth of her daughter's laziness, "and I am poor and cannot procure the flax" (Grimms 2002:63). The queen is impressed by this tale, and takes the 'hard working' daughter to her palace. She sets her the task of spinning three rooms full of fine flax, after which she will be rewarded with the queen's son in marriage. Of course the daughter is terrified: she cannot spin to save her life. For three days she weeps and does nothing. This is the occasion of the second lie, when she tells the queen she cannot spin because she is homesick. On the third day, "deliverance is magically provided" (Bottigheimer 1982:145) by "three strange women" (Grimms 2002:64). Each is physically disfigured by the spinning activities they have long carried out (treading, licking the thread, and twisting the thread): "the first of whom had a broad flat foot, the second had such a great underlip that it hung down over her chin, and the third had a broad thumb" (*ibid*). At first, their appearance is dreadful, monstrous, even. We wonder whether they fit the fairy tale norm where deformed body indicates deformed soul (De Graff 1984:19). Yet they address the girl kindly enough, and ask her about the cause of her grief. The crones agree to carry out the impossible task for her; but unlike Rumpelstiltskin, the devilish trickster of another Grimms spinning tale, they ask for nothing in return but recognition, and the respect that this entails:

³⁰³ Bottigheimer (1982:142) classifies this as a period stretching from the Middle Ages to 19th century Germany.

‘If you will invite us to the wedding, not be ashamed of us, and will call us your aunts, and likewise place us at your table, we will spin up the flax for you, and that in a very short time’ (*ibid*).

Of course the girl readily agrees, and the crones set to work fulfilling their part of the bargain. Again, we know a moment of doubt: will she fail in her promise to these crones, and be ashamed of their ugliness and strangeness? For a second time this tale bucks the trend. The idle girl proves loyal, and invites her ‘aunts’ to the feast. Her princely husband meets the “odious friends,” and asks them how they came by their disfigurement (*ibid* 65). This is the occasion of the third lie, when, in attributing their deformities to the constant spinning they undertake, the crones “imply ... that his bride will be transformed into their collective image if she continues to spin” (Bottigheimer 1982:144). The prince is shocked, and vows his wife will never spin flax again. The crones have ensured the girl’s freedom and, in doing so, deviously “[banish] the work ethic publicly espoused by the mother, the queen, and - by his use of the adjective, *faul* (lazy), in the opening sentence - Wilhelm Grimm himself” (*ibid* 45).

That this is a crone tale is undeniable. There are the three strange and deformed women, obviously experienced spinners, and therefore likely to be old. They appear from nowhere and bear no connection to the two societies, of poverty, and of the palace, in the tale. They are morally ambivalent, for they are at once benevolent, domesticated spinners (much like the compelling ‘housewifely’ crones we saw earlier), and sinister, deformed, and nomadic hags. Further, the interactions between the six key females (mother, daughter, queen, and three crones), like those in many crone tales, are fundamentally dishonest, and “deceit steers the plot” (*ibid* 144). Yet, rather than reviling these old women, we see a strange reversal at play in the tale. The idle girl honours them with their own lie, claiming relation to them as they requested. She invites them into palace society, and places them at its centre, by her side. She refuses to be ashamed of them and, in doing so, transfigures their deceitfulness into her liberation. Perhaps it is possible to bring the “submerged voices” (*ibid*) of the alienated figure of the crone back into the communal fold.

6.6 Research considerations

Scholarly genealogies of the fairy tale crone portray a post-reproductive, ugly, and sinister being, which is dangerous to human life. Yet, notwithstanding these unsavory qualities, recent research and retellings have sought to rehabilitate this figure through a myriad of tactics. The crone has been recast in the guise of a literary truth-telling motif, an ancient nature goddess with liminal properties, and a tamed pedagogical figure. In analytical psychology she surfaces as an archetype of the Great Mother (Earth), whose unconscious female morality challenges the

male heroic code of honour. Even when her ‘witch’ status is retained, her powers have been ‘naturalized,’ and harnessed for the good of the vulnerable in society. Webb (2006:156), for example, presents Pratchett’s (2003) Granny Aching as a guardian of the community, who “speak[s] up for those who don’t have voices”; and the “submerged voices” of the three crones in *The Three Spinners* can be interpreted as championing not just one humble, work-shy girl, but all the oppressed female domestic workers of the times (Bottigheimer 1982).

Each of these re-imaginings endorses Noddings’ (1989) relational ethics of care. They reach out to the crone in a spirit of empathy (trusting that this she-devil is not entirely irredeemable), and return her to the embrace of community. However, rather than securing access to this figure, the ‘monstrous mother’ (Warner 1994) is changed beyond recognition in these rehabilitating movements, and something vitally important is lost in this transformation from ‘bad’ to ‘good,’ antisocial to social. The crones of the world *self-consciously* occupy the heartlands of the nonhuman wilderness, veiled by thorny thickets, and hedged around by ominous burning skulls who warn us away; and these figures should not be made to yield to our communal needs, however urgent or utopian. The power of crones in fairy tales lies in their utter independence (moral, economic, psychological) of our wishes, desires, and values. They may aid the hero/heroine; or then again they may not. Crone stories promote a ruthless acceptance of—and respect for—the difficult circumstances of life. Self-pity, self-deception, and emotional vulnerability lead to death in these stories. They argue the absolute necessity of adapting to life’s demands in order to ensure survival, whether this is through kindness, cunning, betrayal, or brute force (including murder). Human good and evil coexist in these figures, who do not stand beyond the moral hierarchy (as does the trickster), but who indifferently personify both of these values. Indeed, crone stories demonstrate the futility of such moralistic labels in the face of raw life. Where the beautiful stepdaughter of *Mother Holle* is rewarded by the crone for her attentiveness, caring and honesty, Vasilissa’s success hinges on a ‘mother’s blessing,’ her own natural wisdom, and outright deceitfulness. Tishka is a less savory character yet; a wary and cunning little trickster-boy (who is not even fully human, being magically born of a log), he escapes the witch’s clutches like the devious and desperate Gretel—by cooking her daughter in his stead. Ivan, being older and stronger, is able to overpower the Baba Yaga physically, and so can forcefully demand her aid. The more vulnerable idle girl of *The Three Spinners* is lucky when she is rescued by the three old hags; not so her counterpart in *Frau Trude*, who is destroyed, but for her *naivety*, and not her unseemly disobedience.

Attempts to harness the moral potency of the crone refrain to a new feminist or fairy tale ethic do her a gross injustice when they divide her into two parts (true/false, good/bad), and reject one of these as inappropriate to their purposes. These revisionists ironically exacerbate the Manichean schizophrenia of the very tales they condemn. Instead of projecting the undesirable elements of womankind onto another character in the plot

(such as the granny-eating wolf of *Red Riding Hood*), these revisionists project the ‘evil’ right out of the story or ascribe it to a reified system (e.g. ‘Patriarchy’ or ‘Christianity’), and there is a continued sense that the two polar extremes cannot coincide in one figure. Despite their sympathetic adjustments, we continue to feel uneasy in the presence of their rehabilitated grannies, for we suspect that beast and bestial old woman are still the same³⁰⁴. It is vital to avoid reducing the ambivalence of the crone to either good or evil qualities. As with the trickster, the deadly, yet playful, malicious and pedagogical qualities of this fairy tale figure defy our attempts for easy understanding, and render definitive classifications simplistic and judgmental. Taking shelter behind such indefinite descriptors as ‘ambiguity’ or ‘ambivalence’ is likewise problematic, as it sets up an impotent metaphorical crone figure, with unproductively generalized qualities.

Reductive accounts of the crone often attempt to *re-humanize* this figure. Many crone theorists have striven to untangle a ‘pure’ goddess or archetype from historically muddy waters, yet the crone resists not only patriarchal diminution, but those who would seek to restore her status in a redefined, re-mythicized, and re-moralized utopian human community. Whilst she bears many human properties (including human form), the crone is also a magical (quasi-divine) being with powers over the natural world, including over death. Confusion further arises out of the conjoining of witch and crone figures in fairy tale research, which results in the indiscriminate application of the communal geographies of the former to the latter. Where Von Franz (1995:204) observes, “evil is not right out in nature ... but is dependent on man’s attitude and behaviour,” she is hinting that crone tales open out a world beyond human community and concerns. However, it would be a mistake to renounce the crone figure as having nothing to say about human society. Indeed, in her guise as a raconteur at the nursery hearth, she occupies a privileged position of understanding. In the following section I engage the crone in her guise as an old, storytelling woman, to address questions of the vulnerability and horrors (real or imagined) of post-reproductive age, the inevitability of finitude, and the inherent geographies that accompany and constitute this social question. It is important to consider the repetitive links made in crone stories between female old age and: marginality, isolation, and loss; poverty and ‘ugliness’ (with their corresponding moral associations); innate wisdom, especially of death (defined negatively against science and book learning, including the esoteric); and the ‘natural,’ the wilderness, and beastliness. These debates are best answered by gerontological theorizing, which, whilst it may not specifically engage with a crone figure, or connect her to fairy tales, has wrestled with questions of ageing relative to place and womanhood. Temporarily turning away from fairy stories, then, I look to wider theoretical narratives that underpin our material-discursive constructions of the ageing female figure we call a ‘crone,’ and consider their inherent geographical assumptions.

³⁰⁴ This explains why Carter’s (1989) *The Werewolf* in *The Bloody Chamber* is so convincing.

6.7 Interdisciplinary genealogy of crone studies: gerontology

Crone scholarship from beyond fairy tale studies is scarce, with research primarily evoking this figure as a feminist symbol of resistance³⁰⁵. There is no one clear body of research that focuses on the crone, but rather sporadic references across fields as diverse as analytical psychology (Bolen 2001; Estés 1992, 2010; Jones 1996; Von Franz 1996), psychoanalysis (Creed 1993), mythology (Walker 1988), anthropology (Murray 1921; Rountree 2004), literature studies (Warner 1995), history (Purkiss 1996, 1999), radical pagan feminism (Starhawk 1988), and ‘thealogy’ (Daly 1990; Raphael 1999)³⁰⁶. It is misleading to map a comprehensive interdisciplinary genealogy of ‘crone studies,’ or even organize the ‘main approaches’ to this figure. However, it is vital to seek out less obviously connected literatures that may speak to crone research. The dynamic inter-discipline of gerontology is one body of research that could contribute much to the debate. Within this larger inter-discipline, three sub-disciplines, geographical, feminist, and radical gerontology, are of particular interest³⁰⁷. Each addresses the processes of ageing and the figure of the older woman, prioritizing questions of age over those of gender, in a much-needed theoretical reversal (Krekula 2007). The term ‘crone’ itself is unfamiliar to this literature, and fictional accounts of this figure have had little impact on these fields, with few exceptions (e.g. Cool and McCabe 1987; Hazan 1994; Fortunati *et al.* 2000). However, these three bodies of research offer vital insight into theoretical (and public) material-discursive constructs of ageing, and its constitutive role in society.

6.7.1 Geographical gerontology: the place of age

Geographical gerontology³⁰⁸ stems from 1970s enquiries into geographies of ageing, including seminal studies by Golant (1972), Rowles (1978) and Warnes (1982) (see Andrew *et al.* 2007). Progress reports document four key shifts in theoretical agenda since the inception of this sub-

³⁰⁵ I draw on a predominantly western gerontology in the following sections, largely because this makes up the bulk of the gerontology inter-discipline, but also due to my hesitation to adapt nonwestern perspectives of old age out of context. The genealogy I construct here draws predominantly on Anglo-American academic ‘storying,’ and concerns predominantly western folklore.

³⁰⁶ This is not a comprehensive list, but gives a good flavor of the variety of crone work beyond fairy tale studies.

³⁰⁷ These are not discrete ‘categories,’ for example Woodward’s (1988, 1993, etc.) feminist gerontology also has radical overtones, and strong spatial references.

³⁰⁸ According to Andrews *et al.* (2009) ‘geographical gerontology’ is the currently preferred name for this sub-discipline. Andrews *et al.* (*ibid*) attempt to ‘map the intersection’ between gerontology and geography, but what becomes increasingly clear in their paper is a sense of the problematic disciplinary politics of ‘boundary policing.’ In fact, it is extremely difficult to disentangle the two inter-disciplines, and the theories I have drawn on in this section have been published both in social geography and social gerontology research journals.

discipline (*ibid*). The first was broadly spatial, emphasizing the macro-level, 'ageing population's' location and movement, and public provision of services. Research by Rowles (1978, 1983) shifted the interest to the connection between older age and environment, through his concept of the 'transactional perspective.' This led to a further questioning of place meaning and memories, and the 'home' in relation to age (Andrew *et al.* 2007:152). A third shift returned interest to the practical needs of older people, with a reemphasis on global demographic trends in ageing, questions of location, and "temporal change in the interaction between the environment and older people" (*ibid* 152-3). Harper and Laws' (1995) recent research has reversed this broad spatial agenda again, to eschew "unreflective empiricism" (*ibid* 153), embrace the methods and theory of the cultural turn, and adopt "critical social theory and post-modern perspectives to underpin research" (*ibid*). Across this latter period, the "meaning and experience of age" has itself been redefined from a "biological reality" to a "subject [of] historical and cultural processes" (Wyn and White 1997:9-10). Despite this, ageing in policy-led geographical gerontology, at least, is still largely chronologically defined, and is generally compartmentalized into two distinct stages: "the 'third age,' which refers broadly to sixty and seventy-year-olds; and the 'fourth age,' capturing those over seventy years" (Bryant and Pini 2011:117).

Currently, the sub-discipline is characterized by diverse interests, which can be roughly classified according to scale (see Andrews *et al.* 2009). Macro-scale research adopts a geometrical view of space to address ageing populations' movements, localizations, service provisions, planning and policy, and health and living environments (*ibid*). Whilst much of this work yields the meticulous empirical data needed for policy formation, it has the potential to construct an "apocalyptic demography" (Vanderbeck 2007:200), which frames ageing as a biological ticking time bomb, with potentially devastating effects on society and the environment. Old age becomes a problem to be solved, stereotypes are unproblematized, and the aged themselves appear "a mass of material exigencies" (Hazan 1994:15). The sub-discipline, in turn, presents itself as one of the many mechanisms by which to judge and resolve these problems, in a cycling of theory-policy-theory, such that, "communication about ageing does not necessarily rely on communication with the ageing, much less communication amongst the aged" (*ibid* 3). In sum, "the discourse on ageing involves a vocabulary that combines moral order and practical needs ... Within it, old age is seen as posing a threat to everyday conceptions of space, time, and meaning" (*ibid* 17). Micro-scale projects, in contrast, have grappled with biological, social and political constructions of ageing, and questions of emplacement, emotion, body, and society (Andrews *et al.* 2009). These studies avoid broad demographic overviews, provide insight into *experiences* of ageing, and enable more participatory research (e.g. Hopkins and Pain 2007; Horton and Kraftl 2008). Three

particularly lively debates have traversed both bodies of work, with great pertinence for my own geographical theorizing of the crone. I classify these as: relational versus non-relational ageing; attachment versus disengagement theory; continuity and reengagement theories.

The question of relational versus non-relational ageing disputes the fixity, or not, of the category of ‘age.’ Hopkins and Pain (2007:287) were the first to problematize the proliferation of studies into the very young and very old in the sub-discipline, noting that this pattern of research is indicative of a wider politics of “fetishizing the margins and ignoring the centre.” For them, age is a fundamentally fluid construct, shaped through and in “intergenerationality,” “intersectionality,” and over the “life course” (*ibid*). Intergenerational interactions, first, *produce* identities of people as aged, with cross-generational relationship patterns of “interaction, isolation, divergence, conflict, cooperation and so on ... all [having] material effects on the experiences and quality of life of older and younger people in particular settings” (*ibid* 289). Adopting an intergenerational perspective, we can begin to deconstruct the overly fixed category of ‘age,’ and complicate crone identities as *more than* aged (*ibid*). This would involve situating the crone in relation to a variously aged society, including the younger heroines and heroes of fairy tales (as we see in studies that emphasize her role as initiator, e.g. Pilinovsky 2004), and the distant townsfolk of the stories. The spaces that coalesce around this figure (woods and waters, and the dubious ‘home’) could also be rendered relational, either through a network approach, whereby the woods are seen to materially and narratively “facilitate and limit intergenerational contact and relationships” (Vanderbeck 2007:200), or symbolically, as in the liminal forest, which transforms child to mature adult, etc. Although the crone remains an often-distant figure in folklore, intergenerationality insists that we bring her into ‘everyday worlds,’ and cast her in a socially relevant, and normative, light.

Intersectionality offers a variation on this relational theme, by refuting one-dimensional identity, and considering the interaction and intersection of “various markers of social difference” (e.g. gender, class, race, (dis)ability, sexuality) (Hopkins and Pain 2007:290). The spatial negotiation of these multiple identities is key, as in Crenshaw’s (1993) research on black aged women in the workplace. Research at the intersection between age and gender is of particular importance here, with gerontologists’ problematizing the construction of the ‘normative woman’ of Gender Theory as the unintended consequence of the quest for political solidarity (e.g. Ross-Sheriff 2008). “Others” and “deviants” have been overlooked by feminist theorists, who display a troubling ignorance of the post-reproductive older women (e.g. Krekula 2007:157). In particular, the category of ‘woman’ becomes “synonymous with being a mother of small children,” within a home composed of the nuclear family (*ibid* 159). Mothers as older women, with “adult children and even grandchildren” (*ibid*) or adopted children, are passed over in this double standard of ageing (Stamou 2010). Taking age and gender into dual consideration has its own perils, however, as it may produce an ‘additive account,’ which ascribes gender

to ageing women—and not men—as a “double jeopardy” in a “problematic interplay” of the two identities, as in politico-economic arguments that cite gender as a further contributing factor to the later life poverty and marginalization of old women (*ibid*). On these terms, “older women have predominantly been studied from a misery perspective, stressing women’s ageing as a problem,” in a “first step towards othering” (Krekula 2008:160). More productive theorizing must be alert to the differences in these two “structures of oppression” (*ibid* 162), and stress the dynamism and contradictions of the interactions of identity at play (*ibid*; also Hazan 1994)³⁰⁹. Indeed, longitudinal studies of ageing suggest that there may be significant advantages to the intersection of aged and female identities, including women’s increased choices with age, as “the gender revolution [continues] into old age” (Ross-Sheriff 2008:311).

Longitudinal studies offer a ‘life course’ perspective, which shifts the theoretical focus from the readily accepted notion of rigid life stages (such as biologically defined, premenstrual, reproductive and post-reproductive stages), to one that stresses the dynamism and “different situated meanings [of] ... pathways and experiences over the lifecourse” (Hopkins and Pain 2007:290). Transitional periods, for example between childhood and adulthood³¹⁰, are of particular importance, as well as the permeability of boundaries previously imagined as fixed (e.g. reproductive to post-reproductive). Life course theory approaches ageing (and menopause) from an anti-pathological notion of lifelong ‘becoming.’ It proffers a dynamic account of a continually reshaping body, where “some functions are less powerful than they were before, while others are enhanced” (Fortunati *et al.* 2000:211). Old age becomes a malleable “process that changes over time and space because it is the result of a continuous interaction between nature and culture and between body and mind” (*ibid*). Adding a cautionary note, however, Andrews (2009:73) warns that accounts of continual transformation must not shy from the painful “shadow side of ageing,” and questions of decay and decline.

Crone studies can benefit from intersectional and longitudinal relational theories. An intersectional approach compensates for the predominant age-disinterested feminist imagery of crones-as-witches (see 6.2). Instead of an environmentally radical witch (who bears an uncanny resemblance to the normative woman of gender studies), we are able to address a more vulnerable, or differently radical, crone figure, with her own unique geographies. Adopting life course theory, we can avoid construing the crone as deviant or non-normative by recognizing this refrain

³⁰⁹ E.g., we could more profitably speak of “twofold bodily meanings,” such as pride *and* dissatisfaction (as opposed to the singular quality of ‘misery’ in the accounts above) in the one embodied identity, contributing to a variable living experience in female old age (Krekula 2008:165).

³¹⁰ Of course, focusing on transitions suggests, like Turner’s liminal theory, a return to ‘normal’ society once past the transitional flux itself. This is misleading, as childhood may even be enacted together with adulthood, as psychotherapy has taught us.

as an artificially halted moment in a longer life, with a richly variable, albeit often silent, history. This approach allows us to question the *silencing* of crone life histories, and problematize the fixity of identity that characterizes this figure in fairy tales. However, in presenting a relational account of this figure, we are in danger of ignoring her importance in fairy tales: as the one stable being in a continually changing storyscape. Furthermore, we repeat the problem of forced socialization (and humanization), as we saw in the rehabilitations of crone figures above (see 6.7). Indeed, a major problem with all three relational approaches is their colonizing movement into the uncharted areas of life that cannot ever be fully known. For Horton and Kraftl (2008:286), speaking of the young, but equally applicable to the old, “children’s worlds may escape those of adults, and may indeed be lived quite separately from people of other ages.” This is not to suggest a *non-relation*, but rather “*differential* relations heralded by disjunctures ... which in various guises *disrupt* and even foreclose social relations” (*ibid*). The disjunctures of childhood or old age may have very little to do with ‘age’ as a generational, intersectional, or life course matter, for:

Whilst matters like ‘childhood,’ ‘youth’ and ‘old age’ might be constituted in relation to other ideas (not just ideas about age), we must beware that, in themselves, they constitute powerful *discourses* regardless of their relationality. More importantly, such discourses *exceed* age and identity” (*ibid*).

With this declaration, Horton and Kraftl (*ibid*) seek both to further deconstruct ‘age,’ and deliver more radical “apprehensions of relationality,” to ensure that the complex refrains of ‘childhood’ or ‘old age’ are understood as something that “[exceeds] the social, relational, construction of *identities*.” This entails a shift from a social constructivist perspective, which strives, rather optimistically, to usefully rehabilitate the crone as ‘one of us’ (*ibid* 284). In its place, “an inclination towards more-than-usefulness” attends to those qualities which escape ‘our’ understanding, such as the affective and emotional qualities of the crone refrain, and the geographies which arise from these (*ibid* 287)³¹¹.

This brings me to the second set of dualistic categories that underpin the discourses of geographical gerontology: theories of attachment and ‘insideness’, versus disengagement theory. For Rowles (1983:299), drawing on place-attachment work by humanist spatial theorists such as Bachelard (1994) and Tuan (1974, 1990), all “individuals experience a sense of place and develop emotional attachment to particular locales.” Moreover, this attachment is related to well being, and is especially important for the very oldest members of society, “who tend to have low

³¹¹ Hazan (1994:92) locates these two oppositional positions of relationality/non-relationality (or ‘more-than’ relationality) in the wider social science dispute between ‘socio-cultural’ and ‘existential’ world views: “while the former captures the elderly as ‘ordinary people,’ the latter projects some of the key dilemmas of being human onto the construct of the ‘old.’” Furthermore, this schism is not innocent; rather, it is “an academically celebrated form of necessary social ignorance,” which “[originates] in ambivalence on the part of the non-aged,” between “their fear of death and their desire for intergenerational continuity” (*ibid* 92-3).

mobility and often are characterized by lifelong residence in a single setting” (*ibid*)³¹². Rowles’s (*ibid* 300) field work in a “declining rural Appalachian community” leads him to conclude that this carefully delineated group of people share an unusually strong, and *compensatory*, sense of attachment to their local surroundings, which he designates “insiderness.” ‘Insiderness’ exists at physical, social, and psychological levels, and enables various kinds of “*adaptation*” to the environment (*ibid* 308)³¹³. Adaptation presupposes that old age necessitates a challenging accommodation to society (where society is defined ‘in place’), whereby “‘successful ageing’ [involves] the relation between personal adjustment to impending death and the imputed interests of the overall social system” (Hazan 1994:39). Whilst Rowles (1993) would suggest that the wellbeing of the old can be secured via this quality of ‘insiderness,’ there is nonetheless an element of futility to this material-discourse of attachment and adaptation, with its implicit assumptions of the shrinking life space of this age group (Teo 1997:422), their increased dependency, and their gradual descent to social and physical death. The ageing *body* takes centre stage in this account, but not as “the presentation of the social self ... [as] the hub of cultural discourse,” but rather as the negation of this discourse (Hazan 1994:27). The body of the ‘old-old’ ceases to carry symbolic weight, and “is marginalized to the extent of symbolic invisibility ... meaning and control cease to inform each other” (*ibid*). Rowles’ (1993) notion of *psychological* attachment is especially damning, as it constructs the old as an anachronistic group, out of touch with the globalized present social reality. Thus, a rather contradictory sense of *detachment* underpins attachment theory, which brings it (ironically) close to Cumming and Henry’s (1961) controversial ‘disengagement theory.’

Disengagement theorists posit the pervasive marginality of older groups in society has little to do with external socioeconomic pressures. Instead, marginality is a *natural* (biological) process by which “relationships between [an older] person and other members of society are severed” (*ibid* 1961:210). Further,

Society and the individual prepare *in advance* for the ultimate ‘disengagement’ of incurable, incapacitating disease and death by an *inevitable, gradual, and mutually satisfying process of disengagement from society* (Rose 1964:46-7).

Disengagement plays out across a number of levels (Hazan 1994). *Structurally*, the very old are recognized as a hindrance to ‘general society,’ for “the social system is impeded in its operation by the presence of elements whose sudden and final departure from it might cause dramatic

³¹² Rowles (1993:299) defines this group chronologically as “the old-old ... person[s] over 75 years of age.”

³¹³ For example, physiological ‘body-awareness,’ a physical intimacy derived from negotiating the physical terrain; social credit, which they have amassed in the community after a lifetime of giving; geographically bound social networks, including peer groups; and autobiographical attachment of “remembered places” and “incident places” (Rowles 1993:300-308).

disruption” (*ibid* 45-6). Societal needs outweigh individual needs, and thus “social forces pre-empt the rupture by expelling the elderly from the social world” (*ibid*). For society to operate successfully, an element of intergenerational exchange must take place. *Behaviourally*, then, the aged ‘step aside’ to make way for younger generations; and in doing so, they can themselves enjoy the benefits of decreased interaction, including “increased personal autonomy induced by decreased expectations of normative behaviour and the opportunities for leisure time” (Dowd 1975:585). *Psychologically*, disengagement enables “the aged to prepare for death” (*ibid* 46). Further, it prepares the entire community for the event of death, with the aged body acting as a symbolic carrier of human finitude; or, more accurately, as the symbolic void of death: the negation of the social and individual self in the final stage of life.

There is a deep and pervasive sense of despair buried in this structural, behavioural, and psychological diagnosis of disengagement, which ties old age—through detachment—to depression, the cessation of activity, disease, and ultimately death. As Woodward (1988:91) notes of de Beauvoir’s (1966) *The Coming of Age*, which develops a similar analysis, old age appears a “hostile and bitterly dark” place. For de Beauvoir (1966), old age is necessarily accompanied by a loss of productivity (a quality which defines youth); and with the loss of productivity comes an agonizing loss of self—an idea that she develops through the myth of Prometheus:

The moral of Beauvoir’s version of the tale is not that death is a good ... but rather that interminable age is an excruciating punishment because one is repeatedly subjected to the pain of losing an important part of oneself, losses for which there is no restitution (Woodward 1988:93).

De Beauvoir’s dark vision has strong geographical resonances for the fairy tale crones I have described thus far, whose wilderness habitats do indeed seem “hostile and bitterly dark” (*ibid* 91) to the heroines/heroes who must traverse them, and who dwell in seeming detachment from the rest of society. The excruciating loss of purpose robs the crone figure of meaningful direction, identity, and ultimately community. The crone, shorn of her (social) productivity, becomes a personification of loneliness.

This geographical ‘negativity,’ however, has proved unacceptable to many gerontologists, who find within it a residual ageism. As Hazan (1994) notes, disengagement theory constructs clear boundaries between the very old and society, implying that the former cannot be a part of (nor originate from) the latter. This is not a mere utilitarian separation; rather the spatial relationship set up by the divide is one of mutual

antagonism³¹⁴. This has dire consequences for planning and policy, as it can be used to justify the legislation of segregated state housing and reduced service provision (Teo 1997). The legislated, purpose-built environment, in turn, reinforces this detachment through an “architecture of ageing” (Peterson 2009), comprised of “the growth of specialized spaces for older people segregated from the community” (*ibid*). Here, the physical ghettoization of the aged into heavily controlled, surveillance institutions robs them of radical potential, and renders them withdrawn, helpless and dependent. Psychologically, the assumed ‘losses’ of old age, including those of selfhood, and the awaited loss of life, marks this period of life as impotent. The very old, and especially the female old (Ray 1996), are both depoliticized and depersonalized by disengagement theory, which privileges a societal viewpoint over an ‘ageing’ perspective. Politically and psychologically weak, and fundamentally nonproductive, the old are portrayed as ‘naturally’ declining; and efforts to counter their decline would constitute a vain opposition to biology itself (the benchmark of reality). In sum, in disengagement theory “the aged confront a disregard which gradually strips them of their status and rights” (Hazan 1994:14).

Whilst disengagement theory’s construct of a powerless and vulnerable old age might account for the deep rift between crone figures and human society in fairy tales, it cannot clarify the behavioural and spatial characteristics of these figures. Maitland’s (2008) lonely old woman of *Far North*, for example, is not *disenfranchised* in the tale, for she is distinguished by her innate energy, pride, and fearsome power. Likewise, she is both creative and productive: far more so than the youths of the story. She has a closer affinity with the ‘natural’ world than the younger woman and man of the tale, which enables her to be a great huntress, whilst still taking pleasure in the beauty of the animals that she hunts. Her attachment to the landscape and its non-human inhabitants is in no way compensatory; there is no sense of withdrawal, ‘careful’ adaptation, despair, or depression in this relationship. Similarly, Baba Yaga has a rich relationship to the Taiga woods and its denizens, and her lifeworld is remarkably broad, as symbolized best, perhaps, by her powers of flight (Zipes 2012). Her aloneness is clearly a deliberate choice, and not a mutual and gradual distancing from society as a natural consequence of the descent to a feeble old age, and death. Again, her encounters with strangers, both in person and in reputation, elicit their respect or awe, and not disregard or pity. A final fairy tale critique of disengagement theory would highlight its narrow westernized focus. The experiences of the neglected elderly in nursing homes, or the poverty-stricken elderly at home (Vulliamy 2011), does not tally with cultures of old age beyond the west. Miyazake’s (2004) *Howl’s Moving Castle* is a case in point. Sofi, the young girl cursed to be old by the Witch of the Waste, is *empowered*, not diminished, by this transformation. There are numerous brilliant and

³¹⁴ An antagonism reinforced in crone tales.

moving scenes in the animation, in which she confronts her new aged body and its limits (e.g. her difficulty in climbing a footbridge and walking on the rough terrain). However, in each case the mood ranges from grouchiness to hilarity; there is no lamentation for, or dwelling on, the loss of agility or beauty. Instead, Sofi takes stock, adjusts a little, and discovers a ruthlessness, courage, selfishness, and adventurousness she was entirely lacking as a young woman.

A rejection of disengagement theory tends to result in the uptake of one of two alternative gerontology stances: continuity theory, or reengagement theory. Each 'regime' has clear geographical implications, although these differ somewhat. Continuity theory, first, is a micro-scale psychological theory of adaptation. Taking a functionalist stance, it argues:

Middle-aged and older adults attempt to preserve and maintain existing internal and external structures and that they prefer to accomplish this objective by using continuity (i.e., applying familiar strategies in familiar arenas of life) (Atchley 1989:183).

The internal structures mentioned here refer to "a remembered inner structure, such as the persistence of a psychic structure of ideas, temperament, affect, experiences, preferences, dispositions, and skills" (*ibid* 184). External continuity, in contrast, involves the "remembered structure of physical and social environments, role relationships, and activities" (*ibid* 185), i.e. the outward focused aspects of identity. There is a sense that actions and behaviours taken over the personal life course "are controlled by an experiential, emotional thread" (Hazan 1994:67), which allows for change; albeit a limited change in the context of the longer life course: "change and evolution are usually perceived against a backdrop of considerable connection to the individual's past" (Atchley 1989:184).

Greater flexibility can be built into the theory to allow for an individual's social circumstances (e.g. personal wealth, status or power) and psychological responses to ageing within the broader "commonalities of old age" (Covey 1981:632). Further, identity itself is perceived as variable, as it "changes from situation to situation in accordance with differing interpretations of the needs of the individual and the social partners to whom the presentation is addressed" (Hazan 1994:66). Nonetheless, continuity theory problematically stabilizes and consolidates identity over time (Stamou 2010:58) by "[imposing] chronological order on the ebb and flow of experience [which] ... does not account for gaps in time, ways in which various experiences overlap and intersect, or inconsistencies within and between time periods" (Ray 1996:677). In counter argument, it is likely that the unified identity posited by continuity theory is in fact 'discovered' retrospectively, as ageing individuals "project a consistent, self-justifying story that makes sense and conveys meaning" out of the "haphazard, inconsistent, multidimensional events of life"

(Hazan 1994:67). However, there are more damning criticisms yet: continuity theory *normalizes* the ageing process; and those experiences that do not fit this model of adjustment are designated pathological (such as experiences of chronic illness and memory loss)³¹⁵. This normative ageing is implicitly based on the male experience, as it ignores the close relation between female social identity and reproduction (Powell and Hendricks 2009)³¹⁶. Additionally, it problematically assumes a level of economic and social independence that may not be common to all, and neglects the formative role of social institutions in age construction. Age is presented as an inevitable, *biological* stage of life, which is mediated by the correct psychological and behavioural responses. Thus, continuity theory does not depart greatly from disengagement theory, despite its positive ‘spin.’ It fails, like the latter, to account for the power and resonance of the crone, whose potency arises from her willful *break* from society (a matter of sharp and deliberate discontinuity rather than a gradual and natural disengagement), and not from the maintenance of a previously independent or radical role. Perhaps the crone figure is more in tune with Atchley’s (1981) notion of pathological ageing (although his pessimistic emphasis on disease and vulnerability limits the usefulness of this concept).

Reengagement theories, second, eschew biologically and psychologically fixed definitions of age, and draw on postmodern concepts of multiplicity and flux to claim that: “the experience of old age straddles multiple life worlds” (Hazan 1994:96; also Featherstone and Hepworth 1989, 1991). Ageing results in a rupture in the layering of identity, between “the external appearance of the body, the face and functional capacities and the internal or subjective sense of experience of personal identity,” and old age becomes a mask, concealing “the essentially youthful self beneath” (Powell and Hendricks 2009:91). Beyond this, psychological and biological experiences of disengagement, disease, and death are open to “[deconstruction] ... so that age is viewed as fluid with possibilities” (*ibid* 91-2). Instead of inevitable decline, “identity management,” “cyborgic fusion,” and “utopian bodies” enable re-identification with, or readjustment to, society (*ibid* 92)³¹⁷.

One key geographical consequence of reengagement is the growing importance of consumer cultures in later life, such as leisure and retirement cultures, which coalesce around a variety of geographical ‘tropes’ (McHugh 2003). These tropes encourage the increased segregation of the ‘old’ into age-based enclaves—this time by choice (*ibid*). However, the figure of the crone seems far removed from this postmodern consumerist

³¹⁵ Memory plays an important role in maintaining psychological equilibrium in continuity theory, posing problems for those suffering from amnesia or Alzheimer's disease.

³¹⁶ “Because women’s value is grounded in her reproductive prospects, the awareness of a loss of youthful appearance brings social devaluation” (Powell and Hendricks 2009:91). Powell and Hendricks (*ibid*) imply the impossibility of continuity here, as the menopause, and subsequent loss of fertility, brings a clear break in female identity in the ageing process, necessitating a renegotiation of identity in female older age.

³¹⁷ Also see Andrews (2009) on ‘the new ageing.’

cultural narrative, despite its seemingly relevant spatial refrain of segregation. The crone's cantankerous mind and ageing body are superseded, here, by notions of the "fit elderly," whose bear an uncanny resemblance to:

Mannequins, dislodged from family and place, smiling manically as they pursue a festival of living in fabricated neighborhoods. Staged in the hyper-reality of 'Retirement Land,' the image parodies the third age (*ibid* 178).

In an ironic twist, the isolated habitat of the crone is usurped by retirement committees, who sell wilderness landscapes to the aged explorers as "geographic ... cornucopia of delights waiting to be experienced" (*ibid* 167)³¹⁸. This "new gerontology" (Andrews 2009:76) constructs old age as a project of restoration—to what is essentially a point of agelessness (McHugh 2003:171). Restoration is not "a positive affirmation of identity," but is rather "a pretense and form of self-hatred" (*ibid*). Striving for a younger body, and denying biographical age, *estranges* the old from themselves (think of the crone of *Far North* masking herself in the face of the young woman), and creates an artificial rift between generations, such that the wisdom of the "elders" is lost to youth (Andrews 2009:79).

6.7.2 Feminist gerontology: loss and transformation

Geographical gerontology gives us a sense of old age as a doubled spatial phenomenon of distance and closeness, scored by a fundamental (bipolar) binary between a postmodern "striving for immortality and denial of death," where age is deconstructed to the point of its negation, and a modernist account that attests to "the ultimate and absolute certainty of death, whose immanence can be forestalled by the penultimate phase of life—old age" (Hazan 1994:96; also Hazan 2009). "Bipolar ageism" (Cole 1992) originates from the "perennial division between life and death," which "generates other separations such as 'society' and 'the aged'" (Hazan 1994:94). Feminist gerontology problematizes this dualist assumption, and shifts the emphasis from generic, to specifically female experiences of ageing, beyond the commonly accepted watershed of post-motherhood and post-reproduction. Methodologically, it brings greater self-awareness to gerontology research as it "challenges what counts as knowledge of ageing, who makes this knowledge, and how it functions in the world" (Ray 1996:675). An emphasis is placed on praxis, the goal being "to assist in liberating elders, especially women, from these stereotypes and to increase their personal and political agency" (*ibid*). The

³¹⁸ For example, the Arizona Senior Industries Cluster advertise the inhospitable Painted Desert as a magically welcoming "exotica [of] desert vistas, polychromatic sunsets, *saguaro* cacti," etc. (McHugh 2003:167).

sub-discipline encompasses a broad range of approaches, most notably feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and postmodernism (*ibid*). The latter, relatively recent³¹⁹, approach is characterized by a “critique of language, discourse, and research practices that construct knowledge about older women” (*ibid*). As such, it offers some of the most exciting theoretical innovations within feminist gerontology for a study of fairy tale crones. Three conceptualizations in particular raise interesting possibilities for crone research. Each grapples with the pervasive sense of loss that is written literally and affectively through the stories of female old age that we have so far encountered, lending both theoretical and fairy tale narratives some of their haunting emotional power. They refuse to portray loss as an (older) aged emotion, experienced only temporarily in youth³²⁰. Instead, refuting or reengaging psychoanalytical and early feminist accounts of loss as *decline* (Gullette 2004), they seek to reengage the singularities of loss at later stages of life, including the potential for transformation in non-recoverable grief and unending pain.

The first conceptualization posits the losses of old age (primarily the loss of a gendered identity) as transformed through a productive fracturing of identity, culminating in a new, tactical state of cognitive dissonance and deliberate estrangement from self. For Silver (2003:389), social, cultural and demographic shifts in postindustrial America have resulted in “the disappearance of a clear-cut gendered representation of the self among individuals in the third and fourth ages of life.” This change has gone largely unnoticed in psychoanalytical and feminist theory, which continues to differentiate between the male and female experiences of ageing (*ibid*). Freud (1917, in Silver 2003:382, emphasis added) portrays ageing as a form of castration, with old age having an earlier and far more debilitating effect on the *female* libido:

A man of thirty strikes us as [a] youthful, somewhat unformed individual, whom we expect to make powerful use of the possibilities of development opened up to him by analysis. A woman of the same age however, often frightens us by her psychical rigidity and unchangeability. Her libido has taken up final positions and seems incapable of exchanging them for others. *There is no path open to further development.*

The geography of his statement is striking. The image he conjures of a rigid ageing woman is uncannily suggestive of fairy tale crones, whose place of abode and place in the narrative is indeed the end of the path (her hut is beyond all known paths, at the heart of the wilderness), and the journey (literally, as they get eaten), for many of those who stumble upon it. Freud (*ibid*) returns to this image when describing his personal experience of old age as a “state of total disillusionment, whose sterility is comparable to a lunar landscape, an inner ice age.” His wilderness

³¹⁹ Ray (1996:676) notes that empirical approaches have prevailed in the field to date, given the “historical construction of gerontology around the conceptual frameworks of biomedicine.”

³²⁰ For example, Freud (1917) proposes losses in younger years are “succeeded by restitution,” and can be *recovered* (and recovered from) (also see Woodward 1993:82).

imagery, of a lifeless lunar or ice landscape, coupled with the trope of barrenness, resonates with prevailing medical accounts of menopause as the “fatal touch of death itself” (Kristeva 1982, in Silver 2003:383). Ironically, he brings the male ageing process into the crone’s realm of experience, enmeshing the loss of libido with death, the female gender, and a geography of wilderness.

Seminal feminist texts on ageing take a similarly negative, gendered perspective, positing female ageing as a loss of *power*, and one more factor in the oppression of Woman (*ibid*; also Krekula 2007). Even where ageing is recognized as offering certain freedoms, these are understood to be futile, coming at a time when they mean very little; or, at worse, a cause of lack in themselves (they free a woman from being ‘needed,’ and so undermine the very basis on which her gender has hitherto been defined, stripping her of the remainder of her feminine identity) (de Beauvoir 1966). Indeed, women come to know their ‘old age’ through an-Other’s horrified gaze. Internalizing this gaze, they subsequently produce an abject self-image of “the Other within us” (*ibid* 288). Again, fairy tale crones initially seem a fitting representation of this rejected, solitary being—a figure who persists, disturbingly, in late twentieth century feminist discourse (e.g. in research that persistently depicts older women as socioeconomically more vulnerable and dependent than men). Attempts have been made to reclaim this older woman as a ‘positive’ figure of resistance or resilience in romanticized narratives of ageing women as goddesses (e.g. Caputi 1993), and in postmodern accounts of the female body as “machine, plastic body, cyborg” (Silver 2003:385; also Wei Leng 1996). In the former case, the older woman is identified as a crone who defies patriarchy and the cult of youth; whilst she rebels against gender, age, and death in the latter (Powell and Hendricks 2009). Yet the figure of the ageing woman is betrayed in these very movements that attempt to reinstate her. Postmodern concepts of cyborg, plastic body, etc., arise out of “unconscious fears and a rejection of the ageing female body, with its connotations of danger and contamination that need to be kept separate and isolated” (Silver 2003:385). Further, their emphasis on indestructibility and choice deny the pain and suffering that older women may feel as their bodies and lives transform with age. In contrast, romanticizing accounts mythicize a powerful Old Woman goddess who bears precious little resemblance to women’s life experiences. Moreover, a feminist paradigm that idealizes the crone as a goddess with natural ties to the earth, or as a machine with endless powers of rejuvenation, will struggle to combat prevailing negative stereotypes that portray her, psychologically and physically, as naturally “deformed, ridiculous looking, and desexualised” (*ibid*). Likewise, feminist encounters with menopause may unconsciously reassert the link between the aged female body and death by implying: “the female body, which no longer reflects reproductive abilities nor attracts ‘the gaze’ of men, has become a reminder of death to come” (*ibid*: 386).

This old woman-death association is written into the etymology of the term crone, with its links to carrion and carnage, etc. (see 6.5). Cannibalistic old women in fairy tales quite clearly reflect and feed these fears of postmenopausal decay, and the threatening voraciousness of female old age, which preys on youth to survive (Creed 1993)³²¹. There is an increasing sense that the crone figure is a mere reflection of our inevitable communal western fears of ageing and death. Yet, for Silver (2003), the terrible old woman of the mythical imagination is as much a *scholarly theoretical* construct. For example, empirical studies of older women have shown that, contradicting prevailing theory, they “psychologically gain” in later life, experiencing increased power and control over their lives due to the “lifting of social and symbolic controls around sexuality, femininity, and family obligations” (*ibid* 387). It is *men* who stand to lose more, because of their previously higher social standing and socioeconomic power. Again, defying our common beliefs, recent research downplays the importance of women’s menopause, finding it to be “an inconsequential or positive experience overall” for many women (*ibid*). Moreover, it “may make little sense to equate menopause with ageing ... [when] contemporary women can expect to live as much as half of their lives after reproductive ageing” (Dillaway 2005:400-1). From the perspective of pre-menopausal women, contraceptives and broader life choices make it very likely that:

Contemporary women may define themselves by things other than biological reproductive capacity for a significant amount of time before they reach menopause. And women may no longer identify menopause with the end of fertility (*ibid*).

The uncoupling of the material-discursive complex of ageing-infertility-menopause, together with the “leveling of [the] power differential between older men and women,” transforms gender relations; and in postindustrial America, at least, we are witnessing the “emergence of new psychological states, namely tendencies toward the integration of feminine and masculine characteristics” with resultant “androgynous gender roles” (Silver 2003:388). In particular, men over seventy years “may begin to identify more with both masculine and feminine personality traits,” in a tendency to androgyny, which “reflects the addition of feminine, expressive traits to a firmly established identification with masculine traits” (Strough *et al.* 2007:393)³²². Interestingly, we are more likely to see the projection of masculine traits onto the female gender in crone stories, with these old women exhibiting an unusual physical strength, and a disinterest in nurturing, reproduction, beauty, and other supposed feminine concerns.

³²¹ Woodward (1991:28) draws attention to Freud’s “bizarre” antipathy for older women (such as his mother-in-law) who refuse to sacrifice themselves to their children’s needs. For Freud, power in an older woman is ‘unnatural’ (unlike power in older men, who have ‘earned’ it over their lifecourse) (*ibid*). Old women are irrelevant to society, and thus “Freud concludes that the energy and vigor of his future mother-in-law—those very qualities which set her off from the ‘absurd weakness’ of old women in general—are *unnatural* for an old woman ... Unnatural and thus threatening” (*ibid*).

³²² Strough *et al.* (2007:395) reports “the oldest-old women (80+ years)” display *lower* scores for androgyny than middle-aged and younger women.

The social projection of androgyny onto the ageing genders is largely a result of an equalized disgust where “the abject leakages as usually connected to femininity and female subordination may be related to older men and their bodies” (Sandberg 2008:125). Older people are marginalized through discourses of dirt and pollution, and are ascribed a homogenous identity as the ‘other-than-young.’ In turn, this “marginalization brings about [a] psychic response to cope with the binary split of young versus old,” involving an increased flexibility and multiplicity of the ageing self, which enables older people to adapt to not just “the contradictions of the self in old age,” but also the contradictors of the ageing experience itself: “separateness and freedom, resistance and conformity” (Silver 2003:390). Paradox and contradiction (as opposed to the rigidity depicted by Freud, or the dependence described by earlier feminists) thus become *the* “strategy of survival” in old age, through:

A process of ‘aintenance,’ that is, forms of coping that do not imply conformity, adaptation, or unity of the self, but are based on the ability to deal with contradictions, fluid situations, and double binds (*ibid* 391).

The process of ‘aintenance’ entails a “psychological splitting,” or the dissociation “between body and mind, between physical and mental spheres, between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ inner representations” amongst the old (*ibid*). Key to this is a purposeful estrangement (not to be confused with alienation), and hence freedom, from embodied suffering and pain (*ibid*).

Whilst younger generations might regard this “lack of ‘consistency,’ ‘integrity,’ and ‘unity’ of the self” as pathological, it merely points to the “emotional logic, disordered experience of time/space, and a language of essentials used [by the old] to create a world of their own” (*ibid* 392). Clearly, it is a mistake to buy into the ‘misery perspective’ of female old age, which portrays old age as one further loss in a history of female losses, when common experiences of ageing involve the *weakening* of gender as the organizing principle of women’s lives (*ibid*). Indeed, (de)gendering theory would suggest that we need to pick apart the assumed links between gender, advanced age, post-reproductive body, etc., that lie behind popular constructs of the ageing woman as “frightening, ‘crones,’ and ‘witch like,’ as imagined in children’s books and fairy tales,” to consider how gender, in fact, is *undone* by age, both in the popular imagination and in theory (*ibid* 385). I would extend Silver’s thesis, geographically, to suggest that, in reconsidering loss as productive fragmentation in old age, we pay attention to the concurrent time-space assumptions. Silver (*ibid* 392) envisions in the disordering of the ageing process, the chance of a feminist utopia, where “power relations and gender differences become minimized, androgyny becomes the norm, and the self can be actualized in contradictory ways.” Despite its large (and

suspect) ambitions, (de)gendering theory does pose an intriguing alternative to the more negative accounts of hopeless loss, alienation, and barrenness in old age.

From (de)gendering theory, then, we review the common understandings of loss in the ageing process as *misunderstandings* of the strategic fracturing of the self, in response to the decreasing importance of previous ways of organizing identity, and increasing social paradoxes faced by the aged. As a result of this reorganization, a gradual, but definite, break opens up between generations, such that we can speak of the aged as occupying a separate “world of their own” (*ibid*). For Woodward (1993:83), however, age does not precipitate entry to a new, (de)gendered, disordered, and possibly utopian state of existence; but nor does it entail the opposite, that is the continuation of self (identity), with minor adjustments to ensure equilibrium. Indeed, “we respond differently ... at various times in our lives.” Woodward is speaking specifically of our response to *death* here; and it is at the nexus of “loss, grief, and late life” that she strives to construct her feminist gerontology.

The emotion most frequently associated with old age in western culture is loss, and Woodward (1993, 1997, 1999) does not necessarily want to challenge this, given many of the figures of old age that she discusses struggled with grief and loneliness (Freud, Barthes, de Beauvoir, Bevington, etc.). She does question the assumed *unproductiveness*, impotence, and solitariness of this loss. Tackling the notion of solitariness, first, she turns to reminiscence as an affective process of sharing—through storytelling—in the later stages of life. Reminiscence is a “fragmentary and partial” process, unique to old age, which “carries within it the figure of companionship, of the social” (*ibid* 1997:2). Whilst it could be theorized as detachment or escapism, or even as a sign of “degeneration,” reminiscence is, from the perspective of those who reminisce, a “normative process” of “memory-work” (*ibid*). Fundamentally, it creates a mood of “companionableness ... marked by the hope if not the promise of trust and security” (*ibid* 21).

Reminiscing about a family vacation when she was a child of ten, Woodward (1995:81) revisits the ‘companionableness’ she and her late grandmother shared on this trip: “a palpable *sociality*, a convivial ease.” A “mood of mutuality” connects her with a woman fifty years older than herself, in a “fluent companionship that ... stretched across the continuity established by three generations” (*ibid* 82). We can clearly relate this ‘mood of mutuality’ to the structure of fairy tales, with their crone storytellers who speak, primarily, to younger female audiences, in an important transfer of wisdom through the ages (Warner 1995). This companionable tableaux of ‘older woman’-‘younger girls’ is unusual in psychoanalysis, which is more attuned to competitive female relationships of mother-daughter:

A story whose psychoanalytic plot revolves around identification and separation, intimacy and distance, and engages ... the potentially explosive emotions of envy, fear, hostility, desire, guilt, and jealousy (Woodward 1995:79)³²³.

Indeed, older women are absent in Freudian psychoanalysis; shorn of their reproductive capacity, their “female sexuality vanishes, leaving only gender behind” (*ibid* 87). This raises an intriguing problem: “Freudian psychoanalysis cannot contain the concept of gender as distinct from sexuality. Thus: the older woman cannot exist!” (*ibid*). Given her inability to fit into the Oedipus scenario, the older woman becomes, in Woodward’s haunting terms, “*posthistorical*”; she is literally “dismissed from the world ... finding herself outside of the discourse of history yet again” (*ibid*). Where she does make an appearance, it must be subsumed under the all-pervading mother-daughter plot. Even concerted feminist attempts to disrupt this psychoanalytical story of feminine struggle, and bring the older woman into the fold through the horizontally delineated notion of ‘sisterhood,’ flatten the particulars of her existence and deny her unique experience (*ibid* 89). The post-historical crone, dismissed from the social world of the family, with its Oedipal struggle, seemingly resonates with the ostracized crone of fairy tales, who is all but forgotten in fairy tale theory, and often in stories. A shadowy presence, she haunts the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies, and is a similarly unspeakable, unknowable force in crone tales, appearing only in competitive relation to (usually female) youth. Attempts to bring this crone back to the sociable ‘sisterhood’ or society largely fail, as they obscure her Otherness, and simplify this complex refrain.

However, this account of the post-historical ageing woman ignores the other face of the crone figure: that of Woodward’s (1995) reminiscing *storyteller*, who guards the communal past, and is an ‘embodiment’ of human history or, more specifically, genealogy³²⁴. We need to revise Freud’s (1910, in Woodward 1995) two-generational psychoanalytical model of the nuclear family with a three-generational, non-phallic alternative, to account for the storytelling crone. For Freud (*ibid*), the pre-Oedipal mother-daughter relationship is based on affectionate mimicry; a little girl playing with dolls imagines herself as the mother, and the doll as herself. For Woodward (1995), though, there is an alternative to this

³²³ A competitive relationship around which many contemporary fairy tales are structured (e.g. Disney’s 2011 *Tangled*; see Mendelson 1997 on the absence of female collaboration in Grimms fairy tales.)

³²⁴ Benjamin’s (1999) notion of the storyteller-chronicler (see 2.2.1) comes to mind, but this time the storyteller is the female crone of fairy tales, not a male imposition (folk tale collector).

sexually inscribed script³²⁵. In her scenario, the little girl playing with dolls is imagining her own child, a baby of the *next* generation (*ibid* 84). The girl is thus adding depth to the triangular family equation:

We have, in other words, not a *triangle* but the further elaboration of a *line*, a plumb line—one that has specific gravity and weight to it. Furthermore, it is not sexual difference that distinguishes this economy, but generational linkage, or generational continuity (*ibid*).

The traditional hostilities, specifically matricide, that pervade the Freudian account are rejected here in favour of mutuality. However, this model has again “reproduced the paradigm of the mother and the infant daughter,” with too great a focus on the child figure (*ibid* 86). Instead of positioning the child’s child as the third term in the linear equation, Woodward (*ibid*, emphasis added) prefers to place the figure of the older woman (grandmother) in this role, who appears “as a figure of knowledge who *represents the difference that history, or time, makes, a difference that she in fact literally embodies.*” We can easily picture Gammer Gurton or Old Mother Goose in this role (Warner 1995).

As the embodiment of history or time, the older woman returns us to the emotive moment of reminiscence: a Janus-like activity, which sets a “hallucinatory” mood, which can easily be projected “into the future” (Woodward 1997:13). This future, furthermore, has a strong *spatial* quality³²⁶: of intimacy and of being ‘with-in,’ which is intensely private³²⁷. Woodward (*ibid*) observes that reminiscing draws us into an “enclosed” space, “like a garden, but infinite, like the universe.” This notion of an enclosing garden, or an intimate ‘pastoral’ scene of some other kind is repeated throughout her research, for example, when she notes de Beauvoir’s reminiscing on “her grandmother’s garden in a village in Lorraine, and the little plums and greengages they ate, warm from the tree” (*ibid* 11). There is something mythical about this sunny garden space with fruit trees; and it strikes me how such reminiscence suggests a return to “a timeless zone where neither the past nor the future exist” (*ibid* 8-9); a time-space that bears great similarity to that of fairy tales, conjured by crone storytellers. The reminisced ‘garden of youth’ is a primordial, prelapsarian landscape, which ultimately serves as an “emotional protection ... a kind of *holding* environment” (*ibid* 5, emphasis added).

³²⁵ Woodward (1995:84) notes how, even in the situation described here, “the conventional connotations of sexual difference cling ... like a phallic slip, reinscribing themselves retrospectively in the pre-Oedipal period ... Indeed, Freudian psychoanalysis can admit no other economy than a sexual economy.”

³²⁶ Bollas (1987, in Woodward 1997) interestingly describes mood, such as a reminiscing mood, as a “spatial territory.”

³²⁷ ‘Mood,’ an affective state, itself sets the scene for intimacy, for: “a person who is inside a mood ... is to us ‘not present in some private and fundamental way’” (Woodward 1997:5).

Loss in old age is crystallizing as a static holding place, and the *intensification* (to the point of an all-consuming paralysis) of the present—and not at all a gradual fading away into the richer tapestry of the past. Loss reverberates with “solace”: an affect more tender than despairing, reviving than impoverishing (*ibid*). However, Woodward (1993) also notes a more anguished, violent, loss, tied up in the death of a loved one, which is equally incompatible with the popular caricature of old age loss as decline. This time, she turns to Freud’s (1917) theory of mourning and melancholia, and his later (1939) interest in anxiety and *separation* (as opposed to castration), together with Barthes’s (1980) “expression of grief in writing,” to reengage ageing in relation to *death* (Woodward 1993:83-84). Again, it is primarily in the “affective dimension” of their experiences of ageing, leaking through words (Freud), or written with intent (Barthes’s “affective intentionality”) that Woodward finds her greatest inspiration (*ibid* 83). That is, she listens closely to the *tone* of Freud’s words, “his exhausted resignation, his deadening pain” (*ibid* 87), to find another meaning of loss, which is beyond representation, but nonetheless strongly *felt*: “representation of loss is, as it were, a lie; the experience of loss itself is of another order altogether, inexplicable in its pain” (*ibid* 88).

The losses that accompany ageing cannot adequately be expressed in theoretical language, and especially Freud’s psychoanalytical language, which strives for rational mastery over the emotions, with an “emphasis ... on *detaching ourselves* from others, on severing the bonds of love” (Woodward 1993:88, emphasis added). Rather, loss in old age is an intersubjective, *attaching* emotion; an overflowing of pain and grief, which calls out in the very voice of love that the earlier Freud so casually rejected. For the earlier Freud (1917, in Woodward 1993:85), mourning:

Is psychic work which has a precise purpose and goal - to ‘free’ ourselves from the emotional bonds which have tied us to the person we loved so that we may ‘invest’ that energy elsewhere, to ‘detach’ ourselves so that we may be ‘uninhibited.’

A slow process, involving the “testing” of memory against “reality”³²⁸, mourning is finally complete when the attachment to the loved one has been severed, and loss is “succeeded by restitution” (*ibid* 82). The libido is released from its attachment to the object or person now departed, and can be fixed elsewhere. Mourning is primarily figurative, “involving less a lament for the passing of a unique other, and more a process geared

³²⁸ Woodward (1993:85) notes of this testing process: “Freud means primarily that we compare our memories with what exists in actuality, now. He portrays the process of mourning as a passionate or hyperremembering of all the memories bound up with the person we have lost. Mourning is represented as a dizzying phantasmagoria of memory. Every memory must be tested. But not only the past is at stake. Also involved is what one had imagined the future might bring. And each of those phantasies of the future must be remembered as well.”

toward restoring a certain economy of the subject” (Clewell 2004:47)³²⁹. Loss followed by restitution (reattachment to a new object of loyalty) becomes a narcissistic “force for change” (Woodward 1993:82): “we must sever one attachment to make another possible” (Clewell 2004:47). Yet this process requires strength of libido, which is supposedly depleted in old age. Thus loss in old age “yields only impoverishment, not renewal ... mourning is blocked; melancholia (depression) results” (Woodward 1993:82). Unsuccessful mourning, or melancholia, is a pathological state of *denial*. The melancholic is unable to “cleave” from the object of his loss and, “in a self-destructive loyalty to the lost object, internalizes it into his ego” (Ferber 2006:66). The object of loss becomes consumed, *cannibalistically*, by the subject, and becomes an inseparable part of them. That is, the subject “can no longer clearly define the borders between his own subjectivity and the existence of the lost object within it” (*ibid*). Further, the hatred and hostility inscribed in the original loss, and incorporated into the psyche of the subject, is violently turned against the *self*, to the detriment of the ego (*ibid*; see Clewell 2004:59-60 for more on hostility in the splitting of ego)³³⁰.

Beyond the solace of reminiscence, loss provokes two aggressive, yet clearly oppositional responses in the grieving subject, one normal, and the other pathological; and the pathological is associated specifically with the losses of old age. It is interesting to consider the cannibalistic qualities of crone figures from this Freudian angle of mourning. Perhaps the crone is not a marginalized figure, but an introspective one, unable to let go of her losses and full of bitterness as a result. Card’s (1999) fairy tale, *Enchanted*, hints at this possibility. He presents Baba Yaga as a one-time innocent young princess, Olga. Abused, raped, and mistreated by her husband, King Brat, she identifies strongly with her grievances, until this willful attachment shapes her into a hateful crone for whom “the flame of malice burned as bright as ever” (*ibid* 410). For Pilinovsky (2004), “it is [her] metamorphosis from innocent victim to self-protector” that the Yaga mourns most keenly; and it would be easy for us to see in this the pathology of melancholia. However, interpreting crone tales through a Freudian geography of melancholia seems counterintuitive, for it denies the *a*-psychic characteristic of these mythic and impenetrable refrains. As mythic figures, crones lack psychological depth and personal histories. To attribute such to them would be to transform them, and strip them of their enigmatic power³³¹. In crone tales we are necessarily given little insight into the motivations of these figures, and their range of emotions is limited to brief, inexplicable, outbursts of rage, eager cunning,

³²⁹ It is the *figure* (e.g. of the Mother) who is lost, and not the specific person of whom this word speaks; and so restitution (the discovery of and attachment to a new Mother figure) is possible.

³³⁰ More could be said here about the matricidal aspect of mourning, with its initial violence against the mother (see Kristeva 1992; also Clewell 2004). This will have to be the subject of another thesis!

³³¹ E.g., Card’s (1999) secularization and psychologicalization of Baba Yaga’s power, which returns it to a social (her Russian nobility) and historical context, severs the deep and unfathomable connection between nature and the Baba Yaga, destroys her enchantment, and renders her as a “bleak and rather one-dimensional” being (Pilinovsky 2004).

cantankerousness, and hostility. Nevertheless, a geography of loss does permeate these fairy tales, and Woodward's (1993) re-theorizing of mourning helps us to better understand this.

For Woodward (*ibid* 85), Freud offers us a “false opposition [that] ... has paralyzed discussions of mourning ever since.” Indeed, as Freud himself aged, the enormity of the losses he experienced provoked him to consider “a new category” of loss, beyond mourning and melancholia: “that of pain ... only pain” (*ibid* 89). This pain was something Other: a state of agony that cannot be subsumed under a theory of anxiety or mourning. It is just this state of pain that Barthes' (1977) experienced upon the death of his mother. For Barthes (*ibid*) pain is not an emotion: it is an atemporal *state*, which cannot be overcome through mourning: “time eliminates the emotion of loss (I do not weep), that is all. For the rest everything has remained motionless.” This pain is caused by the loss of a loved one who cannot be “assimilate[d] ... to an abstraction, a generality, or even to the family structure”—the loss is not figurative (Woodward 1993:90). Rather, “Barthes insists on the particularity, the concreteness of his loss” (*ibid*). Furthermore, he consciously refuses to mourn his pain or transform it into something new, choosing, instead, to “reinforce his pain” through a process of affective intentionality, carefully nurtured through a photograph (*ibid*). This self-willed refusal to mourn, which is “neither denial nor negation,” cannot be equated with the depression of melancholia, which subconsciously strives to deny (consume) the dead (*ibid*). Barthes openly wishes to commemorate his mother; and this places his loss in a different order, “halfway between anxiety and attachment to others ... a middle position *in between* mourning and melancholia” (*ibid* 92). This in-between place of *commemoration* characterizes the experience of loss in advanced old age, where the energy (or libido) released in mourning is no longer required for further attachments in the future, such that we need not “detach ourselves from our losses. Instead we may live with them. And then die with them” (*ibid* 94)³³².

Returning to fairy tales, this account of pain as a commemorative state allows us to productively move beyond an (attempted) *psychoanalysis*, to experience *affective* loss in the framing, ‘worlding,’ and mood of crone stories. Immediately, we can make a link to the reminiscing crone storytellers (above), who bring the neglected tragedies of ‘everyday’ folk to our attention (Warner 1995). Furthermore, within the story world itself, many of the protagonists approach the crone figure through their own painful histories, crossing hostile and barren landscapes that seem to absorb and magnify their grief and loneliness. We have a pitiable Vasilissa, for example, driven from her father's house by her merciless stepmother and sisters, aching for her dead mother, and carrying her substitute as a tiny, animated doll, which she names her ‘mother's blessing.’

³³² Woodward (1993:94) clarifies this point by noting that parents who have lost a child may also experience this level of grief. What is important is that this grief cannot be resolved through mourning, and nor does it fit the model of melancholia; it is a loss born out of love for the other *as* Other.

In Windling's (2005) retelling of the Mexican crone story, *La Huesera*, the loss of the protagonist is more poignant still; for it is not just the loss of family and innocence, but the loss of *life*, that this story recounts. *La Huesera*'s desert plain is as threatening as Baba Yaga's taiga forest, and similarly amplifies the young wife's pain:

The young wife hid in the meager shade of rocks by day when the sun was fierce. By night she walked, crying, for she could not find her way home. The nights were cold. Wolves prowled the hills and carrion birds followed after her. She was hungry, thirsty, weary, and she walked till she could go no further. Lying down by a wide, dry wash, she wrapped herself in her long white skirt. She said, "Let *La Huesera* (the Bone Woman) take me, for I am spent." She died. Wild animals ate her flesh. Her spirit watched over the white, white bones and knew neither sorrow nor fear (Windling 2005).

The wilderness in both tales, like the narrative itself, is a sparse, pitiless expanse that strips the protagonists of physical and psychical strength (i.e. of 'life'). The young women who eventually reach the crone are a trembling bundle of nerves (*Vasilissa*), or a nameless pile of bones (protagonist of *La Huesera*). It is notable that both are also *lost* in these stories. It is impossible to reach the crone unless you 'stray off the path,' as fairy tale protagonists from Red Riding Hood to Timothy Hunter discover to their peril³³³. When we consider the tragic etymological resonances of 'lost' and 'loss' (i.e. "brought to destruction," or "unrecoverable," and "wasted" life, ODE 2010), we can understand a little more the bitterness written into these unforgiving landscapes.

In *La Huesera* it is the bone woman's place to mourn the nameless young wife. This is not a Freudian work of grief, severance, and restitution; rather, as with crone storytellers, the tragedy of this woman's life is contemplated ceremoniously, and at a distance:

The old woman took the bones up to her cave high in the mountaintops, then laid them out beside her fire. She sat and smoked. She smoked and thought. She smoked and she thought for a long, long time (Windling 2005).

The crone sits in the presence of the woman's loss, and 'considers' (or reminisces); but this does not precipitate her decline, or the stagnation of her libido as in melancholia. Rather, the crone's loss is "absorbing ... sustaining ... transforming - of thought, of style, of life itself" (Woodward

³³³ Timothy Hunter is the protagonist of Gaiman's (1991) graphic novel *The Land of Summer's Twilight*, who stumbles across Baba Yaga's hut when straying of the designated path. One rare exception to this rule is the Grimms' *Frau Trude*, with which I opened the chapter.

1993:94)³³⁴. Whilst the mood of many crone stories is at first somber, the presence of the crone herself reenergizes the tales. The crone is not defeated by the pain of loss, but rhythmically reshapes death to make new life³³⁵:

She smoked and she thought for a long, long time, and then she began to sing. "Flesh to bone! Flesh to bone! Flesh to bone!" the Bone Woman sang, and before too long the bones knit back together, covered in flesh. Where the girl had once been red and rough, now she was soft and smooth and plump. Her skin was as gold as daylight and her hair as black as night. La Huesera sang and sang. She blew a puff of tobacco smoke. The young woman's eyes flew opened and she sat up and looked around her.

The cave was empty. The ashes were cold. The old Bone Woman had disappeared. All that was left were tobacco seeds and she put them in her pocket (Windling 2005).

As Woodward (1993:97) notes of Freud's and Barthes' experiences, the losses of old age precipitate a new style: the expression of grief on a page, which transmutes a 'clinical' theory (Freud), or biography (Barthes) into something poignantly insightful: "a love story, a death story, a writing story." Indeed, this melodic phrase is pertinent for our understanding of crone stores, which, as we have seen, are similarly affective tales of love, death, and storytelling.

6.7.3 Radical gerontology: (r)age

The creativity that accompanies later life losses has been the subject of wider feminist interest, with Wyatt-Brown and Rossen (1993), amongst many others, tying this creativity to the female gender³³⁶. At this crossroads of age-loss-creativity, we see not just a phoenix-like rebirth of *writing*, as in the case of Freud and Barthes above, but the power to make radical *political* changes, with the "[transformation of] mourning into militancy" (Woodward 1993:96). The radicalizing potential inherent in loss, when in tandem with *rage* (and the two often coexist), "is the catalyst for politicization which takes the form of mobilizing as a group and also ... writing" (*ibid* 96-7). That is, grief from non-recoverable loss may become "anger in bereavement," which can be transformational and politically binding (Favret-Saada 1990:196). Understanding this allows us to reclaim loss in old age from those bipolar discourses that have beset the discussion. The presence of anger contradicts both the negative pole

³³⁴ Woodward (1993:94) draws this conclusion from the Barthes's and Freud's experiences of old age, noting their inexhaustible pain is an exceptionally *productive* state, fueling their creativity to a greater level than experienced in youth.

³³⁵ Although we could understand this tale as cathartic, I would argue that there is neither the purging nor the *restoration* we expect in catharsis. The woman brought to life by the crone's singing is a new being. Life is brought out of death, but not the *same* life (we cannot restore the original loss, even as we accept, with the Bone Mother, that life goes on).

³³⁶ See Wyatt-Brown and Rossen's (1993) *Ageing and Gender in Literature* for more detail on the creativity entailed in later life, and at the moment of death.

of ‘decline’ (setting the right to/existence of anger against the assumption of detached wisdom), and the positive pole of later life happiness and health (calling the assimilationist politics of this account into doubt, through a politics of shame) (see Woodward 2003; Sandberg 2008).

Looking first to the question of decline, Hall (1922, in Woodward 2003:58) notes how elderly people are denied the right to anger in the popular psychological thesis of “lessening of emotional intensity” in old age. Together with decreased libido, the inhibition of emotions is regarded as a ‘normal’ step on the road to a ‘healthy,’ ‘accepting’ old age (Gullette 2004). Countering this prevalent belief, Hall (1922, in Woodward 2003:58) remarks:

They say our emotional life is damped. True, we are more immune from certain great passions and our affectivity is very differently distributed. But what lessons of repression we have had to learn!

In a further belittlement, when rage *is* expressed it is psychologically attributed to cantankerousness (as we saw in the etymology of ‘crone’). Hall (*ibid* 58) combats this assumption of “an unbecoming ‘irritability’ common to old age” by coupling rage with another emotional quality commonly associated with the old: the wisdom of experience. With this adjustment, wisdom tempers (r)age, giving it direction, meaning, purpose, and a certain leadership status not easily available to the young (*ibid*). Friedman (1993) similarly attributes a ‘practical’ wisdom to old age, comprised of good sense and cooperation. However, the “cultural reflex of associating wisdom and age” can backfire, as it inhibits “the crucial work that needs to be done to reclaim these years as meaningful” (*ibid* 63). With its connotations of detachment and dignity, wisdom conveys a sense of the ‘heights,’ and of looking down with wry neutrality at the foibles of life: “it implies a transcendence of the social world, a certain timelessness, a knowledge that is not characterized by one’s placement in the world” (*ibid*). Wisdom thus renders anger impotent, and detaches the old from the ‘everyday’ space-time of youthful and mid-aged life. The crone remains a figure of excommunication, but this time because of her insight. Woodward (*ibid*), uneasy with such distancing, proclaims: “it is time to declare a moratorium on wisdom.” Anger, not wisdom, is the catalyst that transforms loss to political power, and grants the marginalized group of the elderly a visibility and platform from which to organize. Anger serves as a form of judgment, and as the motivation to work (“the impetus for a kind of work”); further, it becomes a form of work in itself (of a self-conscious confrontation, guardedness, and passionate attachment to life) (*ibid*). Certainly, anger triggers the final metamorphosis of Ugrêsic’s (2010) *Baba Yaga Laid an Egg*, where the mild mannered Dr. Aba Bagay alarmingly “sprouts feathers and finds her mouth stretching into a beak, and takes off on another kind of magical flight” (Warner 2009). Aba Bagay takes off with other witchy old women in a raging “proletarian Hags International, the crazy army of score-settling Baba Yagas” (Bachner 2010); and, just like the original folklore figure, these old hags sleep with their swords (Ugrêsic 2010).

Whilst anger reconciles loss with libido, when caught up in 'identity discourses' around rights and visibility it runs the risk of returning old age to youthful norms, and stripping it of its truly radical, transformational potential (Sandberg 2008). This transformational potential includes its restructuring of, first, societal and family relationships beyond 'reproductivity,' and second, our understandings of grief, loneliness and finitude. Instead of utilizing (r)age as a platform to protest social marginality, there might be greater radical potential in altogether eschewing the western, "heteronormative, procreational assumptions regarding what constitutes mature adulthood" (Vanderbeck 2007:213). Speaking specifically of intergenerational relations, Vanderbeck (*ibid*) suggests that these are shaped differently in queer communities, given "queer temporalities and spatialities ... are 'lacking the pacing and schedules that inhere to family life and reproduction.'" Concepts of continuation, attachment, disengagement, and relationality in old age originate from the essential ambivalence of younger generations: "their fear of death and their desire for intergenerational continuity" (Hazan 1994:92). Queer experiences, however, being more distanced from reproductive concerns, do not fit these models (Vanderbeck 2007). Indeed, the experience of older queers necessitates a new conceptualization of old age (and crones) that supersedes the dualism of mentorship-dependence (with detachment as the final stage of dependence) thus far encountered:

Rather than 'mentors' along the road towards particular normative outcomes or 'honorary grandparents,' older queers ... have important lessons to teach about survival and resistance (*ibid* 214).

Sandberg (2008) invites us to look beyond the heteronormative material-discursive frameworks of family, to reconsider female old age from a queer perspective. Crones are not anxious, barren, and post-reproductive women. Nor are their young female companions 'second-bests' to a male heir, or the subject of their envy. Rather, these young women are cherished daughters, or a worthy sexual partner and life companion. Maitland's (2008) *Far North* carries different connotations from this queer perspective. Jealousy remains the motive for murder, but this time the old woman's hatred is sparked by the betrayal of her (erotic) love, lifestyle, and closeness by the younger woman, and not out of a thwarted desire for the man of the tale. He does not steal her youth (by ageing her), but steals her *love*; and her sexual act with him is no act of lust, but an act of scorn and mockery, and a theft in turn (of his ability to choose). Donoghue's (1997) *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* reconfigures heterosexual relationships to "[question] the moral binary so frequent in traditional folktales and fairy tales, with old and 'evil' women becoming objects of love for younger women" (Seifert 2008:402). Similarly, Ugrêsic (2010) conjures up a sisterhood of crones who are entirely independent of and, in the case Kukla, deadly to men.

Beginning with Broumas's (1977) post-Stonewall interventions, queer storytellers have made full use of the fairy tale genre's "self-conscious exaggeration and theatricality," which "lends itself readily to the camp aesthetic that is exploited in many gay and lesbian circles" (Seifert 2008:401). Fairy tales are ripe for the "practice of ... 'queerness'" (*ibid*)³³⁷. Indeed, theory has now followed practice, and queer readings of well-known stories are becoming increasingly common. Thus, the "homoerotic elements" of Wilde's and Anderson's tales, common cross-dressing motifs, and the strong homo-social relationships in many tales have been problematized (Bech 1998; Duffy 2001; Heede 2008; McGillis 2003; Orme 2010; Pugh 2008)³³⁸. Such queer readings open out a potent space of transformation, wherein the characteristic heterosexual pattern of the fairy tale is twisted in infinitely new ways (Bacchilega 2008). Despite these interjections, queer readings remain a subtext in fairy tale studies, and little has been said about the radical potential of *crones* as queered figures, or the more general relationships between fairy tales, queerness, and the (older) aged. A key exception to this is Coover's (1969:16) disturbingly sordid image of bestiality, which sees Red Riding Hood's ageing granny in sexual relationship with a beast:

For ain't I the old Beauty who married the Beast ... only my Beast never became a prince ... don't speak to me of the revelations of rebirthers and genitomancers! Sing me no lumpen ballads of deodorized earths cleansed of the stink of enigma and revulsion! For I have mated with the monster my love and listened to him lap clean his lolly after.

Coover's retelling goes beyond titillation and shock, to strike at the heart of the shame and desire that the Other holds for us. It taps into the queer tradition of "'embracing shame' and the abject" as a viable political tactic of anti-assimilation (Sandberg 2008:122). Delving right into the heart of subversion "to deploy [the] feelings of shame, negativity and disgust ... linked to old age," such queering specifically challenges the assimilation implications³³⁹ of the 'positive pole' in the bipolar construction of age, which is "built on an oxymoronic notion, where ageing well is equated with resisting ageing" (*ibid* 120, 122). Queer theory counters this by embracing negativity and "failure" in old age, including the failures of the body to perform 'normally,' and 'cleanly,' whereby "ailments and disabilities as well as inability to control one's bowels and urine leakages are realities for many people in old age" (*ibid* 125). Hence Coover's (1969:16) aged Beauty welcomes the "revulsion" of her act, and accepts her beast's "doggy stink" and his tendency to "drop a public turd or two on sidewalks and seashores in populous parks and private

³³⁷ Seifert (2008:401) defines 'queerness' as "the deliberate alteration and making 'strange' of the seemingly 'natural' constructs of patriarchal and heterosexual culture so as to expose their arbitrariness."

³³⁸ Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it does provide a good sample of the range of work to date.

³³⁹ Elaborating on neoliberal assimilationist politics, Sandberg (2008:124) notes "there is seemingly a resemblance between the assimilationist discourses on homosexuality and on old age, where being old does not have to be a negative thing as long as you live life like you used to live it. (The assimilationist version in relation to homosexuality would be we tolerate that you are gay as long as you live a respectable coupled life...)"

parlors.” The aged body, with its “closeness to death and decay,” is “the furthest position of the abject” (Sandberg 2008:122). However, the aged *crone* is more abject still; for Coover’s (1969) queered fairy tale refutes normative privileging of human over animal, by highlighting the obscenely close relationship between the uncivilized ageing body and the uncivilized nonhuman. Cavorting with a beast, Red Riding Hood’s grandmother becomes beastly herself, as the Grimms’ (2002:116) well knew:

‘Oh! Grandmother,’ she said, ‘what big ears you have!’
‘The better to hear you with, my child,’ was the reply.
‘But, grandmother, what big eyes you have!’ she said.
‘The better to see you with, my dear!’
‘But, grandmother, what large hands you have!’
‘The better to hug you with.’
‘Oh! but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!’
‘The better you eat you with!’

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Red-Cap.

It is this very *dehumanization* of the ageing, female body³⁴⁰, and its descent into beastly³⁴¹ animality, which ensures the ultimate abjection of the crone figure.

³⁴⁰ Abjection takes place on the bodily level, as a strong reactionary (physical) disgust. However, there is also a political angle to the abjection of the crone-as-beast, when we consider the importance of female (maternal) sexuality to nationalism: a political system based on the ideology of kinship (Banti 2008). This has two aspects: first, kinship as “a community of descent,” and second, as a genealogical language (Fatherland, Motherland, Fraternity, etc.) (*ibid* 55). The community of descent must be guarded from “miscegenation” by the male figures of the nation; however, it falls to the female figures, and specifically mothers, to preserve the purity of the bloodline through “a *respectable* sexual behaviour, characterized by a strict monogamous chastity” (*ibid* 56, emphasis added). Coover’s (1969) crone is anything but respectable in this regard, and we could see her actions as a sully of her lineage, and of the human community more generally.

³⁴¹ ‘Beast’ is the most appropriate name for this wild, sordid, and threatening crone aspect, which is comprised of exaggerated, menacing features (big teeth, perfect sense of smell, claw-like hands, etc.), and ravenous behaviour. ‘Beast’ need not necessarily refer to the animal; Maitland’s (2009) bryophyte Moss Witch, and Baba Yaga’s iron teeth, evoke similar emotions (see 7.4).

6.8 The crone as a geographical refrain

“You are always in danger in the forest, where no people are” (Carter 1979:130).

Thus far, I have summarized key interdisciplinary crone research, paying particular attention to the influence of 1960s-70s American feminist revisions. I have subsequently expanded our understanding of the fictional crone figure by refocusing on the spatiotemporal question of age, positing the crone as a post-reproductive and post-historical women, with all the desires and fears that such temporality entails. The crone has clear geographical relevance. Fairy tale scholarship highlights the importance of wilderness geographies to crone tales³⁴²; feminist revisionists appropriate the crone’s rural and ‘natural’ resonances to enhance the political symbol of the witch; psychoanalysis reads the crone’s forested landscapes as a symbol of repression, or a threshold space for important life transitions; and environmentalist activist-scholars draw on older apocalyptic myths of barren ‘cronescapes’ to demand care and respect in our human-environmental relationships.

Despite this wide-ranging interest, crone geographies have rarely been theoretically interrogated or contextualized. This has led, first, to somewhat simplistic, binary understandings of crone landscapes as either wilderness utopias or hellish wastelands (and in both cases, *empty* of human life); and, second, to conflated witch and crone geographies, which overemphasize the relation between the female gender and ‘nature,’ and neglect the affective geographies of ageing and storytelling which are so vital to this figure³⁴³. A gerontological focus brings a more nuanced crone geography into play, drawing attention to: the (non)relational nature of the crone; her attachment to locale; the institutions and architectures that contribute to the crone’s marginalization; the presumed *asociality* of old age, with its ontological separation from society; the fracturing of identity in ageing; the psychological desolation and anger of old age. A lonely or angry old woman, the crone of gerontology is an outcast or

³⁴² E.g. Staine’s (2010) *The Old Woman in the Woods*, and Warner’s (1995) study of cave-dwelling Sibyls, watery Sirens, etc.

³⁴³ Many ‘witch’ theories have been discredited for the way they converge female experiences under a broadly western, white, middle class, and reproductive experience; and, moreover, for the way they essentialize the female as ‘natural,’ and ‘nature’ as female—and a specifically *maternal* female at that (Mortimer-Sandilands 2008). Notably absent is a critique of these theories for their *geographic* blindness. Whilst the witch occupies a central position in the community, and seeks to reign from the domestic sphere (see Purkiss 1996), the crone is a geographically separated figure, far removed from the domestic order, and in closer proximity to wilder landscapes (excepting the nurse figures, who themselves are partially wild and fully uncontrollable). Interestingly, the crone complicates the more maternalistic discourses in which she is sometimes located (such as in 1970s -1990s feminist eco-geographies) through her post-reproductive status, and offers critical purchase for “a feminist politics that includes nature” without being “a backhanded way of naturalizing gender” (Mortimer-Sandilands 2008:307).

outlaw figure, who has been banished from society by the moral dictates of patriarchy and youth³⁴⁴, or who has taken to the woods in willful rebellion³⁴⁵. Yet feminist gerontology reminds us there is creative and transformational potential in the crone's landscapes, which thin the borders between living and dead, and form a holding space of suspended time, both intimate and painful, from which 'society,' as the product of reminiscing, can arise.

Throughout this crone genealogy we are continually haunted by one key spatiotemporal axis: *menopause*. The perimeter of the ageing crone's realm is deeply scored, often implicitly, by this taboo passage from female (re)productivity to non-(re)productivity. Beyond this boundary lies a petrified and barren wasteland, where 'normal' (re)productive time, and, consequently, relationality, progression, and directionality³⁴⁶ cease to have meaning. The place of menopause is furthermore presumed to be empty of people, other beings, and ultimately *community*—and the rules that bind (and civilize) community. It appears as a dull, grey, featureless landscape, in which one is both lost, and at a loss. Many of the theoretical and fictional narratives of ageing assume Freud's image of the post-menopausal woman whose path has 'run out.' The path, the key spatial marker of human jurisdiction, ends right here, at the borders of the crone's realm. This post-menopausal crone is not just post-history, then, but *post-geography*³⁴⁷; and this is where Queer Theory lends perhaps the greatest corrective insight, its purview lying with exactly this non-(re)productively oriented world. Indeed, a closer examination of crone stories from beyond Freud's reproductive framework demonstrates what Queer Theory has already made clear: that the seemingly isolated and barren wastelands of the crone are teeming with life; albeit life that is abject, shameful, disorderly, unsanctioned, 'wild,' and independent of the key tenets of civilization. The crone's geography becomes a matter of perspective, and of physical, social and psychological distance. As Morton (2007:113) observes: "if you came too close [to a wilderness] ... by actually living in one, then it would no longer be a wilderness."

³⁴⁴ Feminist gerontologists such as Woodward (2007) might see more creative and transformational potential in this enforced isolation. Indeed, the crone is not truly isolated, for she is surrounded by ghosts and animal beings.

³⁴⁵ Second wave British feminist and fairy tale writer Roberts (in Lungu-Cirstea 2011) remarks: "if you were a feminist, maybe that meant that you had to leave home in some very deep way and be a traveler ... someone who was out in the wood." The links between female rage and the space of the woods, together with a rejection of the space of the home, are very clear in her novel *Daughters of the House*, in which she "explores the opposition between home and wood/world through the juxtaposition of two spaces that project divergent ideas of sacredness: the village church and the altar in the forest" (*ibid*).

³⁴⁶ I am referring here to the three dimensionality of a landscape, which gains its shape through the paths that are carved through it, physically, or symbolically, by wanderers, fools, tricksters, etc. The crone's landscape, being unknown and *unnavigable*, lacks these directional territorial markers. Even Hansel, with his organized trail of pebbles, is eventually stumped. Further, the crone's landscape is never static; her hut famously moves, so that it can never be found twice. As such, one can only ever be lost in her realm.

³⁴⁷ Where geography is understood relationally, or as having spatial dimensionality and direction, i.e. as 'territory.' In contrast, the place of female old age evoked by Freud is a deadened, static, and featureless non-place/non-time.

Two simultaneous, and covertly linked, geographies are crystallizing around the repetitive figure of the crone. The *storytelling* crone, first, is a female reminiscing 'keeper' of women's histories. However, she can be harnessed both for the nation-building and fairy-tale genre-building projects; projects which have coincided, historically and geographically, around the mythic communal hearth. This 'tamed' fairy tale crone opens out a very specific geography of nationalism, which has potentially disastrous consequences (see 2.1). However, this nationalist geography is never complete: it necessarily opens itself up to the strangeness beyond the communal hearth, drawing its energy from, but also ceding some of its control in, the woods, waters, and other wild places, from whence these pedagogical *Volk* nurses arrived. Nation disintegrates into nature as, with strong rural or wilder (especially wild fowl) resonances, these crones evidence the always-incomplete domestication entailed in the logic of nationalism (Schama 1995:35-74). With their unusual freedom of movement, and knowledge of strange and unholy matters (such as death), storytelling crones are only partially defined by their central(izing) position at the hearth. The very factors which entrain them in the nationalist and fairy tale cause ironically lends them to the role of scapegoat for society's unconscious fears about finitude, and about human vulnerability outside of human community.

A sense of danger consequentially inheres in the spaces, and spacing, of crone narratives, which brings us to the second geographical aspect of crone figures: they act as a 'wilding' refrain, which entangles the human *polis* with the nonhuman 'environment.' Crones who dwell in the forests, deserts, and deep waters of fairy tales, unsettle our social, political, ontological, and moral orders, and strip us of all trappings of human civilization. Socially, pedagogical crone storytellers bridge the rural uneducated fringes, and urban bourgeois centers; meanwhile, their feral counterparts ravenously consume any human prey foolish enough to enter their realms, and are antithetical to human society. Politically, crone tales subvert the Romantic project of human enlightenment and reason, with its doctrine of democracy, practice of nation building, and shaping of a particular civilized human being. They undermine the anthropocentric notion of fraternity that underpins the *polis*, the leitmotif of western civilization (Bingham 2006), by dwelling beyond its communal borders, in hostile landscapes where might (or a devious animal cunning) makes right, and wisdom can be measured pragmatically by "what works" (Estés 2010). Here, they recall us to our ultimate fate as abject aged beings, where the 'civilized' human is subsumed in the ravenous and beastly nonhuman, as the bird-crone storytellers, and granny-wolf hybrids famously demonstrate. With this entanglement they sabotage the myth of progressive civilization, which isolates the human being and its cultural products

from ‘undomesticated nature’—the residual category occupying the opposite pole of the anthropomorphic duality (Harrison 1992)³⁴⁸. Defined *against* the human, undomesticated nature is imagined as an ahistorical (atemporal), holistic, and menacing wilderness (Birch 1998). Consequently, the crone, with her great big eyes, big ears, big teeth, etc., inspires great uneasiness in us as she reminds us of the need to vigilantly maintain borders against the encroaching forested domains of the ‘outside’; for “forests mark the provincial edge of Western civilization, in the literal as well as imaginative domains” (Harrison 1992:247)³⁴⁹.

Crone landscapes, then, are frightening places where the discrete categories of the human and nonhuman begin to crumble, and humans can no longer claim to be culturally, ontologically, and morally privileged beings, ‘outside’ of nature. Complicating this entangled geography, crone figures bring us closer to the supernatural and *unnatural* worlds of ghosts, demons, bizarre animated materials (flying pestles and mortars, talking gates made of human bones, flaming skulls that provide light, etc.), and spirits that refuse to rest quietly (to *die*)³⁵⁰. In Zheleznova’s (1966) *Vasilissa the Beautiful*, for example, we witness an unlikely alliance (based on gift-giving³⁵¹) between human, animal, plant, and the supernatural undead, with Baba Yaga’s cat, dog, tree, and skeleton-gate rebuking the crone for her lack of care, and aiding Vasilissa’s escape:

Baba-Yaga ... seeing that Vasilissa was gone, rushed out into the passage. "Did you scratch Vasilissa as she ran past, Grumbler-Rumbler?" she demanded. And the cat replied: "No, I let her pass, for she gave me a pie. I served you for ten years, Baba-Yaga, but you never gave me so much as a crust of bread." Baba-Yaga rushed out into the yard. "Did you bite Vasilissa, my faithful dog?" she demanded. Said the dog in reply: "No, I let her pass, for she gave me some bread. I served you for ever so many years, but you never gave me so much as a bone." "Birch-tree, birch-tree!" Baba-Yaga roared. "Did you put out Vasilissa's eyes for her?" Said the birch-tree in reply: "No, I let her pass, for she bound my branches with a ribbon. I have been growing here for ten years, and you never even tied them with a string." Baba-Yaga ran to the gate. "Gate, gate!" she cried. "Did you shut before her that Vasilissa might not pass?" Said the gate in reply: "No, I let her pass, for she greased my hinges. I served you for ever so long, but you never

³⁴⁸ This is clearest when we understand the crone figure to be a perversion of the ‘Mother’ archetype, which is so vital to the myth of civilization. The Mother is a nexus figure, who brings together the powerful symbols of the reproductive female, ‘nature,’ and the ‘home-land.’ As a female figure in close proximity with the ‘natural’ world (the *genius loci* of the various wild landscapes of fairy tales), the crone taps into this Mother Earth/Mother-land imagery. However, her post-reproductive nature, bitter isolation, and uncanny and threatening ‘home’ and landscape, not to mention her perverted sexual acts, subvert the ideology of civilization, and suggest the tantalizing possibility of another type of dwelling (see chapter 7).

³⁴⁹ I am deliberately painting a crone geography with broad strokes. Of course, “the meaning of forests differ dramatically in the differing national cultures of Germany, France, England, America, and Poland” (Jones and Cloke 2002:2). However, Harrison (1992) also makes a valid point about the role of forests in the western Modernist imagination, in relation to fairy tales at least, where forests *always* mark the perimeters of civilization, society, and the ‘safe.’ On entering them, and whatever else happens, fairy tale protagonists open themselves up to transformation (Zipes 2002).

³⁵⁰ This is not as contradictory as it sounds, for Birch (1998) reminds us that the natural is always accompanied by the supernatural, and ‘nature’ necessarily houses the sacred. More controversially, Morton (2007:18-9) argues that we cannot help but invoke the spiritual whenever we evoke nature in our writing, given that the ideology of nature attempts to situate itself ‘in-between’ substantialism and essentialism—which leads us, logically, to a position of materialist spirituality, or spiritual materialism.

³⁵¹ See 7.4-7.5 on reciprocity and gift-giving in fairy tales and ecological ‘storying.’

even put water on them." Baba-Yaga flew into a temper. She began to beat the dog and thrash the cat, to break down the gate and to chop down the birch-tree, and she was so tired by then that she forgot all about Vasilissa.

Such enmeshing of normally discrete ontological spheres complicates the moral binaries we tend to assume in fairy tales. Crone tales are not stories about evil and good, nature and the social-cultural-political, or even life and death³⁵². These tales challenge all preexisting moral codes based on Manichean categories, implying they have neither place, nor use, in the realm of the crone. To survive here requires constant adaptation to whatever one finds, whether human, bestial, or supernatural, and a reliance on one's wits in a tacit form of wisdom far removed from the norms and rules that govern the all-human *polis*³⁵³.

6.9 Summary

The crone is an affective geographical refrain that enacts, and subsequently undermines, a spatialisation of human time: the time-space of finitude, which spans the individual human (storied) life; and the time-space of fairy tale storytelling itself, with its affiliations to the material-discourses of 'nation' and 'civilization' (or *polis*). The crone refrain demarcates the perimeters of the *polis* from an outside position (her remit begins where the civilized ends). Beyond this border commonsense boundaries between life and death, society and the asocial, human and (natural and unnatural) nonhuman cease to exist, and we are drawn into a mass of unpredictable, lively, cooperative, and competing species, types, and ways of being. The refrain goes further: to entangle the natural, human, and unnatural in shocking ways that "retain some space outside of human appropriation" (Lulka 2009:389)³⁵⁴. As we story the crone, we lose our sense of mastery over nature, and our 'separateness,' completeness, and control. Instead of consuming the crone's wilderness as a 'natural resource,' the table is turned, and this landscape, with the crone at its heart, consumes us. The protagonists who enter the crone's wild landscapes are necessarily lost, at a loss, and afraid. They find themselves challenged by wild forces that exceed them, and it takes all of their canniness to make it back 'home.' They must leave their human

³⁵² It is not just those beings who refuse to properly die (the bones that continue to speak, even rebuke the Baba Yaga, etc.) that complicate this usually fundamental boundary; the crone herself is a living being with close ties to birth (life) and death, and who should herself be dead (her life is infinitely extended, but is always in a state of decay). Further, as we have seen above, old age marks the uncanny place where life and death meet for an extended time, whether this be through a dissociation with society (as in disengagement theories), or through a unique proximity to the 'loss' of finitude (as in feminist gerontology).

³⁵³ See Jones and Cloke (2002:111-6) on "grounded relational ethics." I will return to the pragmatic ethics of crone stories in chapter 7; for now, suffice to say that the crone refrain opens out a pragmatic ethics that supersedes the humanized temporal-spatial *polis*.

³⁵⁴ The obvious example of this is those crone stories that eschew the human altogether, such as Esté's (1992) *La Loba*.

identities, pretense at understanding, and cherished perceptions of right and wrong at the borders of the crone's domain. If they don't, they will not survive their encounter with this figure.

Maitland's (2009) *Moss Witch* is a dark fairy tale that brings together a crone-like witch with a young male bryologist—with disastrous results. Unable to step outside of his narrow, 'scientific' mindset, the protagonist of the tale fails to realise his danger, and pays for his intrusion into the crone's realm with his life. In the following chapter I draw on the crone genealogies discussed here, to consider what happens when we unwittingly step off the path, and stray into the wildwood.

Chapter 7. *Moss Witch*: Straying off the path

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Troubling genres: science, fiction, and fairy tale

7.3 Ecological imperialism

7.4 Becoming prey

7.5 Queer home

7.6 Summary

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses Sara Maitland's (2009) short story *Moss Witch*, which narrates the meeting of a crone-like witch and a bryologist in a patch of moss-laden ancient oak wood, within a microcosmic Scottish wilderness. Here, the primordial storyteller and savage beast resonances of this ancient crone converge to produce a horrific (and sometimes comic) 'wilding' in the narrative. This constitutes an uneasy dwelling, scored by affective material-discourses of ecological omnipotence and imperialism, 'becoming prey,'³⁵⁵ the ecologically queer, and hospitality and inhospitality. Within this excessively natural landscape, Maitland's crone offers us a geographical consciousness that grapples with notions of wilderness, nature, and being at home in the world, in a way which contradicts both relational accounts of being, and more romantic discourses of 'dwelling.'

7.2 Troubling genres: science, fiction, and fairy tale

Maitland's *Moss Witch* (2009) is a "dark fairy story" (Reisz 2009) written in collaboration with plant evolutionary ecologist Dr. Rowntree³⁵⁶. This twelve-page tale was commissioned by Comma Press for their science-fiction anthology *When it Changed: Science into Fiction*, which brought British research scientists together with established authors to encourage a robust storytelling, "underpinned by good scientific facts and theory" (Rowntree 2010:34). The aim of the endeavor was "to see if fiction based in part on the real research being done now by real scientists, could capture the thrill of reality," and refresh the "outdated" genre of science fiction (Ryman 2009:ix). A desire for *change* was the driving factor for editor Ryman (*ibid* xi):

Change is heartless and all devouring. Change is also the engine of creation. These stories roll with change rather than fight it.

Scientific progress is the engine of this change, whether utopian or dystopian, and is cast as inevitable: "there is progress because the methods of science share one great similarity to the best designing function of all: evolution" (*ibid*). Ryman (*ibid*) is cautious about this 'evolutionary progress,' recognizing that it does not necessarily coincide with ethical gains (citing "Auschwitz, Cambodia, Rwanda, Sarajavo, Darfur, or

³⁵⁵ I am indebted to Plumwood (2008b) for this term.

³⁵⁶ Rowntree's role was advisory, providing scientific details of bryophytes and botany techniques, etc., and commentary.

Guantanamo” as examples of this failure). Nonetheless, he places science at the pinnacle of human advancement: “whatever illusion of progress there has been in daily life, in terms of comfort, longevity or simple relief from boredom, has come from technology, the application of science” (*ibid* viii). Fiction, meanwhile, is chastised for failing to ‘keep up’ with “real world” science (*ibid* ix). Science fiction slips into fantasy, where “the scientist’s hard fight towards the truth and their endless self-doubt are ignored in the quest to find magic wands to grant our wishes ... Sadly ... popular science fiction has become anything other than scientific” (*ibid*). Ryman (*ibid* viii) implies fiction should eschew fantasy to adopt the rigorous, ‘testing’ methods of science, where “great scientists are honoured, but their legacies are refined, superseded or simply thrown out,” and “that which does not work is discarded.”

Maitland’s (2009) offering is unusual because of its break with this futuristic, anthropocentric temporality of ‘pushing forward’ into change³⁵⁷. Moss Witches are a haunting anachronism in the progressive march of scientific and natural evolution: “perhaps there are no more Moss Witches; the times are cast against them ... But Moss Witches lurk in the green shade, hide on the north side of trees, and make their homes in the dark crevasses of the terminal moraine” (*ibid* 27-8). Lacking “‘competitive’ or ‘protective’ strategies” (Maitland 2011 pers. comm.), they ‘vanish’ in the face of threat (“they are even declared extinct”) only to reappear “there again, there or somewhere else, small, delicate, but triumphant - alive” (*ibid* 2009:27). They “do not compete; they *retreat*” (*ibid* 27, emphasis added)³⁵⁸. These opening words draw us away from the urgent scientism of the collection, into a ‘natural’ present saturated with a mythic past. This is a “magical space” where “time somehow shook itself and came out differently from before” (*ibid* 33). The story interrupts linear time and holds us “contented” in the realm of the “wildwood in the space outside of time” (*ibid* 35). In this “secret place” (*ibid* 29), suggestive of Lewis’s (1955) ‘wood between the worlds,’ we suspend our disbelief and our impatient eagerness for the new, and slip into the magic of the tale (figure 17). As the deep time past encroaches on the present, scientific progress becomes a minor, incidental movement in the vaster, slower rhythm of world evolution.

³⁵⁷ This applies not just to the particular anthology here, but to science fiction more generally. Science fiction is an innovative genre that explores future ‘possibilities,’ or different (historical) trajectories into the future (see Del Rey 1979; Smith 2002).

³⁵⁸ Maitland (2011 pers. comm.) notes: “retreat is necessarily a regressive/retrograde or reversed movement - you can’t retreat forward into new territory.” This “incantation” (retreat/compete) contrasts with the ‘pushing forward’ that characterizes the anthology as a whole (*ibid*).



Figure 17. Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: magical space of enchantment. Collage.

The ‘change’ that *Moss Witch* effects is principally a *narrative* transformation: from science to magic. Where Rowntree (2009:40) concludes that *Moss Witch* “[does] a great job of imagining an intelligent, human-like creature who works like a bryophyte,” she misses this key ‘genre’ shift³⁵⁹. This is not primarily a science-fiction story, where fiction adopts the metaphysics of science to enchant with the ‘thrills’ of the ‘real world’ (Ryman 2009). Rather this story plays on “the relationship of science and fiction,” and develops an evocative writing through the destabilizing of genre conventions (Maitland 2011 pers. comm.):

It is a story about genre; about narrative strategy and its limits and about how far writers can push that without losing the ‘evocative, moving element’ – the almost childlike capacity to identify imaginatively and emotionally with things that are not “material.” Science fiction and Fantasy (as genre) have attempted this – and for me at least reached a kind of dead end; this story ... is trying to explore ways of breaking the deadlock.

Maitland (2011 pers. comm.) defines the genre of *Moss Witch* as “‘magical realist’... it certainly isn’t ‘science fiction’ in genre terms, and I wouldn’t say it was fantasy or fairy story in a technical sense (though both those could be sensible ways to read it).” Magical realism offers a provocative challenge to western science, with its non-hierarchical amalgamation of the ‘real’ and the marvellous, such that, “the marvellous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them” (Faris 2004:1). The ‘challenge’ takes shape as a parasitic movement, “radically modif[ying] and replenish[ing] the dominant mode of realism in the west, challenging its basis of representation from within” (*ibid*). Vitaly, magical realism destabilizes the transcendental *temporality* of western realist literature—that is its teleological, or ‘monumental,’ histories (Hart and Ouyang 2005)³⁶⁰. *Moss Witch* draws on this magical realist tradition, with its marvellous, mythical, and fairy tale elements, to undermine the scientific progressiveness of the anthology and “explore what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe” (Stretcher 1999:267). The result is enthralling: an enchantment that removes us (the human protagonist of the story and the audience) from our common-sense frameworks of understanding, and holds us in an uncanny and uncertain space-time (figure 18). The bryologist of the tale, for instance, is fundamentally unable to compute his experience in the wildwood or subsume it in his scientific epistemology.

³⁵⁹ Maitland (2011 pers. comm.) remarks that the imagining of “a person who functions like a moss” is the “driving motor” of the story.” Whilst this may be true on a plot conception level, at the narrative level I would attribute the driving power and intensity of the story to its genre experimentation, and especially its use of the affective fairy tale crone. The story does not so much imitate science, as transform science into a multi-genre project, imbued with the affective power of fairy tale.

³⁶⁰ Magical realism’s challenge to the space-time and natural and physical laws of western realism lends it to postcolonial endeavors (Simpkins 1988). Thus Bhaba (1994:236-256), for example, salutes the ‘postcolonial time lag’ that effects a ‘temporal break or caesura ... in the continuist, progressivist myth of Man,” and that consequently “destroy[s] the “ontology of man.” Hart and Ouyang (2005:856) develop Bhaba’s notion in the context of Rushdie’s magical realist work, understanding *The Satanic Verses* to be a politicization of western time: “in *The Satanic Verses* the hectic and broken temporality of the text disrupts ... monumental histories.”



Figure 18. Moss Witch's landscaping: Into the wildwood. Collage.

He considers a number of possible explanations for the Moss Witch: “tinker ... Walker ... gypsy?” and even the seemingly far-fetched (and quickly rejected) “uncontacted tribes[woman]” (Maitland 2009:30-1). Unable to ‘understand,’ he projects his own disorientation and unease onto her being, concluding, with relief, that she is mad: “she was mad, he realised, and with it he felt a great tenderness—a mad old woman miles from anywhere and in need of looking after” (*ibid* 32). This reductive sense-making cannot ‘contain’ her Otherness, however, and he is forced to accept “something strange was happening to him” (*ibid* 33); something which demands that he suspends his rational mind, and opens him up to “anything she [tells] him” (*ibid* 34).

The enthrallment of the magical wildwood, with its interruption of ‘progressive time,’ resonates with Woodward’s (1995, 1997) gerontological ‘holding space’ of reminiscence (see 6.7.2). The ‘natural’ setting is a suspended place of “palpable sociality” and “convivial ease,” itself suggestive of the fairy tale hearth (*ibid* 1995:81; see 6.7.2). The sharing of space, food, interests, and companionship—and most of all *knowledge*—structures the story as a crone tale, with the Moss Witch acting the part of the aged pedagogical storyteller, sharing her “gentle bubbling knowledge” (Maitland 2009:33) with the young male protagonist. Adding to this fairy tale feel is the distanced setting of the wildwood. A “pocket” (*ibid* 27) of primordial oak wood, it is riddled with hints of the primeval, the awe-inspiring, and the downright uncanny: ice age boulders “as big as cottages,” ancient “naked trees” (*ibid* 29), a weird green light, and a profusion of strangely glowing “green, green mosses” (*ibid* 33). Furthermore, the tale involves a deadly ‘trial,’ familiar to a fairy tale (and especially crone tale) audience (see 6.5). This is not the testing of fiction against the rigours of science, which Ryman (2009) desires (above), but quite the reverse: the testing of science against the disruptive, affective power of the marvellous. We can break this test down into three distinct components. First, is the question of the bryologist’s capacity (with his scientific metaphysics, tools, and techniques) to face up to the unexpected ‘Other’: the Moss Witch, and the magic of the wildwood. The second test pertains to his self-knowledge: whether he will realise his own limitations in the face of this unknown Other, in time to save himself. The final test concerns his ability to survive the transformation that this magical encounter entails.

The bryologist fails on all three counts. Invading the crone’s realm, he is at first enchanted by the wonder of the moss-laden site, and content to listen to her wisdom. At this point, there is a good chance he may escape unscathed. However, he “could not just sit all day” (Maitland 2009:35). He ‘remembers’ himself, his research interests, and his ethical fervour for conservation, “[shakes] off the magic” and its unsettling strangeness, and sets off to gather (plunder) the riches (mosses) of the crone’s woodland glade (*ibid*). This is his fatal mistake. As he bends to scrape off a

“fine little feathered mat: a *sematophyllum* - *S. micans* perhaps” (*ibid* 33), the Moss Witch murders him, crushing his head with a granite rock. She subsequently “plants” (*ibid* 36) his body to hide the evidence and preserve her pristine hillside³⁶¹. The scientist is reduced to bio-art (or geo-art), as the crone decorates his carefully prepared, desiccated body with a growth of subtly colourful living mosses, in a gentler cannibalism than that practiced by the ravenous Baba Yaga. The bryologist’s knowledge, control, and confidence have proven illusory. He “could not bring himself to admit that she said what he thought she said” (*ibid* 31) and thus (ironically) denies the ‘evidence’ of his own senses, which warn him of the threat of this unknown Other. Unable to believe or understand what is in front of him (because it defies his rationalist notion of reality), and lacking the courage or wisdom to confront (or simply tolerate) this divergence, he is unprepared for the attack from the supposedly frail old woman. When she plants *Orthodontium gracile* in his mouth as a gesture of respect, “because he has been such a sweet man and knew the names of mosses” (*ibid* 37), we are struck by the paucity of his masculine hardiness, fieldwork experience, and scientific metaphysics in the face of the crone’s vast experience, and her own ruthless acceptance of change³⁶². The Moss Witch holds all of the power in this Otherly realm; and it is at this moment in the plot that the primordial storyteller morphs into the nonhuman ‘beast’: “she opened her mouth wide and exhaled; and her microscopic spore flowed out between her sixty-four little hydroscopic teeth” (*ibid* 37)³⁶³.

On the narrative level the ‘failed test,’ and our subsequent disillusionment with scientific knowledge, is developed through an unusual play of narrative ‘voices.’ The tale commences on a mythical note with a solemn language evocative of sacred origins and the profound. Whilst this is not a monumental recounting of human origins, there is a clear orality and pedagogical tone to the narrative (again, resonant of fairy tales). This is interrupted by a more confident, even brash, cartographic and ecological writing, with terse directives: “if you do want to look for a Moss Witch, go first to www.geoview.org. Download the map that shows ancient woodland and print it off...” (*ibid* 27). The scientism of this voice prepares us for our meeting with the bryologist, and slants the next section of the tale from his perspective. A fictional writing in the third person follows, leading us into an imaginative realm of ‘story.’ This begins with a realist, and specifically *ecocritical*, flavour, with its biographical hints, generous descriptions of nature, and detailed account of the meeting with the ‘natural Other’ (the Moss Witch). The marvellous begins to

³⁶¹ The death is all the more shocking for its brevity in the story: it is described in an economical four word sentence: “So she killed him” (Maitland 2009:35). The macabre burial, or “planting,” however, is described at length (*ibid* 36-7).

³⁶² In a comical moment, the crone overtly demonstrates her ability to keep pace with scientific change, as she provides the patronizing bryologist with all the “proper names” he requires (Maitland 2009:32).

³⁶³ ‘Beast’ is the most appropriate term here, given its wildness, predatory, disgusting, ‘evil’ or savage, devilish, and ‘lower’ animal connotations (ODE Online 2010). The mark of the beast is surely the baring of (nonhuman) teeth.

slowly creep into this fiction, precipitating the abrupt switch of perspective at the moment of the murder. The narrative voice (necessarily) shifts at this point, from the languid, descriptive richness of the bryologist's viewpoint, to the matter-of-fact pragmatism of the crone. Although this 'voice' deals briskly with technical 'laboratory' and forensic practices (e.g. building a yoghurt culture moss colony to hide the body), it forgoes the 'objective' academic tone of the cartographic and ecological writing. Instead, it is suffused with a (typical) cronish irony: "So she killed him. She was sorry of course, but for witches it is always duty before pleasure" (Maitland 2009:35-6). This humorous irony troubles the 'serious' science of the story, and enhances the power of magic. The finale returns us to the orality and distance of the earlier mythic voice. Repeating the speculative opening refrain in reverse order, it breaks up the linearity of the fictional story, undermines its 'truthfulness,' and brings us back to the ever-present moment with its direct address and warning:

Perhaps there are no more Moss Witches; the times are cast against them. But if you go down into ancient woodland and it glows jewel green with moss and is damp and quiet and lovely, then be very careful (*ibid* 38)³⁶⁴.

The narrative voices differentially frame the key oppositional binaries of the tale: science-fiction, science-magic, science-nature, and human-nonhuman. These binaries have strong geographical import. Indeed, the tale is shaped around a number of closely related geographical tropes that derive from such dualistic thinking, including: *romantic wilderness*, with both gothic and sacred resonances; *exploration*, echoing the visual mapping and field practices of early Royal Geographic Society-funded expeditions; *frontier*, with its heroic, imperialistic flavour; and ecological *environmentalism*. As the tale progresses, the geographical tropes, together with their distinct narrative voices, become increasingly confused. The mythic impinges on the scientific, as we turn from mapping ancient woodland and rain frequency to speculating on the perils of meeting a crone. The introduction of the marvellous and the ecstatic unsettles the illustrative 'scientific' field account, transforming the language of science to a dynamic "love song," which enlivens the mosses in turn: "the mosses sang back the same tune in harmony" (*ibid* 34). Psychological explanations and thick descriptiveness erode the nascent fairy tale mood, and scientific technicalities of the crone's murder and planting further disrupt our suspension of disbelief. Meanwhile, the human-nonhuman entanglements of the tale become ever more complex, as the nonhuman side of the binary fractures along species lines and takes on multiple agencies, cultures, and place-meanings of its own. Evolutionary rivalry, as well as coevolution between species, comes to the fore; reproductive concerns and procedures are raised; the 'natural' world transforms to a

³⁶⁴ Given the collaborative nature of the anthology, we could consider Rowntree's (2009) following commentary as an extension of the story. Its 'objective' academic examination of the writing process, and assessment of *Moss Witch* finally closes down the tale, and abruptly returns us to the scientism of the wider anthology.

complicated agential³⁶⁵ tissue of animate and inanimate beings and forces; and colonial aggressions are transferred to vegetation, and expressed as ecological imperialism. Scientific omniscience and omnipotence, on the other hand, are threatened, and the bryologist is dethroned from his privileged human position as observer, recorder, and *maker* of the environment. The crone evidences superior taxonomic, conservationist, and ‘laboratory’ knowledges and practices, and the bryologist is reframed as just another species, both prey and predator, in the ecosystem. The representationalist ‘gap’ of science is likewise closed (see 3.1), as the bryologist is literally brought back down to earth through the tragi-comic ‘planting’—only to be reopened through the distancing voice of myth. As the multi-vocal, multi-genre narrative progresses, the momentum and power of the story shifts: the crone figure is transformed from a passive chance-met companion, framed by a scientific-fictional accounting, to the focal point and, with hindsight, centripetal force, of a dark fairy tale.

The story ends inconclusively, leaving the bryologist, competing narrative voices (romantic, cartographic, eco-writing, field science, etc.), and the reader’s ‘environmental’ understandings, at a loss. The sacred heart of ‘nature’ that we (protagonist, narrative voices, and reader) pursue through the tale, to variously log, map, conserve, worship, and experience, continues to elude our grasp, just as the crone herself drifts out of the story to a place and time beyond our knowing (*ibid* 38). The magical geography of the crone’s realm instead brings us to a startlingly simple ‘realisation’: that, for better or for worse, we *are* at ‘home’; and the success of this home depends on a pragmatic pursuit of “what works” (Estés 2010). In the remainder of the chapter I will attempt to make some sense out of these losses, and detail this ‘realisation,’ by engaging these narrative voices and their contradictory crone geographies. I structure this ‘sense-making’ around three key themes: ecological imperialism, becoming prey, and the queer home.

7.3 Ecological Imperialism

The wildwood habitation of the Moss Witch is a pristine microcosmic landscape of “ancient woodland ... caressed by at least two hundred wet days a year” (Maitland 2009:27). This woodland comprises well-established oak trees on a post-Ice Age bedrock: “where over twenty-thousand years ago the great grinding glaciers pushed large chunks of rock into apparently casual heaps and small bright streams leap through the trees” (*ibid* 28). Moss Witches, being “sensitive” and retiring creatures, prefer the green, shady, and cool “north side” of these oaks, and the darkness of

³⁶⁵ See Barad (2007).

“crevasses of ... terminal moraine” where they can hide away (*ibid*). There are few such habitations left, for “these are not common coordinates”; indeed, they include “only a few pockets running down the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland” (*ibid* 27). Once upon a time, “long long ago,” there was plenty of wildwood:

There had been meetings and greetings and gossip among the Moss Witches, quite a jolly social life indeed with gatherings for wild Sabbats in the stone circles on the hills. There had been more wildwood and more witches then (*ibid* 30).

Today, these “very specific ecological niches” are endangered (*ibid* 27), and the tale ends with the Moss Witch forced to move on, to “[wait] for a new and quieter time when witches and mosses can flourish” (*ibid* 38).

From the opening paragraph of the tale, which narrates the vanishing, suspected extinction, and occasional “triumphant” reappearance of Moss Witches, we are aware of the rarity of their ecosystem, and their biological fragility (*ibid* 27). “Retreat” is the key refrain of the story, narratively framing the tale, and poetically reminding us of the Moss Witches’ inability to ecologically “compete.” This refrain positions *Moss Witch* as an environmentalist story, and part of the increasingly popular material-discourse of biodiversity loss (e.g. Cohen 2004; Hess 2010; Morton 2010; Plumwood 2000; Yusoff 2011)³⁶⁶. Indeed, biodiversity loss and consequential ‘environmental catastrophe’ has become a popular theme in ecological writings (academic and nonacademic), where ‘humankind’ is castigated for:

Losing touch with a fantasy Nature that never really existed ... while we actively and passively destroy life-forms inhabiting and constituting the biosphere, in Earth’s sixth mass extinction event (Morton 2010:273)³⁶⁷.

Human destructiveness coupled with the threat of extinction is a major theme of ecological imperialist scholarship. Here, the focus is expanded to account for more-than-human processes and interactions at work in biodiversity loss. Crosby’s (1986) seminal work on the biogeographical

³⁶⁶ Biodiversity loss and wider themes of environmental utilization and destruction have also become important within fairy tale studies (e.g. Hollindale 1999; Ostry 2004; Rahn 2005; Whitley 2008).

³⁶⁷ The ‘blame’ for biodiversity loss and the failure of ecology in environmentalist thinking varies according to the scale of theorizing. At the meta-scale, we find blanket condemnations of prevailing (western) anthropocentric human ideologies of ‘nature’ based on ‘faulty’ and distancing dualistic metaphysics (e.g. Bannon 2009; Barad 2011; Derrida 2008; Haraway 1989; Morton 2007; Plumwood 1993; Proctor 2009). At increasingly detailed scales we find the more usual finger-pointing at: human settlement and ‘civilization’ practices (from the deep time past); European colonization; capitalism (especially ‘western’ capitalism); phallogocentrism; heteronormativity; conservation practices; the liberal justice tradition. Feminist Mother Nature theorizing, masculinist nature writing, and ‘armchair’ theorizing (detached from activism) are also brought to task (Alaimo 1994; Anderson 1997; Wolfe 2008). Note: these theories often bridge the macro/micro scale divide I have found conceptually useful here, and this list only scratches the surface of the rapidly burgeoning field of study. I have attempted to provide a cross-section of key interdisciplinary works that have informed the present chapter, as opposed to providing a comprehensive account of the various fields of environmental history, ecocriticism, etc. (which is beyond the reach of this thesis).

expansion of Europe (from 900 - 1900) is instructive. For Crosby (*ibid*), it was not superior cultural, technological or military power that enabled European expansion across Europe and into the ‘neo-Europes’³⁶⁸. Rather, European expansion was achieved and consolidated through the devastating “global diffusion of Eurasian *plants, diseases, and animals*” (Moore 2003:58, emphasis added), enabling a “demographic takeover” of indigenous human, and other indigenous species (Griffiths 1997:9). By pairing the (previously) non-congruent terms ‘ecology’ and ‘empire,’ Crosby (1986) enabled a rewriting of imperialism in the field of environmental history. He denaturalized ‘ecology’ and de-humanized ‘empire’ to demonstrate “the superhuman achievements of European expansion were exactly that: more than human” (Griffiths 1997:2). Imperialism becomes as much a product of “the *passive* or *distracted* role of humans in ecosystems” as “the manifest history of conscious social and political action that conventionally occupies historians” (*ibid*). Meanwhile, “domesticated animals, pests, pathogens and weeds” (*ibid*) are granted non-human ‘agencies’³⁶⁹, acting as physically invested ‘partners’ in the colonisation event: for humans did not immigrate alone but “as part of a grunting, lowing, neighing, crowing, chirping, snarling, buzzing, self-replicating and world-altering avalanche” (Crosby 1986:194). The nonhuman world is enlivened in Crosby’s account, and the ‘distanced’ cultural human is entangled in wider biogeographical ecosystems.

We can initially read *Moss Witch* as analogous to these European “ecologies of invasion” (Arnold 2012). The story draws a clear frontier along the western coastlines of Scotland and Ireland—the last remnant of ancient oak woodland in Britain. The distinct narrative shift from ecological mapping to myth only enhances this sense of the primeval, especially when danger (the uncivilized savage) is enfolded into the narrative:

If you hope to find a Moss Witch this is where you must go. You must go silently and slowly, waiting on change and accident. You must pretend you are not searching and you must be patient.

But be very careful. You go at your own peril. The last known encounter with a Moss Witch was very unfortunate (Maitland 2009:28).

The temporality and geography of this Moss Witch ‘hunt’ carries something of the “aesthetics of loss ... that characterize [the] extinction event” (Yusoff 2011:1). To pursue the Moss Witch we must step ‘backward’ in time and space: across a biogeographical indigenous frontier that is forever receding. The narrative of loss immediately evokes the “open frontier associated with the American west” (Arnold 2012), with its

³⁶⁸ The ‘neo-Europes’ consist primarily of the New World (North and South America) and Australasia.

³⁶⁹ I am not referring to agency in the conventional sense, here, as a matter of ‘intentionality,’ but rather to Barad’s (2007) posthumanist notion of agency as a product of the entangled phenomena (see also Jones and Cloke’s 2002 lengthy discussion of nonhuman ‘agencies’).

repetitive tropes of moving on, moving northwards, and most importantly, moving “beyond the *uttermost west*” (Maitland 2009:36-38, emphasis added). The ‘uttermost west’ is, of course, the imaginary end of the world, where myth crumbles into silent mystery (e.g. Tolkien 1955). As the frontier is pushed back to this point outside of history and geography (and all forms of knowledge), we acknowledge that Moss Witches, like the American wolves, bison, and certain Amerindian populations of the nineteenth century, are a species very close to extinction (Coleman 2004; Crosby 1986)³⁷⁰.

The wildwood itself carries different eco-mythic connotations to that of ‘frontier.’ It is styled as the ‘dark heart’ (another popular ‘nature’ trope) or *depths* of the ‘natural,’ where things remain ‘untouched’ and isolated, and therefore safe from the devastations of western interaction:

Suddenly [the bryologist] remembered the rules in Peru about not trying to interact with people you encountered *deep in the jungle*. Uncontacted tribes should remain uncontacted, for their own safety, cultural and physical; they had no immunities and were always vulnerable (Maitland 2009:31, emphasis added).

The Moss Witch’s steady ‘retreat’ is imbued with a lingering affect of hopelessness: “then, sadly, singing all their names one last time, she turned northwards” (*ibid* 37). However, the bryologists’ experience of the wildwood is framed as a discontinuous shock of encounter: a disorienting ‘clash of cultures’ (Griffiths 1997). The bryologist is conscious of the danger he (his actions, and the possible diseases or microorganisms he ‘hosts’) poses to the fragile ecosystem and its (non)human inhabitant(s). His musing on ‘uncontacted tribes’ bears a remarkable likeness to Crosby’s (1986:99) ecological imperialist statement: “few experiences are as dangerous to a people’s survival as the passage of isolation to membership in the worldwide community.” The bryologist is an intruder, bringing the human, and specifically scientific, ‘community’ to the wildwood. Admittedly, his intentions are less colonial than ‘protective.’ He is described non-threateningly as “a very lovely young man” who has pursued “a girly subject,” while “real men preferred hard things; rocks if you must, stars if you were clever enough and dinosaurs if you had imagination” (Maitland 2009:28). His job, “to survey and record Scottish ancient woodlands and to compare the biodiversity of SSIs with less protected environments,” is conservational, and he “genuinely love[s]” the mosses in which he specializes (*ibid* 29). Despite this positive presentation, he remains “a vector for various masculinity memes, including rugged individualism, a phallic authoritarian sublime” (Morton 2010:274), with his scientific confidence, “lean and fit and sturdy” build, and his “[delight] in his own company and in solitary wild places”

³⁷⁰ Of course, I say this with some irony. I will briefly examine the myth of frontier, wilderness, and ‘passive native/nature’ below.

(Maitland 2009:28). We can even observe a touch of the “allergy to femininity” (Morton 2012:274) that characterizes this “meme” (*ibid*), in his easy reduction of the Moss Witch to a powerless and burdensome “mad old woman” who threatens his efficiency: “he dreaded the slow totter back to the village, but pushed his irritation away *manfully*” (Maitland 2009:32, emphasis added). The Moss Witch, in turn, likens him—and the human population at large—to the moss “*Orthodontium lineare* ... successful but not native” (*ibid* 33), emphasizing his intrusion into her domain. Finally, the bryologist’s condemnation of the Moss Witch’s ‘management’ of *Orthodontium gracile* is disturbingly neo-imperialistic: “‘you mustn’t do that,’ he said shocked, ‘it’s protected. You mustn’t gather or collect it’” (*ibid*). The hypocrisy of his own ‘collection’ and ‘conservational’ intentions, together with his glib justification (a posturing of scientific authority), is a deep irony that is lost on the bryologist:

‘Yes it’s fine,’ he said reassuringly, ‘I’ve got a certificate. This is one of the richest sites I’ve ever seen. We’ll get a team in here, later in the year, but I need some samples now - just to prove it, you know; no one will believe me otherwise’ (*ibid* 35).

Indeed, this justification by scientific authority echoes a plethora of ‘western’ eco-hypocrisies, regarding, for example: fossil fuel use in developing nations (‘differentiated responsibility’ in climate change debates); environmentally ‘unsound’ or ‘unsustainable’ indigenous and traditional land management techniques (e.g. slash and burn); and ‘immoral’ hunting and eating practices (Plumwood 2000).

However, this easy comparison between the bryologist’s and European colonial practices falls prey to Crosby’s (1986) worryingly “broad biogeographical strokes” (Piper and Sandlos 2007:782), with their oversimplified “diffusionist and ecologically-reductionist conception of imperialism” (Moore 2003:58). Indeed, Crosby’s ecological imperialism has been roundly criticized for its biological ‘essentialism,’ which tends to “‘social Darwinism,’ a way of denying human agency-for good or ill-on the frontier” (Griffiths 1997:2). Crosby (1986) strives to historicize, ecology by demonstrating the inextricable relationship between human practices of empire building and wider biogeographical ecosystems. Moreover, he notes the importance of agricultural *surplus building* to the success of early European settlers, hinting at the importance of the burgeoning capitalist system—and economics more widely—to ecological imperialism. However, “economic and cultural factors” (surely a vital part of the more-than-human ecosystem³⁷¹) are largely neglected in favour of ‘natural’ “agents of environmental change in colonial environments” (Piper and Sandlos 2007:782). Thus, “for all its promise ... the idea of ecological imperialism remain[s] narrowly ecological,

³⁷¹ For Plumwood (2000:308), “the fundamental ecological insight [is] that culture is embedded in ecological systems and dependent on nature.” I engage Plumwood’s thesis later in the chapter.

abstracted from capitalist social relations” (Moore 2003:58)³⁷². Marxist-derived ecological political theory asserts, to the contrary, the slower bio-cultural transformations of ecological imperialism, which extend well beyond the initial shock of encounter. Ecological imperialism, in this account, involves ‘inevitable’ and progressive ecological degradation through capitalist exploitations of waged labour and ‘conquests’ of nature (e.g. Foster and Clarke 2004). Further, it *actively produces* the ‘third world,’ through an imperial harnessing of the ecological with the economic for exploitative purposes (Moore 2003). Davis (2001:239), for example, attributes contemporary ‘third world’ underdevelopment to late Victorian British colonial activities, and specifically the consolidation of the British-dominated world market. Davis (*ibid*) cites the callous social engineering of ‘tropical world’ famines through the manipulation of the El Niño droughts of 1876-1878 and 1888-1902 (producing “climates of hunger,” and “indigenous holocausts”) as one key example of the conscious ecological imperialist production of underdevelopment. Likewise, the global adoption of the Gold Standard ‘forced’ the shift from subsistence to cash crop farming in India (with its consequential benefits for Britain’s world hegemony), and devastated peasant populations, economically and demographically—with the effects still being felt in the present day. Moore (2003:61), meanwhile, extends Davis’s argument to other “epochal transformations,” including: “the epochal remaking of world ecology ... in the ‘long’ sixteenth century, ranging from the ‘Columbian exchange’ and its apocalyptic disease vector, to the wide-ranging impact of sugar monocultures, to the reorganization of regional socio-ecologies around silver mining centres.”

Moss Witch hints at such powerful and widespread economies and cultures of ecological imperialism in its brief allusion to the European Union financing of the bryologist’s research project, and scientific cultures of international conservation (or bio-surveillance), i.e. the bryologist’s expedition in Peru (e.g. Mazel 2007). A further, tentative, connection might be made when we consider the economic worthlessness of mosses—which may well account for the increasing scarcity of their ecosystem³⁷³. These wider cultural and economic circulations are at best peripheral to the story, and from a political ecology perspective, *Moss Witch* constructs a naive ecological imperialism after Crosby (1986). However, *Moss Witch* offers a more complex bio-socio-geography than political ecological perspectives, with their fundamentally anthropocentric ‘casual

³⁷² One clear example of this abstraction is Crosby’s (1986) insistence on the vital part that disease has played in the colonizing of the ‘neo-Europes.’ However, he largely neglects the *economics* of disease, e.g. the role of transatlantic slavery (bringing malaria and yellow fever to the Americas) in the decimation of Amerindian populations (see McMichael 2001:114).

³⁷³ Despite counting “among the oldest land plants,” bryophytes’ “usefulness is relatively unknown to most people” (Saxena and Harinder 2004:56). Potential industrial (absorption of toxins), medical (wound packing), and horticultural (soil additives and ornamental use) benefits aside, mosses have made little impact on industry and the global economy. Glime (2007:14) attributes their “general lack of commercial value” to their “small size, and inconspicuous place in the ecosystem”; albeit she notes that this is now changing. Mosses, as such, are ‘wilderness’ plants: the unproductive ‘beyond’ of the agricultural frontier.

relations,' can grasp³⁷⁴. We must look to alternative engagements of Crosby's ecological imperialism for inspiration here. Important amongst these, is the critique of the problematic *pacification* of indigenous populations (human and nonhuman) in Crosby's 'apocalyptic' environmental history (MacKenzie 1997:215). Crosby's account may appear to be 'enlivening' other species, yet his nonhuman beings serve suspiciously human goals:

Crosby saw Europeans as initiating a successful biological conquest of the globe. ... He painted a picture of organisms of all sorts being marshaled, consciously and unconsciously, for just such a campaign. Mammals, birds, freshwater fish, insects, pathogens, trees, plants and *weeds* set about the creation of neo-Europes, exotic environments comprehensively overlaid with the extensive biota of the new conquerors. These events were promoted by economics, aesthetics, sport, nostalgia, or simply absent-mindedness and inefficiency (*ibid* 219, emphasis added).

I emphasize 'weeds,' as this particular form of plant life has played a vital role in ecological imperialist thinking, exacerbating the discourse of the vulnerability and passivity of 'authentic indigenous' biotic populations. Indeed, Crosby "devoted an entire chapter to the spread of weeds around the world," attributing "another unintentional imperial victory" to these otherwise 'worthless' plants (Tintle 2005). The term 'weed' conveys little about the specific species at hand, and more about its value from a human perspective. This value is as much moral as economic: "weeds are ... plants that tempt the botanist to use such anthropocentric terms as aggressive and opportunistic" (Crosby 1986:150). Weeds are unusual in that they flourish where other plants fail. They fare best during "ecological emergencies," and "thrive on radical change, not stability," such as the radical change posed by eroded soils and damaged ecosystems (*ibid* 169-70). It is on the subject of weeds that the rigid dualism of imperialist/indigenous begins to crumble in *Moss Witch*, with the surprising dialogue between crone and bryologist:

'That's one of the problems of evolution - losses and gains, losses and gains. Vascular was a smart idea, you have to admit, even at the price of all those vulgar coloured flowers.'
He realised suddenly there were no snowdrops; no green sprouts of bluebells, wild garlic or anemone; no primrose or foxgloves. 'Don't you like flowers?'
'Bloody imperialists,' she responded crossly, 'they invaded, imposed their own infrastructure and ruined our culture, stole our land. And anyway they're garish - I do honestly prefer the elegance, the subtle beauty of seta, capsules and peristomes.'
He did too, he realised, although he had never thought of it before (Maitland 2009:35).

³⁷⁴ Moore (2003:60) argues that Davis' political ecology is refreshing in that it *avoids* "[explaining] socio-ecological change in terms of markets ... [and] is neither circulationist nor productionist." Indeed, he lauds Davis for approaching the "'organic whole' of production and exchange" after Marx himself (*ibid*). However, in sketching out "Imperial Britain's violent construction of a world market at multiple scales, the degradation of living environments, and resistance to imperialism—all as mutually relational and formative moments in a *single world historical-process*" (*ibid*, emphasis added), Davis fails to leave room for multiplicity and the dynamism of the nonhuman Other.

Vascular flowers provoke a strong negative reaction from the Moss Witch, who berates the aggressive success of these species. Ironically, her preference for less showy bryophytes bears startling resemblance to American settler's nationalistic pride in 'their' native biota as: "modest, woodland, retiring things; and no match for the intrusive, pretentious, self-asserting foreigners" (Gray 1894 in Crosby 1986:165)³⁷⁵. The Moss Witch regards vascular plants as imperialist intruders in her ecosystem, and not the bryologist (at least not until he 'threatens' her mosses). Thus she extends the temporality of imperialism beyond the human, to the evolutionary 'progression' from nonvascular to vascular. Again, this resonates with ecological imperialist discourse, which harks back to the deep time past, when Europe was a "'new land' ... with a simplified biota that had to start again after the last ice age ... populated by invasive, dominating weeds, animals, and plants that were pre-adapted to disturbed environments" (Griffiths 1997:8). Griffiths belittles this 'youthful biota' for encroaching on ancient Australian soils (during the British colonizing of Australia):

So the Australian gaze turns back across the world and, ecologically speaking, sees a comparatively raw and rapacious biota. ... Now we know that they [European flora] were weeds before they even left, not just when they spilled out of the ships onto Australia's ancient soils! (*ibid*).

Such privileging of the 'old' over the 'new' is a common practice in environmentalist thinking, and is bound up, as we see here, with wider issues of nationalism, authenticity, nature as 'wilderness'—and ultimately the 'sacred' (Birch 1988; Franklin 2006). This troublesome nexus has been subject to considerable academic debunking, especially in ecocritical and environmental history fields, since Cronon's (1995:69) declaration that "the trouble with wilderness" is that it is a "human invention" that inhibits 'better' environmental practice (e.g. Alaimo 1996; Garrard 2004; Hess 2010; Mortimer-Sandilands 2005; Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson 2010; Morton 2007; Soper 2007; Wolfe 2008). More interesting in the context of the crone, is the *aged* aspect of this nexus. 'Nature'³⁷⁶, the object of ecological imperialism, inheres in ancientness, which itself has a geography, as an excessively natural, unchanging time-space. The place of 'ancientness' becomes the bedrock upon which the myth of human exceptionalism is founded, whether this is understood through perilous "classical" or ecstatic "romantic" archetypal language (Ridanpää 2010)³⁷⁷.

³⁷⁵ Crosby (1986:165) is citing an exchange between Charles Darwin and American botanist Asa Gray. Darwin provocatively remarks on the hardiness and success of English "weeds" in the Americas, whilst Gray states her preference for the more fragile, but less vulgar, native flora.

³⁷⁶ 'Nature' in this discourse is the (purified) place where the human is not. See Morton (2007) for a sustained engagement of this discourse, and Garrard (2010) for an excellent critical summary of his "against nature" positioning.

³⁷⁷ Ridanpää (2010:325) offers the "classical" and "romantic" as the two key oppositional archetypes of 'nature' (and especially wilderness) thinking. The classical archetype values nature solely "through human social action"; thus nature "lying outside civilization ... turns into something to be afraid of" (*ibid*). It depicts nature as "a cruel beast, a venomous challenge for a white man to enter, something to conquer" or an "elemental force" (*ibid*)—words that uncannily echo much crone discourse, especially Halissey's

Crones speak from this primordial realm. Indeed, they are the architects of mythic ‘ancientness,’ and their narratives precede—and *frame*—the story of the origins of humanity. As we enter their lands we are returned to our infancy, both as individuals (learning, childlike, from their vast wisdom), and as a species. Ancientness, and ancient crones, also point *beyond* the human, “[retaining] some space outside of human appropriation” (Lulka 2009:389). The Moss Witch, an emigrant from the pre-vascular Gondwanaland, frames the bryologist as just one more, latterly evolved, intruder in a long lineage of multi-species ‘imperialists.’ As she draws us into her expansive timeframe, with its myriad competitive species, cultures, and evolutionary “gains and losses” (Maitland 2009:35), she founds, and subsequently *undermines*, the myth of human exceptionalism. The “imperialism dogma (that the Eurasian species are exceptionally successful invaders)” (Jeschke and Strayer 2005:7198) becomes suspect; and the ‘frontier’ of nature-culture is fundamentally ruptured. New rifts are carved through the hitherto holistic ‘natural,’ comprising broken frontiers of unstable imperialism, partial failures, and two-way exchanges (see Piper and Sandlos 2007)³⁷⁸ (figure 19). Moreover, the Moss Witch, the supposed ‘heart of nature,’ is something of an imperialist herself, albeit less successful than the garish weeds she denounces. Her origins, and her genealogical heritage (which ‘fixes’ species identity) are surprisingly uncertain:

Finally he said, ‘Where do you come from?’

‘Perhaps we drifted northwards,’ she said vaguely. ‘No one is quite sure about before the ice times; that was the alternate generation, though not of course haploid. But here, really. I’ve lived here for a very long time’ (Maitland 2009:31).

The Moss Witch species, we learn, is ecologically established through “disjunctions and wide dispersal,” (*ibid* 34); an establishment pattern that bears similarity to Eurasian settlement patterns, which so dominate ecological imperialist discourse. Complicating this widely dispersed biogeography³⁷⁹, Moss Witches are both ‘explorers’ (*ibid*) and strongly territorial: the wildwood is starkly inhospitable to vascular ‘weeds’ and human intruders alike; and the witch preserves the ‘integrity’ of her ecosystem violently, and without qualm. The flash of “sixty-four ... teeth” at

(1987) work on venomous women. From the romantic perspective, nature is “a place of deep spiritual significance and a symbol of earthly paradise ... but still barren and—what is particularly important—infertile” (Ridanpää 2010:326). Again, this spiritual earthly paradise resonates with cronescapes, with their bizarre contradiction of the lush and the barren. The deadly Moss Witch, who regrets her sterility, and whose wildwood is a rich profusion of mosses, taps into both of these archetypes.

³⁷⁸ E.g. we learn that the bryophytes which the Moss Witch nurtures “are not commonly obedient or compliant, they tend to follow their own rules, coming and going at their own random whim” (Maitland 2009:37).

³⁷⁹ The Moss Witch’s spores are “caught by the wind, and carried up into the higher air currents that circulate the Earth” (Maitland 2009:38).



Figure 19. Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: ecological imperialism as a fractured process of encroachment. Collage.

the end of the tale fill us with doubt as to which is the truly vulnerable species. Moss Witches cannot compete: but they can murder. This incongruity blurs the ethical line between encroachment (imperialism) and inhospitality (territoriality), and begs the question: does the damning of ‘imperialist weeds’ in the crone’s wildwood signal a fundamentally closed ethics regarding the Other? Further, how does this matter (in both senses of the word)? To address these questions, and the wider matter of crone ‘ethics,’ we must look further into ecological aggression, and specifically the entangled issues of predation, food ethics (and especially an ethics of the human-as-food), and decompiculture in the ecosystem. This entails engaging the aged crone in her ‘wild,’ carnivorous, cannibalistic guise (see 6.4); distinguishable, above all, by her exaggerated teeth and ravenous appetite.

7.4 Becoming prey

We must enter the wildwood with extreme caution: Moss Witches’ pose great danger for the inattentive, and “the last known encounter with a Moss Witch was very unfortunate” (Maitland 2009:28). The predatory nature of crone geographies explains our exaggerated fear of these creatures, which are perhaps the most threatening of many menacing fairy tale beings. The Baba Yaga’s forest is a sentient landscape with malign intent; her chattering gate and fence are comprised of the bones of her many prey, and flaming human skulls surround her mobile chicken-legged hut. Granny’s house is reached through narrow, perilous paths of pins and needles; and when you finally lift the latch to safety, you may well find that granny has big ears, eyes, and teeth—not to mention a ravenous appetite. Likewise, the edible house of candies is a saccharine trap for lost, starved children who survive the disorienting forest wilderness, only to furnish the aged witch who dwells there with her own, meatier repast. Even the beautiful wildwood hides a mossy lump that is suspiciously man-shaped.

The physiology of crones reaffirms their predatory geographies. These aged, frail-seeming ‘grannies’ have an unusual brutish strength, and their appearance is beastly, with prominent sharp, pointed teeth. This predatory beastliness exceeds simplistic animalistic or ‘natural’ connotations, for the crone is simultaneously *unnatural*: both evil and supernatural (see 6.8). She commits monstrous ‘acts against nature’ with her cannibalistic appetite, especially for innocent little children. This is all the more perverted given her pedagogical ‘Mother-land,’ and Earth Mother resonances, which might lead us to expect nurturance from this ancient female figure (Johns 2004; Von Franz 1995). Further, crones bear close relation to the *unearthly*. The wildwood is a lush landscape bursting with mosses in unusual “variety, in luxuriance and somehow in joy” (Maitland 2009:32). However, this ‘healthy’ ecosystem is illuminated by a strange “lapidary brightness” of “glow[ing] jewel green” (*ibid* 29-38): the unearthly

“green, green” (*ibid* 33) of magic. It is intriguing that green, the metaphorical colour of nature, life, the ‘good,’ and joyfulness (Conroy 1921), is simultaneously the colour of evil, magic, and death in fairy tales (Randall 1960)³⁸⁰. This doubled meaning stems at least from British medieval folklore, which portrays the colour not just in a goodly and ‘natural’ manner, but also as a threefold signifier for “the other world” (*ibid* 480). First, green “was the colour associated with the dead,” the dead here being granted a corporeal solidity and earthly presence as “virtually animated corpses,” unlike the colourless, “wispy, ectoplasmic vapours,” hazy angelic beings, and dark presences of the “modern” era (*ibid*). Second, green evokes fairies and the fey; and medieval fairies were often dangerous and spiteful, “capable of inspiring fear and horror in the human beings with whom they came in contact” (*ibid*; Purkiss 2000). Third, green was associated with the devil and “‘feend[s]’ whose ‘dwellyng is in helle’” (*ibid* 481). Randall (*ibid*) traces a folk connection between the Germanic Devil (Satan) and the Norse god Odin, a hunter figure, concluding that green is the colour of sinister predation: “green, being a hunter’s colour, is quite well suited to the devil *while stalking human prey*” (*ibid*, emphasis added).

The unnatural (but not necessarily unearthly) green of cronescapes returns us to the stalking behaviour of a ‘natural’ predator. We are caught up in a paradox: that which is most natural is simultaneously most unnatural³⁸¹. Crone stories, with their wisdom and savagery, wildness and magic, draw the human, nonhuman, and supernatural into a complex tangle of predatory imagery (figure 20). For Plumwood (*ibid* 287), such confusion fundamentally (ontologically) derives from western dualist metaphysics, with its alienation of the ‘cultural’ human “from ecological embodiment and ecological communities.” This alienation inheres in the western “master story” of human exceptionalism and separatism: a story which is so “deeply and fatally entrenched in modern conceptions of the human and of nature” that even challenges to this dualist thinking (such as animal rights and cultural ecofeminist discourses) “have been appropriated by the master forms of consciousness or remade in their terms” (Plumwood 1993: 6, 190)³⁸².

³⁸⁰ Many fairy tale witches cast a strange, unearthly green glow. Consider Fleming’s (1930) green-faced Wicked Witch of the West (and Maguire’s 1995 popular emerald revision); Disney’s (1959) Maleficent (and Stromberg’s forthcoming 2014 revision); or Marillier’s (1999) Lady Oonagh, who bewitches the children of the tale with a choking green mist.

³⁸¹ I.e. the catching, killing, and eating of food in an ecosystem.

³⁸² See Plumwood (2000) for a devastating critique of animal rights and cultural ecofeminist assumptions of predation, based on their inability to escape the dualist ‘master story.’



Figure 20. Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: becoming prey. Collage.

The ‘master story’ trips over its own faulty logic at times, constructing a natural-unnatural muddle that has particular pertinence for our murderous Moss Witch. For example, ‘acts against nature’ bear a contradictory doubled structure where:

Nature is the victim, the victimised, the wronged. At the same time, humans who commit ‘acts against nature’ are said to be acting like animals. In other words, *the ‘perpetrator’ is seen as damaging nature from the outside, yet at the same time is reviled for becoming part of Nature*. Bestiality is surely both a spoken and unspoken infraction here, but the real crime is the breach of the Nature/culture divide, which has not simply been ruptured but has itself been wronged. ... Those who would prosecute the ‘perpetrators’ of ‘crimes against nature’ trip over the very divide they seek to secure” (Barad 2011b:121, emphasis added).

Such dualist logic explains why the strangely human Moss Witch only morphs into a nonhuman beast *after* the planting process. The murder is ethically problematic, but still conceivable in the human realm. It is the horrific, *predatory consumption* of the bryologist’s body that secures the transformation, made more revolting by excessive details of colour and texture, and the obvious pleasure the Moss Witch takes in her lengthy task:

First she dehydrated the body by stuffing all his orifices with dry sphagnum ... When he was desiccated and floppy she stripped his clothing off, rolled him onto his back among the thick mosses under the rocks and planted him, brushing the cell-rich mixture deep into the nooks and crannies of his body and pulling thicker more energetic moss clumps over his now cool flesh. At first she was efficient and businesslike, but later she allowed her imagination to cavort. She painted *Aplodon wormskiodii* on his forehead and where his toes poked up ... She festooned his genitals with *Plagiochila atlantica* because its little curling fronds were so like the curly mass there ... She looked at her little arrangement; it was clever, witty even, and secure ... Then she spoke clearly and firmly to all the mosses, the liverworts and the lichens she had planted. She told them to grow fast, to grow strong and to grow where she had told them (Maitland 2009:36-7).

In short, the contradiction of nature as victim and victimiser, and the demonizing of predatory beings at large, is a legacy of a long lineage of hyper-separated (dualist) philosophies. Plumwood (1993) traces a genealogy from Plato to Descartes to ‘modern liberal individualism’ to account for this contemporary western (il)logic. The schism begins with “Platonic rationalism and its valuation of inner, rational nature over outer, bodily nature” (Bannon 2009:42). Briefly: Plato (~380 BC) elevated human ‘understanding,’ “the property that inheres within *human substance* that sets it apart from other beings,” above other animals and forms of being in an overtly hierarchical gesture (*ibid*, emphasis added)³⁸³. Descartes (1647) deepened this rift by extending the primacy and purview of human reason, with its increasingly technological outputs, beyond “internal nature” to

³⁸³ I will not explain further here, as this is already a well developed and much discussed argument (see Plumwood 1993 for a lengthy and especially coherent example).

“external nature” (Plumwood 1993:109)³⁸⁴. He proposed a twofold imaginary of this external realm: as ‘wax,’ “passive and easily moulded,” and as a ‘machine’ (*ibid*). The latter, in particular, affirms the supremacy of the human rationalist being by “[taking] up the devaluation of the corporeal ... to transform it into a relation of control and domination” (Bannon 2009:42). A machine is a tool for human use (and an especially pertinent metaphor in the rapidly industrialising and militarising context of Descartes’s writing); and the mechanical “non-rational and deterministic” substance of nature is *essentially* discontinuous with the elevated, spiritual substance of the human mind (*ibid*). Rational knowledge enables humanity to become “masters and possessors of nature” (Descartes 1952, in Plumwood 1993:110).

This “master story” of western human supremacy splits the human and (residual) nonhuman into two mutually exclusive narratives (Plumwood 2000:293). The nonhuman is structured within a “‘holistic’ narrative of ecological embedment and exchange” (*ibid* 2000:293). Here, “tragedy, suffering, and vulnerability to predation ... have been treated as *appropriate* for nonhumans, as *a sacrificeable and replaceable order*” (*ibid*, emphasis added). The human, in contrast, is structured within “individual ethical narratives of tragedy, desert, and justice,” where “the ills of ecological embodiment,” including suffering and predation, “become part of the *problem of evil* ... to be evaded or combated by any means possible (including the means of sacrificing other animals)” (*ibid*, emphasis added). Indeed, human predatory acts against nonhumans are no longer classed as ‘predation’ (i.e. ‘acts against nature’) by this logic:

One might think that the forms of violence against animals perpetuated by industrial meat production—that is, the mass extermination of ‘others’ made killable—would qualify in this logic as ‘acts against nature’ worthy of provoking moral outrage. And yet, it is particular sexual acts that are criminalised and labeled immoral, while the mass extermination of animals goes unnoticed and unpunished, and is normalised, naturalised, and sanitised as part of the cost of food production (Barad 2011b:122)³⁸⁵.

The holistic ecological narrative renders animals ‘edible’; but it is the individualistic narrative, which is withheld from the nonhuman, that reduces animals to ‘meat.’ ‘Meat’ is a reductionist imagining of nonhuman animals as nothing more than edible. The material-discourse of meat derives from an exploitative materialised culture of “high levels of commodification, homogenization, reduction, denial of kinship, and hyper-

³⁸⁴ Plumwood (1993:109) notes of Plato’s philosophy: “the prime human task, the route to the higher type of life, is to rise above ties to the lower realm and to ascend to the heights of reason and contemplation of the Form of the Good. Plato does not seem to think of the natural world itself, external nature, as a field for control, something humans have power over or have to struggle with. He regards it rather as an inferior sphere of little interest.”

³⁸⁵ Barad (2011) is writing for *Qui Parle*’s special issue on queer ecologies, hence the reference to homosexuality in the context of ‘acts against nature.’ However, we could also include here a variety of ‘bestial’ acts in this morally outlawed category, including the sexual perfidies of crone beings (see 6.8.3), and the ‘cannibal’ consumption of the bryologist by the Moss Witch.

separation” (Plumwood 1993:296)³⁸⁶. Ethics, which is an individualist—and thus solely human—matter, cannot apply to these undifferentiated meaty beings: “the sanctity attributed to individual human life ... contrasts radically with the completely instrumentalizable and replaceable status attributed to nonhuman life” (*ibid*). Ethical sanctity implies (individual) rational ownership of our (human) selves, bodies, lives, and afterlives: “politically as an enterprise we are running, experientially as a drama we are variously narrating, writing, acting and/or reading” (*ibid* 2007). Masters in every sense, we are alienated from not just ecological embedment and exchange, but from our own material (‘natural’) bodies, including their “finale of bodily disintegration” (*ibid* 2000:292). This alienation is most clearly demonstrated in our dread and revulsion of becoming ‘food’ for others: “predation on humans is monstrous, exceptionalised and subject to extreme retaliation. ... Horror is the wormy corpse, vampires sucking blood and sci-fi monsters trying to eat humans (*ibid* 2007)³⁸⁷. We might well add: horror is the Moss Witch preparing, planting, and ‘cultivating’ the bryologist’s body. This horror is particularly affective in Risbec’s (2010) *The Moss Witch* stop-motion animation, a thirteen-minute filmic adaptation of Maitland’s story³⁸⁸. In the literary tale the ‘consumption’ evokes unease, but not shock; perhaps because we struggle to imagine mosses as predatory beings (we are accustomed to gorier crone violence in fairy tales). Further, the Moss Witch’s irony provides comic relief, toning down the violence. Risbec’s (2010:09:17-10:00) heavily stylized ‘planting,’ however, is upsetting, evoking both shock and disgust, aided by the discordant non-diegetic music, ominous skyline, and the creepy wriggling mosses on the body of the corpse. The Moss Witch’s curse-like incantation likewise heightens the savagery of the act: “my dear mosses, my lovely liverworts; grow fast, grow strong, and *grow all the way into him, turn him into you, my pretty ones*” (*ibid* 09:17, emphasis added). At scene 10:01 the mosses and liverworts do just this: their writhing parasitical mass envelops and feasts on his body, until all that is left is “a green irregular shape among so many others” (Maitland 2009:37). He has been absorbed into the wildwood in a matter of minutes (in the literary story the absorption process takes a few weeks).

The Moss Witch’s perilous wildwood (just like Baba Yaga’s menacing forest, or *La Huesera*’s pitiless desert) reminds us of “the most basic feature of animal existence on planet earth—that we are food and that through death we nourish others” (Plumwood 2008a:323). Common western conceptualisations of death deny this truth, striving to preserve the master story of the difference of human ‘rationality’ (a “disembodied

³⁸⁶ ‘Meat’ is “a hyper-separated and degraded category with which we are unable to experience any form of identification” (Plumwood 2000:294).

³⁸⁷ The vicious extermination of predatory beings such as wolves (and note the folkloric connection between wolves and crones) is one sobering consequence of this human fear of ‘being edible’ (see Coleman 2004).

³⁸⁸ Stop-motion animator Risbec’s (2010) *The Moss Witch* featured at the ‘short film corner’ of the 2010 Cannes Film Festival. It is currently being hosted by Vimeo, and can be accessed in its entirety at <http://vimeo.com/12597253>.

spirit”) from nonhuman ‘nature’ even as the body disintegrates (*ibid*). Dualist thinking thus leads us to the “false choice” of the continuation of the spirit, in a separate, non-earthly afterlife (e.g. Christian beliefs); or of the total death of body and spirit, “the complete ending of the story of the material, embodied self” (e.g. “reductive materialist” or “finality” theses) (*ibid*). Neither death-narrative is satisfactory; in the former case we remain alienated from the ecosystem, whilst “loss of meaning and narrative continuity” renders the latter particularly tragic (*ibid*). Materially, these choices are reflected in burial practices that jealously guard the body from ‘nature,’ through “the strong coffin, conventionally buried well below the level of soil fauna activity,” the stone slab to deter predators, etc. (Plumwood 2000:294). A similar mentality (and materiality) produces the strong aversion commonly felt for posthumous donation of body parts (Papagaroufali 1999)³⁸⁹. Crone predation, however, nullifies both ‘spiritual afterlife’ and ‘reductive materialist’ discourses and brings us—violently—back to ‘earth.’ In the crone’s wildwood, humans are not masters, but *prey*. The master story, with its “frameworks of subjectivity” and “continuing narrative self” crumbles, and we “[glimpse] the world for the first time ... *as no longer my own*, an unrecognizable bleak landscape composed of raw necessity, indifferent to my life or death” (Plumwood 2008b, emphasis added). In this bleak landscape we must abandon our pretense of knowledge and control (i.e. our storytelling), and “acknowledge our own animality and ecological vulnerability” (*ibid*). This entails an acceptance of our *edibility*: “all embodied beings are edible (for something)” (Plumwood 1993:298). On death we will be ‘recycled’ in the ecosystem, forced to nourish other life.

The Moss Witch’s ‘planting’ is an explicit demonstration of this “ecological ontology” (*ibid*), which we might define as ‘decompiculture’ (figure 21). A neologism coined by entomologist Myles (1993), ‘decompiculture’ is “the growing or culturing of decomposer organisms by humans.” The linguistic connection to *agriculture* is intentional:

The term is intended to establish a contrast with the term agriculture. Agriculture encompasses the production systems based on the culture of herbaceous plants and herbivore animals. In effect, agriculture is human symbiosis with select organisms of the herb-herbivore-carnivore food chains comprising the live plant food web. Decompiculture, in contrast, is human symbiosis with organisms of the decomposer food chains comprising the dead plant-based, or plant cell wall-based detrital food web (*ibid*).

³⁸⁹ Papagaroufali (1999) offers an intriguing study of posthumous organ donation in the context of Greek Orthodox belief. What is immediately apparent are the manifold contradictions regarding body disposal. Greek Orthodox beliefs do not reject the body or oppose it to the soul (in the way of more ascetic forms of Christian doctrine). Further, “flesh must be eaten, not only by the earth and the worms *but also by the living [human]* through ... substitute,” in recognition of the fact that “it was God made *flesh* that redeemed mankind” (*ibid*, emphases added). Nonetheless, the taboos against organ donation are pervasive and further, “*recipients* tend to personify extracted organs and to view them as carrying the deceased’s emotional, moral, and physical characteristics” (*ibid* 294, emphasis added). Thus the spirit lingers, jealously guarding—and dominating—the human (natural) body.

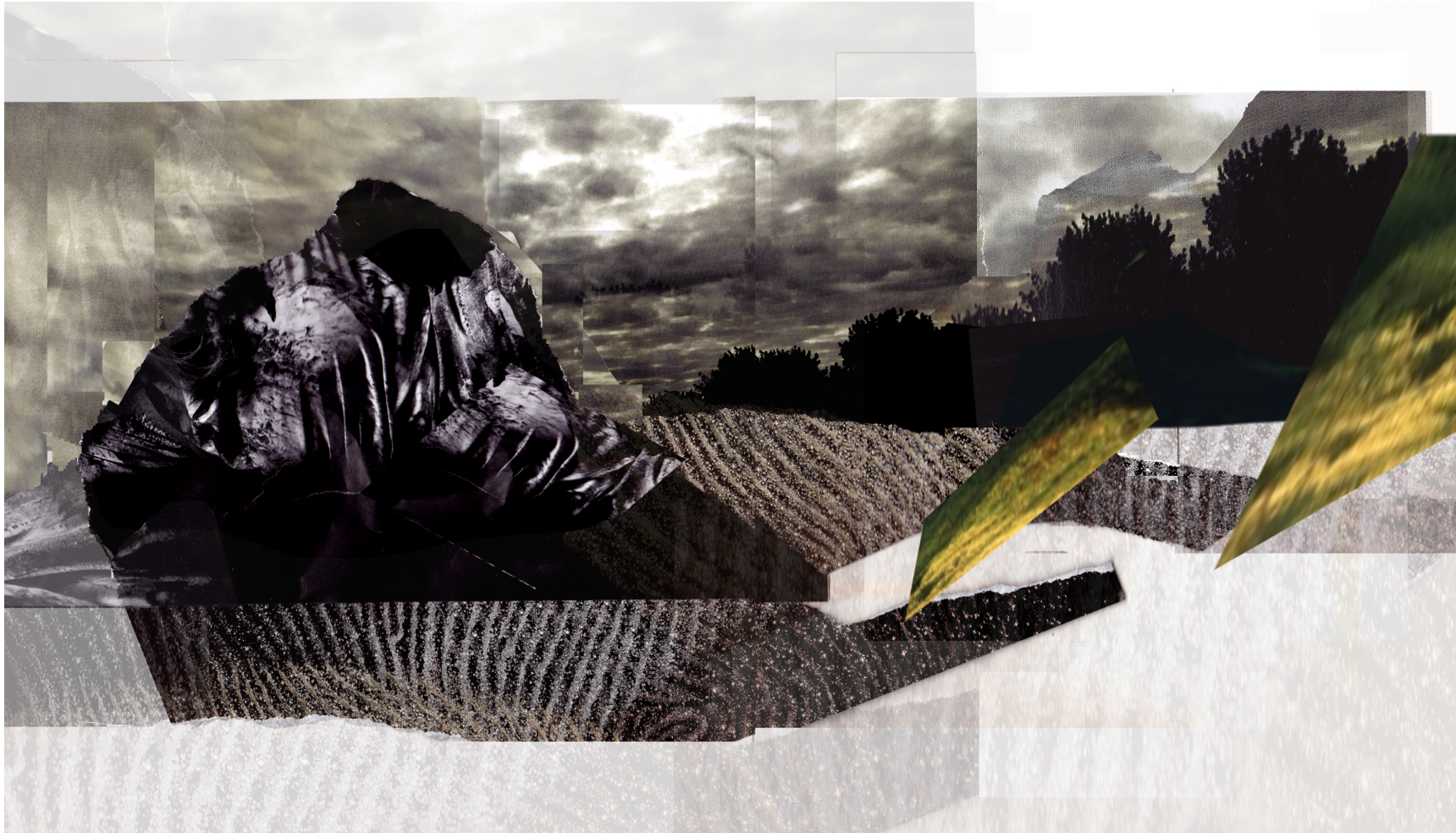


Figure 21. Moss Witch's landscaping of the wildwood: decompiculture. Collage.

Decompiculture is a sustainable practice of human recycling, whether of human waste or humans-as-waste (or from a non-anthropocentric perspective, humans-as-food). For Myles (*ibid*) practicing decompiculture is our best means of avoiding ecological disaster: “unless the now enormous human population with its unsustainable resource consumption patterns learns how to symbiose [sic] with the ancient decomposer communities then it will be impossible to sustain our populations and soil fertility much longer into the future.” It is notable how Myles (*ibid*) refers to such decomposer communities as *ancient*—a loaded word in the context of the primordial crone (see 7.4). More interestingly, he simultaneously associates ancient decomposer communities with the evolutionary *future*: “decompiculture may now initiate the dawn of a new leap forward in human evolution” (*ibid*); a notion that allows us to read crone tales as ‘progressive’ stories, and gives *Moss Witch* a particular relevance in Ryman’s science-fiction collection³⁹⁰.

Decompiculture offers us a powerful way to “promote ... death awareness and acceptance” (Lee 2011), as the Infinity Burial Project (IBP) proposes³⁹¹. This community provides practical applications for decompiculture, for example, their Mushroom Death Suit (or Infinity Burial Suit) prototype, which forms part of a larger “decompiculture kit” (a cultivation of various organisms that facilitates rapid bodily decay) (*ibid*). The mushroom suit, with its “embroidered ... thread infused with mushroom spores ... [resembling] the dendritic growth of mushroom mycelium” (*ibid*), resonates with the Moss Witch’s mossy biodegradable-art. IBP initiator, Lee (*ibid*), is moreover, “training” a predatory strain of fungi, the ‘Infinity Mushroom,’ “to consume her own body tissues and excretions—skin, hair, nails, blood, bone, fat, tears, urine, faeces, and sweat”; again, bringing the crone’s macabre death rites to mind³⁹². Lee’s (*ibid*) aim, to “[promote] ... a personal engagement with death and decomposition,” resonates with Plumwood’s (2008b) “animist death ... story,” which recognises human death as part of the wider chain of *reciprocity* in the predatory-driven food chain. For Plumwood (*ibid*), animism points to the continuity of the human with the ecosystem, and to our (human) “entry to a sacred ecological community.” The burial site, when arranged as decompicultural practice, becomes: “a site of union with the prior sacred presences of the earth rather than as set apart from it, and can honour the dissolution of the human into the more-than-human flux” (*ibid*).

³⁹⁰ Note that fairy tale crones are present from the ‘beginning,’ presiding at the birth of human individuals, and the origins of the species, to the ‘end,’ where they assist in (if not initiate) individual deaths, and outlast the human species. Where the trickster is a figure who comes and goes, and has little relation to time (unless we compare him to quantum time, after Barad 2010), the crone precedes and exceeds the human timespan, and indeed *frames* human temporality (individually, i.e. the time of finitude, and as a species, i.e. apocalyptic time).

³⁹¹ The Infinity Burial Project can be accessed online at: <http://infinityburialproject.com/>.

³⁹² I.e. the wider crone practices of laying out dead bodies and other burial preparations (see 6.4).

7.5 Queer home

Decompiculture marks our kinship (and indeed symbiosis) with other animals, plant-life, inanimate beings, etc., in the eternal food chain. Further, it structures this kinship as a “gift-exchange ... a sacrament of sharing and exchange of life in which all ultimately participate as food for others, and the ‘moreness’ of all beings is recognised” (*ibid* 1993:299). The “balanced predator ... [and] prey identity” of this gift-exchange, “[brings] ecological wisdom ... an equivocal relationship of doubleness [predator/prey] that can never be available for simple celebration unmixed with a sense of tragedy and gratitude” (*ibid* 314). This ‘sacred’ account, with its bedrock of care, friendship, and love (Alaimo 1994), is somewhat removed from the pragmatic, macabre, and *ironic* planting practice of the Moss Witch³⁹³. It tends to the romantic and the mystical (and certainly the idealistic), attributing worryingly teleological “mind-like” (albeit not of ‘consciousness’) properties, and “agency” to the sphere of ‘nature’ (Bannon 2009:42-3). Nature becomes ‘substantialised’ as a holistic being with distinct ‘properties’; and acts of representation are required to flesh out its teleological momentum (*ibid* 46). Whilst this account undermines “‘the human’ as an autonomous, rational being who provides an Archimedean point for knowing about the world” (Pollock 2011:235), its ‘return’ to animism has unfortunate primitivist connotations. Plumwood (1993:8) argues that we should not “have to renounce the achievements of culture and technology to inhabit the enchanted forest”; however, her feminist affinity with nature has more success in figuring culture as natural, than in “figuring nature as something made, not something existing ‘out there’ in some pure form” (Alaimo 1994:145). Even her attempts to ‘return’ the human to the ecosystem are drawn back into the irresistible dualist master story, which structures so much of environmentalist thinking. We see this particularly clearly in her account of her world-shattering experience of being crocodile prey:

In the exaggeration of the crocodile’s size, in portraying the encounter as a heroic wrestling match, and especially in sexualization ... which encouraged male identification with the crocodile and interpretation of the attack as sadistic rape ... I had to wait nearly a decade before I could repossess my story and write about it in my own terms (Plumwood 2008b)³⁹⁴.

When Plumwood (*ibid*) does feel able to tell her own story of the *continuity* of humans in the ecological food chain, a second problem arises. Her insistence on a broad model of gift-exchange, to counter the equally broad separatist master narrative, “raises many questions about *local*

³⁹³ See 6.7 on attempts to rehabilitate the crone figure.

³⁹⁴ I do not intend this as a criticism of Plumwood’s insightful and thought-provoking work. Rather, I suggest we *build on* her account, looking to the figure of the crone to overcome any residual traces of romanticism, representationalism, and humanism.

demarcations of difference and continuity” (Alaimo 1996, emphasis added). Recognition of our simultaneous difference from and kinship with nature, whilst vital, “does not assist us in making ethical or political decisions about what constitutes continuity and where the lines of difference (albeit nonhierarchical lines) should be drawn” (*ibid*). When we attempt to draw these lines, we realise, further, the theses of reciprocity and gift-exchange gloss over the often-extreme violence and loss (and mourning) that accompanies many ‘ecological’ deaths, and which may have less ‘positive’ affects than the milder stirrings of ‘tragedy’ and ‘gratitude’ (above).

We need to embrace a more nuanced, less romantic account of kinship, then, that avoids attributing teleological properties to nature (thus remodelling the ‘natural’ realm once again in our own human image). This would entail a shift from “grounding politics in affinity (which often slides into essentialist definitions)” to “[grounding] affinity in politics” (Alaimo 1994:150)³⁹⁵. Haraway’s (1992) conceptualisation of “artifactualism” suggests a way forward, positing the cultural, artifactual, *made* (as opposed to pre-existing) quality of ‘nature,’ and thus suggesting a way to “[recognize] the agency of nature without personifying it into a mirror of human actions” (Alaimo 1994:146; Haraway 1992). For Haraway (1988, 1992:298), an appropriate image of ‘artifactual nature’ would be the folk figure of the Coyote *trickster*, with its “coding” and “protean” aspects; a notion seconded by ecocritic Morton (2007:31), who rejects any use of the concept ‘nature’ for this very reason:

Never mind that for many cultures nature is a trickster, and literary illusion would aptly summon its ever-changing, elusive ‘essence.’

Rejecting the term and theorizing of ‘nature’ as “oppressively normative” (Garrard 2010:16), unavoidably consumerist—for “environmentalisms *in general* are consumerist” (Morton 2007:114)—and fundamentally distancing, Morton pursues ‘ecology’ through more deconstructive methods, to which the trickster lends a certain appeal. Tricksters are master hermeneuts as we have seen (see 4.4.3), and further their bodily disunity and hybridity bring out the more painful, violent, and *strange* (and estranging) aspects of the ‘natural.’ However, approaching the trickster for clarity(!) on environmental issues is, in many ways, a misunderstanding of this figure, whose purview is rather the (mythic) community, and its boundary-making practices (chapter 4). Environmentalist scholars who embrace tricksters draw primarily on one branch of trickster theorizing, the cultural-hermeneutical (see 4.4.3); and even here they discard the clearly *societal* application of trickster polysemy and word play. Cronon, however, offers us greater insight into the ‘worlding’ of humanity, both scoring a line between human and natural with their storytelling practices,

³⁹⁵ Alaimo (1994) is speaking specifically on the affinity between *feminism* and nature, however her argument has wider relevance.

and subsequently undermining this division through their ‘wilding’ practices. Further, their recurrent relationship with the ‘natural’ makes these figures politically potent. As Alaimo (1996) convincingly argues:

Cultural struggles often gain more ground by articulating their aims with already potent ideological elements, rather than attempting to create an entirely original vision ... ‘counter-discourse does not arise as a pure autonomous radical language embodying the purity of a new politics. Rather it arises from within the dominant discourse and learns to inhabit it from the inside out.’”

Given “‘nature’ and the ‘natural’ are such potent discursive nodes,” and the ‘feminine’ likewise figures so strongly in these discourses (*ibid*), it would be foolish to neglect the environmentalist import of the fairy tale crone.

The crone’s connection with nature offers us an understanding that exceeds the word play and masking games of the trickster (chapters 4 and 5); and this understanding has affective resonance, and consequently transformational potential. Contrary to the fears of Haraway (2002) and Morton (2002), the crone’s ‘natural’ (and more damning still in this discourse, ‘wild’ realm) is not a romantic site of dwelling, in either the ‘authentic,’ ‘heroic,’ or ‘gothic’ guises. Indeed, the Moss Witch makes a mockery of ‘authentic dwelling,’ with her conservational, cultivation, ‘imperialist,’ and burial practices. Similarly, heroic dwelling, of the bryologist’s manly ilk, has short shrift in her wildwood, earning this poor unfortunate a speedy death. Finally the ‘gothic,’ with its subtler, ‘back door’ language of estranged dwelling, is nullified in the brisk, pragmatic, and ‘salty’ (crude) language and behaviour of the crone. There is little awe to be found in the Moss Witch’s childish ‘art,’ as she ‘colours by number’³⁹⁶, the bryologist’s dead body. Other fairy tale crones, with their bawdy sexual behaviour (e.g. we can think back to Coover’s disgusting granny in 6.7.3), likewise shatter the sacred distance of the sublime and the gothic, and make a mockery out the ‘elevation’ and ‘consumption’ of the ‘strange,’ including the ‘disgusting,’ or the ‘meaningless’ (Morton 2007). I refer here to Hillard’s (2009) elevation of gothic nature, but also to Morton’s (2007) troubling account of “ecology without nature.” Whilst Morton (*ibid*, 2008, 2010, 2011) claims to be overcoming (as far as such a thing is possible) romantic discourses of ‘environment’ and ‘Nature’ with his “ecology without a world,” and “mesh” structure of the ecological, his fascination and celebration of the weird, the strange, the terrifying, etc., such as Coleridge’s albatross, and “a thousand thousand slimy things” (2007:157), is unconvincing. It is suffused not with the politicized ‘queerness’ (‘queering’) that he claims to support (e.g. Morton 2010), but with

³⁹⁶ Obviously, the bryologist’s body is not numbered for her colouring! However, this phrase accurately evokes the simplicity and childlikeness of the crone’s very limited, and ironically representational, artistic abilities. She chooses mosses based on their colour correspondence to the bryologist’s hair, their textural correspondence to his genital hair, and their practical uses (e.g. *Aplodon wormskioldit*, which grows on rotting carcasses).

the unfathomable strangeness of the gothic, complete with its Christian, self-abnegating undertones. For example, he names his “transition from ... an ideological fixation with Nature ...[to] ... a fully queer ecology,” “*dark ecology*” (*ibid* 2010:279). More disturbing is his definition of ‘dark ecology’ as “*profound* yet ironic, neither nihilistic nor solipsistic, but aware like a character in a *noir movie* of her or his entanglement in and with life-forms. Think *Blade Runner* or *Frankenstein*” (*ibid*, emphasis added). Later in the same article, he leans heavily on Levinas’s quasi-transcendental ethics to state his own ethics of ‘dark ecology’ as a “visualizing the unbeautiful, the uncold, the ‘lame,’ the unsplendid” (*ibid* 280). The irony here is his unacknowledged (unrecognized?) debt to a Christian ethics of hospitality, which also pervades, at an admittedly subconscious, and reversed/‘negative’ level, the gothic imagination, with its underlying fear of *rejection* by God, and *ejection* from Nature (Eden).

Common to each of these strands of romantic environmentalist thinking is an unproblematized geography of ‘place.’ Whilst Morton (2007) struggles against the circularity of place with its ‘environment’ connotations (i.e. the topological geometries of ‘enclosure’ and ‘surround’), other ‘nature’ thinkers have celebrated ‘place’ and ‘dwelling’ for their ethical potential, and have attempted to redraw place along more dynamic lines. Place, as a “form of internal cohesion distinct from that around it” (Jones and Cloke 2002:9), offers the potential for an experience of “richness,” temporal rootedness (albeit within flux) (*ibid*), and an ethics of hospitality. To understand this, we need to trouble the commonsense notion of place as “carved out of a pre-existing spatial container” (*ibid* 76). Instead of this ‘niche’ imagery, places become understood as habitual and relational: “created and maintained through the everyday actions of everyday life” (*ibid*). For Jones and Cloke (*ibid* 78, emphasis added), “it is the *unevenness* of socio-ecological formations ... which renders the world as a series of places,” and as such, places are constantly shifting in response to this unevenness; they are in flux, but with enough “coherence [to] sustai[n] them as places” (*ibid* 79). Dwelling in the flux of place thus becomes a matter of performative “emergence” (*ibid* 80), through the “ongoing togetherness of beings and things which make up landscapes and places, and which bind together nature and culture over time” (*ibid*). Further, dwelling is not a choice, but an always already ontological structure of our being on earth: “dwelling is the manner by which we are on the earth” (Vycinas 1969, in Jones and Cloke 2002:82). Beyond this, dwelling has ethical resonances: it is the *proper* manner by which we are on earth—a “sparing of the earth” (*ibid*), which is respectful of the agencies of nonhuman others in their distinct locales.

The wildwood is neither romantic paradise nor gothic terror. However, nor does it resonate with place-derived notions of respectful ‘sparing’ and

dwelling. The crone's human/nonhuman/superhuman abode is not a holistic locale of 'welcoming' or 'respectful' relationships. We might even note a certain *stasis* here, for the wildwood is marked by its inhospitability and closed boundaries, as well as its 'wilding' affect. We can say the same of the relation (connection) of 'gift-exchange' (e.g. Plumwood's 2008a, 2010 animist death thesis), and the more violent relationship of 'ecological imperialism' (Crosby 1986) that structure both the romantically and biologically derived interpretations of ecological discourse. These theories render all life forms ontologically connected (and implicitly equally *empowered* on a biological, albeit not cultural, level), in the great preexisting web of 'natural' being—a notion that sits uneasily with the stubbornly reclusive crone figure, who will kill to preserve her wild 'kingdom.' The varying discourses of the relational more troublingly refuse an 'out' for the *non-relation* (the aporetic relation), and fail to acknowledge the social (human and nonhuman) 'outcast,' which the crone so often evokes with her geographies of self-excommunication, anti-sociality, abjection (to the point of being a 'pollutant'), and fierce territoriality (Harrison 2007; see 1.4, 6.7.3). The 'healthiness' of holistic and vitalist relational discourses is further suspect in a crone geography that bears much in common with the abjection and 'unhealthiness' of the queer (see 6.7.3).

Turning to alternative ideologies of 'natural health,' crone geographies likewise debunk those resonances of nurturing and 'healing' which structure so many ecofeminist accounts, and which Plumwood (1993:10) rightly disparages as the "angel in the ecosystem" mentality³⁹⁷. The Moss Witch is neither particularly womanly, and nor is the wildwood particularly feminine—and certainly not nurturing. Indeed, where femininity is all too often equated with productiveness, which in patriarchal society equates to motherhood, and specifically motherhood within the confines of the nuclear family (Krekula 2007), the barren crone cannot help but disrupt this nurturing feminine discourse. Beyond this, 'nature' itself (the wildwood) is not especially natural, or healthy. The mosses are lush, green, abundant and prolific (Maitland 2009), but they are also supernaturally sinister, and there is a blot, or a 'stain,' in the green undergrowth: the decomposing corpse of a dead man which may well "contaminate" the moss life around (*ibid* 36). Beyond this we must question the naturalness of a wooded glade without 'weeds.' If this is a natural wilderness to the bryologist, then it is simultaneously a garden to the crone. There is, moreover, nothing 'natural' about the crone. As we have seen, the Moss Witch is an explorer who has journeyed to this wildwood many centuries ago. She is a conservationist, cultured, and erudite (with her scientific knowledge of mosses, laboratory techniques, death rites, and decompicultural practices), a knitter (her homemade jumper and

³⁹⁷ The link between 'nature' and the 'feminine' is forged by the dualistic master story, and thus is grounded on erasure and oppression (Plumwood 1993). As such, we should be wary of celebrating this connection, at the same time as recognizing its political potency (Alaimo 1996).

gloves are hand knitted, one presumes by herself), and on rare occasions a social being (although her territoriality trumps her sociability and hospitality). The Moss Witch tells little of her personal history. However, her body is marked by the passing of (evolutionary) time, with her unsettling facial skin scored by wrinkles “that run up and down instead of across” (*ibid* 34): a mark of her non-vascular status. Further, the tragedies of life, in particular her loneliness, have wounded her body, which lacks four fingers—the Moss Witch having cut them off in an earlier (failed) attempt to clone herself, for she “did so want a daughter” (*ibid*). Mortimer-Sandilands’s (2005) queer ecology best encapsulates the abnormality of Moss Witch and wildwood, and beyond this, the unhomey and disruptive ‘nature’ of crones. The murderous, wounded Moss Witch, and the vicious, iron-toothed and iron-legged Baba Yagas, are not welcoming and hospitable beings; but nor are they solely terrifying monsters. Baba Yaga might attempt to eat you, but if you act prudently, you may earn her help, and the benefit of her enormous wisdom and experience. The Moss Witch is lonely; she risks her hard-won secrecy to speak with a young bryologist, who eventually betrays her trust—to his detriment. It is not healthiness or perfection that characterizes the crone’s pedagogical ecology. Rather, it is through “their ecological defilement” (or abjection) that “these wounded landscapes [or crone geographies] end up teaching [us]” (Mortimer-Sandilands 2005). For example, Grover (1997, in Mortimer-Sandilands 2005) travels to the “north woods” to seek healing, but instead finds a ‘nature diseased.’ She realises these (un)natural woods:

Offered me an unanticipated challenge, a spiritual discipline: to appreciate them, I needed to learn how to see their scars, defacement, and artificiality, and then beyond those to their strengths—their historicity, the difficult beauties that underlay their deformity (*ibid*).

The challenge lies in “coming to love the north woods not in spite, but because, of their wounds” (Mortimer-Sandilands 2005). In a heart-wrenching experience with AIDS (from which she flees to the north woods in the first place), Grover discovers that the disease-ridden “macerated” leg of her dying friend “did not look like a leg. It look like *freshly-turned soil, dark and ruptured*” (Grover 1997, in Mortimer-Sandilands 2005, emphasis added). It is both ironic and poignant that:

She can see in a festering wound the terrifying beauty of flesh turning to soil, and she can also thus see in a clear-cut [sic] *both the ravages of capitalist extraction and the vivacity of jack pines, aspens and poplars* (Mortimer-Sandilands 2005, emphasis added).

In the festering leg of a dying friend, no doubt a stinking, agonized mess that must be pragmatically washed, treated with antiseptics, and bound with clean bandages daily, the human (including ‘capitalist’ exploitations) and the natural finally entangle convincingly (figure 22). This is the



Figure 22: Moss Witch's landscaping: queer home. Collage.

home that the crone draws us to, for her ‘removed’ wilderness is a mirage that is fundamentally *not for us*, except as a temporary holding place for learning (ironically) how to be human. Home is the beside of a friend who needs us desperately, for practical aid and for comfort in her proximity to death; and the rotting flesh that recalls us to our always already naturalness and belonging in the world. This is not a ‘Jesus’ story, or a Levinasian cautionary tale, or even an ecofeminist womanly story, of tending to the dying, sick, and lame. Rather, crones tell us a story of pragmatic entanglements and practical *doing*, which is both hospitable and inhospitable, cruel and kind, accepting and rejecting, successful, or not. The ruined leg, the bandages, the fleeing to the north woods, and the reluctant but determined return; likewise, the badly knitted jumper on a strange nonhuman/human being, mossy gloves, yoghurt cultures, glowing green mosses, Latin names, ancient oaks, and a foxy-haired bryologist: all exist on the same plane, all are the same world. This world is not a pre-formed enclosure of identifiable beings in struggling or sympathetic relation, but a world where times, spaces, places, and beings, arises within ‘encounters’ (Barad 2007). If there is exteriority in the tale of human-nonhuman (or of science-nature), it is an “exteriority *within*”:

Relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions. Crucially, then, intra-actions enact *agential separability*—the condition of exteriority-within-phenomena (*ibid* 140, emphasis added; see 3.1).

That is, we become human, and separated agents, at the moment we meet the crone, and she tells us ‘our’ story: a nationalist fairy tale of ‘authentic folk,’ and a racial (human) genealogy that is troublingly inconsistent. Alternatively, we meet the crone and we learn that our collection jars, mapping practices, plastic gloves, fancy lab work, and fancier theories are more-than-human, more-than-dead/alive, more-than-‘our story.’ In the AIDS-destroyed leg of a friend we see the soil, and we are thankful—or distraught—to be at home: our home, and more-than-our home.

7.6 Summary

When you enter the Moss Witch’s realm you so do at your peril (Maitland 2009). This is not because Moss Witches, and crones more generally, are demonic predatory beings, or Goddesses of Death (see 6.4, 6.5). Nor are crones jealous witches who steal life—that is *youth*—in their insatiable quest for immortality (see 7.3)³⁹⁸. Nor does the Moss Witch offer us a symbolic geography of human finitude, whether this is the Othered and unproductive realm of (universalized) very old age with its gradual decline into death (see 6.7), or the “bleak landscape” of

³⁹⁸ In this understanding, as we saw in 6.3, the crone is ‘humanized,’ and constructed within a social discourse of patriarchy.

indifference that precedes a more violent death of predation (Plumwood 2008b). Rather, the peril we face in the Moss Witch's wildwood is that of a fundamentally disruptive *entanglement*, which has unpredictable outcomes (death or wisdom, for example, for the protagonist of crone tales). The crone mocks ideologically derived knowledges, aspirations, and fears, and offers us a pragmatic geography of "what works" (Estés 2010). It is this that we forget, to our peril, when we stray off the path and into the woods.

Chapter 8. Concluding thoughts...

8.1 Introduction

8.2 At the end of the road...

8.3 A critical accounting

8.4 Emergent geographies

8.5 Final words

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis with a summary of its main challenge, aims and approach, followed by a brief account of where we are at the end of this long research journey, with reference to the research considerations outlined in the introduction (1.5). Next, I critically examine the key achievements of the thesis at greater depth, including its potential to breathe fresh life into the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies, moving it beyond the two currently dominant paradigms of historicism (including historicism and new historicism), and various identity-oriented ideology critiques. I subsequently draw attention to the less successful aspects of the research, and proffer suggestions for tackling these issues in future projects. Finally, I consider some of the geographies that might emerge as a result of this sustained engagement with fairy tales and storytelling, which offer fruitful potential avenues for future research.

8.2 At the end of the road...

The key proposition of the thesis is that fairy tales are enchanting geographical stories, which affectively materialize space-time in important and often overlooked ways. I have explored this proposition through the geographical enchantments of trickster and crone figures in contemporary fairy tales and storytelling, including academic retellings of fairy tales. Given the paucity of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research in this field, the main challenge of the thesis has been to adequately theorise the relationship between fairy tales, storytelling, and geography. I have addressed this in two key ways: by considering how the orality and mythic language of fairy tales gathers a mythic community, which grounds subsequent sociopolitical mythopoeia (Nancy 1991); and by engaging two recurrent fairy tale motifs (i.e. trickster and crone) as enchanting (de)territorializing refrains, which affectively (dis)organise “distributions of space, a distribution in space” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:344).

This geographical retelling of fairy tales has a number of consequences for both fairy tale and geographic scholarship, and it worth briefly examining these before engaging with the key successes and shortcomings of the thesis at greater depth. Thus, first, the thesis re-establishes the importance of the recurrent folkloric figures that populate fairy tales, and establishes a more productive way of addressing these from a nonrepresentationalist and non-essentialising perspective, i.e. as refrains (see 1.5). Second, it evokes “the ‘outwardlookingness’ of a spatial imagination” (Massey 2005:189), and thus problematises the implicit spatial assumptions of much fairy tale scholarship. Vitally, the thesis

undermines the prevalent literary understandings of space as background, container or setting. In doing so, it unfolds new geographically-derived areas of enquiry, including: the relationships between fairy tales, storytelling, and the *polis*; the practices and processes of urban defacement and urbicide in contemporary fairy stories; the entanglements of nature and culture in, and through, fairy tales. Third, it affords geographical insight into contemporary definitions and classifications of fairy tales, which tend to assume an essentialised fairy tale form and content, and in particular into the widely accepted *Motif-Index* classification (Thompson 1932-37). It challenges us to readdress ‘motifs’ from a non-reductionist angle as ‘refrains,’ with affective as well as symbolic force. Fourth, the thesis confronts the prevalent representationalist methodologies in fairy tale scholarship with more ‘lively and ‘worldly’ research approaches, which exceed identity-based critique to perform fairy stories as enchanting geographic ‘matterings.’ This performance, in turn, draws our attention to the fundamental instability of fairy tales, and therefore, fifth, opens out a ‘research at the limits’ of the genre, where the transformational potential, enduring mystery, and indeed *endurance*, of these stories is most apparent. Finally, this geographical account directly addresses fairy tale scholars’ concerns with the practices and possibilities of interdisciplinary work (e.g. Hasse’s 2004), and offers a sustained engagement with the theories and practices of multi- and post-disciplinarity.

Looking now to the sub-discipline of cultural geography, the thesis offers a (rare) convergent account of fairy tales with storytelling, in contrast to the more characteristic disparate forays into oral traditions, place-bound folklore motifs and meanings, and geographies of storytelling, etc. (see 1.2). Consequently, it unfolds new socially and politically potent areas of enquiry. It specifically speaks to three nascent and developing bodies of research. First, it contributes to the project of ‘new geographies of storytelling,’ furthering their challenge to the grand ideological narratives of the ‘cultural turn’ by developing a strongly affective storytelling-in-practice, which is alive to the social, political, and ethical possibilities—and limitations—of fairy tales and storytelling more widely. Second, it explores ‘academic storytelling’ within the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of literary geography, addressing and interrogating key debates concerning ‘metadisciplinarity,’ and the performances of space and spacing across disciplinary borders. Finally, the thesis engages nonrepresentational theory (NRT), critiquing and refining the sometimes inconsistent theorising of this material-discursive geographical field, problematising NRT’s fixation with ‘epistemological uncertainty,’ and pushing for a more radical refocusing on ‘ontological indeterminacy’ in the encounter with the (research) Other.

8.3 A critical accounting

“It is usually at the edges where the great tectonic plates of theory meet and shift that we find the most dramatic developments and upheavals” (Plumwood 1993:1).

Plumwood (1993:1) posits the greatest developments of knowledge are to be found at the “edges” of the monolithic assemblages of theories and paradigms that comprise disciplinary research, where they “meet and shift.” This thesis traverses exactly such ‘edges’ and occupies the interstices between various theoretical and disciplinary positions in order to produce new, albeit unstable, material-discursive theoretical ‘arrangements’ (see 3.2.3). The primary ‘meeting’ and ‘shifting’ in the thesis takes place at the edges of the opposing epistemological paradigms of representationalism and nonrepresentationalism. I entangle critical hermeneutical interpretation with a performative retelling of the stories in a bold move that leads to productive developments in theory—but also raises a number of difficulties. Following Barad’s (2007:25) multidisciplinary approach, I attempt to harness these paradigms in an anti-systematic and non-aggressive manner, which “remains rigorously attentive to important details of specialised arguments within a given field, in an effort to foster constructive engagements across (and a reworking of) disciplinary boundaries.” Adopting such a “strategy of excess and categorical scandal” enables me to “implod[e] ideas of policing social science and wor[k] against the inscription of another ‘regime of truth’” (Lather 1993:677; see 1.1). Beyond mere provocation, the main hope of the thesis has therefore been to “challenge the rules of the scientific game” for the sake of stimulating “alternative circuits of knowledge” (Smith 1998:311), and developing innovative and productive possibilities for theorising a geography of fairy tales and storytelling.

The greatest success of the thesis has been the development of an innovative *methodological* apparatus, which straddles the representationalist and nonrepresentationalist ‘paradigms,’ and is accordingly well situated to address fairy tales as symbolically rich, but also as ‘worldly’ and enchanting, stories. To briefly summarise, the methodological apparatus comprises three separate, and somewhat contradictory, approaches. Hermeneutical textual analysis provides a rigorous interpretation of the symbolic traditions of the fairy tale refrains, whilst remaining open to their ‘playful’ enchantments. An experimental visual collage methodology, meanwhile, offers a new point of access to, and way of understanding, the stories, which is sensitive to the Otherness and ultimate mystery of these enchanting tales. Further, it poses a strong challenge to the logocentricism of academic theorising, with its evocation of the affective geographical enchantments of fairy tales, and undermining of rationalist interpretation. Genealogical analysis, finally, destabilises the ‘meanings’ made of protean folkloric figures, including the meanings made within

this thesis, as it traces the varied ‘storying’ of the trickster and crone within interdisciplinary scholarship, and holds theory accountable for the material-discursive ‘matterings’ of these fairy tale refrains.

The methodological apparatus has yielded two particularly fruitful possibilities for a geographical theorising of fairy tales and storytelling, which are worth examining in greater detail. Foremost of these is the achievement of a ‘livelier’ approach to the stories, which presents a cogent challenge to the somewhat moribund and deadening theoretical stances of historicism and new historicism, and identity-oriented ideology critiques (including feminist, Marxist, postcolonial, etc.) that dominate fairy tale scholarship. These theoretical stances have tended to cordon off fairy tales (fantastical texts) from society (material reality), rendering them transparent, like a visual and linguistic lens placed over the ‘knowable’ world (see 1.5). Indeed, for many fairy tale scholars the meaning of these stories lies on this symbolic discursive level, and the task of scholarship is to “break the magic spell” (Bacchilega 1999:8) in order to access the truths that lie ‘behind’ this distorting lens. In contrast, this thesis refuses to sacrifice the enchantment of fairy tales to such ‘demythologizing’ scholarship, or systematise the stories for ideological gain. Indeed, it understands “the debunking of myths [to be] ... an empty activity,” where:

The denunciation of ‘myths,’ of ‘images,’ of ‘media,’ and of ‘what seems’ ... is part of the mythological system of media of their images and their seeming. Which is to say that the veritable *myth*, if there is one ... holds itself back in a more subtle retreat, from where it directs, perhaps, the whole scene (if necessary, as the myth of the denunciation of myths) (Nancy cited in Deppman 1997:18).

Looking to the history of academic engagements with fairy tales, we see that the demythologizing obsession evolved out of a genuine need to challenge the “unrepresentative canon” through the “reinstatement of silenced narratives,” and to counter the bourgeois morality and norms of the genre by “the rewriting of material in a manner which is true to the utopian spirit of the genre rather than the historically dominant letter” (Benson 2000:118). An unfortunate consequence of this need has been that the bulk of fairy tale scholarship over the past few decades has been caught up in futile questions about ‘authenticity’ with regards to the form and content of fairy tales, and specifically the contentious and irresolvable definitional question of “what would constitute a proper expression of the genre” (*ibid*). The sometimes-fierce debate surrounding this latter question has resulted in the propagation of a regrettable tautology: “*this is what the fairy tale should be, because this is what the fairy tale really is*” (*ibid*, emphasis added). Zipes’ (2012) most recent publication is a pertinent example of this circular reasoning. Searching for the origins of fairy tales amongst “ancient societies” (*ibid* xii), he draws on cultural anthropology, evolutionary psychology, biology, cognitive

philosophy, linguistics, and memetics to trace a “cultural evolution” of fairy tales and storytelling from “shared experiences” in an orally structured “prehistory” to the present day literary form (*ibid* 7). In so doing, he takes vitriolic issue with “some deplorable scholarly endeavours that have sought to dismiss the fairy tale’s oral roots and reduce it to a genre that privileges print over orality” (*ibid* xii). Zipes (*ibid*) considers these literary-based theorists to be dangerously shortsighted, and roundly condemns them in a two part Appendix dedicated to this task³⁹⁹. Despite acknowledging the murky origins and fundamental mystery of fairy tales, he (*ibid* 2) confidently locates their meaning in their ‘believability,’ and thus practical relevance and usefulness to society:

Though many ancient tales might seem magical, miraculous, fanciful, superstitious, or unreal to us, people believed them, and these people were and are not much different from people today who believe in religions, miracles, cults, nations, and notions such as ‘free’ democracies that have little basis in reality.

‘Enchantment’ in this account is somewhat perverse; like the ‘enchantments’ of religion and patriotism, the magic of fairy tales is reduced to superstition, which “has little basis in reality”, but is rather a consequence of humankind’s psychological “disposition to action—to transform the world and make it more adaptable to human needs, while we also try to change and make ourselves fit for the world” (*ibid*). Thus for Zipes (*ibid*) the proper expression of fairy tales as an oral storytelling for the ‘people’ (“what the fairy tale should be”) derives from the ‘authentic’ origins of these stories (“what the fairy tale really is”) Benson (2000:118).

For Benson (2000), the key problem with such theorising, quite apart from its tautology, is the (sometimes deliberately) deadening effect it has on fairy tales, to the extent that these enchanting stories are stripped of their affective power, and are presented as having no force beyond that which we, the subject (‘receiver’ or critic), bestow upon them. Rejecting these disenchanting stances (both historicism and ideology-based critique), I have experimented with more sensitive, nonrepresentationalist research approaches in this thesis, which strive to evoke and embrace, rather than ‘explain away,’ the “sheer alterity” of fairy tales (*ibid*)⁴⁰⁰. This has necessitated a purposefully ‘light’ touch, in the “spirit of play rather than

³⁹⁹ More problematically in terms of this thesis, is Zipes’ (*ibis* xiii) evolutionary approach to witch figures, which he theorises historically as “patriarchal reutilizations of ancient goddesses” (see chapter 6).

⁴⁰⁰ Of course, this problem of ‘deadening’ is also rife throughout cultural geography research, and it is one of the key propositions of nonrepresentational theory to eschew these static and weighty accounts for a more ‘livening’ performance of ‘knowing’ (see 1.4).

programme” (*ibid* 2010:176), which is particularly important given the powerfully resonant and nonsensical trickster and crone figures under consideration. Indeed, these figures are typical of a genre that continually eludes captivity by the ‘logocratic,’ sense-making academy’ (see 3.2.2):

For all its alleged transparency of meaning, the fairy tale has a relationship with sense that is far from untroubled—or at least that is the case with those fairy tales worth the name. Fairy tales arrive as mutant texts, resonant with suggestions of meaning, but rather resistant, in themselves, to being pinned down (*ibid* 177).

This is not, of course, to suggest these stories are fundamentally sense-less (in terms of ‘meaningless’) (*ibid*); rather, the thesis convincingly demonstrates that ‘sense’ (and meaning) is a broader matter than commonly supposed, which exceeds the symbolic register to include pre-subjective and nonhuman forces of affect. Thus, the thesis experiments with a collage-based retelling of the stories in order to ‘look-with’ the tales (see Wylie 2005), and tap into their affective force and linguistic excesses. Additionally, it constructs genealogies that trace the ‘metamorphic becomings’ (see Woodward and Jones 2005) of the fairy tale trickster and crone refrains. In sum, the thesis has “redirect[ed] attention from the posited meaning towards the material compositions and conduct” of fairy tales (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002:439), taking a ‘line of flight’ beyond essentialist debates, in the hopes of breathing life back into these enchanting refrains, and into the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies more generally⁴⁰¹.

In addition to breathing ‘life’ back into the crone and trickster refrains, the thesis has engaged with the interdisciplinary ‘*matterings*’ of these refrains. This ‘worldlier’ aspect of the research represents the second key success of the thesis. The third proposition of the thesis, laid out in the Introduction (see 1.1), was of the messy and entangled nature of the “material practices of knowing and becoming” (Barad 2007:89). Thus the thesis aimed not merely *reflect* on the tales, or ‘look-with’ these stories (evoke their affectivities), but further to openly acknowledge the *act* of scholarship as “a material practice of engagement as part of the world in its differential becoming,” which *matters* (Barad 2007:89). Thus, incorporated in the methodological apparatus is a genealogical approach, which draws its inspiration from Nietzschean (and subsequently Deleuzian and Foucauldian) genealogical efforts, and Barad’s (2007) ‘diffractive’ engagement with *how* exclusions in things/concepts/etc. come to ‘matter.’ Vitaly, this nonrepresentationalist approach has enabled me to locate my own theorising as one of the many ‘wills to power’ that

⁴⁰¹ As I note in the introduction, there are currently a (small) number of scholars taking fairy tale enchantment and affectivity seriously, with Anna Kérchy’s (2011) research at the forefront of such work (see 1.5). However, the wealth of fairy tale scholarship still employs historicist and ideology-based critique to debunk the ‘magic’ of these tales.

have directed and shaped the ‘matterings’ of the trickster and crone refrains (see 3.2.3). Practically, this has involved the division of the trickster and crone research into two distinct parts, comprising a ‘critical historicism’ followed by an interpretative textual analysis, which is further unsettled through the inclusion of collage. Beginning with the trickster, I trace the logics and values caught up in key feminist, psychosocial, structural, and cultural-hermeneutical ‘matterings’ of this figure. Further, I identify a ‘minor literature’ of trickster theory, which constitutes this figure as a humorous and ‘delightful’ being. Interestingly, despite their unique spatial characteristics, geography is largely omitted from the material–discourses of trickster scholarship.

The thesis intervenes in this ‘pseudo-history’ by placing spatial concerns at the heart of trickster tales, engaging the Joker-trickster from Nolan’s (2008) *The Dark Knight* to demonstrate the importance of tricksters as powerfully affective geographical refrains. I employ a mixture of collage and textual analysis to explore the ways in which the Joker exposes and profanes Batman’s mythic construction of the *polis*. For example, the Joker infiltrates Gotham and violently disrupts its mythic community and dwelling, employing black humour and self-contrived artifice to establish himself as a compelling force. A vibrant, yet enigmatic figure of nowhere and no-place, he exists at the crossroads of both the narrative and Gotham City, and undermines their teleological, mythic closure. His embodied narrative, which is riddled with sadistic semiotic and affective eruptions, further destabilizes the order of the city; and his liminal position as both teller and told unsettles the fairy tale *narrative*, and shifts us back and forth between enchantment and disenchantment. Moreover, the Joker pursues affective destructiveness, delighting in the materialistic pleasure of violence. An animating force of destruction and chaos, he drives the film (plot and narrative) through aural and physical aggression, unfolding a ‘deep’ temporality of immersion and childish ‘play,’ which is incomprehensible, but nonetheless compelling. Iterative graffiti bombing, based around his horrific ‘Glasgow smile,’ and defacements of the urban fabric, bear the savage force of urban terrorism, which is exacerbated by his acts of uricide. Threatening the durability of the urban fabric, the Joker consequently assails the possibility of ‘dwelling-together’: the mythical notion that grounds the *polis*. In short, the Joker’s destructive gestures and violent landscaping techniques take the Batman myth of the city-state to its contradictory limits, and problematise our common geographical assumptions of communal space, fairy tales, and storytelling.

This strongly geographic retelling of the trickster provides new insight into what is a notoriously difficult area of research. Conceptualising the trickster as a ‘located’ geographic refrain, rather than as a singular ‘victim,’ ‘devilish being,’ abstract ‘mediating structure,’ or ‘semantic force,’

etc., furthermore restores affective power and compelling humour to this figure, in a much needed ‘enlivening’ process. However, a geographic account inevitably entails its own ‘exclusions,’ and risks mystifying the trickster in other ways, for example, by denying this ‘figure’ a clear history or purpose (placelessness, atemporality, and ‘immediacy’ are the source of his geographical potency). This ‘exclusion’ might sit uneasily with certain feminist takes on tricksters as empowered communal beings, and especially empowered female beings⁴⁰².

This research pattern is repeated with regards to the crone figure, where a genealogical analysis has brought to light two key exclusions in crone scholarship: of geography and, ironically, age. Indeed, the crone figure has been worryingly ‘erased’ from the canons of fairy tale scholarship because of this originary material-discursive exclusion, and ‘lost’ in the more generalised figure of the witch. The first crone chapter proposes 1960s and 70s feminist concerns with the powerlessness of women, especially in the home/family, and in environmental degradation, has led to the ‘mattering’ of two oppressed and ageless witch figures from crone stories, across a broad swathe of mythological, psychological, and fairy tales material-discourses. Thus, first, the crone is mattered as a figure of patriarchal and Christian nightmares; and second, she is fashioned as a humane environmental being, with ancestral precursors in the Great Mother goddesses of Neolithic cultures. Alternative ‘matterings’ based around the complex and seemingly disconnected nursery-nurse, barrenness (body and landscapes), and deceitful, deadly, antisocial, and wilder characteristics of this figure are nullified by this over-feminized scholarly project. Indeed, where fairy tale scholarship has engaged ‘geography,’ it has either done so either symbolically, reducing this figure’s wilderness landscapes to mythical and liminal signs, or, influenced by its own ‘witch lore,’ it has rehabilitated the ‘witch’ within society, at the cost of her distinct geographical separateness. Carrying out a subsequent genealogy of gerontology literatures, I demonstrate that this rehabilitation in fairy tale scholarship is haunted by a wider societal ignorance and fear of ageing women, where to be old and female is to be abject, post-historical, and post-geographical—and thus invisible.

With this critical ‘psuedo-history’ (see 3.2.3) firmly in mind, I address the exclusions of age and geography in my own retelling of Maitland’s (2009) *Moss Witch*, where I matter a *crone* (as opposed to ‘witch’) as an affective spatio-temporal ‘wilding’ refrain, which both performs, and subsequently undermines, a *spatialisation of human time*. That is, the crone performs and then unsettles the time-space of finitude, which spans

⁴⁰² Note that the Batman Joker is a ‘white’ figure. Given more time, it would be fascinating to enrich the study of the Joker by addressing another exclusion in trickster theorizing: race. Indeed, it would be interesting to construct a ‘racial’ genealogy between this figure and African American folkloric tricksters, to whom the Joker is sometimes compared. Beyond this, there are questions that could productively be asked about: the role of the New York Jewish immigrant community in the founding, and urban imaginations, of comic-book art (Jones 2004); Jewish minstrelsy in Hollywood (after Rogin 1998); and the relationship between these two marginalised races, which intersect in the geographical matterings of the Joker.

the individual human life, and the time space of fairy tale storytelling itself, with its strong affiliations to the material-discourses of ‘nation’ and ‘civilization.’ Within the excessively natural landscape of Maitland’s (*ibid*) wildwood, with its uncanny artificial and supernatural resonances, the Moss Witch effects an uneasy dwelling, scored by affective material-discourses of ecological omnipotence and imperialism, ‘becoming prey,’ and the queer ‘home,’ and offers us a geographical consciousness that grapples with notions of wilderness, nature, and human-nonhuman encounters, in a way that contradicts both relational accounts of being and more romantic discourses of ‘dwelling.’ Furthermore, I explore the human-nonhuman encounter of this story at a *literary* level, and consider the power of the crone to enchant even the most prosaic of ‘genres,’ such as the bryological science of the story. *Moss Witch* is part of a science fiction anthology that was compiled with the deliberate agenda of presenting science more ‘realistically’ within fiction. Maitland’s contribution is unusual because of its break with the progressive anthropocentric futurism of the anthology. The ‘marvelous’ seeps through the technological detailing of the story, and undermines the teleological temporality of progressive ‘science.’ Ultimately, the Moss Witch refrain enacts a narrative transformation from science to magic. This transformation is effected through an unusual play of narrative ‘voices,’ including cartographic, ecological, and ecocritical writings, and mythic and fictional storytelling, each of which pursue the crone through the tale, to variously log, map, conserve, and ‘experience’ her ‘nature.’ As these voices intersect, they erode scientific claims to authority. As fairy tale enchants science, the peril of the Moss Witch’s wildwood becomes clear: it threatens us with a fundamentally disruptive *entanglement*—of science with fiction, culture with nature, the human with the nonhuman, and life with death—that has frighteningly unpredictable outcomes. In short, the Moss Witch mocks anthropocentric, separatist spatialities and temporalities, and demonstrates that, for better or for worse, we *are* at ‘home’; and that the success of this geographic home depends on a pragmatic pursuit of “what works” (Estés 2010).

Conceptualising the fairy tale crone figure as a geographical refrain is a radical move in the context of the long tradition of ‘witch’ scholarship. My own approach enables us to ‘matter’ a uniquely cronish ‘force,’ prioritising the aged and ‘wild’ aspects of the crone figure/tale, over the more common privileging of (female) gender. Consequently, we gain access to the complex isolationist, wilderness, posthuman, supernatural, etc., aspects of these crone stories. There is real scope here for further interdisciplinary work into crone ‘beings,’ and a more sustained exploration of the post-histories and post-geographies of old age. Whilst the thesis has performed a crone who stands apart from other ‘monstrous female’ figures of fairy tales, a counter-argument could—and often has—been made to preserve these connections for political purchase. If we re-entangle crone and witch figures this traditionally self-excommunicated being is once more rehabilitated in society. Indeed, there may be good

reason to seek this rehabilitation, as it allows us to approach old age in a more relational manner, and bring the focus of crone stories back to the *human* domain.

By adopting a ‘worldly’ genealogical account I have been able to acknowledge and perform meaning *as* matter throughout the course of the thesis, and furthermore take responsibility for my own scholarly ‘matterings’ and exclusions. However, there are areas where the thesis has perhaps been less successful. The greatest shortcoming of this thesis lies with the experimental collage method. Although it does successfully challenge the lococentricism of academic scholarship by performing a way of knowing that does not ‘colonise’ the stories, but rather ‘looks-with’ and thus *enlivens* them, the material presentation of the thesis has limited the affective power of this nonrepresentationalist approach. The collages were constructed through a combination of first, paper, and second, digital techniques, which gave them initially a 3D texture, the sense of which was preserved on the screen. At the digital stage, the collages were rendered into order to give them a ‘glowing’ quality (aided, of course, by the backlighting of the screen, which exaggerates this ‘magical’ or enchanting quality). However, flattened onto A4 paper and bound up within the thesis, these collages are drained of light and colour and become mere ‘images,’ and the ‘retelling’ consequentially loses much of its force. Indeed, there is an unfortunate sense that these collages have been somehow recuperated by the “logocratic academy” (Taylor 1994:xii), which forces us (through institutionalised expectations of style, presentation, etc.) to “brin[g] back the ‘data,’ and then re-presen[t] it (nicely packaged up)” (Thrift 2000:3). A more contentious question could also be raised regarding whether the ‘inaccessibility’ of these collages (that is, to a largely ‘visually illiterate’ audience of geographical scholars, see Rose and Tolia-Kelly 2012) makes them somehow exclusionary?

It is debatable, then, how successfully the collages have drawn us into “the becoming made possible by stories, their capacity to cultivate perceptions and inclinations that are not provoked through didactic or expository prose” (Cameron 2012:14); and perhaps this is a matter for individuals to decide. However, I would strongly argue that, with these collages, the thesis does not, at least, fall prey to “methodological timidity” (Latham 2003:1993) or hypocrisy⁴⁰³. Further, the collages are productive in the sense that they enable a ‘narrative difference’ throughout the thesis, breaking the otherwise continuous hermeneutical interpretation of the trickster and crone refrains in chapters 5 and 7, “severing ... narrative and syntactic relationships” (Banash 2004), and playfully introducing doubt into the certainty of scholarly critique. Beyond

⁴⁰³ I am thinking here of those scholars who decry the marginality of “visual processes of becomings, enchantments and vibrancy” in social science, and are then somewhat lax in seriously engaging or experimenting with innovative visual materials and methodologies in their own research practices (e.g. Rose and Tolia-Kelly 2012:2).

this, they provide us with a clear *visual* sense of the spatio-temporal arrangements of the trickster and crone refrains, which encourages new dispositions toward these stories. Finally, they hint at more productive possibilities for future research presentation, and in particular point to the limitations of *print* media (this extends beyond the thesis to academic articles, books, etc.), and the need to experimentally fold more challenging spaces and materials into our research practices if we are to be serious about undermining the logocentric force of representational language in academic scholarship.

8.4 Emerging geographies

There is much exciting research that could be undertaken with regard to fairy tale refrains, and the development of better methods of presentation and innovative styles of retelling are only a small part of this. The relationship between geographies, fairy tales, and storytelling, for example, remains an underdeveloped field that deserves greater attention. Though theorizing this relationship has been the key challenge of the thesis, no single effort could hope to answer all of the questions that remain. I have suggested that we approach this nexus of geography, fairy tales, and storytelling by way of three key propositions: first, by recognizing that fairy tales matter, ontologically and ethically. That is to say these are material-discursive stories with generative and transformational weight. Second, that fairy tales and storytelling be studied in tandem, recognizing that it is impossible to separate one from the other. Developing this proposition, I have offered an account of fairy tales as iterative performances, and locate their *geographic* enchantment in their narrative propensity to self-repeat (with difference). Third, I have highlighted the messy, contingent, and performative nature of knowledge making, understanding theory-building to be a *material* practice of ‘storytelling,’ which engages and intervenes in lengthy ‘traditions’ and ‘matterings’ of these enchanting fairy tale refrains. Two particularly interesting geographical possibilities have emerged out of these propositions throughout the course of the thesis, and I would argue each offers very fruitful opportunities for future research.

First, I am personally fascinated by the nexus of aging-femaleness-nature that comprises the crone refrain, and would strongly argue that this fairy tale figure has a lot to offer to the nascent inter-disciplinary field of environmental humanism, and in particular the more established, albeit increasingly problematic, field of ecofeminism, which can be included under this ‘umbrella term’ (see Rose et al 2012). For example, in chapter 6 I touched on the twofold question of *productiveness* that underpins crone tales; that is productiveness as a biological matter, i.e. the physical

reproduction of humanity in childbirth (positioned in fairy tales, at least, as a solely female issue), and as a mythological matter, where such productiveness extends to the equally pregnant concepts of ‘Nature’ and ‘Home’ (see 6.3). The crone represents the ‘darker’ side of the triple Goddess complex, the deadly reverse of fecund ‘Mother Nature,’ with her venomous ‘being,’ barren landscapes, and inhospitable ‘home.’ As such, she offers unique insight for feminist ecocriticism (ecofeminism), which has itself repetitively grappled with this potent triad of ‘reproductivity,’ ‘nature,’ and ‘home’ (Alaimo 1996). As I noted in 6.3, the ‘home’ aspect of this ecofeminist triad has been condemned as a place of female suppression and patriarchal control, with Merchant (1996:166) going so far as to claim “unless the home is liberated from its status as ‘women’s sphere’ to that of ‘human habitat,’ the feminist movement cannot succeed” (see also Valentine 1995; Alaimo 1996). However, I propose a sustained engagement with the fairy tale crone brings to light the stereotypical, or normative, assumption entailed in this claim, whereby the only ‘home’ of which we speak is the home of capitalist suburbia and the nuclear family—the home that also makes an appearance as the abode of the ‘Good Mother’ figure within fairy tales (Von Franz 1993). Looking the crone refrain for inspiration, we ‘discover’ (and perform) an altogether different concept of feminine ‘home,’ divorced from questions of reproduction and the natural. Here, the home-place is a non-nurturing, chilling house of *death* (Hallisey 1987), and simultaneously a satisfactory dwelling place for the monstrous crone, and, for others, a temporary place of refuge, or source of strength, rejuvenation and wisdom. Harnessing death with life, femaleness with non-productivity (and from a gerontological perspective wisdom with aggression), the crone’s uncivilised home defies our expectations, and proffers a challenge to the essentialism and romanticism that has beleaguered the ecofeminist field of study, and, indeed, ecocriticism more widely (e.g. Morton 2007).

It is not possible to sustain the ‘Master Story’ (Plumwood 2008) of the human separation from nature in crone stories, as we saw in chapter 7; and so the crone refrain further points to a way out of the moribund discourses of dwelling and actor-network theory, which have been prevalent in environmental (and nature) material-discourses of the last few decades (see Barad 2007; Rose *et al* 2012; Kirksey 2012; also chapter 7 of this thesis). This brings crone geographies more in line with the ambitions of Environmental Humanism, which is striving to “pus[h] past ... anthropocentrism ... [and] human exceptionalism, while avoiding the trap of anthropomorphism” (Kirksey 2012). Environmental Humanism strives to “rethin[k] the ontological exceptionality of the human” by:

Position[ing] us as lively ecologies of meaning and value, entangled within rich patterns of cultural and historical diversity that shape who we are and the ways in which we are able to ‘become with’ others (Rose *et al* 2012:2).

For Rose *et al* (*ibid*) this re-positioning entails a rethinking of “the underlying cultural and philosophical frameworks that are entangled with the ways in which diverse human cultures have made themselves at home in a more than human world”; and certainly stories, and particularly the rich traditions of fairy and folk tales, are important and potent ‘refrains’ within the wider cultural framework too which they refer. Rose *et al* (*ibid* 3) specifically isolate human conceptions of *time* as one area for interrogation, proposing that we situate “traditional human histories ... within broader earth histories”⁴⁰⁴. Again, the crone refrain is pertinent to this project, as this figure unsettles precisely our human understandings of time, including the time of finitude, and more mythical conceptions of the temporality of humankind (humanity as a race/species). As indifferent death-bringers, crones play on our apocalyptic narratives of ecological imperialism and extinction, and recast humans as merely one of many vulnerable species. Thus, the crone refrain shifts us from a distancing “aesthetics of loss” (Yusoff 2011:1), such as that caught up in the spectre of the Western frontier, to immerse us in a more lively and *contemporary* account of competitive ecologies (species and habitats). This contemporaneity is vital, for it prevents us from falling into the suspect material-discourse of ‘ancientness,’ which itself forms the bedrock on which the myth of human exceptionalism is founded⁴⁰⁵. In humorous contrast to this back-door material-discourse of active human/passive nature, crones appear as territorial imperialists, as they ruthlessly purify their ‘gardens,’ throwing out undesirable humans or ‘weeds,’ and preserving the integrity of ‘their’ ecosystems with considerable violence. Again, with their ironic decompicultural practices, crones challenge our notions of ‘care,’ ‘stewardship,’ and any form of ‘environmental ethics’ that constructs ‘nature’ as somehow more ‘sacred’ or precious than (and definitely apart from) the ‘human’ (see 7.5).

Moving beyond the crone refrain, the thesis, second, offers a sustained and considered engagement with textuality, and particularly literary texts. Building primarily on Hones’ (2008) critique of the varying approaches to textuality across the inter-discipline of literary geography, the thesis does not simply ‘add’ geography to literary concerns (or vice versa) regarding fairy tale texts, but thoroughly interrogates the philosophical and methodological ruptures between these disciplinary approaches, including their differing conceptions of ‘literature’ and ‘space’ (see 1.3). Hones

⁴⁰⁴ In speaking of “earth histories” Rose *et al* (2012:3) are referring to “considerations of deep time [which] draw on geology, evolutionary biology and climate science to recast human stories within the context of larger synergetic time frames and processes.”

⁴⁰⁵ This material-discourse of ‘ancientness’ pervades Rose *et al*’s (2012) account, for example, and it is evident in much environmentalist thinking. Whilst accounts of ‘deep time,’ ‘geological time,’ etc., strive to counter the disturbing scientism of notions such as ‘Anthropocene’ (e.g. Crist 2012), they fall into their own trap, by casting humans as active and dangerous, against the passive and helpless primordial background of ‘nature.’ The complex crone refrain, both ancient and contemporary, refutes such apocalyptic thinking, and entangles humanity more thoroughly with the more than human.

(*ibid* 1307) and Kneale (2009) have (respectively) made important advances in problematising the “gaps” between “the ‘textuality of space’ and ‘the spatiality of texts,’” and between “studies of texts (and textual spaces) and studies of the production, dissemination and reception of texts” that trouble the inter-discipline (see 1.3). For example, Hones (2008:1301) proposes that we approach texts as “reading events,” asserting “text is something which happens at the intersection of agents and situations scattered across time and space, both human and non-human, absent and present.” As such, the text or reading event is infinite; an extensive relational event space which gathers “people, places, times, contexts, networks, and communities” (*ibid*) as well as materials, dispositions, etc.; a notion that aligns ‘text’ with Barad’s (2007) post-humanist performative notion of ‘material-discursive entanglements and matterings.’ In the thesis I have addressed the fairy tale texts of *The Dark Knight* (Nolan 2008) and *Moss Witch* (Maitland 2009) from exactly such a performative perspective, positing the texts as ‘event spaces’ that give rise to particular geographical formations (the focus lying here, of course, with the geographical refrains of the trickster and crone). At a broader scale, the thesis ‘performs’ the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies itself as a ‘happening text,’ thus moving us beyond concerns over the terminological and analytical differences between the varying disciplines that comprise this field of knowledge, to posit such differences as “the located products of particular collaborations and performative social situations, thereby enabling dialogue and opening up new geographical ways of working with fiction” (Hones 2008:1314). Conceptualising fairy tale geographies as ‘textual performances’ consequently offers us a way beyond prevalent scholarly approaches in the inter-discipline (e.g. the aforementioned representationalist historicist and ideology-based critiques), which locate text in opposition to society or subject, and word in opposition to world. In short, the geographies of textuality (literature, film, etc.) that emerge from this thesis, push toward a performative understanding of fairy tales, and other texts, as material-discursive happenings, which *matter*.

8.5 Final words...

This thesis offers a provocative challenge to both the interdisciplinary field of fairy tale studies, to recognize and problematise commonsense spatial assumptions; and to the discipline of geography, to acknowledge the social, political, cultural and ethical importance of the supple and sinisterly transformational genre of fairy tales. New applications of methods, concepts, and theory provide a starting point for embracing this challenge, and a means for better understanding the potency of the enchanting fairy tale refrains of the trickster and crone. In short: this contribution to the inter-discipline of fairy tale studies allows for a more nuanced appreciation of fairy tales as geographically enchanting stories: affective stories that ‘play’ with space and time, implicating how ‘we’ (a product of ‘storytelling’) conceptualise, and constitute, the human, the

human as a social being, and this social being in its environment. Going forward, continued engagement with this nexus of geography, storytelling and fairy tales promises to enrich our multidisciplinary endeavours, highlight our theoretical ‘matterings’ of fairy tales, and enable more responsible engagement with these endlessly enchanting stories.

REFERENCES

- A Clockwork Orange*. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Perfs. Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, Michael Bates. DVD. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1971.
- Abrahams, R. D. (1962). 'Playing the Dozens.' *Journal of American Folklore*, 75:209-220.
- Abrahams, R. D. (1968). 'Trickster, the Outrageous Hero,' in Coffin, E. T. (ed.) *Our Living Tradition: an introduction to American folklore*. Basic: New York.
- Abrahams, R. D. (2006). *Deep Down in the Jungle: Black American folklore from the streets of Philadelphia*. Transaction: Piscataway.
- Ackerman, D. (1999). *Deep Play*. Random House: London.
- Aguiar, S. A. (2001). *The Bitch is Back: Wicked Women in Literature*. South Illinois University Press: Carbondale.
- Alaimo, S. (1994) 'Cyborg and Ecofeminist Interventions: challenges for environmental feminism.' *Feminist Studies*, 20(1):133-154.
- Alaimo, S. (1996) 'Feminism, Nature and Discursive Ecologies.' *Electronic Book Review*, Creative Commons: www.electronicbookreview.com/threadwritingpostfeminism/ecofeminism; accessed 02/03/11.
- Allen, J. and Pryke, M. (1994). 'The Production of Service Space.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12(4):453-475.
- American Psycho*. Dir. Mary Harron. Perfs. Christian Bale, Justin Theroux, Josh Lucas. DVD. Am Psycho Productions, 2000.
- Andersen, H. C. (1994). *Fairy Tales*. Penguin: London.
- Anderson, B. (2002) 'A Principle of Hope: recorded music, listening practices and the immanence of utopia.' *Geografiska Annaler B*, 84:211-227.

- Anderson, B. (2006). 'Becoming and being hopeful: towards a theory of affect.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24:733-752.
- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities*. Verso: London.
- Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (2006). 'Questioning Affect and Emotion.' *Area*, 8:333-335.
- Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (2010). *Taking-Place: non-representational theories and geography*. Ashgate: Farnham.
- Anderson, B. and Holden, A. (2008). 'Affective Urbanism and the Event of Hope.' *Space and Culture*, 11:142-159.
- Anderson, B. and Wylie, J. (2009). 'On Geography and Materiality.' *Environment and Planning A*, 41(2):318-335.
- Anderson, K. (1997). 'A Walk on the Wild Side: a critical geography of domestication.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(4):463-485.
- Anderson, K. and Domosh, M. (2002). 'North American Spaces/Postcolonial Stories.' *Cultural Geographies*, 9:125-128.
- Andrew, G. J., Cutchin, M., McCracken, K. Phillips, D. R., and Wiles, J. (2007). 'Geographical Gerontology: the constitution of a discipline.' *Social Science and Medicine*, 65:151-168
- Andrew, G.J., Milligan, C., Phillips, D. R. and Skinner, M. W (2009). 'Geographical Gerontology: mapping a disciplinary intersection.' *Geography Compass*, 3(5): 1641-1659.
- Andrews, M. (2009). 'The Narrative Complexity of Successful Ageing.' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29(1/2):78-83.
- Apps, L., and Gow, A. (2003). *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.
- Arendt, H. (1983). *Men in Dark Times*. Harcourt Brace: London.
- Arendt, H. (1993). *Between Past and Future: eight exercises in political thought*. Penguin: London.
- Arendt, H. (1998) (2 ed.). *The Human Condition*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

- Arnold, D. (1997). 'Two-Way Traffic in the Antipodes.' *Times Higher Education*. Online <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=159785§ioncode=34>; accessed 7/3/12.
- Ashley, K. (1988). 'Interrogating Biblical Deception and Trickster Theories: narratives of patriarchy or possibility?' *Semeia* 42: 103-115.
- Atchley, R. C. (1989). 'A Continuity Theory of Normal Ageing.' *The Gerontologist*, 29(2):183-190.
- Athanasidou, A., Hantzaroula, P. and Yannakopoulos, K. (2008). 'Towards a New Epistemology: the 'affective turn.''' *Historiein*, 8:5-16.
- Atwood, M. E. (1993). *The Robber Bride*. Nan A. Talese/Doubleday: New York.
- Azzerello, S. (2011). *Populist Masculinities: power and sexuality in the Italian populist imagery*. Unpublished Thesis. Online <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/student-theses/2011-0322-200501/thesisdef.pdf>; accessed 1/2/12.
- Batman*. Dir. Tim Burton. Perfs. Michael Keaton, Jack Nicholson, Kim Basinger. DVD. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1989.
- Babcock-Abrahams, B. (1975). 'A Tolerated Margin of Mess: the trickster and his tales reconsidered.' *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 11(3):147-186.
- Bacchilega, C. (1999). *Postmodern Fairy Tales: gender and narrative strategies*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia.
- Bacchilega, C. (2008). 'Preface to the Special Issue on Erotic Tales.' *Marvels and Tales*, 22(1):193-196.
- Bachelard, G. (1994). *The Poetics of Space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Beacon: Boston.
- Bachner, (2010). 'Which Witch? Reading Dubravka Ugresic's Baba Yaga Laid an Egg.' *Book slut*. Online <http://www.dubravkaugresic.com/pdf/Bachner.pdf>; accessed 15/09/10.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: four essays*. University of Texas Press: Austin.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and his World*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington.
- Bal, M. (1988). 'Tricky Thematics.' *Semeia*, 42:148-153.

- Ballinger, F. (1991). 'Ambigere: the Euro-American picaro and the Native American trickster.' *Melus*, 17(1):21-38.
- Balfe, M. (2004). 'Incredible Geographies? Orientalism and Genre Fantasy.' *Social and Cultural Geography*, 5(1):75-90.
- Banash, D. (2004). 'From Advertising to the Avant-Garde: rethinking the invention of collage.' *Postmodern Culture*, 14(2) Online http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v014/14.2banash.html; accessed 2/2/12.
- Bandelier, A. (2006). *The Delight Makers*. The Project Gutenberg Ebook #18310. Online <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18310/18310-h/18310-h.htm>; accessed 03/07/09.
- Bannon, B. (2009). 'Developing Val Plumwood's Dialogical Ethical Ontology and its Consequences for a Place-Based Ethic.' *Ethics and the Environment*, 14(2):39-55.
- Banti, A. M. (2008). 'Deep Images in Nineteenth Century Nationalist Narrative.' *Historiein* 8:54-62.
- Barad, K. (2003). 'Posthumanist Performativity: towards an understanding of how matter comes to matter.' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3):801-831.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Barad, K. (2010). 'Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: dis/continuities, spacetime enfoldings, and justice-to-come.' *Derrida Today*, 3(2):240-268.
- Barad, K. (2011a). 'Erasers and Erasures: Pinch's unfortunate 'uncertainty principle.''' *Social Studies of Science*, 41:443-454.
- Barad, K. (2011b). 'Nature's Queer Performativity.' *Qui Parle*, 19(2):121-158.
- Barnett, C. (2005). 'Ways of Relating: hospitality and the acknowledgment of otherness.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(5):5-21.
- Barnett, C. (2008). 'Political Affect in Public Space: normative blind-spots in non-representational ontologies.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 33:186-200.

- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. Hill and Wang: New York.
- Barthes, R. (1975). *The Pleasure of the Text*. Hill and Wang: New York.
- Barthes, R. (1991). *S/Z: an essay*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux: New York.
- Barsamian, G. (2008). 'Extracinematic Animation: Gregory Barsamian in conversation with Suzanne Buchan.' *Animation* 3(3):288-305.
- Baudrillard, J. (1993). *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Sage: London.
- Baudrillard, J. (2003). *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays*. Verso: London.
- Beall, J. (2008). 'Infertility,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 485.
- Beauty and the Beast*. Dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. Perfs. Paige O'Hara, Robby Benson, and Richard White. Film. Walt Disney Pictures, 1991.
- Bech, H. (1998). 'A Dung Beetle in Distress: Hans Christian Anderson meets Karl Maria Kertbeny, Geneva, 1860: some notes on the archaeology of homosexuality and the importance of tuning,' in *Scandinavian Homosexualities: Essays in Gay and Lesbian Studies*. Haworth: New York.
- Beidelman, T. O. (1993). 'The Moral Imagination of the Kaguru: some thoughts on tricksters, translation and comparative analysis,' in Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. G. (eds.) *Mythical Trickster Figures: contours, contexts, and criticisms*. University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 174-192.
- Benhabib, S. (1994). 'Hannah Arendt and the redemptive power of narrative,' in Hinchman, L. P. and Hinchman, S. K. (eds) *Hannah Arendt: critical essays*. State University of New York Press: Albany.
- Benjamin, W. (1999). *Illuminations*. Pimlico: London.
- Bennett, J. (2001). *The Enchantment of Modern Life: attachments, crossings and ethics*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.
- Benson, S. (2003). *Cycles of Influence: fiction, folktale, theory*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit.

Benson, S. (2008). 'Coover, Robert (1932–),' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 235-237.

Benson, S. (2008). 'Introduction: fiction and the contemporaneity of the fairy tale,' in Benson, S. (ed.) *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit, 1-19.

Berger, H. A. (1999). *Witches: contemporary neo-paganism and witchcraft in the United States*. University of South Carolina Press: Berkeley.

Bettelheim, B. (1991). *The Uses of Enchantment*. Penguin: London.

Bhaba, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge: Oxon.

Bigger, S. (2009). 'Victor Turner, Liminality, and Cultural Performance.' *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 30(2):209-212.

Bingham, N. (2006). 'Bees, Butterflies, and Bacteria: biotechnology and the politics of nonhuman friendship.' *Environment and Planning A*, 38(3):483-498.

Birch, T. (1998). 'The Incarceration of Wilderness: wilderness areas as prisons,' in Callicott, J. B. and Nelson, M. P. (eds.) *The Great New Wilderness Debate*. University of Georgia Press: Athens.

Blacksell, M. (2005). 'A Walk on the South West Coast Path: a view from the other side.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30:518-520.

Bloustien, (2003). "'Oh Bondage, Up Yours!' Or Here's Three Chords, Now Form a Band: punk, masochism, skin, anaclisis, defacement,' in Muggleton, D. and Weinzierl, R. (eds.) *The Post-Subcultures Reader*. Berg: New York, 51-63.

Bly, R. (2004). *Iron John: a book about men*. Da Capo: Cambridge.

Bolen, J. S. (2003). *Crones Don't Whine: concentrated wisdom for juicy women*. Conari: York Beach.

Bonta, M. and Protevi, J. (2004). *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.

- Bosky, B. L. (2007). 'The Witch,' in Joshi, S. T. (ed.) *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural: an encyclopaedia of our worst nightmares Volumes 1 and 2*. Greenwood Press: Westport.
- Bottigheimer, R. (1982). 'Tale Spinners: submerged voices in Grimms' fairy tales.' *New German Critique*, 27:141-150.
- Bottigheimer, R. (1993). 'The Publishing History of Grimms' Tales: reception at the cash register,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales: responses, reactions, revision*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit, 78-101.
- Bracken, L. J. and Oughton, E. A. (2006). 'What do you mean?' The Importance of Language in Developing Interdisciplinary Research.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(3):371-382.
- Bragg, S. (2011). 'Now it's Up to Us to Interpret It': 'youth voice' and visual methods,' in Thompson, P. and Sefton-Green, J. (eds.) *Researching Creative Learning: methods and issues*. Routledge: London, 88-103.
- Brody, H. (2001). *The Other Side of Eden: hunter-gatherers, farmers and the shaping of the world*. Faber and Faber: London.
- Brosseau, M. (1994). 'Geography's Literature.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 18(3):333-353.
- Broumas, O. (1977). *Beginning with O*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Bryant, L., and Pini B. (2011). *Gender and Rurality*. Routledge: New York.
- Bryman, A. (1995). *Disney and his Worlds*. Routledge: London.
- Bryne, C. (2008). *The Dark Knight Featuring Production Art and Full Shooting Script*. Universe: New York.
- Buchanan, I. (1997). 'Deleuze and pop music.' *Australian Humanities Review*. Online <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-August-1997/buchanan.html> accessed 1/1/13.
- Buller, H. (2001). *Where the Wild Things Are: reflections on the evolving iconography of rural fauna*. Paper presented to the European Society for Rural Sociology, Bi-Annual Conference, Dijon, France.

- Buller, H. (2004). *The Woozle's Return: angels, monsters and imaginary spaces*. Paper presented at the 'Dark Ruralities' session. Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers, Philadelphia, US.
- Byatt, A. S. (1998) *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye*. Vintage: London.
- Caldwell, G. (2004). 'Author Toni Morrison Discusses Her Latest Novel *Beloved*,' in Taylor-Guthrie, D. (ed.) *Conversations with Toni Morrison*. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson.
- Calvin, D. (2011). 'Anti-Fairy Tale and the Demythologising Business in Jane Campion's *The Piano*,' in Kérchy, A. (ed) *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales: how applying new methods generates new meanings*. Edwin Mellen: Lewiston, 181-201.
- Cameron, E. (2008). 'Indigenous spectrality and the politics of postcolonial ghost stories.' *Cultural Geographies*, 15(3):383-393.
- Cameron, E. (2009). 'Summer Stories: (re)ordering the Canadian Arctic.' *Antipode*, 14(1):216-219.
- Cameron, E. (2011). 'Copper Stories: imaginative geographies and material orderings of the central Canadian Arctic,' in Baldwin, A., Cameron, L. and Kobayashi, A. (eds) *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*. UBC: Vancouver.
- Cameron, E. (2012). 'New Geographies of Story and Storytelling.' *Progress in Human Geography*, Published online before print. February 6, 2012, doi:10.1177/0309132511435000.
- Camp, C. V. (1988). 'Wise and Strange: an interpretation of the female imagery in Proverbs in light of trickster mythology.' *Semeia*, 42:14-36.
- Campbell, D., Graham, S. and Monk, D. B. (2007). 'Introduction to Urbicide: the killing of cities?' *Theory and Event*, 10(2). Online http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/theory_and_event/v010/10.2campbell.html accessed 12/11/10.
- Campbell, J. (1988). *The Power of Myth*. Anchor: New York.
- Canepa, N. (2008). 'Basile, Giambattista (1575–1632),' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 99-101.

- Caputi, J. (1991). 'The Metaphors of Radiation: or, why a beautiful woman is like a nuclear power plant.' *Women's Studies Int. Forum*, 14(5):423-442.
- Caputi, J. (1993). *Gossips, Gorgons and Crones: the fates of the earth*. Bear & co.: Santa Fe.
- Caputo, J. (1996). 'A Community Without Truth: Derrida and the impossible community.' *Research in Phenomenology*, 26:25-37.
- Caputo, J. (1997). *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: a conversation with Jacques Derrida*. Fordham University Press: New York.
- Caputo, J. (2002). 'Good Will and the Hermeneutics of Friendship: Gadamer and Derrida.' *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 28(5):512-522.
- Card, O. S. (1999). *Enchantment*. Del Ray: New York.
- Carroll, M. P. (1981). 'Lévi-Strauss, Freud, and the trickster: a new perspective upon an old problem.' *American Ethnologist*, 8(2):301-313.
- Carroll, M. P. (1984). 'The Trickster as Selfish-Buffoon and Culture Hero.' *Ethos*, 12(2):105-131.
- Carter, A. (2006). *The Bloody Chamber*. Vintage: London.
- Carter, S. and McCormack, D. (2006). 'Film, Geopolitics and the Affective Logics of Intervention.' *Political Geography*, 25:228-45.
- Cavearero, A. (2000). *Relating Narratives: storytelling and selfhood*. Routledge: London.
- Chitwood, S. (2008). 'The Dark Knight Set Visit: Crowley, Hemming, and Oldman.' *Superhero Hype*. Online <http://www.superherohype.com/features/articles/96853-the-dark-knight-set-visit-crowley-henning--oldman>; accessed 03/09/09.
- Clarke, D. B. and Doel, M. A. (2007). 'Shooting Space, Tracking Time: the city from animated photography to vernacular relativity.' *Cultural Geographies*, 14(4): 589-609.
- Clewell, T. (2004). 'Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud's psychoanalysis of loss.' *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 52(1):43-67.
- Cloke, P. and Jones, O. (2005) 'Unclaimed territory': childhood and disordered space(s).' *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6(3):311-333.

- Cohen, M. P. (2004). 'Blues in the Green: ecocriticism under critique.' *Environmental History*, 9(1): 9-36.
- Cole, T. R. (1992). *The Journey of Life: a cultural history of aging in America*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Coleman, J. T. (2004). *Vicious: wolves and men in America*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Connolly, J. (2006). *The Book of Lost Things*. Hodder and Stoughton: London.
- Conrad, J-A. (2008). 'Motif,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 643-5.
- Conroy, E. (1921). *Symbolism of Colour*. Kessinger: Whitefish.
- Coogan, P. (2006). *Superhero: the secret origin of a genre*. MonkeyBrain Books: Austin.
- Cool, L. and McCabe, J. (1987). 'The 'Scheming Hag' and the 'Dear Old Thing': the anthropology of aging women,' in Sokolovsky, J. (ed.) *Growing Old in Different Societies: cross-cultural perspectives*. Coley: Acton.
- Cooper, M. and Chalfant, H. (1988). *Subway Art*. Henry Holt: New York.
- Coover, R. (1969). *Pricksongs & Descants: fictions*. Penguin: London.
- Coover, R. (1997). *Briar Rose*. Grove: New York.
- Coover, R. (2004). *Stepmother*. McSweeney's: San Francisco.
- Corrigan, T. and White, P. (2009) (2 ed). *The Film Experience: an introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.
- Covey, H. C. (1981). 'A Reconceptualization of Continuity Theory: some preliminary thoughts.' *The Gerontologist*, 21(6): 628-633.
- Coward, M. (2006). 'Against Anthropocentrism: the destruction of the built environment as a distinct form of political violence.' *Review of International Studies*, 32:419-437.
- Coward, M. (2007). 'Urbicide Reconsidered.' *Theory And Event*, 10. Accessed July 27, 2010. doi. 10.1353/tae.2007.0056.

- Coward, M. (2009). *Urbicide: the politics of urban destruction*. Routledge: London.
- Crang, M. (2009). 'Commentary on Text as it Happens: literary geography.' *Geography Compass Interdisciplinary Virtual Conference Online*, <http://compassconference.wordpress.com/2009/10/27/conference-paper-text-as-it-happens-literary-geography/>; accessed 2/2/12.
- Cray, E. (1946). 'The Rabbi Trickster.' *The Journal of American Folklore*, 77(306):331-345.
- Creed, B. (1993). *The Monstrous-Feminine: film, feminism, psychoanalysis*. Routledge: London.
- Cresswell, T. (2006). 'You Cannot Shake That Shimmie Here: producing mobility on the dance floor' *Cultural Geographies*, 13:55-77.
- Cresswell, T. (2011). 'The Vagrant/Vagabond: the curious career of a mobile subject,' in Cresswell, T. and Merriman, P. (eds.) *Geographies of Mobilities: practices, spaces, subjects*. Ashgate: Farnham.
- Cronon, W. (1995). 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,' in Cronon, W. (ed.) *Uncommon Ground: toward reinventing nature*. Norton: New York, 69-90.
- Crosby, A. W. (1986). *Ecological Imperialism: the biological expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Cummings, E., and Henry, W. (1961). *Growing Old: the process of disengagement*. Basic: New York.
- Cunningham, P. L. (2010). 'The Absence of Black Supervillains in Mainstream Comics.' *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 1(1):51-62.
- d'Entréves, M. P. (1994). *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt*. Routledge: London.
- d'Entreves, . P. (2008). 'Hannah Arendt.' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)* Online. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/arendt/>; accessed 06/12/09.
- Dale, C. (2002). 'Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze,' in Massumi, B. (ed) *A Shock to Thought: Expressions After Deleuze and Guattari*. Routledge: London.

- Dallmayr, F. (1989). 'Hermeneutics and Deconstruction: Gadamer and Derrida in Dialogue,' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 79-92.
- Daly, M. (1990). *Gyn/ecology: the metaethics of radical feminism*. Beacon Press: Boston.
- Daniels, S. and Lorimer, H. (2012). 'Until the *End* of Days: narrating landscape and environment.' *Cultural Geographies*, 19(3):3-9.
- Davies, E. (1991). 'Trickster at the Crossroads' *Gnosis*, 19:37-45.
- Davies, G. and Dwyer, C. (2007). 'Qualitative Methods: are you enchanted or are you alienated?' *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(2):257-266.
- Davis, E. (1991). 'Trickster at the Crossroads.' *Gnosis*, 19:37-43. Online <http://www.levity.com/figment/trickster.html>; accessed 03/07/09.
- Davis, M. (2001). *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino famines and the making of the third world*. Verso: London.
- Dawkins, R. (1976). *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- De Beauvoir, S. (1996). *The Coming of Age*. Norton: London.
- Debord, G. (1972). 'On Wild Architecture.' *Situationist International*. Online <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/postsi/wild.html>; accessed 21/01/09.
- Debord, G. (2006). *Society of the Spectacle*. Aldgate Press: London.
- Deleuze, G. (2004). *Difference and Repetition*. Continuum: London.
- Deleuze, G. (2006). *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Continuum: London.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004). *A Thousand Plateaus*. Continuum: New York.
- Del Rey, L. (1979). *The World of Science Fiction, 1926-1976: the history of a subculture*. Ballantine: New York.

- Denby, D. (2008). 'Past Shock: The Dark Knight and WALL-E.' *The New Yorker* Online
http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/cinema/2008/07/21/080721crici_cinema_denby?currentPage=all; accessed 17/07/09.
- Deppman, J. (1997). 'Jean-Luc Nancy, myth, and literature.' *Qui Parle*, 10:2 11-32.
- Derrida, J. (1974). 'Linguistics and Grammatology.' *Substance*, 4(10):127-181.
- Derrida, J. (1980). 'The Law of Genre.' *Critical Inquiry*, 7(1):55-81.
- Derrida, J. (1989). 'Three Questions to Hans-Georg Gadamer,' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 52-54.
- Derrida, J. (1992). *Acts in Literature*. Routledge: New York.
- Derrida, J. (1994). *Spectres of Marx*. Routledge: London.
- Derrida, J. (2005). *Paper Machine*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.
- Derrida, J. (2008). *The Animal that Therefore I am*. Fordham University Press: New York.
- DeSilvey, C. (2006). 'Observed decay: telling stories with mutable things.' *Journal of Material Culture*, 11:318-338.
- DeSilvey, C. (2007a). 'Art and Archive: memory-work on a Montana Homestead.' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 33:878-900.
- DeSilvey, C. (2007b). 'Salvage Memory: constellating material histories on a hardscrabble homestead.' *Cultural Geographies*, 14(3):401-424.
- DeSilvey, C. (2010). 'Memory in Motion: soundings from Millton, Montana.' *Social and Cultural Geography*, 11(5):491-510.
- DeSilvey, C. (2012). 'Making Sense of Transience: an anticipatory history.' *Cultural Geographies*, 19(1):30-53.
- Deszcz, J. (2002). 'Beyond the Disney Spell, or Escape into Pantoland.' *Folklore*, 113(1):83-91.
- Dewsbury, J. D. (2003). 'Witnessing Space: 'knowledge without contemplation.''" *Environment and Planning A*, 35(11):1907-1932.

- Dewsbury, J. D. and Thrift, N. (2005). 'Genesis eternal: after Paul Klee,' in Buchanan, I. and Lambert, G. (eds.) *Deleuze and Space*. University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh, 89-108.
- Dewsbury, J. D., Harrison, P., Rose, M. and Wylie, J. (2002). 'Enacting geographies.' *Geoforum*, 33(4):437-440.
- Disch, L. J. (1993). 'More Truth than Fact: storytelling as critical understanding in the writings of Hannah Arendt.' *Political Theory*, 21:665-694.
- Dikovitskaya, M. (2005). *Visual Culture: the study of the visual*. MIT Press: Cambridge.
- Dillaway, H. E. (2005). 'Menopause is the 'Good Old': women's thoughts about reproductive aging.' *Gender and Society*, 19(3):398-417.
- Dittmer, J. (2010). 'Comic Book Visualities: a methodological manifesto on geography, montage and narration.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35(2):222-236.
- Dittmer, J. (2011). 'American Exceptionalism, Visual Effects, and the Post-9/11 Cinematic Superhero Boom.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29(1):114-130.
- Doel, M. A. (2000). 'Un-glunking geography: spatial science after Dr Suess and Gilles Deleuze,' in Crang, M. and Thrift, N. (eds.) *Thinking Space*. Routledge: London, 117-135.
- Doel, M. A. and Clarke, D. B. (2007). 'Afterimages.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25:890-910.
- Donoghue, E. (1998). *Kissing the Witch: old tales in new skins*. HarperCollins: London.
- Doty, W. G., and Hynes, W. J. (1993). 'Historical Overview of the Theoretical Issues: the problem of the trickster,' in Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. G. (eds.) *Mythical Trickster Figures: contours, contexts, and criticisms*. University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 13-32.
- Doueih, A. (1993). 'Inhabiting the Space Between Discourse and Story in Trickster Narratives' in Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. G. (eds) *Mythical Trickster Figures: contours, contexts, and criticisms*. 193-201. The University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa.
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and Danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo*. Routledge: London.

- Dowd, J. J. (1975). 'Ageing as Exchange: a preface to theory.' *The Journal of Gerontology*, 30(5):584-594.
- Downing, C. (1989). *Russian Tales and Legends*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Dreyfus, H. L. (1991). 'Being in the World: a commentary on Heidegger's 'Being and Time', Division I.' Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Massachusetts.
- Duffy, J-C. (2001). 'Gay Related Themes in the Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde.' *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 29:327-349.
- Dundes, A. (1965). *The Study of Folklore*. Prentice-Hall: Upper Saddle River NJ.
- Dundes, A. (1997). 'The Motif-Index and the Tale Type Index: a critique.' *Journal of Folklore Research*, 34(3):195-202.
- Dutheil de la Rochere, M. H. (2011) 'Forward,' in Kérchy, A. (ed) *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales: how applying new methods generates new meanings*. Edwin Mellen: Lewiston, i-iv.
- Eisenstein, G. (1989). 'The Privilege of Sharing: dead ends and the life of language,' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 269-283.
- Elden, S. (2005). 'Missing the point: globalization, deterritorialization and the space of the world.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30:8-19.
- Ellis, C. and Bochner, A. P. (1996). *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing*. AltaMira Press: London.
- Estés, C. P. (1992). *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. Rider: London.
- Estés, C. P. (1993). *The Gift of Story: a wise tale about what is enough*. Ballantine: New York.
- Estés, C. P. (2010). *The Dangerous Old Woman: myths and stories of the wise woman archetype*. Audio Book. Sounds True: Louisville.
- Fagan, K. (2010). 'What's the Trouble with the Trickster? An Introduction,' in Reder, D. and L. M. Morra (2010) (eds.). *Troubling Tricksters: revisioning critical conversations*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press: Waterloo, 3-20.

- Faris, W. B. (2004). *Ordinary Enchantments: magical realism and the remystification of narrative*. Vanderbilt University Press: Nashville.
- Favret-Saada, J. (1990). 'About Participation.' *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 14(2):189-199.
- Featherstone, M. and Hepworth, M. (1989). 'Ageing and Old Age: reflections on the postmodern life course,' in Bytheway, B., Kiel, T., Allat, P., and Bryman, A. (eds.). *Becoming and Being Old*. Sage: London,143–157.
- Featherstone, M. and Hepworth, M. (1991). *The Body: social processes and cultural theory*. Sage: London.
- Ferber, I. (2006). 'Melancholy Philosophy: Freud and Benjamin.' *E-rea*. Online <http://erea.revues.org/413>; accessed 19/03/11.
- Fernandes, A. R. (2008). 'Trickster,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 965-966.
- Finigan, T. (2010). "'To the Stables, Robin!': regenerating the frontier in Frank Miller's 'Batman: The Dark Knight Returns.'" *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comic Studies*, 5(1). Online http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v5_1/finigan/; accessed July 26, 2010.
- Fisher, B. (2008). 'Shooting the Dark Knight: Christopher Nolan and DP Wally Pfister shed some light on their latest collaboration.' *Movie Maker: the art and business of making movies*. Online http://www.moviemaker.com/cinematography/article/the_dark_knight_christopher_nolan_wally_pfister_20080714/; accessed 5/7/10.
- Fortunati, V., Greenblatt, S. and Billi, M. (2000). 'Introduction: discourses on/of the body' *Textus*, 13:203-212.
- Foster, H. (ed.) (1988) *Vision and Visuality*. Bay Press: Seattle.
- Foster, J. B. and Clark, B. (2004). 'Ecological Imperialism: the curse of capitalism.' *The Socialist Register*. Online http://www.nodo50.org/cubasigloXXI/taller/foster_clark_301104.pdf; 05/01/12.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca.
- Freidman, B. (1993). *The Fountain of Age*. Simon and Schuster: London.
- Freud, S. (2003). *The Uncanny*. Penguin: London.

- Fuchs, (1988). 'For I Have the Way of Women': Deception, Gender, and Ideology in Biblical Narrative.' *Semeia*, 42:79-80.
- Fynsk, C. (1991). 'Forward: experiences of finitude,' in Conner, P. (ed.) *The Inoperative Community*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Gabbard, K. (2004). *Black Magic: White Hollywood and African American culture*. Rutgers University Press: Toronto.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1989). 'Reply to Jacques Derrida' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York Press: Albany.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1989). 'Text and Interpretation' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York Press: Albany.
- Gadamer, H. G. (2004). *Truth and Method*. Continuum: London.
- Gaiman, N. (1991). *The Land of Summer's Twilight: books of magic*. DC Comics: New York.
- Gaiman, N. (2003). *Coraline*. HarperCollins: London.
- Garrard, G. (2004). *Ecocriticism: new critical idiom*. Routledge: Abingdon.
- Garrard, G. (2010). 'Ecocriticism.' *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*, 18(1):1-35.
- Gates, H. L. (1989). *The Signifying Monkey: a theory of African-American literary criticism*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic: New York.
- Geertz, C. (1972). 'Deep Play: notes on the Balinese cockfight.' *Deadalus*, 101:1-37.
- Geuss, R. (2008). 'Nietzsche and Genealogy.' *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2(3):274-292.
- Gibson-Graham, JK. (2006). *A Postcapitalist Politics*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Girardot, N. J. (1977). 'Initiation and Meaning in the tale of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.' *The Journal of American Folklore*, 90(357):274-300.

Glime, J. M. (2007). 'Economic and Ethnic Uses of Bryophytes.' *Flora of North America*, 27: 14-18.

Golant, S. M. (1972). *The Residential Location and Spatial Behaviour of the Elderly*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Goldberg, N. (1979). *Changing of the Gods*. Beacon Press: Boston.

Gotham Uncovered: creation of a scene: The Dark Knight 2 Disc Special Edition DVD. PAL. 152 minutes. New York: Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2008.

Graves, R. (1948). *The White Goddess: a historical grammar of poetic myth*. Peter Smith: Gloucester.

Greenberger, R. (2008). *The Essential Batman Encyclopedia*. Titan: London.

Gregory, D. (1994). *Geographical Imaginations*. Blackwell: Oxford.

Gregory, D. (1995). 'Between the Book and the Lamp: imaginative geographies of Egypt, 1849-50.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 20:29-57.

Gregory, D. (2000). 'Edward Said's Imaginative Geographies,' in Crang, M. and Thrift, N. J. (eds) *Thinking Space*. Routledge: London.

Griffiths, T. (1997). 'Introduction: ecology and empire: towards an Australian history of the world,' in Griffiths, T. and Robin, L. (eds.) *Ecology and Empire: environmental history of settler societies*. Keele University Press: Edinburgh, 1-18.

Grimm, J. and Grimm, W. (1857). 'Fitchers Vogel,' *Kinder und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*, final edition, no. 46. Online <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm046.html>; accessed 3/7/08.

Grimm, J. and Grimm, W. (2002). *Grimm: complete fairy tales*. Routledge: Oxford.

Griswold, (1983). 'The Devil's Techniques: cultural legitimation and social change.' *American Sociological Review*, 48(5):668-680.

- Grondin, J. (2001). 'Play, Festival, and Ritual in Gadamer: on the theme of the immemorial in his later works,' in Schmidt, L. K. (ed.) *Language and Linguisticality in Gadamer's Hermeneutics*. Lexington: Lanham.
- Gullete, M. M. (2004). *Aged by Culture*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
- Gupta, L. A. (2007). 'Intertetual/Intermedia Analysis of The Briar Rose.' *Unpublished paper*. Online <http://ramsites.net/~lagupta/An%20Examination%20of%20Feminist%20Rewrites%20of%20the%20Fairy%20Tale.pdf>; accessed 15/09/10/
- Haase, D. (2004). 'Feminist Fairy Tale Scholarship' in Haase, D. (ed) *Fairy Tales and Feminism: new approaches*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit.
- Hallisey, M. (1987). *Venomous Woman: fear of the female in literature*. Greenwood Press: Westport.
- Hannon, P. (1998). *Fabulous Identities: women's fairy tales in seventeenth-century France*. Rodopi: Atlanta.
- Haraway, D. (1989). *Primate Visions: gender, race, and nature in the world of modern science*. Routledge: New York.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the reinvention of nature*. Free Association Books: London.
- Haraway, D. J. (1992). 'The Promises of Monsters: a regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others,' in Grossberg, L. Nelson, C. and Triechler, P. (eds.) *Cultural Studies*. Routledge: New York, 295-337.
- Harper, S., and Laws, G. (1995). 'Rethinking the Geography of Ageing.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 19:199-221.
- Harrison, P. (2007). 'How shall I say it...?' Relating the Nonrelational.' *Environment and Planning A*, 39 (3):590-608.
- Harrison, R. P. (1992). *Forests: the shadow of civilization*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
- Hart, S. M., and Ouyang, W-C. (2005). *A Companion to Magical Realism*. Tamesis: Woodbridge.
- Hawaas, A. (2007). 'A Prologue Tale as Manifesto Tale: establishing a narrative literary form and the formation of 'Arabian Nights'' *Marvels and Tales*, 21(1):65-77.

- Hazan, H. (1994). *Old Age: constructions and deconstructions*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Hazan, H. (2009). 'Essential Others: anthropology and the return of the old savage.' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29(1/2):60-72.
- Heede, D. (2008). 'Notes on a Scandal: reflections on queering a national icon.' *Feminism and Psychology*, 18(3):410-416.
- Heiner, H. A. (1999). 'History of Hansel and Gretel.' *Surlalune Fairytales* Online <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/hanselgretel/history.html>; accessed 20/01/09.
- Heiner, H. A. (2007). 'The Quest for the Earliest Fairy Tales: searching for the earliest versions of european fairy tales with commentary on English translations.' *Surlalune Fairytales* Online <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/introduction/earliesttales.html>; accessed 20/01/09.
- Heisig, J. W. (1977). 'Bruno Bettelheim and the fairy tales' *Children's Literature*, 6:93-114.
- Herzog, A. (2000). 'Illuminating Inheritance: Benjamin's influence on Arendt's political storytelling.' *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 26(5):1-27.
- Hess, S. (2010). 'Imagining an Everyday Nature.' *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 17(1):85-112.
- Hess-Luttich, E. W. B. (2012). 'Spatial Turn: on the concept of space in cultural geography and literary theory.' *Journal for Theoretical Cartography* 5, Online: http://meta-carto-semiotics.org/uploads/mcs_vol5_2012/MCS_Vol5_2012_Hess.pdf; accessed 2/2/12.
- Heywood, I., Sandywell, B. and Gardner, M. (2012). *The Handbook of Visual Culture*. Berg: Oxford.
- Hokenson, C. (2008). 'The Dark Knight Blu Ray Review.' *HD Report*. Online <http://www.hd-report.com/2010/03/29/the-dark-knight-%E2%80%93-blu-ray-review/>; accessed 05/07/10.
- Hollindale, P. (1999). 'Why the Wolves are Running.' *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 23(1):97-115.
- Holtorf, C. (2002) 'Monumental Past: the life histories of megalithic monuments in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany).' *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 13:131-137.

- Hones, S. (2008). 'Text As It Happens: literary geography'. *Geography Compass*, 2(5):1301-1317.
- Hones, S. (2009). 'Commentary on Text as it Happens: literary geography.' *Geography Compass Interdisciplinary Virtual Conference Online*, <http://compassconference.wordpress.com/2009/10/27/conference-paper-text-as-it-happens-literary-geography/>; accessed 2/2/12.
- Hones, S. (2010). 'Literary Geography and the Short Story: setting and narrative style.' *Cultural Geographies*, 17(4):473-485.
- Hopkins, P. and Pain, R. (2007). 'Geographies of Age: thinking relationally.' *Area*, 39(3):287-294.
- Horton, J. and Krafft, P. (2008). 'Reflections on Geographies of Age: a response to Hopkins and Pain.' *Area*, 40(2):284-288.
- Howey, M. O. (2003). *Horse in Magic and Myth*. Kessinger: Whitefish.
- Howls' Moving Castle*. Dir. Hayao Miyazake. Perfs. Chieko Baishô, Takuya Kimura, Tatsuya Gashûin. DVD. Studio Ghibli, 2004.
- Hyde, L. (1998). *Trickster Makes This World: mischief, myth and art*. Canongate: Edinburgh.
- Hynes, W. J. (1993). 'Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters: a heuristic guide,' in Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. G. (eds.) *Mythical Trickster Figures: contours, contexts, and criticisms*. University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 33-45.
- Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. D. (1993). 'Introducing the Fascinating and Perplexing Trickster Figure', in Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. G. (eds.) *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms*. University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 1-12.
- Jackson, M. (2002). *The Politics of Storytelling*. Museum Tusulanum Press: Copenhagen.
- James, I. (2006). *The Fragmentary Demand: an introduction to the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.
- Jensen, G. H. (2004). 'Introduction: situating Jung in contemporary critical theory,' in Baumlin, J. S., Baumlin, T. F. and Jensen, G. H. (eds.) *Post-Jungian Criticism: theory and practice*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 1-30.
- Jeschke, J. M., and Strayer, D. L. (2005). 'Invasion Success of Invertebrates in Europe and North America.' *PNSA*, 102(20): 7198-7202.
- Johns, A. (2004). *Baba Yaga: the ambitious mother and witch of the Russian folktale*. Peter Lang: New York.

Johnston, L. and Valentine, G. (1995). 'Wherever I Lay my Girlfriend, that's my Home,' in Bell, D. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Mapping Desire: geographies of sexualities*. Routledge: Oxon, 88-103.

Jones, C. (2003). 'The poetics of enchantment (1690–1715).' *Marvels and Tales* 17(1):55-74.

Jones, G. (2004). *Men of Tomorrow: geeks, gangsters, and the birth of the comic book*. Basic: New York.

Jones, J. (2009). 'Should Banksy be Nominated for the Turner Prize?' *The Gaurdian: Jonathan Jones on art blog*. Online <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2009/apr/15/turner-prize-banksy>; accessed 14/07/10.

Jones, O. and Cloke, P. (2002) *Tree Cultures: the place of trees and trees in their place*. Berg: Oxford.

Jones, P. (1996). 'Prétat, Jane R. Coming to Age: the croning years and late-life transformation.' *The Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 41:142-144.

Jung, C. G. (1959). 'The archetypes and the collective unconscious' in Read, H., Fordham, M. and Adler, G. (eds) *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung Volume 9, Part I*. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

Jung, C. G. (2003). *Four Archetypes: mother, rebirth, spirit, trickster*. Routledge: Oxon.

Jurich, M. (1986). 'She Shall Overcome: overtures to the trickster heroine.' *Women's Studies Int. Forum*, 9(3):273-279.

Kendrick, J. (2010). 'Disturbing New Pathways: Psycho and the priming of the audience.' *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 38(1):2-9.

Kent, E. J. (2005). 'Masculinity and Male Witches in Old and New England, 1593-1680.' *History Workshop Journal*, 60(1):69-92.

Kérchy, A. (2011). *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales: how applying new methods generates new meanings*. Edwin Mellen: Lewiston.

Kerstein, B. (2008). "Batman's War on Terror." *Azure* 34, Online, <http://azure.org.il/article.php?id=477>; accessed 27/10/10.

Kidd, C. and Spear, G. (2005). *Mythology: the DC comics art of Alex Ross*. Pantheon: New York.

- Kipfer, S. Goonewardena, K. (2007) 'Colonization and the New Imperialism: on the meaning of urbicide today', *Theory and Event* 10(2). Online http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v010/10.2kipfer.html; accessed 12/11/10.
- Klaven, A. (2008). 'What Bush and Batman Have in Common.' *The Wall Street Journal* Online. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121694247343482821.html>; Accessed July 27, 2010.
- Kneale, J. (2009). 'Commentary on Text as it Happens: literary geography.' *Geography Compass Interdisciplinary Virtual Conference* Online, <http://compassconference.wordpress.com/2009/10/27/conference-paper-text-as-it-happens-literary-geography/>; accessed 2/2/12.
- Knight, D. (2011). 'Landscapes of Anti-tale Uncertainty: *The Dark Knight*,' in McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (eds.) *Anti-Tales: The Uses of Disenchantment*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 185-202.
- Koen-Sarano, M. (2003). *Folktales of Joha, Jewish Trickster*. The Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia.
- Kramer, R. (2009). *A Social History of Graffiti Writing in New York City, 1990-2005*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Krekula, C. (2007). 'The Intersection of Age and Gender: reworking gender theory and social gerontology.' *Current Sociology*, 55(2):155-171.
- La Belle et la Bête*. Dir. Jean Cocteau. Perfs. Jean Marais, Josette Day, Mila Parély. Film. DisCina, 1948.
- Lambert, G. (2005). 'What the Earth thinks,' in Buchanan, I. and Lambert, G. (eds.) *Deleuze and Space*. University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh, 220-239.
- Landesman, C. (2008, July 27). 'The Dark Knight: review of the motion picture.' *TimesOnline*. Online <http://www.timesonline.co.uk>; accessed 03/07/09.
- Landay, L. (1998). *Madcaps, Screwballs, and Con Women: the female trickster in American culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia.
- Landy, M. (1986). 'The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci.' *Boundary 2*, 14(3):49-70.
- Latham, A. (2003). 'Research, Performance, and Doing Human Geography: some reflections on the diary-photograph, diary-interview method.' *Environment and Planning A*, 35:1993-2017.

- Latham, A. and Conradson, D. (2003). 'The possibilities of performance.' *Environment and Planning A*, 35:1901-1906.
- Lather, P. (1993). 'Fertile Obsession: validity after poststructuralism.' *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(4):673-693.
- Lather, P. (2008). '(Post)Feminist Methodology: getting lost or a scientific we can bear to learn from.' *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 1(1):55-64.
- Law, J. (2004). *After Method: mess in social science research*. Routledge: London.
- Lawn, C. (2006). *Gadamer: a guide for the perplexed*. Continuum: London.
- Leach, E. (1962). 'Pulleyar and the Lord Buddha: an aspect of religious syncretism in Ceylon.' *Anthropological Studies*, 49(B):81-102.
- Lee, J. R. (2011). 'Infinity Mushroom.' *Infinity Burial Project: a modest proposal for the postmortem body*. Online <http://infinityburialproject.com/mushroom>; accessed 7/3/12.
- Lee, L. J. (2008). 'Guilty Pleasures: reading romance novels as reworked fairy tales.' *Marvels and Tales*, 22(1):52-61.
- Lee, L. J. (2008). 'Witch,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 1032-1034.
- Lieberman, M. R. (1972). "'Some Day My Prince Will Come': female acculturation through the fairy tale.' *College English*, 34(3):383-395.
- Leslie, E. (1998). 'Walter Benjamin: traces of craft.' *Journal of Design History*, 11(1):5-13.
- Levine, L. (2007). *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American folk thought from slavery to freedom*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Structural Anthropology*. Basic: New York.
- Lewis, C. S. (1955). *The Magician's Nephew*. The Bodley Head: London.
- Lewisohn, C. (2008). *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*. Tate Publishing: London.

- Limón, J. E. (1983). 'Western Marxism and Folklore: a critical introduction.' *The Journal of American Folklore*, 96(379):34-52.
- Linge, D. E. (1976). 'Introduction,' in Linge, D. E. (ed.) *Hans-Georg Gadamer Philosophical Hermeneutics*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- Lock, H. (2002). 'Transformations of the Trickster.' *Southern Cross Review*, 82, Online <http://southerncrossreview.org/18/trickster.htm>; accessed 3/6/08.
- Lorimer, H. (2003). 'Telling Small Stories: spaces of knowledge and the practice of geography.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28(2):197-217.
- Lorimer, H. (2005). 'Cultural Geography: the busyness of being 'more-than-representational'' *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(1):83-94.
- Lorimer, H. (2006). 'Herding memories of humans and animals.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24(4):497-518.
- Lorimer, H. (2007). 'Cultural Geography: world shapes, differently arranged.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(1):89-100.
- Lorimer, H. (2008). 'Cultural geography: nonrepresentational conditions and concerns.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(4):551-9.
- Lorimer, H. and Wylie, J. (2010). 'LOOP (a geography).' *Performance Research*, 15:4-11.
- Lorraine, T. (2005). 'Ahab and becoming-whale: the nomadic subject in smooth space,' in Buchanan, I. and Lambert, G. (eds.) *Deleuze and Space*. University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh, 159-175.
- Lozano, W. G. and Foltz, T. G. (1990). 'Into the Darkness: an ethnographic study of witchcraft and death.' *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(3):211-234.
- Luban, D. (1994). 'Explaining Dark Times: Hannah Arendt's theory of theory,' in Hinchman, L. P. and Hinchman, S. K. (eds.) *Hannah Arendt: critical essays*. State University of New York: Albany, 79-110.
- Lulka, D. (2009). 'The Residual Humanism of Hybridity: retaining a sense of the earth.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 34:378-393.

Lungu-Cirstea, A. (2011). 'Feminism and Faith: exploring Christian spaces in the writing of Sara Maitland and Michele Roberts.' *E-rea* 8.2. Online <http://erea.revues.org/1563>; accessed 03/03/11.

Luria, S. (2012) 'The Art and Science of Literary Geography: practical criticism in 'America's wasteland.''' *American Literary History*, 24(1): 189-204.

Lurie, A. (1990). *Boys and Girls Forever: children's classics from Cinderella to Harry Potter*. Penguin: London.

McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (2011). 'Introduction,' in McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (eds.) *Anti-Tales: The Uses of Disenchantment*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 1-17.

McCormack, D. P. (2003). 'An Event of Geographical Ethics in Spaces of Affect.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28(4):488-507.

McCormack, D. P. (2005). 'Diagramming practice and performance.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23:119-147.

McCormack, D. P. (2008). 'Thinking-spaces for research-creation.' *Inflexions*, 1:1 1-16.

McCormack, D. P. (2010). 'Thinking in Transition: the affirmative refrain of experience/experiment,' in Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (eds.) *Taking Place: Non-representational Theories and Geography*. Ashgate: London, 201-220.

McCormack, D. P. (2012). 'Geography and Abstraction: towards an affirmative critique.' *Progress in Human Geography*, Published online before print, doi:10.1177/0309132512437074.

McGillis, R. (2003). 'A Fairy Tale is Just a Fairy Tale: George MacDonald and the queering of fairy.' *Marvels and Tales*, 17(1):86-99.

McHugh, K. E. (2003). 'Three Faces of Ageism: society, image and place.' *Ageing and Society*, 23:165-185.

McKillip, P. (2003). *In the Forests of Serre*. Ace Books: New York.

McMichael, T. J. (2001). *Human Frontiers, Environments and Disease: past patterns, uncertain futures*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

- MacKenzie, J. M. (1997). 'Empire and the Ecological Apocalypse: the historiography of the imperial environment,' in Griffiths, T. and Robin, L. (eds.) *Ecology and Empire: environmental history of settler societies*. Keele University Press: Edinburgh, 215-228.
- Mackintosh, F. (2004) 'Babes in the Bosque: fairy tales in twentieth-century Argentine women's writing' in Haase, D. (ed) *Fairy Tales and Feminism: new approaches*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit.
- Madison, G. B. (2001). *The Politics of Postmodernity: essays in applied hermeneutics*. Kluwer Academic Publishers: Dordrecht.
- Maitland, S. (1983). *Telling Tales: short stories*. Journeyman Press: Newburyport.
- Maitland, S. (2008). *Far North and Other Dark Tales*. Maia Books: London.
- Maitland, S. (2009). 'Moss Witch' in Ryman, G. (ed) *When it Changed: science into fiction*. Comma Press: Manchester, 27-38.
- Makarius, L. (1993). 'The Myth of the Trickster: the necessary breaker of taboos,' in Hynes, W. J. and Doty, W. G. (eds.) *Mythical Trickster Figures: contours, contexts, and criticisms*. University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 66-86.
- Marillier, J. (2002). *Daughter of the Forest*. HarperCollins: London.
- Marillier, J. (2003). *Child of the Prophecy*. HarperCollins: London.
- Marrilier, J. (2007). *Wildwood Dancing*. PanMacmillan: London.
- Marshall, E. Z. (2011). *Anansi's Journey: a story of Jamaican cultural resistance*. University of the West Indies Press: Kingston.
- Martin, L. (2011). 'The German Enlightenment and Romantic Märchen as *Antimärchen*,' in McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (eds.) *Anti-Tales: The Uses of Disenchantment*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 18-36.
- Marwood, K. (2009). 'Shadows of Femininity: women, surrealism and the gothic.' *Re.Bus*, 4:1-17.
- Marwood, K. (2011). 'Transmitter/Receiver: the persistence of collage.' *Interface (Visual Art Exhibitions and Events with a Platform for Critical Writing)*. Online <http://www.a-n.co.uk/interface/reviews/single/1515286>; accessed 2/2/12.

Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. Sage: London.

Maynard-Ford, M. C. (2011). *Geo-Graphies: Performing City Space and Economic Possibility and the Storyteller of Cairo*. Unpublished Thesis. Online <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1781&context=theses>; accessed 1/5/11.

Maxwell-Stuart, P. G. (1999) *The Occult in Early Modern Europe: a documentary history*. Palgrave Macmillan: London.

Maxwell-Stuart, P. G. (2004). *Witchcraft: a history*. Tempus: Stroud.

Mazel, D. (2007). 'Annie Dillard and the Book of Job: notes toward a postnatural ecocriticism,' in Ingram, A. M., Marshall, I., Philippon, D. J., and Sweeting, A. W. (eds.) *Coming into Contact: explorations in ecocritical theory and Practice*. University of Georgia Press: Athens, 185-196.

Meyer, R. (1981). *The Wisdom of Fairy Tales*. Floris Books: Edinburgh.

Mendelson, M. (1997). 'Forever Acting Alone: the absence of female collaboration in *Grimms'* fairy tales.' *Children's Literature in Education*, 28(5):111-125.

Merchant, C. (1996). *Earthcare: women and the environment*. Routledge: New York.

Merriman, P. (2012). 'Human geography without time-space.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37: 13-27.

Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (1989). 'Introduction,' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York: Albany, 1-20.

Mieder, W. (1987). 'Grim Variations from Fairy Tales to Modern Anti-Fairy Tales.' *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 62(2):90-102.

Miller, F. (with Klaus J., and Varley, L.) (1997). *Batman: The Dark Knight returns*. DC Comics: New York.

Miller, F. and Mazzucchelli, D. (with Lewis, R.) (2005). *Batman Year One*. DC Comics: New York.

Miller, I. (2002). *Aerosol Kingdom: subway painters of New York City*. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson.

Miller, J.H. (2009). *For Derrida*. Fordham University Press: New York.

MindGem (2009). 'Interview with Does from the LoveLetters Crew.' *Graffiti Creator Online*
<http://www.graffiticreator.net/htm/articles/does/does.htm>; accessed 16/0910.

Mirzoeff, N. (1999). *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Routledge: London.

Monsma, B. J. (1996). 'Active Readers . . . Obverse Tricksters': trickster texts and cross-cultural reading.' *Modern Language Studies*, 26(4):83-98.

Moore, A. (2001). 'Postcolonial Textual Space: towards an approach.' SOAS Literary Review 3. Online
<http://www.soas.ac.uk/soaslit/issue3/Moore.pdf>; accessed 20/01/09.

Moore, A. (with Bolland, B.) (2008). *Batman The Killing Joke*. DC Comics: New York.

Moore, J. W. (2003). 'Ecology and Imperialism, Essay review of *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*, by Mike Davis. *Monthly Review* 55 (1), 58-62.

Morgenstern, J. (2008). 'Ledger Dazzles in Suffocating Dark 'Knight.' ' *The Wall Street Journal Film Review*. Online
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121632327909562803.html>; accessed 17/07/09.

Morrison, T. (2005). *Beloved*. Vintage: London.

Mortimer-Sandilands, C. (2005) 'Unnatural Passion? Notes Toward a Queer Ecology.' *Invisible Culture*, 9:1-31.

Mortimer-Sandilands, C. (2008). 'Eco/Feminism on the Edge.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. 10(3):305-313.

Mortimer-Sandilands, C., and Erikson, B. (2011). *Queer Ecologies: sex, nature, politics*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington.

Morton, T. (2007). *Ecology Without Nature: rethinking environmental aesthetics*. Howard University Press: Cambridge.

Morton, T. (2010). 'Guest Column: queer ecology.' *PMLA*, 125(2):273-282.

Muecke, S. (2002). 'The Fall: fictocritical writing.' *Parallax* 8(4):108-112.

Mulan. Dir. Tony Bancroft and Gary Cook. Perfs. Ming-Na, Eddie Murphy, BD Wong. Film. Walt Disney Pictures, 1998.

Murai, M. (2011). 'In the Realm of the Senses: Tomoko Konoike's visual recasting of Little Red Riding Hood,' in McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (eds.) *Anti-Tales: The Uses of Disenchantment*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 152-163.

Murray, M. (1921). *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*. Clarendon Press: Wotton-Under-Edge.

Myles, T. G. (2003). 'Decompiculture: human symbiosis with decomposer organisms.' *Urban Tilth*. Online <http://www.urbantilth.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/decompiculture.pdf>; accessed 7/3/12.

Nancy, J. (1991). *The Inoperative Community*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Nash, J. W. (1992). 'Gotham's Dark Knight: the postmodern transformation of the Arthurian mythos,' in Slocum, S. K. (ed.) *Popular Arthurian Traditions*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press: Bowling Green.

Nava, W. (2008). 'Batman, The Dark Knight's nihilism - Christopher Nolan's Batman: trend of cynicism infects the box office.' *Film and Tv Suite 101*. Online <http://william-nava.suite101.com/the-dark-knights-nihilism-a62623>; accessed 17/07/09.

Nayar, P. (2009). 'Popular Culture and the Ecological Gothic: Frank Miller's *Batman* in *The Dark Knight Returns*.' *Nebula*, 6(1). Online http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Nayar_p.pdf; accessed 21/09/10.

Nealon, J. T. (2005). 'Refraining, becoming-black: repetition and difference in Amiri Baraka's Blues People.' *Symploke* 6(1-2):83-95.

Neef, S. (2007). 'Killing Kool: the graffiti museum.' *Art History* 30:418-431.

Nietzsche, F. (1998). *Twilight of the Idols, Or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. Oxford University Press: New York.

Nikolajeva, M. (2003). 'Fairy Tale and Fantasy: from archaic to postmodern.' *Marvels and Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 17(1):138-156.

Nikolajeva, M. (2009). 'Devils, Demons, Familiars, Friends: towards a semiotic of literary cats.' *Marvels and Tales*, 23(2): 248-267.

Noddings, N. (1989). *Women and Evil*. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Nolan, J., and Nolan, C. (2008). 'The Dark Knight Shooting Script.' In *The Dark Knight Featuring Production Art and Full Shooting Script*, edited by Steve Korté and Jessica Fuller, 66-239. Universe Publishing: New York.

Nutting, E. A. (1997). 'Remembering the disremembered: Toni Morrison as Benjamin's storyteller.' *Schuylkill*, 1(1) online <http://www.temple.edu/gradmag/fall97/nutting.htm>; accessed 20/01/09.

O'Hare, P. (2010). 'Urbicide: the politics of urban destruction, Martin Coward: book review.' *UGRG Book Review Series*. Online [http://www.urban-geography.org.uk/Book%20Reviews/Coward%20\(2008\)%20-%20OHare.pdf](http://www.urban-geography.org.uk/Book%20Reviews/Coward%20(2008)%20-%20OHare.pdf); accessed 12/11/10.

Ó hÓgáin, D. (2008). 'Simpleton,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 906-907.

OED Oxford English Dictionary Online (2012). Oxford University Press. Online. <http://www.oed.com/>; last accessed 15/05/12.

Opie, I. A. and Opie, P. (1980). *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Orme, J. (2010). 'Mouth to Mouth: queer desires in Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch*.' *Marvels and Tales*, 21(1):116-130.

Ostry, E. (2004). 'Is He Still Human? Are You?': young adult science fiction in the posthuman age.' *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 28(2):222-246.

Palmer, R. E. (1969). *Hermeneutics: interpretation theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. Northwestern University Press: Evanston.

Palmer, R. E. (1999). 'The Relevance of Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics to Thirty-six Topics or Fields of Human Activity.' *Paper given at The Department of Philosophy, South Illinois University*. Online <http://www.mac.edu/faculty/richardpalmer/relevance.html> accessed 20/01/09.

Palmer, R. E. (2001). 'The Liminality of Hermes and the Meaning of Hermeneutics.' *Unpublished Paper* Online <http://www.mac.edu/faculty/richardpalmer/liminality.html>; accessed 20/01/09.

Pan's Labyrinth. Dir. Guillermo del Toro. Perfs. Ivana Baquero, Ariadna Gil, Sergi López. DVD. Estudios Picasso, 2006.

- Papagaroufali, E. (1999) 'Donation of Human Organs or Bodies after Death: a cultural phenomenology of 'flesh' in the Greek context.' *Ethos*, 27(3):283-314.
- Paslick, R. (1994). *Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue: essays in German literary theory*. State University of New York: Albany.
- Pearl, Max. (2009). "Co-Authoring the Urban Text: 'Official Graffiti,' the Tag, and the Marginalized Body." *Popular Influence: Marginal and Mass Mediated Arts and Culture*. Accessed 27 July 2010.
- Pearson, M. (2007). 'Performing the Past,' in Farquhar, A. (ed) *Half Life*. NVA: Glasgow, 49-51.
- Pearson, M. (2012). 'Raindogs: performing the city.' *Cultural Geographies*, 19(1):55-69.
- Pecora, V. P. (1986). 'Deleuze's Nietzsche and Post-Structuralist Thought.' *Substance* 14(3):34-50.
- Pelton, R. D. (1980). *The Trickster in West Africa: a study of mythic irony and sacred delight*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- Pennington, J. (2002). 'From Elflands to Hogwarts, or the Aesthetic Trouble with Harry Potter.' *The Lion and the Unicorn* 26:78-97.
- Peterson, M. (2009). 'Ageism: designed and planned for older Australians?' *Unpublished Paper*. Online <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan034922.pdf>; accessed 03/03/11.
- Pfister, W. (2008). 'Using Anamorphic and IMAX.' *Motion Kodak*. Online <http://motion.kodak.com/motion/uploadedFiles/darkKnight.pdf>; accessed 07/07/09.
- Phillips, B. (2007). 'Nursing Care and Understanding the Experiences of Others: a Gadamerian perspective.' *Nursing Inquiry* 14(1):89-94.
- Pile, S. (2005). *Real Cities: modernity, space, and the phantasmagorias of city life*. Sage: London.
- Pilinovsky, H. (2004). 'Russian Fairy Tales, Part II: Baba Yaga's domain.' *Endicott Studio*. Online <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/rrBabaYaga.html>; accessed 15/09/2010.
- Pilinovsky, H. (2005). 'The Mother of all Witches: Baba Yaga and Brume in Patricia McKillip's *In the Forests of Serre*.' *Extrapolation*. Online <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-133319921.html>; accessed 15/09/10.

- Pilinovsky, H. (2008). 'Bab Yaga,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 93-94.
- Pink, S. (2006). *The Future of Visual Anthropology: engaging the senses*. Routledge: New York.
- Piper, L., and John, S. (2007). 'A Broken Frontier: ecological imperialism in the Canadian north.' *Environmental History*, 12(4):759-795.
- Plumwood, V. (1993). *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge: London.
- Plumwood, V. (2000). 'Integrating Ethical Frameworks for Animals, Humans, and Nature: a critical feminist eco-socialist analysis.' *Ethics and the Environment*, 5(2):285-322.
- Plumwood, V. (2008a). 'Tasteless: towards a food-based approach to death.' *Environmental Values*, 17:323-330.
- Plumwood, V. (2008b). 'Being Prey.' *Aisling Magazine*. Online
<http://www.aislingmagazine.com/aislingmagazine/articles/TAM30/ValPlumwood.html>; accessed 19/03/11.
- Politsky, R. H. (1995). 'Penetrating our Personal Symbols: discovering our guiding myths.' *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 22(1):9-20.
- Pollock, G. (2011) 'What is Posthumanism: Cary Wolfe (2009).' *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, IX(1/2):235-241.
- Popke, J. (2009). 'Geography and ethics: non-representational encounters, collective responsibility and economic difference' *Progress in Human Geography* 33(1):81-90.
- Powell, K. (2010). 'Making Sense of Place: mapping as a multisensory research method.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(7): 539-555.
- Powell, J. L. and Hendricks, J. (2009). 'The Sociological Construction of Ageing: lessons for theorizing.' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 29(1/2):89-94.
- Praet, S. (2011). 'Reader Beware: Apuleius, metafiction, and the literary fairy tale,' in McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (eds.) *Anti-Tales: The Uses of Disenchantment*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 37-50.
- Pratchett, T. (1988). *Wyrd Sisters*. Roc: New York.

- Pratchett, T. (2003). *The Wee Free Men*. Doubleday: New York.
- Pratt, G. (2000). 'Research performances.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18:639-651.
- Pratt, G. (2009). 'Circulating Sadness: witnessing Filipina mothers' stories of family separation.' *Gender, Place and Culture*, 16:3–22.
- Preston, C. L. (2004). 'Disrupting the Boundaries of Genre and Gender: postmodernism and the fairy tale' in Haase, D. (ed) *Fairy Tales and Feminism: new approaches*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit.
- Price, P. (2010). 'Cultural Geography and the Stories We Tell Ourselves.' *Cultural Geographies* 17: 203–210.
- Proctor, J. D. (2009). 'Environment After Nature: time for a new vision,' in Proctor, J. D. (ed.) *Envisioning Nature, Science, and Religion*. Templeton: West Conshohocken.
- Propp, V. A. (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale, Volume 9*. University of Texas Press: Austin.
- Pugh, T. (2008). 'There Lived in the Land of Oz Two Queerly Made Men.' *Marvels and Tales*, 22(2):217-239.
- Purkiss, D. (1996). *The Witch in History: early modern and twentieth-century representations*. Routledge: Oxon.
- Purkiss, D. (2000). *At the Bottom of the Garden: a dark history of fairies, hobgoblins, and other troublesome things*. New York University Press: New York.
- Purkiss, D. (2009). 'Author's Response.' *Reviews in History*. Online <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/16>; accessed 3/5/2011.
- Psycho*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perfs. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles. DVD. Shamley Productions, 1960.
- Rabinow, P. (1986). 'Introduction' in Rabinow, P. (ed) *The Foucault Reader: an introduction to Foucault's thought*. Penguin: London.
- Radin, P. (1987). *The Trickster: a study in American Indian mythology*. Schocken: New York.
- Rahn, J. (2002). *Painting without Permission: hip-hop graffiti subculture*. Greenwood Press: Westport.

- Rahn, S. (1995). 'Green Worlds for Children.' *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 19(2):149-170.
- Randall, D.B.J. (1960). 'Was the Green Knight a Fiend?' *Studies in Philology*, 57:479-491.
- Raphael, M. (1999). *Introducing Theaology: discourse on the Goddess*. Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield.
- Ray, R. E. (1996). 'A Postmodern Perspective on Feminist Gerontology.' *The Gerontologist*, 36(5): 674-680.
- Reder, D. and L. M. Morra (2010) (eds.). *Troubling Tricksters: revisioning critical conversations*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press: Waterloo.
- Reisz, M. (2009). 'Putting the Science Back into Fiction.' *Times Higher Education*. Online <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=409114§ioncode=26>; accessed 19/03/11.
- Richardson, L. (2000). 'Writing: a method of inquiry' in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage: London.
- Ridanpää J. (2010). 'A Masculinist Northern Wilderness and the Emancipatory Potential of Literary Irony.' *Gender, Place and Culture*, 17(3): 319-335.
- Riley, M. and Harvey, D. (2005). 'Landscape Archaeology, Heritage and the Community in Devon: an oral history approach.' *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 11(4): 269-288.
- Roach, J. (1996). *Cities of the Dead: circum-Atlantic performance*. Columbia University Press: New York.
- Roberts, J. W. (1990). *From Trickster to Badman: the Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia.
- Roffe, J. (2005). 'Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995).' *IEP*. Online <http://www.iep.utm.edu/deleuze/>; accessed 5/12/07.
- Rogin, M. (1998). *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish immigrants in the Hollywood melting pot*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- Rose, A. M. (1964). 'A Current Theoretical Issue in Social Gerontology.' *The Gerontologist*, 4(6):46-50.

- Rose, D. B., van Dororen, T., Chrulew, M. Cooke, S., Kearnes, M. and O’Gorman, E. (2012). ‘Thinking through the environment, unsettling the humanities.’ *Environmental Humanities* 1:1-15.
- Rose, G. (1993). ‘On the Need to Ask How, Exactly, is Geography ‘Visual?’’ *Antipode*, 35:212–21.
- Rose, G. (1996). ‘As if the mirrors had bled: masculine dwelling, masculine theory, and feminist masquerade,’ in Duncan, N. (ed.) *BodySpace*. London: Routledge, 56–74.
- Rose, G. and Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (2012). ‘Visuality/Materiality: introducing a manifesto for practice,’ in Rose, G. and Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (eds.) *Visuality/Materiality: images, objects and practices*. Ashgate: London, 1-12.
- Rose, G., Basdas, B. and Degen, M. (2009). ‘Using Websites to Disseminate Research on Urban Spatialities.’ *Geography Compass*, 3(6):2098-2108.
- Rose, M. (2006). ‘“Gathering dreams of presence”: a project for the cultural landscape.’ *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24:537-554.
- Ross, A. (1980). ‘Ballots, Bullets, or Batman.’ *Screen*, 31(1): 26-44.
- Ross-Sheriff, F. (2008). ‘Identity, Oppression and Power: feminisms and intersectionality theory.’ *Affilia*, 23:5-9.
- Rountree, K. (1997). ‘The New Witch of the West: feminists reclaim the crone.’ *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 30(4):211-229.
- Rowe, K. E. (1979). ‘Feminism and Fairy Tales.’ *Women’s Studies: an interdisciplinary journal*, 6(3):237-257.
- Rowe, K. E. (1999). ‘To spin a yarn: the female voice in folklore and fairy tale’ in Tatar, M. (ed) *The Classic Fairy Tales*. W. W. Norton: New York.
- Rowles, G. D. (1983). ‘Place and Personal Identity in Old Age: observations from Appalachia.’ *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3:299-313.
- Rowntree, J. (2009). ‘Afterword: lifeforms,’ in Ryman, G. (ed) *When it Changed: science into fiction*. Comma Press: Manchester, 39-40.

- Rowntree, J. (2010). 'Moss arrives at Cannes!' *Field Bryology*, 102:34-5.
- Ryden, K. C. (1993). *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: folklore, writing, and the sense of place*. University of Iowa Press: Iowa City.
- Ryman, G. (2009). 'Introduction,' in Ryman, G. (ed.) *When it Changed: science into fiction*. Comma Press: Manchester, vii-xi.
- Said, E. (2003). *Orientalism*. Vintage: London.
- Samuels, A (2004). 'Forward,' in Baumlin, J. S., Baumlin, T. F. and Jensen, G. H. (eds.) *Post-Jungian Criticism: theory and practice*. State University of New York Press: Albany, vii-xv.
- Sánchez-Escalonilla, A. (2010). 'Hollywood and the Rhetoric of Panic: the popular genres of Action and Fantasy in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.' *Journal of Popular Film and TV*, 38(1):10-20.
- Sandberg, L. (2008). 'The Old, the Ugly and the Queer: thinking old age in relation to queer theory.' *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, 5(2):117-139.
- Saunders, A. (2010). 'Literary Geography: reforging the connections.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(4):436-452.
- Sauer-Thompson, G. (2005). 'Agamben: The Camps in Political Life: book review of Giorgio Agamben Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.' *Unpublished Paper* Online <http://www.sauerthompson.com/archives/philosophy/003293.html>; accessed 1/2/12.
- Schama, S. (1996). *Landscape and Memory*. Fontana: London.
- Scheff, T. (2001). 'The Emotional/Relational World: shame and the social bond,' in Turner, J. H. (ed.) *Handbook of Sociological Theory*. Springer: New York.
- Schmidt, L. K. (1995). 'Introduction: between certainty and relativism,' in Schmidt, L. K. (ed.) *The Specter of Relativism: truth, dialogue, and phronesis in philosophical hermeneutics*. Northwestern University Press: Evanston.
- Schneider, J. (2005). *Donna Haraway: live theory*. Continuum: London.

- Schrader, A. (2010). 'Responding to *Pfiesteria Piscicida* (the Fish Killer): phantomatic ontologies, indeterminacy, and responsibility in toxic microbiology.' *Social Studies of Science*, 40(2):275-306.
- Seifert, L. C. (1988). 'Gay and Lesbian Tales,' in Haase, D. (ed.) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Greenwood Press: Westport, 400-402.
- Seifert, L. C. (2004). 'On Fairy Tales, Subversion, and Ambiguity: feminist approaches to seventeenth-century Contes de Fees' in Haase, D. (ed) *Fairy Tales and Feminism: new approaches*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit.
- Selling, K. (2003). 'J. R. R. Tolkien's 'The Lord of the Rings': the book, the film, and genre criticism.' *Sidney Studies in English*, 29:1-22.
- Sempruch, J. (2004). 'Feminist Constructions of the 'Witch' as a Fantasmatic Other.' *Body and Society*, 10(4):113-133.
- Shaviro, S. (1990). *Passion and Excess: Blanchot, Bataille, and literary theory*. Florida State University Press: Gainesville.
- Sharp, J. P. (2000). 'Towards a Critical Analysis of Fictive Geographies.' *Area* 32(3):327-334.
- Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the Margin: alterative geographies of modernity*. Routledge: London.
- Shinoda, C. (2008). 'Melusine and Toyotamahime: dissemination of a culture by sea.' *Diogenes*, 55(2):59-64.
- Silver, C. B. (2003). 'Gendered Identities in Old Age: toward (de)gendering?' *Journal of Aging Studies*, 17:379-397.
- Silverman, Y. (2004). 'The Story Within: myth and fairy tale in therapy.' *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 31:127-135.
- Simon, J. (1989). 'Good Will to Understand and the Will to Power: remarks on an improbable debate' in Michelfelder, D. P. and Palmer, R. E. (eds) *Dialogue and Deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. State University of New York: Albany, 162-175.
- Simpkins, S. (1988). 'Magical strategies: the supplement of realism as post-colonial discourse.' *Canadian Literature*, 116:9-24.
- Smith, M. J. (1998). *Social Science in Question*. Sage: London.
- Smith, M. M. (2002). 'Foreword,' in Kitchen, R., and Kneale, J. (eds.) *Lost in Space: geographies of science fiction*. Continuum: London.

- Soja E. W. (1989). *Postmodern Geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.
- Solis, S. (2007). 'Snow White and the Seven 'Dwarfs'—Queercrippled.' *Hypatia*, 22(1):114-131.
- Somerville, M. (2008). "'Waiting in the Chaotic Place of Unknowing': articulating postmodern emergence.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 21:209-220.
- Soper, K. (1997). 'Re-thking the 'Good Life': the citizenship dimension of consumer disaffection with consumerism.' *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 7(2):205-229.
- Speigelman, A. (1996). *Mauss: a survivor's tale*. Pantheon: New York.
- Spinks, C. W. (1991). *Semiosis, Marginal Signs and Trickster*. Macmillan: London.
- Spinks, L. (2001). 'Thinking the Post-human: literature, affect, and the politics of style.' *Textual Practice*, 15(1):23-46.
- Spirited Away*. Dir. Hayao Miyazaki. Perfs. Daveigh Chase, Suzanne Pleshette, Miyu Irino. DVD. Studio Ghibli, 2001.
- Staines, R. (2010). 'Drawing the Old Woman in the Woods.' *Marvels and Tales*, 24(2):336-340.
- Stamou, E. (2010). 'The Ageing Process and Female Identity in Midlife.' *Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Huddersfield*. Online <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/8757/1/estamoufinalthesis.pdf>; accessed 03/03/11.
- Starhawk (1988). *The Spiral Dance: a rebirth of the ancient religion of the Great Goddess*. Harper: San Francisco.
- Stave, S. A. (1993). 'Toni Morrison's 'Beloved' and the Vindication of Lilith.' *South Atlantic Modern language Association*, 58(1):49-66.
- Steinberg, N. (1988). 'Israelite Tricksters: their analogues and cross-cultural study.' *Semeia*, 42:1-13.
- Stave, S. A. (1993). 'Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and the Vindication of Lilith.' *South Atlantic Review*, 58(1):49-66.

Stewart, S. (1987). 'Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art' in Fekete, J. (ed) *Life After Postmodernism: essays on value and culture*. St Martin's Press: New York.

Stewart, S. (1991). *Crimes of Writing: problems in the containment of representation*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Stewart, K. (1996). *A Space on the Side of the Road: cultural poetics in an 'other' America*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Stretcher, M. C. (1999). 'Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki.' *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 25(2):263-298.

Strough, J., Leszczynski, J. P., Neely, T. L, Linn, J. A and Margett, J. (2007). 'From Adolescence to Later Adulthood: femininity, masculinity, and androgyny in six age groups.' *Sex Roles*, 57:385-396.

Style Wars. Dir. Henry Chalfant and Tony Silver. Perfs. Cap, Daze, Dondi. DVD. Public Art Films, 1983.

Summers, M. (1993). *Popular History of Witchcraft*. Kessinger: Whitefish.

Surin, K. (2001). 'The Sovereign Individual and Michael Taussig's Politics of Defacement: review essay.' *Nepantla: views from the South*, 2(1):205-220.

Tangled. Dir. Nathan Greno and Bryan Howard. Perfs. Mandy Moore, Zachary Levy, Donna Murphy. Film. Walt Disney Pictures, 2011.

Tatar, M. (1993). *Off With Their Heads!: fairy tales and the culture of childhood*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Tatar, M. (1999). 'Sex and Violence: the hard core of fairy tales' in Tatar, M. (ed) *The Classic Fairy Tales*. W. W. Norton: New York.

Tatar, M. (2005). 'Fairy tales in the Age of Terror: what Terry Gilliam helps to remind us about an ancient genre' *Slate Magazine Online* <http://www.slate.us/id/2126727/>; accessed 20/01/09.

Tatar, M. (2012). 'Cinderellas: the long lost fairy tales.' *The New Yorker*, Online <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2012/03/long-lost-fairy-tales.html#ixzz1pO4ChQEe>; accessed 21/3/12.

Taussig, M. (1999). *Defacement: public secrecy and the labour of the negative*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.

- Taussig, M. (2006). *Walter Benjamin's Grave*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
- Teo, P. (1997). 'Spaces to Grow Old in: the availability of public spaces for elderly persons.' *Urban Studies*, 34(3):419-439.
- Thacker, A. (2005). 'The Idea of a Critical Literary Geography.' *New Formations* 57:56-73.
- The Brothers Grimm*. Dir. Terry Gilliam. Perfs. Heath Ledger, Matt Damon, Monica Bellucci. Film. Miramax, 2005.
- The Company of Wolves*. Dir. Neil Jordan. Perfs. Sarah Patterson, Angela Lansbury, David Warner. DVD. Palace Pictures, 1984.
- The Dark Knight*. Dir. Christopher Nolan. Perfs. Christian Bale, Heath Ledger, Aaron Eckhart. DVD. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2008.
- The Princess Bride*. Dir. Rob Reiner. Perfs. Cary Elwes, Mandy Patinkin, Robin Wright. DVD. Buttercup Films Ltd., 1987.
- The Spirit*. Dir. Frank Miller. Perfs. Gabriel Macht, Samuel L. Jackson, Scarlett Johansson. DVD. Lionsgate, 2008.
- Thein, D. (2005). 'After or Beyond Feeling? A consideration of Affect and Emotion in Geography.' *Area* 37:450-56.
- Thesz, N. (2011). 'Nature Romanticism and Grimms' Tales: an ecocritical approach to Günter Grass's The Flounder and The Rat.' *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 25(1):96-116.
- Thompson, A. (2006). 'Deconstruction,' in Waugh, P. (ed) *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 298-318.
- Thompson, S. (1955). 'Motif-Index of folk literature: a classification of narrative elements in folktales, ballads, myths, fables, medieval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest-books and local legends.' Online <http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/thompson/index.htm> (accessed 1/1/13).
- Thrift, N. (2000). 'Dead or Alive?' in Cook, I., Crouch, D., Naylor, S. and Ryan, J. (eds.) *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns: perspectives on Cultural Geography*. Prentice-Hall: Harlow.
- Thrift, N. (2007). *Non-representational Theory: space, politics, affect*. Routledge: London.
- Thrift, N. (2009). 'Intensities of Feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect.' *Geografiska Annaler B*, 86(1):57-78.

Thrift, N. and Dewsbury, J. D. (2000). 'Dead Geographies: and how to make them live.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18(4):411-432.

Tiffin, J. (2006). 'Ice, Glass, Snow: fairy tale as art and metafiction in the writing of A. S. Byatt.' *Marvels and Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 20(1):47-66.

Tiffin, J. (2009). *Marvellous Geometry: narrative and meta-fiction in modern fairy tale*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit.

Tiffin, J. (2011). 'Blood on the Snow: Inverting "Snow White" in the Vampire Tales of Neil Gaiman and Tanith Lee,' in McAra, C. and Calvin, D. (eds.) *Anti-Tales: The Uses of Disenchantment*. Cambridge Scholars: Newcastle.

Tintle, R. L. (2005). 'Book Review, *Ecological Imperialism*.' Online, www.hilwaerda.com/ecologicalimperialism.htm (accessed 1/5/12).

Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (2004a). 'Locating Processes of Identification: studying the precipitates of re-memory through artefacts in the British Asian home.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29(3):314-329.

Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (2004b). 'Materialising post-colonial geographies: examining the textual landscapes of migration in the South Asian home.' *Geoforum* 35:675-688.

Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (2006). 'Affect – an ethnocentric encounter? Exploring the 'universalist' imperative of emotional/affectual geographies.' *Area*, 38(2):213-217.

Tuan, Y. (1990). *Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. Columbia University Press: New York.

Tuan, Y. (1991). 'Language and the Making of Place: a narrative-descriptive approach.' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 81(4):684-696.

Tucker, D. (1999). 'Graffiti: art and crime.' *Unpublished Paper* Online <http://www.graffiti.org/faq/tucker.html>; accessed 14/07/10.

Turner, V. (1969). *The Ritual Process: structure and anti-structure*. Cornell University Press: Ithica.

Turner, V. (1970). *The Forest of Symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Cornell University Press: Ithica.

- Turner, V. (1975). *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: symbolic action in human society*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca.
- Turner, V. (1975). *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca.
- Ugrêsic, D. (2010). *Baba Yaga Laid an Egg*. Cannongate: Edinburgh.
- Valentine, G. (1998). 'Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones: a personal geography of harassment.' *Antipode*, 30:303-332.
- Valsiner, J. (2001). 'Glory to the Fools: ambiguities in development through play within games.' *Forum: Qualitative Research*, 2(1). Online <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/986/2149>; accessed 3/7/09.
- Vanderbeck, R. M. (2007). 'Intergenerational Geographies: age relations, segregation and re-engagements.' *Geography Compass*, 1(2):200-221.
- Vandermause, R. K. (2008). 'The Poiesis of the Question in Philosophical Hermeneutics: questioning assessment practices for alcohol use disorders.' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 3:68-76.
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage*. Routledge: London.
- Vaughan, K. (2005). 'Pieced Together: collage as an artist's method for interdisciplinary research.' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4(1): 1-20.
- Vizinor, G. (1990). 'Trickster Discourse.' *American Indian Quarterly*. 14(3):277-287.
- Voger, M. (2006). *The Dark Age: grim, great and gimmicky post-modern comics*. TwoMorrows Publishing: Raleigh.
- Von Franz, M. (1995). *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*. Shambhala: Boston.
- Von Franz, M. (1996). *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. Shambhala: Boston.
- Vulliamy, E. (2011). 'Cold Homes will Kill up to 200 Older People a Day, Warns Age UK: rising energy bills will put millions at risk from 'fuel poverty gap.' *Guardian*. Online. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/oct/22/older-people-cold-energy-bills>; accessed 3/3/11.

- Walker, A. (1981). *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down: short stories*. Harvest: Fort Washington.
- Walker, B. (1988). *The Crone: women of age, wisdom, and power*. HarperCollins: London.
- Wardough, J. (2005). 'The jungle and the village: discourses on crime and deviance in rural north India.' *South Asia Research*, 25:129-140.
- Warner, M. (1995). *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers*. Vintage: London.
- Warner, M. (2009). 'Witchiness.' *London Review of Books*, 31(16):23-24.
- Warner, M. (2010). 'The Difference in the Dose: a story after 'Rapunzel.''' *Marvels and Tales*, 24(2):317-328.
- Warnes, A. (ed.) (1982). *Geographical Perspectives on the Elderly*. Wiley: Chichester.
- Waugh, P. (2006). *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Webb, C. (2006). "'Change the Story, Change the World': witches/crones as heroes in novels by Terry Pratchett and Diana Wynne Jones.' *Paper*, 16(2):156-161.
- Wei Leng, K. (1996). 'On Menopause and Cyborgs: or, towards a feminist cyborg politics of menopause.' *Body and Society*, 2(3):33-52.
- Wigzell, F. (2006). 'Review of Baba Yaga: the ambitious mother and witch of the Russian folktale by Andreas Johns.' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 84(4):746-748.
- Whalen, T. (2004). 'Introduction: rhetoric as liminal practice.' *Rhetor* 1, Online <http://uregina.ca/~rheaults/rhetor/2004/whalen.pdf>; accessed 15/7/09.
- Wheeler, P. (1996). *Russian Wonder Tales*. Senate: New York.
- White, M. D. (2008). 'Why Doesn't Batman Kill the Joker?' in White, M. D. and Arp, R. (eds.) *Batman and Philosophy: the dark knight of the soul*. Wiley: Hoboken.
- Whitley, D. S. (2008). *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation*. Ashgate: Aldershot.

Williams, A. (2000). *Tricksters and Pranksters: roguery in French and German literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Rodopi: Amsterdam.

Wilson, K. M. and Wilson K. J. (1991). *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers*. Taylor and Francis: London.

Wilson, S. R. (1993). *Margaret Atwood's Fairy-Tale Sexual Politics*. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson.

Wilson, S. R. (2000). 'Mythological Intertexts in Margaret Atwood's Works,' in Nischik, R. M. (ed) *Margaret Atwood: works and impact*. Camden House: Rochester.

Winding, T. (2000). 'Les Contes des Fées: the literary fairy tales of France.' *Endicott Studio Online* <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/forconte.html>; accessed 20/01/09.

Winding, T. (2005). 'Dark of the Woods: rites of passage tales.' *The Journal of Mythic Arts*. Online <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/rrRites.html>; accessed 03/03/11.

Winkler, K., Seifert, K., and Detering, H. (2012). 'Literary Studies and the Spatial Turn.' *Journal of Literary Theory*, 6(1):253-270.

Witek, J. (1989). *Comic Books as History: the narrative art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar*. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson.

Wolfe, C. (2008) 'Learning from Temple Grandin, or, Animal Studies, Disability Studies, and Who Comes After the Subject.' *New Formations*, 64:110-123.

Woodward, K. (1988). 'Simone de Beauvoir: ageing and its discontents,' in Benstock, S. (ed.) *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 90-113.

Woodward, K. (1993). 'Late Theory, Late Style: loss and renewal in Freud and Barthes,' in Wyatt-Brown, A. and Rossen, J. (eds.) *Ageing and Gender in Literature: studies in creativity*. University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville.

Woodward, K. (1995). 'Tribute to the Older Woman: psychoanalysis, feminism, and ageism,' in Featherstone, M. and Werrick, A. (eds.) *Images of Aging: cultural representations of later life*. Routledge: London.

- Woodward, K. (1997). 'Telling Stories: aging, reminiscence, and the later life review.' *Doreen B. Townsend Centre for Occasional Papers 9*, University of California: Berkeley.
- Woodward, K. (2003). 'Against Wisdom: the social politics of anger and aging.' *Journal of Aging Studies*, 17:55-67.
- Woodward, K. and Jones, J.P. (2005). 'On the border with Deleuze and Guattari,' in van Houltum, H., Kramsch, O. and Zierhofer, W. (eds.). *In B/ordering Space*, Ashgate: Hampshire, 233-248.
- Woods, L. (1993). *War and Architecture (Rat I Architecture)*. Princeton Architectural Press: New York.
- Wyatt-Brown, A. and Rossen, J. (eds.) *Ageing and Gender in Literature: studies in creativity*. University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville.
- Wylie, J. (2005). 'A Single Day's Walking: narrating self and landscape on the south-west coast path.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30(2):234-247.
- Wylie, J. (2007). 'The Spectral Geographies of W. G. Sebald.' *Cultural Geographies* 14(2):171-188.
- Wylie, J. (2009). 'Landscape, Absence and the Geographies of Love.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34(3):275-289.
- Wylie, J. (2012). 'Dwelling and Displacement: Tim Robinson and the questions of landscape.' *Cultural Geographies*, published online before print, doi: 10.1177/1474474011429406.
- Wyn, J., and White, R. (1997). *Rethinking Youth*. Sage: London.
- Yglesias, C. (2012). 'Seeing Air,' in Rose, G. and Tolia-Kelly, D. P. (eds.) *Visuality/Materiality: images, objects and practices*. Ashgate: London, 85-108.
- Yolen, J. (2002). Surlalune fairy tale discussion board: Bruno Bettelheim *Surlalune Fairy Tales* Online <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/boardarchives/2002/apr2002/questionsandadvice.html>; accessed 20/01/09.
- Yusoff, K. (2011). 'Aesthetics of loss: biodiversity, banal violence and biotic subjects.' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, published online before print, doi: 10.1111/j.1475-5661/2011.00486x.

Zheleznova, I. (1966). 'Vasilisa the Beautiful,' in Zheleznova (ed.) *Vasilisa the Beautiful: Russian fairy tales*. Progress: Moscow.

Zipes, J. D. (1993). *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: versions of the tale in sociocultural context*. Routledge: London.

Zipes, J. D. (1994). *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*. University Press of Kentucky; Lexington.

Zipes, J. D. (1995). 'Breaking the Disney Spell,' in Bell, E., Haas, L. and Sells, L. (eds) *From Mouse to Mermaid: the politics of film, gender, and culture*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington.

Zipes, J. D. (2002). *The Brothers Grimm: from enchanted forests to the modern world*. Palgrave MacMillan: New York.

Zipes, J. D. (2006). *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the classical genre for children and the process of civilization*. Routledge: London.

Zipes, J. D. (2007). *When Dreams Came True: classical fairy tales and their tradition*. Routledge: New York.

Zipes, J. D. (2008). 'Are Fairy Tales Still Useful to Children? The Art of Storytelling with Children: an international conversation of storytellers on the Art of Storytelling with Children.' *Unpublished Paper* Online <http://www.storytellingwithchildren.com/2008/06/29/jack-zipes-fairy-tales/>; accessed 20/01/09.

Zipes, J. D. (2010). *The Enchanted Screen: the unknown history of fairy-tale films*. Routledge: New York.

Zipes, J. D. (2012). *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: the cultural and social history of a genre*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Zolkover, A. (2011) 'King Rat to Coraline: Faerie and Fairy Tale in British Urban Fantasy,' in Kérchy, A. (ed) *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales: how applying new methods generates new meanings*. Edwin Mellen: Lewiston, 67-82.

“My tale is done, there runs a mouse, whosoever catches it may make himself a big fur cap out of it.”

(Grimms 2007:72)

