

A THRESHOLD TO AN OBJECT ORIENTED ONTOLOGY:
METACOGNITIVE MYSTERY TALE AS A HERMENEUTIC PANDEMONIUM

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Canberk Doğalı, certify that

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ABSTRACT

A Threshold to an Object Oriented Ontology:

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This thesis reads three novels of the genre called "metacognitive mystery tale". These novels are *The New York Trilogy* by Paul Auster, *Mulligan Stew* by Gilbert Sorrentino, and *The Serialist* by David Gordon. This thesis aims to explore the hermeneutics of the genre and offer its distinguishing generic features through this investigation. It discusses the politics and ideology implied by the hermeneutics of the metacognitive mystery explored, and shows how the genre promotes and represents an emancipatory and anti-totalitarian hermeneutics. The thesis discusses and depicts that a totalitarian hermeneutics characteristic of detective fiction transforms everything into state apparatuses, depicting them as purely instrumental. Detective fiction does so by transforming things into fixed meanings that join each other and constitute and confirm a larger whole. Referring to a larger whole, things become symbols. And in detective fiction, they symbolize omniscience and omnipotence of the authority that translates them into clues -- things that point beyond themselves -- and then seals them together. In contrast, the hermeneutics of metacognitive mystery is liberating in that it frees things from the political and ideological mechanisms, in which detective fiction assumes and renders them to function. The thesis argues that metacognitive mystery achieves such a liberation by portraying things indeterminate. Following the imagery of instrumentality, if things are instruments, according to detective fiction, that join each other and thusly constitute a larger whole, metacognitive mystery sets them out of joint. This thesis investigates the ways in which metacognitive mystery does so. It argues that

metacognitive mystery demonstrates that things resist being translated into clues, into sound and fixed meanings. I call the text that represents a lack of identification, an inability to define things, a hermeneutic pandemonium. And the thesis discusses that metacognitive mystery portrays a hermeneutic pandemonium. The liberation of things in metacognitive mystery parallels how the school of philosophy Object Oriented Ontology (OOO) democratizes them. Therefore, the thesis argues that the hermeneutic pandemonium is a threshold to OOO; and displays how the novels this thesis reads represent such a threshold.

ÖZET

Nesne Odaklı Ontolojiye Bir Eşik: Göstergebilimsel Curcuna Olarak

Üstbilişsel Gizem Hikayesi

Bu tez, "üstbilişsel gizem hikayesi" adlı türe ait üç romanı okumaktadır. Bu romanlar Paul Auster'ın *The New York Trilogy*'si, Gilbert Sorrentino'nun *Mulligan Stew*'u ve David Gordon'un *The Serialist*'idir. Bu tez, ilgili edebi türün yorumbilimini keşfetmeyi ve bu inceleme aracılığıyla türün ayırt edici genel özelliklerini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Üstbilişsel gizem türünün yorumbilimince ima edilen siyaseti ve ideolojiyi tartışmaktadır ve türün özgürleştirici ve totaliter karşıtı bir yorumbilimi nasıl desteklediğini ve temsil ettiğini göstermektedir. Tez, polisiye kurgunun karakteristiği olan totaliter bir yorumbilimin her şeyi birer devlet aygıtına dönüştürdüğünü ve nesneleri araçsallaştırdığını tartışmakta ve göstermektedir. Polisiye kurgusu, bunu, şeyleri birbirine eklemlenen ve daha büyük bir bütün oluşturan ve o bütünü onaylayan sabit anlamlara dönüştürerek yapmaktadır. Daha büyük bir bütüne işaret ederek, şeyler sembol haline gelir. Ve dedektif kurgusunda, onları ipuçlarına - kendilerinin ötesine işaret eden şeylere - dönüştüren ve sonra onları bir araya getiren otoritenin her şeyi bilmesini ve her şeye kadirliğini sembolize etmektedirler. Buna karşılık, üstbilişsel gizemin yorumbilimi, şeyleri, polisiye kurgunun içinde işlev gördüğünü resmettiği politik ve ideolojik mekanizmalardan kurtarması bakımından özgürleştiricidir. Tez, üstbilişsel gizemin, şeyleri belirlenimsiz olarak tasvir etmekle böyle bir özgürleştirmeye ulaştığını iddia eder. Araçsallık imgesini takip edecek olursak, dedektif kurgusuna göre nesneler birbirine bağlanan ve böylece daha büyük bir bütün oluşturan araçlarsa, üstbilişsel gizem onları eklemlerinden kurtarır. Bu tez, üstbilişsel gizemin bunu nasıl yaptığını

araştırmaktadır, ve üstbilişsel gizemin, şeylerin, ipuçlarına ve sabit anlamlara çevrilmeye direndiğini gösterdiğini savunmaktadır. Özdeşleşme sorununu, ve şeylerin tanımlanmazlığını temsil eden metne yorumbilimsel curcuna adını veriyorum. Bu tez, üstbilişsel gizemin yorumbilimsel bir curcunayı tasvir ettiğini tartışmaktadır. Üstbilişsel gizemde, şeylerin özgürleşmesi, Nesne Odaklı Varlıkbilim denen felsefe okulunun onları demokratikleştirmesiyle paralellik gösterir. Bu nedenle tez, yorumbilimsel kargaşanın Nesne Odaklı Varlıkbilim'e bir eşik olduğunu ileri sürer; ve bu tezin okuduğu romanların nasıl böyle bir eşiği temsil ettiğini gösterir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The introduction consists of five parts. The first one discusses the naming of the genre that regards the works, *Mulligan Stew* by Gilbert Sorrentino, *The New York Trilogy* by Paul Auster, and *The Serialist* by David Gordon. The second part explores what Object Oriented Ontology [OOO] is, and explains its significance for this thesis. The third part is about the relationship between OOO and the genre of metacognitive mystery. The fourth part sheds light on the imagery of “hermeneutic pandemonium” and explains what I understand from it. The fifth and the last part comprises the outlines of the following chapters, and provide the reader with the itinerary of the thesis’ discussion.

Now I will proceed by discussing the terms in my title. The first term would be metacognitive mystery. It is a genre that exploits the tropes and methods of detective fiction. It counts on its reader’s knowledge of the established conventions of Detective fiction, and exploits the reader’s expectations. Holquist in “Whodunit” reads “[j]ust as earlier Mann had depended on his readers' knowledge of the Faust legend, and therefore could achieve certain effects by changing the familiar story in crucial ways, so Robbe-Grillet and Borges depend on the audience's familiarity with the conventions of the detective story to provide the subtext they may then play with by defeating expectations” (1971, p. 155). Given that the detective fiction is a highly popular genre, if not the most, it can be expected that a prospective reader of metacognitive mystery would be exposed to some crucial themes and methods of investigation of detective fiction.¹ Exploiting the familiarity of the reader with

¹ Brian McHale in *Constructing Postmodernism* asserts that postmodernist literature erases the “‘great divide’” between highbrow and lowbrow genres and modes of writing: between them is a “constant

detective fiction, metacognitive mystery defies her expectations and puzzles the reader: It is not about solving a puzzle as detective fiction but rather putting one into view. Regarding such a subversion Sweeney and Merivale writes “a metaphysical detective story induces the reader to read”, as Kevin Dettmar asserts, “like a detective a tale which cautions against reading like a detective” (Walker & Frazer pp. 149-65, as cited in Merivale & Sweeney, 1999, p. 2).

The prefix of “meta” asserts that metacognitive mystery is self-reflexive. Merivale and Sweeney elucidate the terms of this self-reflexivity as “writers [of metaphysical detective story] have used Poe’s ratiocinative process to address unfathomable epistemological and ontological questions: What, if anything, can we know? What, if anything, is real? How, if at all, can we rely on anything besides our own constructions of reality?” (*Detecting Texts*, 1999, p. 4).² These questions are not merely ornamental to metacognitive mystery but substantial. Its answers to these questions also determine the very construction of metacognitive mystery, and likewise how the metacognitive mystery is written indicates its treatment to these questions. Because metacognitive mystery is mostly occupied with the relationship between the detective and the elements he pursues, and this relationship is immediately related to questions such as what the truth (about these elements) is and whether it can be understood. “[T]he metaphysical detective story endlessly investigates the mysteries of narrative and interpretation, as well as the mysteries of its own narrative and its own interpretation” (p. 11).

traffic”, a “reciprocal assimilation”, or in William Gibson’s terms, postmodernist literature represents a “cultural mongrelization” (“Cross the Border? Close the Gap?”, 2006). Hence, Sweeney and Merivale: “By now, in fact, this quirky, bookish, decidedly highbrow genre may be ready for a mainstream audience – or, indeed, the mainstream audience may be ready for it” (1999, p. 5).

² The quote continues as “In this sense, metaphysical detective stories are indeed concerned with metaphysics” (p. 4).

Another characteristic of metacognitive mystery is that it troubles, if not cancels, the boundaries between the author (whether the actual author of the book, or a fictional author such as a Watson-turned-Sherlock), the detective (mostly appears as a private eye, or in more general terms, a person employed to investigate a case), the reader, and the criminal (or the person missing). The primary missing person in metacognitive mystery is the detective himself. His identity is never represented as a reliable whole, or at least, this whole proves misleading. “Detecting a singular identity is difficult”, Michel Sirvent offers, if not impossible. However, this thesis is not so much about how metacognitive mystery treats the notion of identity and its establishment, as about how the figure of detective in metacognitive mystery identifies the objects, that is, the relationship between the detective and things. Provided that metacognitive mystery relies upon the conventions of detective fiction, to which objects are merely signs to the detective, this thesis, by studying the relationship between the detective and objects, investigates the hermeneutics of metacognitive mystery.

That metacognitive mystery uses the conventions of detective fiction is why scholars like Michael Holquist, Elizabeth Sweeney, Patricia Merivale among many others take this genre as a subgenre of Detective Fiction and call it “Metaphysical Detective Fiction”, a term that is coined by Howard Haycraft in order to define the Father Brown stories of G. K. Chesterton, and later used by a large number of critics for the works this study reads as well, namely *The New York Trilogy*, *Mulligan Stew*, and *The Serialist*. The term this thesis prefers to use, namely “metacognitive mystery”, on the other hand is coined by Antoine Dechéne. The alteration from “detective fiction” to “mystery” in the naming is because although this genre draws

on the conventions of detective fiction, metacognitive mystery rejects some substantial features of detective fiction.

“After having read Poe”, quotes John T. Irwin, “a new literary world, signs of the literature of the twentieth century – love giving place to deductions . . . the interest of the story moved from the heart to the head ... from the drama to the solution”.³ In its purest form, detective fiction is a fetish of solution. On the other hand, as Holquist puts it, metacognitive mystery is “non-teleological, is not concerned to have a neat ending in which all the questions are answered” as opposed to Detective Fiction to which the ending is substantial, and which illustrates the detective as an “‘instrument of pure logic’ that puts back in order the ‘chaos of the world’”. In detective fiction, the solution is synonymous with the restoration of the order, and the solution fetish with the order fetish. Metacognitive mystery rejects the solution; and the closure cancelled, the mystery remains. Hence, Dechêne prefers the term “mystery” over “detective fiction”.

As per Dechêne’s rejection of the term “metaphysics”, he does so in order to cancel the theological connotations. Following Merivale and Sweeney, Dechêne confirms that these stories “embrace a more secular questioning of human existence” (2018, p. 22). Just as Merivale and Sweeney, he asserts that metacognitive mystery is rather postmodern, or proto-postmodern.⁴ Dechêne explains what he understands from “postmodern” by quoting the famous line from Jean-François Lyotard: “[s]implifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward

³ Poe, Text: Edgar Allan Poe (ed. T. O. Mabbott), "the murders in the Rue Morgue," The collected works of edgar allan poe - vol. ii: Tales and sketches (1978), pp. 521-574 (this material is protected by copyright), 521fn.

To clarify, this Poe is not the author of “The Man of Crowd” (the prototypical metacognitive mystery), but the author of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (the prototypical detective fiction).

⁴ Still, the reason that I and the critics mentioned reject Kevin Dettmar’s term “postmodern mystery” is that the term postmodern is somewhat ambiguous: it is “as Protean as it is Procrustean” (Merivale, “Austerized”, as cited in Merivale & Sweeney, 1999).

metanarratives” (1984, p. xxiv). To be clear, Lyotard utilizes the term “metanarrative” not in the sense of self-reflexive stories, but as narratives engendered by an authority in order to legitimize its institutions and organs, with a totalizing effect – such as some narratives endorsing that “the scientific [. . .] represent[s] the totality of knowledge”, which Lyotard refuses (p. 7). In addition, the “metadiscourse” can be the “science [itself], with ontological pretensions” (p. 37). Lyotard takes Humboldt’s slogan “Science for its own sake” and renders how a supposedly objective (or natural) knowledge of things is charged with ethical and political aspects (p. 32). This will be traced and discussed more closely later in the thesis.

Now before going into the details of how the genre represents a hermeneutic pandemonium, and a threshold to Object Oriented Ontology, I’d like to discuss Object Oriented Ontology to the extent that it will speak with the novels this thesis reads. It is a school of philosophy that has profound connections with Martin Heidegger’s thoughts, which I draw on in my arguments as well.

To begin with, OOO redefines the term “to exist”. Levi Bryant in his groundbreaking work “The Ontic Principle” asserts “that to be is to make or produce differences”. The significance of OOO is that it presents a new mode of “Radical Anti-Humanism”, as Bryant puts it: the question of being is prior to the questions of how we know, and so on; any “would-be knower is already situated among differences” (2011, p. 265). Bryant introduces the principle, following his Ontic Principle, the Principle of the Inhuman: things, Bryant asserts, are “in no way dependent on [human] knowledge or consciousness” (p. 267). Thus, the existence of things, according to OOO, are not constrained by the human experience that consider

them, or as Graham Harman implies, the existence of a thing cannot be explained by its characteristics defined by an empirical study.

Harman in his chapter “The Tool and Its Reversal” from his work *Tool-Being* takes on and develops Martin Heidegger’s notions of tool (object) and the broken tool (thing), former denoting the object that has a function and is smoothly operating in a larger network or system, the existence of which is taken for granted, hence, invisible to its onlooker, whereas the latter defines the object that is functionless, and therefore visible. Harman reads “I fully realize that it is possible to sit back and point to countless visible tools and machines that actually work, that are not broken in the least . . . [b]ut the visibility of Heidegger’s ‘broken tool’ has nothing to do with equipment not being in top working order. [. . .] “[T]he broken/unbroken distinction does not” assume “two different sorts of entities” (2002, p. 45). The quality of being broken concerns a thing’s “actuality plain and simple”, while the quality of being unbroken regards a thing’s “encounter with this or that set of distinct objects” (p. 99). A thing that is visible is not merely what is broken and an object that is invisible does not only regard tools that function: tool-ness, object-ness, thing-ness, and broken-ness are concepts and categories that points at certain relationships between humans and things.

My emphasis in this thesis is that OOO democratizes the object in that it acknowledges the existence of the non-human for its own right – an object is not merely a tool, it has a “plain and simple” existence, an existence in itself. Thusly, Bryant and Harman both criticises a vertical relationship between humans and “non-human entities”, and suggest a “flat” ontology (2011, p. 268). OOO rejects an anthropocentric perspective, and it troubles the view that the non-human is at the human’s disposal. OOO does not reduce an object into a function, a paraphernalia.

I suggest that such a relationship between the cognitive subject and objects, and such an ontology is the one that is discussed and confirmed by the genre metacognitive mystery. The rest of this chapter discusses the methods and procedures through which metacognitive mystery achieves such a portrayal.

To begin with, if OOO is significant to this thesis with respect to metacognitive mystery by providing philosophical grounds for discussing the relationship between cognition (or the cognitive subject) and object, metacognitive mystery's contribution to OOO is putting it in a sort of political practice in literature. Metacognitive mystery asserts that the figure of human that is on top of the hierarchy is a tool that represents and serves a totalitarian power. If anything, an ontological hierarchy that prioritizes the human's existence over the non-human on the basis of the human's cognitive skills is in fact a hierarchy that a totalitarian politics promote, so that what is political can be transplanted into ontological, which means, the arbitrary (the political, and/or the ethical) is replaced by the natural (ontological).

The detective in classical detective fiction outsmarting the criminal is what enables the authority to punish the criminal, and define him as a criminal in the first place. This thesis claims that the criminal is a tool for the authority on the grounds that he is defined through his relation to the authority. Provided that an object as a tool is a part of a mechanism, the existence of which is identical to its function, the criminal is a tool in terms of being a part of the mechanisms that are devised by the authority, in Bryant's terms, his existence is reduced to his "exo-relations", that his existence is only manifested through his relation with other things, and his function as a tool is to confirm the superiority of the authority that defines him. That the criminal is a tool, and authority's superiority over him affirms and celebrates that the authority has better cognitive abilities. The cognitive is translated into ontological

here: The cognitive superiority of the detective is illustrated in the detective fiction as the reason for an existential superiority, which means the cognitively superior has the power to define the cognitively inferior.

The detective is a tool himself in classical detective fiction, much less what he investigates. Holquist says “Holmes is less a detective than a mathematician; he *is* his function. Therefore other people simply are not people for him. Watson is regarded, as he himself admits in an unguarded moment, as merely ‘the whetstone for [Sherlock's] mind’” (1971, p. 143). The detective is an instrument, but of what? If anything, he is an instrument of discipline and order.

[Signs] [a]s replicas capable of disassembling the 'beings' they replicate, they make possible the breaking and destruction of those beings, and hence also their reconstruction in different forms. The power of the sign is thus extended both by the power of knowledge over nature and by the sign's own hegemony over human beings (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 134).

Lefebvre declares in his *Production of Space* that when objects become tools, that is, when things are claimed to be interchangeable with signs referring them, knowledge may overpower nature: this in detective fiction, I argue, is through knowledge replacing nature. And signs establish a hegemony over human beings. However, the phrase “human beings” seems complicating regarding my arguments so far. Later, I will discuss that the figure of detective is a thing as opposed to an object in metacognitive mystery. Thus, I would rewrite Lefebvre concerning my discussion of metacognitive mystery as “[. . .] the sign’s (or the tool’s) hegemony over things”. Regarding VDF/PDF my emphasis would be – given that the detective is a tool, “a function” – that the sign (the tool), and being a tool himself, the detective is an apparatus of hegemony.⁵

⁵ This is what Bakhtin calls “a mythological feeling for the authority of the language and a faith in the unmediated transformation” (1983, pp. 369-70). This thesis argues that the hegemony of the language consolidates the hegemony of an authority that champions the hegemony of language.

What allows the criminal to actually become a tool – an *actual* criminal rather than an *alleged* criminal – is the detective’s “knowledge and consciousness” (Bryant, 2011, p. 267). In detective fiction and metacognitive mystery, the relationship between the human and non-human that is discussed by OOO transforms into the relationship between the cognitive subject and the object by a hermeneutic twist. The term “hermeneutics” define the ways of reading, the relationship between the reader and his object of inspection, that is between the reader and the sign. The detective is a critic that reads and interprets the signs that concerns his inquiry. And the first and foremost object of his inquiry is the criminal itself. What allows the criminal to become a tool is that the detective makes him a sign, a meaning that exists only through his relation with other things, in other words, as a function. OOO rejects that a thing is only a function, a tool, a thing the existence of which can only be manifested through its relationship with other things, and depends upon cognition, and claims a thing’s existence in it-self. The difference between VDF/PDF and metacognitive mystery in this is that VDF renders the detective successful in his attempt to identify things and people with signs, whereas metacognitive mystery depicts the detective’s failure in this attempt, and thusly argues that it’s impossible to reduce things to functions and meanings. And the detective himself and the text is portrayed dysfunctional. If the objects in detective fiction are signs (texts) for the sleuth to interpret, it is a theme of metacognitive mystery that the text itself is an object, “impenetrable [...] in [its] own right (Merivale and Sweeney, 1999, pp. 8-9).

A dysfunctional text, one could presume would be *sur rien*. However, Brian McHale argues that “*livre sur rien* is not, of course, completely *sur rien*” (2004, p. 151). Such texts do not undermine themselves in the sense of nullifying themselves; but they do hamper their own procedures to the effect of “making [the reconstruction

of a world] more difficult and thus more conspicuous, more perceptible” (151). In this regard, such texts *sur rien* – dysfunctional texts as I put it – are Heideggerian things, visible – or “conspicuous” – because of their brokenness.

Holquist states as mentioned above that the detective in classical detective fiction is an “‘instrument of pure logic’ that puts back in order the ‘chaos of the world’”. The solution of the crisis in CDF depends upon the detective’s success in transforming the objects of his inquiry into pure instruments, or, in hermeneutic terms, pure meanings. metacognitive mystery reverses this: in order to reject the notion that objects can be successfully transformed into pure functions or meanings, it cancels the order and the “chaos of the world” remains. If CDF is a celebration of cognition and order and a parade of signs, tools, functions, and instruments, metacognitive mystery is about things: Robbe-Grillet in *Pour Un Nouveau Roman* remarks “[t]hey can well hide a mystery, or betray it, but these elements which play with systems have only one serious, obvious quality, which is *to be there*” (2012, pp. 31-2).

Reading hermeneutics of Barthes, his *S/Z* reads “once the subject is provided with its ‘true’ predicate, everything falls into place, the sentence can end” (2002, p. 86). The end is the closure, and the end, in classical texts, is when the “ultimate predicate” falls into place, which Barthes defines as “disclosure” (p. 84). “Writing ‘the end’” is solving “something like a crisis” (p. 52). Cancellation of the end and the solution of “something like a crisis” in metacognitive mystery amounts to the pandemonium.

I take the word “pandemonium” with both its modern (recent, current) connotations such as turmoil and chaos, and its Miltonic definition “the high capital/Of Satan and his peers” (*Paradise Lost*, 2005, Book I, pp. 756-7). Developing

a dialogue between Milton's works and the novels my thesis reads is perfectly apt for this study because this dialogue is already initiated in *The New York Trilogy*. The pandemonium being a hermeneutic one ("a hermeneutic pandemonium"), this thesis asserts that the works *The New York Trilogy*, *Mulligan Stew*, and *The Serialist* defines language as a Satanic one in Miltonic terms: The "double sense deluding" language is demonic, whereas "[Christ's] words/To his large heart give utterance due" (Milton, *Paradise Regained*, 2012, Book I, p. 842; Book III, p. 889).

To conclude, the novels mentioned above claims language to be non-totalizable: words and signs in general have meanings that cannot be reduced to a true and valid whole, in other words, words or signs cannot represent the whole existence of a thing; these works render that the detective cannot simply have a grasp of all the facts in terms of reading all the signs related to the case he concerns, and make an unbreakable deduction that is "the only possible one" as for example Sherlock claims to do in Doyle's stories. Bakhtin's famous words from "Discourse in the Novel" writes "[t]he novel is the expression of a Galilean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language—that is, that refuses to acknowledge its own language as the sole verbal and semantic center of the ideological universe" (1983, pp. 366-7). To Bakhtin, the more complex and diversified the novel's style and glossary is, the more novel is the work. Thus, the archetypal novel would represent a stylistic chaos, if not also a structural one, and therefore I can consider the novels I read as such. From that perspective, these novels suggest solid grounds to study a hermeneutic chaos.

Chapter 2 represents a comprehensive comparison between the treatments of the notion of crisis, or catastrophe in two relative genres, namely Victorian Detective

Fiction [VDF] (and Popular detective fiction [PDF]) and metacognitive mystery.⁶ It also investigates the ideological implications of their treatments of “crisis” or “catastrophe”. And in conclusion, this chapter explains the ways in which metacognitive mystery subverts and parodies VDF/PDF.

The first part of Chapter 2 explores the notion of the crisis (and ending) in VDF/PDF and its ideology. The ending of the crisis in VDF/PDF is when everything “falls into place” as Barthes would put it, when the objects of the detective’s investigation are all sealed together. It is the function of the detective to put the pieces together. The ending firstly confirms that the detective is a functioning tool, and secondly, as the objects of his inquiry are “pieces”, significant only in their relations to a larger whole, the ending confirms that the objects of the detective’s case are tools. The ending fixes all of the pieces into a puzzle, the story reduces them into *fixed* meanings.

The second part of this chapter takes some examples of VDF and PDF (stories of Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown, and so on) and firstly investigates the detective’s *ways of apprehension* of his environment and the things related to his investigation and *how he reads* them: this represents VDF and PDF’s treatment of hermeneutics, and the ideological implications of this hermeneutics. VDF/PDF reduces things to into fixed single meanings as asserted above. It suggests that one (the detective and therefore the reader) can grasp the true existence of objects. It assumes a hermeneutics of truth: that one can deduce a “totalizing truth” by reading it. But if there is an achievable truth about things, there has to be one true reading, one legitimate interpretation, which actually amounts to *no* interpretation. Lyotard is aware that such a theory goes hand in hand with “the programming of the social

⁶ What this work studies as VDF/PDF is called by the critics such as Antoine Dechéne, Michael Holquist, Elizabeth Sweeney among many others as “classical detective fiction”.

whole as a simple *tool* for the optimization of [the theory's] performance" (1984, p. 12; my emphasis). This is a fascistic attitude that discredits individuals for the sake of a "total": PDF represents a totalitarian hermeneutics. And yet, if it wants a hermeneutics of truth it has to *cancel* hermeneutics in the first place. Here, the legitimation of the true interpretation is available but through its claims to be ontological, not hermeneutic (as Lyotard puts it, with "ontological pretensions").

The third part of Chapter 2 argues that metacognitive mystery liberates things by troubling the totalitarianism in VDF/PDF by cancelling the tool-ness of the detective in the first place and the things, and renders crisis as a passage, whereby the detective ceases to be a tool and transforms into a thing. The lack of solution to the catastrophe that disrupts the order in the beginning of the story represents the genre's acknowledgement of the "dysfunctionality" of the detective in metacognitive mystery. If anything, he is unsuccessful in detecting. "What the reviewer jokes about in the Wheatley dossiers has become a serious business in Robbe-Grillet: 'experts . . . instead of hovering lengthily over literary merits' will in fact be constrained to examine the objects themselves; the principal actors have, in Robbe-Grillet ceased to be the characters, and have rather become the things of the world" (Holquist, "Whodunit", 1972, p. 150). The detective transforms from being a s/he into an it; metacognitive mystery removes the ontological barrier between the cognitive and noncognitive, the human and nonhuman, as OOO suggests.

The third chapter explores the ways in which *The New York Trilogy*, *Mulligan Stew*, and *The Serialist* portray what I call a hermeneutic pandemonium. The first part of this chapter studies the imagery of "pandemonium" in greater detail providing a larger dialogue between Milton and *The New York Trilogy*. The second part inquires how this "hermeneutic pandemonium" is rendered by *Mulligan Stew*.

Barthes in *S/Z* asserts that “once the subject is provided with its ‘true’ predicate, everything falls into place, the sentence can end” (2002, p. 86). The end is the closure, and the end, in classical texts, is when the “ultimate predicate” falls into place, which he defines as “disclosure” (p. 84). “Writing ‘the end’” is solving “something like a crisis” (p. 52). However, “the final closure of the modern text is suspension” (Richard Howard, Preface, p. viii). This thesis argues that *The New York Trilogy*, *Mulligan Stew*, and *The Serialist* offers no disclosure, the “ultimate predicate” does not “fall into place”, thusly the crisis, the catastrophe is unsolved and the chaos remains as earlier discussed. In the second part, this chapter asserts that *Mulligan Stew* takes the lack of the “ultimate predicate” to the extremes, and frequently employs a tactic of cancelling the predicate.

Mulligan Stew adopts listing and cataloguing that appear in Joyce’s works, especially *Ulysses*, as a mockery of catechism, a dialogue that claims to offer answers to the questions about the quintessence of being and existence. The only answer, especially in the excerpt below, is that there *are* things, or, as Robbe-Grillet puts it “[t]hey can well hide a mystery, or betray it, these elements which play with systems have only one serious, obvious quality, which is *to be there*” (Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un Nouveau Roman*, 2012, pp. 31-2):

On the lower shelf five vertical breakfast plates, six horizontal breakfast saucers on which rested inverted breakfast cups, a moustachecup, uninverted, and saucer of Crown Derby, four white goldrimmed eggcups, an open shammy purse displaying coins, mostly copper, and a phial of aromatic (violet) comfits. On the middle shelf a chipped eggcup containing pepper, a drum of table salt, four conglomerated black olives in oleaginous paper, an empty pot of Plumtree's potted meat, an oval wicker basket bedded with fibre and containing one Jersey pear, a halfempty bottle of William Gilbey and Co's white invalid port, half disrobed of its swathe of coralpink tissue paper, a packet of Epps's soluble cocoa, five ounces of Anne Lynch's choice tea at 2/- per lb in a crinkled leadpaper bag, a cylindrical canister containing the best crystallised lump sugar, two onions, one, the larger, Spanish, entire, the other, smaller, Irish, bisected with augmented surface and more redolent, a jar of Irish Model Dairy's cream, a jug of brown crockery containing a naggin and a

quarter of soured adulterated milk, converted by heat into water, acidulous serum and semisolidified curds, which added to the quantity subtracted for Mr Bloom's and Mrs Fleming's breakfasts, made one imperial pint, the total quantity originally delivered, two cloves, a halfpenny and a small dish containing a slice of fresh ribsteak. On the upper shelf a battery of jamjars (empty) of various sizes and proveniences (Joyce, 2009, p. 499).

Brian McHale discusses this strategy:

The litany, or catalogue, is the only form of discourse of which Donald Barthelme's Miss R. approves [. . .] Here is Miss R.'s own example of an "approved" discourse:

pewter
snake
tea
Fad #6 sherry serviette fenestration crown
blue.

Such a catalogue, we know, functions to disengage words from syntax, thus hindering the reconstruction of the projected world, and foregrounding the ontological difference between the stratum of words and the stratum of worlds" (2004, p. 162).

The figure of detective in *Mulligan Stew* (both Lamont the detective fiction author and his character Ned Beaumont who investigates a murder that he himself might or might not committed) writing down a catalogue of objects to totalize them, i.e., to transcribe them into signs and see them all at once as a whole, and then to read them, and thusly deduce something from them. He tries to write a chronicle but to turn it into history, in other words, he records a pile of things but to interpret them and make a narrative of them, write them an ending, transform them into functioning components of the narrative, the catalogued things must have an end (a purpose) so that the narrative has an end, and thusly the crisis ends and the detective maintains the order. And yet, he will only be more confused. The "ontological difference" between words and worlds in McHale's terms is shocking news to Lamont. To the

reader, the “thereness” of the things shadows forth that words (signs) and things are not interchangeable.⁷

“By participating in the need to set forth the *end* of every action . . . the readerly declares itself to be historical”; the detective failing to orchestrate such a reading, the narrative immediately generates a sense of thrownness for the detective-reader into things (Barthes, *S/Z*, 2002, p. 52). The lack of predicate (and synonymously, the hermeneutic pandemonium) portrays the dysfunctionality of the detective: he is a thing in the sense the thesis discusses in Chapter 2. The detective himself is a thing thrown into a heap of things; and this heap of things is the text (surely a part of it), because the mentioned parts of the text is a heap of dysfunctional signs that the detective is unable to stabilize and utilize. The cognitive dysfunctionality of the detective is represented in *The New York Trilogy* and *Mulligan Stew* as the figures of detective standing on the verge of madness. Here, this heap, the text, is a passage, where the author-detective, as a reader detached from the things he reads, becomes a thing. Thus, the hermeneutic pandemonium is a passage to an object oriented ontology: It posits that a human and a thing are not two separate ontological categories. This is a reversal of the ontology and ideology implied and championed by VDF (and the Popular Detective Fiction that adopts it), as Chapter 2 discusses it.

⁷ McHale continues as “[w]ords approach the status of objects in their own right, tangible things, through a process of relocation that involves the disruption of syntax” (149) and this assertion seems like a counterflow to my argument that metacognitive mystery refuses the hegemony of language (see fn5), it acknowledges that signs and things are not the same, that things are not mere tools but have an existence independent from human use in Heideggerian terms. But the aim of the attitude McHale writes about is to grant the thingness to the things with words, this is how a text can do after all: with words. And another point regarding the quote from McHale would be the vocabulary of “approaching” as opposed to “identification” which the novels I read reject. The things are “there” as Grillet puts it, inescapably in words (or, graphically in general), but these words are written in a *sous rature* fashion.

The third part starts by following the premise, “truth is a well-made sentence”, and “in the classic text (dependent upon an historical ideology), meaning is mingled with truth, signification is the path of truth: if we succeed in denoting the old man, his truth . . . is immediately revealed” (Barthes, *S/Z*, 2002, p. 84, p. 62). If the predicate is one thing that is necessary for a well-made sentence, the subject is the other (at least in English and French, the languages of the texts this thesis concerns). “[J]ust as any grammar, however new, once it is based on the diad of subject and predicate, noun and verb, can only be a historical grammar, linked to classical metaphysics, so the hermeneutic narrative, in which truth predicates an incomplete subject, based on expectation and desire for its imminent closure, is dated, linked to the kerygmatic civilization of meaning and truth, appeal and fulfilment” (p. 76). This part investigates the ways *The New York Trilogy*, *Mulligan Stew*, and *The Serialist* renders the subject to be an unreliable one, and thusly cancels the possibility of a well-made sentence: a closure, a sense of an ending, and portrays what I call a hermeneutic pandemonium through this unreliability. The unreliability and instability of the subject means that the subject cannot be fixed. Thusly, metacognitive mystery offers another mode of reversal of the fascism in VDF/PDF.

CHAPTER 2

REPRESENTATIONS OF CRISIS AND ENDING

IN DETECTIVE FICTION AND METACOGNITIVE MYSTERY

This chapter compares Victorian Detective Fiction -- and the popular detective fiction that inherits its tropes and style -- with metacognitive mystery, in terms of their treatments of the notion of crisis, mainly by studying the way they end. This thesis only treats and discovers the features of detective fiction in contradiction with metacognitive mystery, in order to suggest some features of metacognitive mystery in this chapter through comparison. The forms of detective fiction the thesis includes are mostly the armchair detective, the conventional locked room, and whodunnit, where the violence of the authority is disguised and the crisis is set in hermeneutic terms, solved by ratiocination, and leaving out hardboiled and thriller, where violence is overt.

To begin with, neither all detective fiction uniformly epitomizes the characteristics this chapter discusses, nor a bibliography of any given writer of detective fiction or metacognitive mystery necessarily represents consistency in showing these characteristics. Furthermore, neither the generic features I discuss here are equally typical of any work of a given period (Victorian), nor all the works that can be categorised under the genre of popular detective fiction conform to these features symmetrically; especially in the age of postmodern literature (or post-WWII literature), considering that postmodern literature constitutes a tendency of amalgamation of two modernist categories, namely, low-brow and high-brow (McHale; see the larger discussion in the introduction). While Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is the prototypical detective story, his works *William*

Wilson, The Mystery of Marie Roget (a sequel to *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*), and *Man of the Crowd* are considered to be the prototypical metacognitive mystery. Lastly, the two genres are not thoroughly contradicting, and one may observe a generic transitivity in any particular example of one of these genres. To elaborate, for instance, I consider *The Mystery of Marie Roget* as a metacognitive mystery, though, it represents the invention of the armchair detective, a trope that is comprehensively used by the genre of detective fiction. Likewise, I consider *The Red-headed League* by Doyle as detective fiction; however, it employs one of the major gestures of metacognitive mystery, that is, cancelling the division between the victim and the criminal in that they turn out to be the same person at the end of Doyle's story. To conclude, the generic definitions this thesis offers concern not any work of any writer as a monobloc piece, all currents of which drifts in the same direction, but regard characteristics of certain literary gestures it discusses. In brief, the reader must understand that I *do not* apply my generic classifications to any given piece, but its parts examined. Those categories would collapse, once one tries to classify an oeuvre as a specimen of a single category -- which I doubt if would be possible, much less practical.

Then, the aim of this chapter is to compare certain bents in the genres mentioned, in regard to their treatments of the notions, ending, and crisis, without the intention of reducing the particulars into showcases of the generic features discussed. The first two parts of this chapter are dedicated to detective fiction. The first part discusses detective fiction's take on "ending" and "crisis." The second one compares the hermeneutics that the argument of part one implicates with that of metacognitive mystery. The last part examines the illustration of the crisis in metacognitive mystery.

Lastly, as mentioned, metacognitive mystery tale is a genre that uses the tropes and conventions of the ratiocinative detective fiction, and subverts them. This thesis, especially its first chapter, negates detective fiction as a reader may say “as if there are no merits of detective fiction”. However, the intention of this chapter is to render the characteristics of the detective fiction that metacognitive mystery negates, and explain how its negation of these characteristics of detective fiction is the merit of metacognitive mystery.

2.1 Genesis and eschatology in detective fiction: Detective as a synecdoche and crisis as an apocalypse

“L'homme n'est rien, l'œuvre est tout”
Gustave Flaubert à George Sand, décembre 1875
“L'homme c'est rien — l'œuvre c'est tout”
Holmes' misquotation of Flaubert,
Arthur C. Doyle, “The Red-Headed League”

This part of the chapter reads examples of detective fiction, mainly by Edgar Allan Poe, and Arthur Conan Doyle. These works represent prototypes of the genre; they denote the very invention of some major tropes that are later adopted by a large set of writers, of both detective fiction and other genres, including but not limited to metacognitive mystery, crime fiction, mystery, whodunit, hard-boiled, and so on.

One of the most prominent focuses of this thesis is the hermeneutics of detective fiction, that is, the ways in which the detective interprets the things, events, people, and his environment in general. Hermeneutics is the study of methods and strategies of interpretation. In this part, I will examine detective fiction's treatment of crisis, and discuss (along with the following part) how this treatment contributes to the establishment of the relationship between the detective and his environment.

Jeffrey T. Nealon's "Work of the Detective, Work of the Writer" maintains that "both reader and detective are bound up in the . . . work of interpretation, the work of reading clues and writing a solution or end" (1999, p. 117). To begin with, one of the most problematized aspects of detective fiction by metacognitive mystery is that whether the detective is able to interpret, i.e., make sense of a clue, a text, is out of the question. No matter how hard to make sense of, anything is interpretable as to be reduced to a valid singular meaning. Joel Black in his "(De)feats of Detection" asserts that texts in detective fiction are "illegible but not unintelligible" (1999, p. 77). They may resist interpreting, or at times, Black acknowledges, they are "even difficult to recognize as texts" (78). But such are "purely logistical difficulties", and once dealt with, "understanding the message (or decoding it, finding its appropriate code) is a relatively simple, straightforward matter" (78). William W. Stowe in "From Semiotics to Hermeneutics" asserts that "[t]he code reader assumes a clearly defined message", and then writes that the detective's "goal is to consider data of all kinds as potential signifiers and to link them, however disparate and incoherent they seem, to a coherent set of signifieds, that is, to turn them into signs of the hidden order behind the manifest confusion, of the *solution* to the mystery, of the *truth*" (1983, p. 368).

To the detective, the world is a text to read. Put in another way, the world is made out of "all kinds of potential signifiers". The investigation of Poe's famous sleuth Dupin, in *The Mystery of Marie Roget* is only through the newspaper accounts of the case. This is the purest instance of the world translated into text. But in fact, anything in the environment of the detective is a sign to him. Hence G. K. Chesterton: "there is no stone in the street and no brick in the wall that is not actually

a deliberate symbol” (1947, p. 4).⁸ This is parallel to what Matthew Gumpert calls “Augustinian hermeneutics”, which he defines as “A figural reading [that] assumes that a text is neither transparent nor tautological but a translucent material screen whose opacity must be trespassed” (2012, p. 102). Augustine’s hermeneutics is inspired by Apostle Paul’s hermeneutic program which asserts that “*videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate*” (Vulgate, 1 Corinthians 13:12). And the assumption that the world is a riddle to solve, an *aenigma*, constitutes the perspective of the detective figure in metacognitive mystery as well as detective fiction. The biblical verse continues as “*tunc autem facie ad faciem nunc cognosco ex parte tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum*” (Vulgate, 1 Corinthians 13:12). It assumes there is a “then [*tunc*]” when one can see the reality “face to face”. The hermeneutics it implies anticipates that the interpreter may access the thing *as it is*. The difference between detective fiction and metacognitive mystery is in the former’s confirms the possibility of such an access as opposed to the latter. The name, *City of Glass* for instance, directly portrays the city as a “*speculum*”. *Ghosts*, the other story in the same volume includes an etymological gesture, where it remarks that “*specular*” in Latin means “to spy out”. And this is what the detective figure in *City of Glass* does, whose quest is to see through them, that is, to reach the *true* meanings of things. However, he fails, and the story thusly depicts the world as a composition of reflections, simulacra, the origins of which, which defines the thing that is present-at-hand, the thing-in-itself (as Heidegger and OOO defines it), cannot be grasped by their interpreter. Augustine, Gumpert displays, “rages against” worshipping “images [*simulacrorum*]”, implying a glorification of an assumed “single truth” (2012, p. 103;

⁸ “All the . . . figures presented are either the detective's assistants (or else malicious delayers of his activity) or suspects. No character is portrayed for his or her own sake. All the extras are firmly bound to the schema” (Heissenbüttel, 1983, p. 83).

see his fn4). The lack of the interpreter's ability in metacognitive mystery to "trespass" the "opacity" of things, this thesis will display, renders him, the interpreter, thrown into the domain of things. This sense of thrownness is what provides the reader with the text as a space where she observes a mode of encounter between the interpreter and the interpreted that defies the traditional hierarchy between them. In this space that metacognitive mystery portrays it is hard for the interpreter (the detective) to make sense of her environment, and impossible to reduce things into pure instruments. Thusly, as their pure functionality becomes dubious the thing-ness of things in Heideggerian terms becomes visible, and metacognitive mystery, by cancelling the absolute authority of the human figure to appropriate and control things, i.e., making things purely instrumental by designating their meanings and functions, reorients the human qua meaning-maker into the universe in the way OOO does. The sense of thrownness implies the cancellation of the traditional order, the vertical hierarchy between humans and things; it situates the human in the same plane as things. This is liberating for humans as well as things, because the acknowledgement of the human as a thing (as an entity that is on the same plane as things) as opposed to an abstract frees her from being a social, political, and moral category/class, and enables her to become a unique individual. Certainly, as one speaks of the ontology of human and things, one perceives human and things as *categories* of ontology. However, this is a knowledge that represents the epistemology of an ontology which rejects reducing things into objects of epistemology, of a knowledge.

Jorge Luis Borges' *Compass* reads "All things are words of some strange tongue" (1972, pp. 108-9).⁹ But Borges notices that things are made signs in order to be appropriated and controlled. Making things words is a way of inaugurating or confirming or solidifying an authority. Hence the poem follows: "in thrall To Someone, Something". And Borges notes that by transforming things into signs the detective becomes a historian, a person who engenders a coherent narrative out of chronicles, an unclassified heap of data. The whole excerpt is as below:

All things are words of some strange tongue, in thrall
To Someone, Something, who both day and night
Proceeds in endless gibberish to write
The history of the world (pp. 108-9)

In Borges, what eludes from the history and the tongue (though strange, and uttering gibberish) is acknowledged. The poem continues "Beyond the name there lies what has no name;/Today I have felt its shadow" (pp. 108-9). In detective fiction, nothing is allowed to escape from it. Holmes in *The Red-Headed League* says "My life is spent in one long effort to escape from the commonplaces of existence". But his interest in the margins proves an intention of centralising, that is, assimilating what is uncommon. This appears as a hermeneutic problem as Holmes' centralization denotes his transformation of the marginal, that is, less recognized and gravitated towards the centre by the authority, and therefore less controlled, into recognizable signs, well-established meanings, instruments of law and order (this is discussed in greater depth in 2.2.) Detective fiction cancels what Peter Hühn calls "polyvalence" for the sake of establishing "one true meaning"; the "essential premise of the classical formula that there ultimately exists such a determinate meaning" (1987, p.

⁹ Jorge Luis Borges is of significance for this discussion, because as an author of metacognitive mystery, and he is very well familiar with detective fiction. In many of his writings, Borges utilizes conventions of detective fiction and subverts them.

455). By assuming that there is a “determinate meaning”, detective fiction simplifies the world.

Now, in order to discuss the ideology implied by the relationship between the things qua signs and the detective, I explore two examples of detective fiction, the narratives of investigation of which are conspicuously centralised around signs: a photograph and a text. The first one is *A Scandal in Bohemia* by Doyle, and the second is *The Purloined Letter* by Poe.

In *A Scandal in Bohemia*, the future King of Bohemia asks for the help of Sherlock Holmes in seizing a photograph of a woman and himself together that the woman uses to blackmail him. Here, the sign, the photograph, appears as a matter of power. Who owns the sign claims the power with it.

This story is no more about solving a crime than about capturing power, and the detective is not a means of justice more than a tool of authority. Blackmailing is a crime for sure, but the prevention of this crime is through committing other crimes. Sherlock starts a fight, and Watson uses a “smokerocket”, among many other things that disturb the order. After a sequence of investigations, Sherlock locates the photograph. This point should have been the end of the case for Sherlock if he were only interested in the disclosure, the revelation of what is hidden. And yet, Sherlock raids the woman’s place to apprehend the photograph, along with Watson and the King, planning to commit yet another crime.

In many stories of Holmes, he only seems to be occupied with the business of detecting, “the art of deduction”. His work appears as if it is an objective interpretation of things. And the reestablishment of the order, which is depicted in *A Scandal in Bohemia* as synonymous with the restoration of power, occurs to be the

natural outcome of his procedures. And yet, the objectiveness of deduction turns out to be a delusion; he is not an objective eye, but an eye in the service of the authority.

Let me remind here again of Jean-François Lyotard's take on Humboldt's famous catchphrase "science for its own sake". Lyotard depicts how an allegedly natural, objective, account of things is charged with ethics and politics (*The Postmodern Condition*, 1984, pp. 32-7). Such is the case for Sherlock. His interpretation, which is legitimized by his assumedly true and objective knowledge of things, is politically charged. *A Scandal in Bohemia* is not the sole example that the story goes on to re-establish the power relations, although the case is already complete, or to rephrase, the disclosure is separate from but integrated into the restoration of the order. At the end of the story, *The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist*, Watson cannot help himself letting go of the juridical outcomes of Sherlock's investigation. At this point, again, the intellectual is overtly mixed with the legal and ethical: "Each case has been the prelude to another, and the crisis once over, the actors have passed for ever out of our busy lives. I find, however, a short note at the end of my manuscript dealing with this case . . . that "that Miss Violet Smith did indeed inherit a large fortune . . . Williamson and Woodley were both tried for abduction and assault, the former getting seven years and the latter ten".

In the other story I explore in this part, *The Purloined Letter* by Poe, the prefect of the police informs Dupin, the detective, that a certain Minister D— has stolen a letter from the Queen, written by her lover, and using it as a means of having power over the queen. The police failing to steal the letter back, ask for Dupin's help in getting the letter back from the Minister, and Dupin steals the letter for them. The affairs between people are portrayed as intellectual battles, a hermeneutic contest between the rivals. In order to picture the nature of this contest, the story tells about

an eight-year-old boy, who by reading his opponents beats them in the game of odds and evens; a game in which one has to predict whether the number her opponent picks is even or odd. The person who reads and analyses her opponent better wins. In the story, the Minister reads the Queen and thusly finds the letter and gets hold of the it, then, the police try to read Minister and locate the letter, but they fail, finally, Dupin reads the Minister, tricks him, and seizes the text back from him.

Here holding possession of the text, is again equated to holding power.

Barbara Johnson writes that for both Derrida and Lacan (in Lacan's *Seminar on the Purloined Letter* and Derrida's response to him *The Purveyor of Truth*) "letter = phallus", an image of power (1977, p. 474). The content of the letter is hidden from the reader, so Derrida asserts that the letter is a hole (pp. 60-1). Lacan defines the letter as a sign stripped from the signified, a mere signifier. But he makes this lack (what Derrida calls "the hole") the meaning of the text. Derrida accuses Lacan of making the lack of the content, "the meaning", of the letter, the meaning of the letter, i.e., for "putting what is not in the letter into the letter" (1975, p. 464). However, the meaning of the letter is defined by the context of Poe's story: it is a phallic item, a means of power, a "glove", once seized by the Minister, "turned inside out" (1966, p. 996). Its meaning was not missing in the first place. Surely, that a great mind such as Derrida himself is wrong in assuming the letter is a hole does not mean Lacan is right. He seems to be unintentionally right in assuming a meaning in the text, which makes him wrong in his suggestion that the text is a signifier detached from a signified. The letter is not a signifier without a signified, but the signified of which is emptied and then re-determined by power relations and accepted morals of the society. Derrida's writing is an application of his umbrella theory to this story that any sign is open-ended and indeterminate to any reader, especially himself, but the

text itself, “The Purloined Letter”, represents the ultimate reader, Dupin, as a person to whom the world is determinate. Dupin’s task is to read his opponent, D--, through turning him into a composition of evidences and locate the letter, in which he becomes absolutely successful. This thesis argues that the hermeneutic determinacy in detective fiction is illusory, and in that, it seems to parallel Derrida, claiming open-endedness. My contradiction is to Derrida’s affirmation and representation of this story by Poe as a patron of his hermeneutics, whereas I argue it is not, given its representation of the detective, the reader, as discussed.

What the purloined letter lacks is not its meaning as Derrida suggests but its letter-ness. It is transformed into a mere sign, in Lyotard’s terms, a metadiscourse (see the introduction for the definition of the term). Its existence in itself is cancelled, and it is turned into a vacant symbol of power. It is only a letter-as-sign as opposed to letter-as-it-is.¹⁰ “Signs, in fact, do nothing other than point beyond themselves, and this comprises their ‘ontological’ character as ready-to-hand” (Nealon, “Work of the Detective, Work of the Writer”, 1999, p. 126). Hence as Nealon indicates, the purloined letter can be anything but itself. In detective fiction, as portrayed in the two stories discussed, the detective (and his rivals) translates things into signs, and thusly, transforms them into sheer tools of authority.

However, what the detective reads in *The Purloined Letter* (as well as in *A Scandal in Bohemia*) is not the text itself. Dupin has to read his opponent, Minister D— in order to obtain the text, as Minister D— reads his opponents, the queen and the police. Thus, people become signs to interpret. But there is only one right way of interpretation. One must read his opponent right; if you misread, you lose. In *The Purloined Letter*, having power depends upon the ability to turn things into signs,

¹⁰ Certainly, if there is a letter in a text, this letter is necessarily a sign. However, a text may confirm a letter’s existence as a letter, as a thing, as does metacognitive mystery.

and reveal their correct meanings. The “right” interpretation is rendered the way of seizing the letter, the power. This applies to *A Scandal in Bohemia* as well. Holmes reads Irene Adler and reveals where the photograph is hidden. Were everything equal, he would have seized the photograph, therefore, the power; Adler reads Holmes, sees his attempt to capture the photograph and escapes from it, and maintains power.

The Purloined Letter is not a story about the recuperation of justice more than restoring power as is *A Scandal of Bohemia* as argued earlier. The crime that Minister D— commits is offset not through the application of legal procedures but the commitment of the same crime, as Dupin steals the letter back from the Minister. An eye for an eye, a crime for a crime. Dupin’s methods though, as in religion, cannot be and are not justified by reasoning. What validates his conduct is that he is working for the authority.

In both stories, the restoration of the order is done by reading and revealing the hidden information. This information in the two stories is the location of the missing sign. In detective fiction, the disclosure is certain. The true meanings of things are accessible to someone who has the proper knowledge of them. The disclosure is, as Peter Hühn puts it, “telling the story of the genesis of the crime” (1987, p. 454). He defines the genesis of the crime as its “origin, agent, causal connection, temporal sequence, aim”. Everything explained, the “true predicate falls into place”, as Barthes puts it, and the crisis is solved (see the introduction for the full quote, and its close reading). This way, detective fiction suggests an end.

The end of the detective story, R. Austin Freeman claims, is what provides the reader with an “intellectual satisfaction” (1947, p. 11). It is the satisfaction of “solving a riddle”, therefore, Willard Huntington Wright asserts that the detective

story represents a “puzzle” (1947, p. 36). The ending of the crisis in detective fiction is a testimonial to the understanding that there can be only one solution.¹¹

There are “two stories” in detective fiction: “the story of the crime, which is missing, and the story of the investigation, which is present, and whose only justification is to acquaint us with the other story” (Dechêne, 2018, p. 40).¹² They are, nonetheless, structurally interwoven (Hühn, 1987, p. 452). In detective fiction, most characteristically, the narrative starts out from the beginning of the story of the investigation, which starts with a verbal account of the story of the crime. The reader most customarily is not exposed to the commitment of the crime, hence she involves in the act of detecting, along with the detective. Thusly, the beginning (the crime) “happens like the fall of man or even of the angels (pardon the mythical coloring) – outside of history” (Ernst Bloch, 1996, p. 254; in “A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel”). In *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode defines crises as “the moments” where there is a “beginning” and an “end” (2000, p. 96). The crisis narrated by the detective story is the story of crime, which represents its beginning. And this beginning is counterbalanced by an end that Kermode defines as “eschatological”: The end in detective fiction is the one true solution; it is the final judgement. Holmes acknowledges in the following quote the “end” of the world, in the sense of it having a purpose, its instrumentality, and the finality of it, the refusal of accidentality:

“What is the meaning of it, Watson?” said Holmes solemnly as he laid down the paper. “What object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable” (Doyle, 2012, “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box”).

¹¹ “Puzzles know only one solution, the arbitrariness of the pile of things knows infinitely many” (Ralf Konersmann, as cited in Frisby, 1994, p. 101).

¹² See also Tzvetan Todorov (1990, pp. 27-38; 1995, pp. 42-52) and Dennis Porter (1981, pp. 29-30).

Eschatology offers a purge and redemption for the world reordered, and the judge of the final judgement (who or what draws the distinction between the innocent and the criminal, and who is able to give a verdict accordingly occurs as the Godlike authority). The ending in detective fiction is the self-legitimation of the methods and procedures of the authority.

Janet Roitman in her *Anti-Crisis* asserts that

Crisis is a blind spot that enables the production of knowledge . . . [it] is an observation that produces meaning (2014, p. 39, p. 41).

[It is an] observation that, like all observations or cognitions, does not account for the very conditions of its observation. Consequentially, making that blind spot visible means asking questions about how we produce significance for ourselves (p. 13).

Defined as such, the act of analysis in *The Purloined Letter* is the crisis. John T. Irwin suggests that in the discussions of Lacan, Derrida, and Johnson, “*The Purloined Letter* is treated as a pretext, which is to say, read as a parable of the act of analysis” (1999, p. 29). Their analyses of the act of analysis represent what Barbara Johnson defines as “asymmetrical, abyssal structure[s]” (p. 34). Concerning their “abyssal” character, these analyses of the act of analysis are the blind spots, through which Lacan, Derrida, and Johnson “produce significance”. To Poe, on the other hand, the analysis itself is a crisis. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* begins by declaring “[t]he mental features discoursed of as the analytical, are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis” (1966, p. 724). Irwin suggests in his essay that Poe, in the quote introduced above, recognizes that the analysis of the analysis generates “a blind spot” -- this “abyssal structure” in Johnson’s terms. Nonetheless, reading Poe’s sentence, Irwin’s assertion seems not necessarily right; but what Poe (or in fact the narrator of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*) necessarily implies is that the analysis itself is a slippery concept, a blind spot, “but little susceptible of analysis”

(1966, p. 724). If there is a “hole” in Poe’s story, it is not the letter as Derrida suggests, but it is Dupin’s act of analysis.¹³

According to the narrator of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, then, the analysis itself is a crisis through which the knowledge is produced. When history is temporalized¹⁴, “the truth of history” becomes “contingent” (Roitman, 2014, p. 18). Regarding the historical contingency, “the production of meaning” connotes “the invention of meaning”.

Irwin argues:

As is often the case in his fiction, Poe, using the picture language of radicals, emblemizes this latent meaning on the level of etymology, a level to which he explicitly directs our attention in "The Purloined Letter" when he has Dupin, in arguing against those who equate analysis with algebra, remark, "If a term is of any importance - if words derive any value from applicability – then 'analysis' conveys 'algebra' about as much as, in Latin, 'ambitus' implies 'ambition,' 'religio,' 'religion,' or 'homines honesti,' a set of honorable men" (987). Since in each of these examples an English word has a meaning different from that of its Latin root, the inference seems clear: in "The Purloined Letter," "if a term is of any importance," we should submit that term to philological analysis to see if the root from which it derives has different or additional meanings compared to its English form, meanings that might alter, reverse, or deepen the significance of the passages in which these words appear (1999, p. 37).

Then Irwin goes on to exercise the same sort of analysis on some other terms Poe uses that are focal to Irwin’s essay. Following Irwin’s method, I integrate Poe’s phraseology into my discussion by rephrasing him as “production” conveys “invention” about as much as, in Latin, “invenire” implies “invention”. In “The Purloined Letter” (as well as in *A Scandal in Bohemia*), the figure of the detective produces (invents) meaning in the sense of discovering (*invenire*) and revealing

¹³ This hole, of course, is not necessarily textual but a narrative hole. It does not necessarily represent a hole to the reader, a structural defect, but it is depicted as a hole by the narrator.

¹⁴ “With the temporalization of history—or the process by which, since the late eighteenth century, time is no longer figured as a medium in which histories take place, but rather is itself conceived as having a historical quality—history no longer occurs in time; rather, time itself becomes an active, transformative (historical) principle (Koselleck [1979] 2004, p. 236; and 2002, pp. 165–67; as cited in Roitman, 2014, p. 18).

them.¹⁵ In *A Study in Scarlet* Holmes says that “[t]here is nothing new under the sun”. Utilizing detective fiction’s “backwards reasoning” (which is problematic, but particularly practical and handy here), I argue that the transformation of production into revelation (discovery), follows that “the contingent” transforms into “the necessity”. Such an understanding of history goes hand in hand with a notion of “crisis” that has an “apocalyptic meaning” in a “theological” sense (Roitman, 2014, p. 16; Koselleck 2006, p. 370).¹⁶ Hence, the solution to the crisis in “The Purloined Letter”, is represented as eschatological, an establishment of order through a final judgement that decides what is what.¹⁷

The words crisis and criticism are derived from the Ancient Greek word “κρίνω” which means “distinguish”, “choose”, “separate”, “pick out” (“Κρίνω”). It is apt to submit that “crisis” etymologically does not have an essence, as implied in the examples of detective fiction as I have argued, but it seems like a construct, as Roitman argues. However, when the term is theologically refurbished with a sense of inevitability and finality as in “the last judgement”, it gets essentialised. Such is its sense in the examples of detective fiction this thesis reads. Crisis essentialised, criticism that I define as the job of the detective becomes an occupation of solving a crisis that means to interpret signs and deduce their essences. The works of detective

¹⁵ On the other hand, William W. Stowe asserts that “interpretation” in metacognitive mystery “is never merely reproduction or revelation of previously existing but is always itself creative (1983, p. 374).

¹⁶ As the concept of crisis discards its apocalyptic sense “[crisis] turns into a structural category of Christianly understood history pure and simple; eschatology is, so to speak, historically monopolized” (Koselleck 2002, 242). Also, Roitman, “Crisis Demands”, fn9: “Read also Koselleck 2004, esp. chapter 13. His argument is greatly indebted to Löwith (1949), who demonstrates the Judeo-Christian eschatological framework underlying certain historical concepts, such as progress, as well as to Schmitt ([1922] 1985) regarding the transposition of theological forms to modern jurisprudence and to the political form of the modern state” (2014).

¹⁷ The narrator of “The Purloined Letter”’s faith in etymology is conceivably a faith in roots and origins. The disclosure is surely an explanation of the “genesis of the crime” as well as the closure is eschatological.

fiction in question are humanist in the sense that they replace God with the human figure squarely, granting human a Godlike authority on things in knowing or being able to know their essences. In other words, their humanism is the removal of the God and celestial creatures from the Scala Naturae, and promoting the human figure to the top chain. Hence, the human figure is “Enlightened” in the sense that he confiscated the light from the God, took on a Promethean guise, becoming he himself a god, or more precisely, a titan, which is defined as *the* “ruler of earth”, and “one that is gigantic in power” (“*Titan*”, from Merriam-Webster).

As per the two narratives (of the crime and of the investigation) in *A Scandal in Bohemia*, there are, in fact, *two* stories of crime communicated to Holmes (and the reader) at the beginning, one successful, one failed. The first is that the woman who wants to “ruin” the king has the photograph. She is not guilty of stealing it though, as the king says that he lent her the photograph with his own hands. The “crime” is her intention to ruin the king. The second story is about the confiscation of the photograph from that woman: “Five attempts have been made. Twice burglars in my [King’s] pay ransacked her house. Once we diverted her luggage when she travelled. Twice she has been waylaid. There has been no result”. What legitimises the king’s attempted crimes (rendering them noncriminal) and defines the woman’s activity as criminal is the end of the story. In the end, the photograph is secured as the king confirms that “[t]he photograph is now as safe as if it were in the fire”, and this outcome is rendered as the success of Holmes’ investigation. The end, which represents a final solution, is depicted as a success, a glory. And the glory of the deduction is the king’s victory, and hence, a vindication of his methods. Here “deduction” seems not to be a means to restore the order by solving a crime but to confirm what is a crime and what is not (for example, the king’s attempts to steal the

letter are not regarded as crimes). In this regard, “deduction” is a medium through which the authority justifies itself. There is no logical explanation – in both *A Scandal in Bohemia* and *The Purloined Letter* – for how it is decided what constitutes a crime. The crime is the crisis to be solved in detective fiction, but what makes it a crisis is not discussed. The authority’s (the king in *A Scandal in Bohemia*, and the Prefect of Police and the Queen in *The Purloined Letter*) definition of crisis is taken for granted, and the authority’s legitimacy is taken for granted; they are beyond questioning. Thusly, the authority takes on a Godlike guise; and the environment, the world, which is a pile of clues, in other words, a text becomes a pretext, which is read by the detective as an allegory of the authority.

The episodes dedicated to discussing deduction in Doyle’s Holmes stories are called “The Science of Deduction”. Doyle portrays deduction as a branch of science. And this science is a lens to see through things. “To the logician all things should be seen exactly *as they are*” (Doyle, 2012, *The Greek Interpreter*). Thus, the stories assert that science provides access to the “simple” and “true” knowledge of things. Depicted as such, a certain knowledge (the knowledge in the service of the authority) is seen under what Lyotard calls “ontological pretensions” (1984, p. 37). Thusly, the legitimation of the means and ways of the authority as discussed above takes on the guise of an ontological legitimation, which means that the authority claims a *natural* right to rule.

In “Reading as Construction”, Tzvetan Todorov remarks that “[o]nly referential sentences allow construction to take place; not all sentences, however, are referential” (1980, p. 68). He calls non-referential sentences as “maxims”. Then, he makes another significant distinction between “signified” and “symbolized”. “Signified facts are understood: all we need is knowledge of the language in which

the text is written. Symbolized facts are interpreted; and interpretations vary from one subject to another” (p. 73). Referential sentences and symbolized facts refer to some other things, thus they require interpretation, with regards to what they relate to. However, maxims and signified facts may be what Todorov calls referential and symbolic. Todorov’s example is “The fact that Adolphe as narrator formulates a maxim on the misery of being loved tells us something about his character, and therefore about the imaginary universe of which he is a part” (p. 70). In detective fiction the non-referential are observations, and turning into symbolic facts or referential meaning units, they may indicate the methods beyond them, and methods may deliver information about the people that use them. However, the information there is reduced to true or false. In his *Genres in Discourse*, Tzvetan Todorov compares the quest for the Holy Grail with the genre of detective fiction and asserts that the Grail quest “is a story of learning. But unlike the Grail story, what characterizes knowledge in detective fiction is that it has only two possible values, true or false” (1990, p. 33). Thusly, the non-referential in detective fiction tell that the people who deduce them are right (their methods are right). The end validates their maxims and observations and methods, and thus, validate their ways. Yet, this is a tautological fallacy, their methods bring up observations and observations validate their methods. In other words, the hermeneutics of detective fiction confirms itself with reference to itself.

David Frisby writes, “in the detective puzzle novel . . . the nature of killing in all its gruesomeness is almost always absent; the act of killing has become aestheticized” (1994, p. 101). The “puzzle-like detective novel” represents an irrational abstraction of things (p. 101). Such an abstraction, Frisby suggests, acts as a mechanism of repression for the anxiety of what Walter Benjamin calls a

“bourgeois pandemonium”. This abstraction is, partly, what I call the transformation of things into sheer signs. By depicting the world determinate, such fiction simplifies it as I postulated above.

In Doyle’s stories of Holmes, the word “simple” is used in a context as in *A Scandal in Bohemia*, “the matter was perfectly simple” (that means interpreting clues and revealing their true meaning is so easy) for more than thirty times. *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton* follows “‘How absurdly simple!’ I [Watson] cried. ‘Quite so!’ said [Sherlock]”. Again, maybe the most famous catchphrase of Holmes is “elementary”. Poe’s Dupin tales posit such simplicity of the world as well. In *The Purloined Letter* Dupin tells the Prefect of the Police who complains about the oddness of the case that “[p]erhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault”, “[p]erhaps the mystery is a little too plain”, “[a] little too self-evident”. Irwin follows Poe’s interest in etymology and defines “simple”:

Though the root of the word "simple," the Latin *simplex*, means "single," "unmixed," "uncompounded,"¹⁸ the roots of the word simplex—the Latin words *semel*, meaning "once," "a single time," and *plico*, meaning "to fold, fold together" (Simpson 556) —make it clear that to be unmixed or uncompounded does not mean to be undifferentiated (1999, p. 39).

In order to describe Poe’s understanding of “simple” as something that is “differentiated” though “uncompounded”, Irwin quotes Poe’s poem, “Epigram for Wall street”. The poem illustrates folding a banknote as doubling it. However, I read the poem as an expression of distrust of banks. It can be interpreted as a whimsical poem that includes puns for comedic effects. It asserts that by folding the money, “you will find your money in creases!”. I read the space between the words “in” and “creases” as a playful suggestion that the money does not increase but it only creases.

¹⁸ “See the definition of "simple" in *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1359)” (Irwin’s endnote, 1999).

It goes “And every time that you fold it across, / 'Tis as plain as the light of the day that you double it!”. The imagery of creasing as opposed to increasing (in the modern sense of both words) renders a doubling as such impossible. Then, the poem may well imply, as opposed to what Irwin makes of it, that a sense of doubling as generating two differentiated parts is futile; it only causes creases. The poem is a piece of financial advice, but I read this advice as “better fold your money than to trust banks”. As per the sense of simplicity as folding and doubling in *The Purloined Letter*, I believe, it may be closer to a sense of “undifferentiated” doubling, implying a double that is identical. But the argument raises the question, a double of what, what is the double identical to? Such a perception of the notion of “simple” implies a deviation between a thing and the sign that refers to it, and it denotes that the sign and the thing are identical. The “simple” thing, as the narrator of *The Purloined Letter* asserts, is “self-evident”, that is, perceptible as it is: thing qua sign is identical to the thing itself. And it follows that “even the hardest things to understand in the world are simple to the analyst”, and that “anything can be reduced to its true meaning”.

Holmes asserts in *The Sign of Four*, that the world can be rendered a puzzle, a complete, totalised truth by “very simple reasoning”. And the puzzle that is sealed together represents the “simple truth” of the world. The simple truth of things is reached through their annihilation as things, and through becoming puzzle pieces, abstracts, symbols related to power that have no context other than in the power relations. The *ultimate* truth that detective fiction claims to offer through an “absurd” simplification of things is what depicts the crisis as an *ultimate* one, an apocalypse. This will be further discussed in the following part of this chapter.

Merriam-Webster defines synecdoche as: “[s]ynecdoche refers to the practice of using a part of something to stand in for the whole thing”. The detective is an “‘instrument of pure logic’ that puts back in order the ‘chaos of the world’” (Holquist, 1971, p. 141, p. 155; Dechêne, 2018, p. 14). Holquist asserts that “Holmes is less a detective than a mathematician; he *is* his function. Therefore other people simply are not people for him” (1971, p. 143; see introduction for its close reading). He is nothing but his work, as the epigraph to this part indicates. The detective is a tool (a function) that transforms things into signs (tools), and identifies things with certain meanings, with a claim to suggest the “real”, “whole” (totalised), and “only” truth (meaning) of the things. Granted that he is a functioning part of a text, a pretext, an allegory of the authority, he is a synecdoche of the authority. The apocalyptic representation of the crisis renders the truth that solves it, which is discovered by the detective, the only valid truth. This allegedly *eternal* truth is the truth that serves the authority. The success of the detective in offering a disclosure represents a solution, a closure. That there *is* a solution confirms that there has been a crisis. In the two stories discussed, the crises concern the authority (the king and the queen). Given that the stories render the notion of crisis apocalyptic, its solution is the final solution, the order that is reinstituted after it is the ultimate order. Hence, the detective is messianic whereas the authority is Godlike. Making the only valid truth the prerogative of the authority, the ending in detective fiction is thusly an acknowledgement of the authority’s *natural* right to rule, that the detective is a tool validating that the authority’s right to rule is natural, and that there *are* true meanings of things, which appear in the context of the distribution and establishment of power, accessible to a “scientific lens [eye]” that claims to see things as they are, and that

things are only signs (equal to their meanings), tools that are at work in the establishment, maintenance, restoration, or consolidation of the authority.

2.2 A hermeneutics of colonisation and the colonisation of hermeneutics

“Whatever remains must be the truth.”
Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sign of Four*,
and *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*

This part studies the hermeneutics of detective fiction concerning the notions of crisis, apocalypse, and genesis, as discussed in the first part of this chapter. I use colonisation as “the action of appropriating a place or domain for one's own use” (Oxford English Dictionary). Still, at times this part performs post-colonial gestures in reading the stories and novels that it discusses as well, and in any case, I use the term somewhat metaphorically. In that sense, this is a strategical approach to the hermeneutics it discusses, more than an attempt to explore the hermeneutics that concerns a history of colonisation. Such a strategy parallels Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's metaphorical use of the term “nomad”, and Michel de Certeau's “colonization”, “assimilation”. This part may offer a possibility for dialogue between its use of the term colonisation and the nomadic imagery of Deleuze and Guattari. However, this opportunity for dialogue is not used as much as I would like to for the sake of the economy of the chapter. Lastly, treating the notion of colonialism as metaphorical, I have no intention to represent the experience of colonisation as an abstract, and only an intellectual problem; I discuss the colonization of hermeneutics. Moreover, I believe all writing is somewhat metaphorical, as Matthew Gumpert in his *End of Meaning* asserts “that metaphor” is “the very condition of writing” (2012, p. 53).

In the first part of this chapter, I have depicted the figure of detective in detective fiction as a historian as opposed to a chronicler. To consolidate my argument, I have to add that the story of detective fiction puts itself up as historical. “‘It is simple enough as you [Holmes] explain it,’ I [Watson] said, smiling. ‘You remind me of Edgar Allan Poe’s Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories.’” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*).¹⁹ Hence it is allegedly outside of stories: the truth of detective fiction - according to detective fiction - is not fictive. It is historical (“real”). I have discussed to some extent that the truth revealed by the detective is rendered the “true” truth in the first part of this chapter.²⁰ Detective fiction’s claims for this truth to be historical validate this truth’s “trueness”. I begin this part by investigating detective fiction’s “truth” of history.

Part 2.1 briefly discusses referential sentences, and how they work in detective fiction. Todorov writes about “modes” of writing which is very related to the prior discussion. “Direct discourse is the only way to eliminate the differences between narrative discourse and the world which it evokes: words are identical to words, and construction is direct and immediate. This is not the case with nonverbal events, nor with transposed discourse” (1980, p. 70). The story of detection a) avoids referential sentences b) is written in direct discourse. In Holmes stories, the narration is verbatim; it is *not* “unlikely that [Holmes] used words . . . identical to those which follow the ‘he told me that’ formula” (p. 70). On the other hand, the crime story is written in transposed discourse, but the translation is hidden. The story of crime is

¹⁹ As per Poe’s Dupin tales, they are written in first person, in a witnessing mode, and in past tense, like many other works that belong to many other fictional genres that would like to depict their stories historical. Such a mode of writing is problematized, for example, in the story, *Ghosts*, in *New York Trilogy* by Paul Auster, that he only writes in present tense and third person and the story tells the reader at the beginning that “neither one will ever change” (2006, p. 133).

²⁰ Stowe asserts: “Like Holmes, Poe’s Auguste Dupin is [an] . . . interpreter who treats facts as signs of other facts, and eventually of ‘the truth’” (1983, p. 370; my emphasis).

not delivered in the form of a second-hand experience of the detective, but a first-hand experience of his observations, transformed into verbatim. Thusly, detective fiction hides the fictional, and claims to be historical. Surely, as discussed in the previous part, this history is symbolic of the victorious authority's omnipotence.

This thesis discusses two points that regard detective fiction's understanding of history. First, it is scientific; second, it is determined. In his essay "History and Science (1862), On H. T. Buckle's History of Civilization in England", Wilhelm Dilthey asserts that Buckle wants to transform history into a branch of science. The way Buckle pursues such an interest concerns finding "fixed laws" that guide and govern the progress of history, applying which, in forecasting the events in future, "chance" will be "excluded" (1996, p. 263).

Examples of such laws that have already been established include the following: The number of crimes committed bears a constant relationship to the number of inhabitants of the country in which they were committed; for example, in France the same number of people are charged with crimes as the number of males who die in Paris in the same period. A similar uniformity may be found in individual locales of the crimes; like-wise with suicides. The number of suicides committed annually in 104 London averages 240 and deviates only insignificantly from that average number. There is a further law that the number of marriages contracted annually bears a constant relationship to corn prices (pp. 265-6).

Buckle goes still further: The number of letters mailed, which their writers have forgotten to address, is the same every year. Hence here too we have a law. This last fact encourages me to share something with the public, the scientific value of which I had no inkling of for years, until reading Buckle's work brought it to my attention. If, at a dinner attended by one hundred guests, green peas and Teltower turnips are served in the same course, assuming that both dishes are equally well prepared, seventy people will select green peas and only thirty will select turnips (p. 266).

Dilthey asserts that we already have a knowledge of such laws in nature. "In spite of the Old Testament's declaration, we know whence the wind comes and whither it goes" (p. 263). He and Buckle imply that we can tell when a raindrop falls if we know the parameters well enough. Since the calculation of the timing and location of

the fall of a raindrop is a function, tracing it backwards is also possible. Such is the approach to laws of nature of Holmes as well. Holmes reassures Watson that “[y]ou see, the whole thing is a chain of logical sequences without a break or flaw”; hence “[f]rom a drop of water” said the writer [Holmes], ‘a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it’” (Doyle, 2012, *A Study in Scarlet*).

Buckle’s “scientific” approach to history is the one that Doyle’s Holmes stories imply as well. There *are* laws of history according to Holmes (and Doyle as he posits Holmes’ understanding through setting him successful), just as Buckle acknowledges. Holmes’ ability to solve a case partly comes from his knowledge of history, and his ability to infer laws and principles of history through this knowledge. Holmes transforms history into a function governed by a set of interchangeable variables. Hence, detective fiction represents beings (that constitute history; and I use history in the sense that “everything that happened, happens, will happen”) as variables. “They [Scotland Yard] lay all the evidence before me [Holmes], and I am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight. There is a strong family resemblance about misdeeds, and if you have all the details of a thousand at your finger ends, it is odd if you can’t unravel the thousand and first” (2012, *A Study in Scarlet*). Dupin’s ability to reveal the truth about crimes depends on “his prodigious store of information” as well (Stowe, 1983, p. 372). Given that a whole body of Holmes stories suggests no exception that challenges such an understanding of history, a sense of history from which chance and coincidence are utterly eliminated, Doyle’s detective fiction -- and other works of the

genre that adopt Doyle's representation of investigation -- renders history determined through scientizing it.

It is determined in the sense that it is what Todorov calls a signified fact.

Is there such a thing as a nonindividual construction? It is easy to show that the answer must be positive. Everyone who reads Adolphe knows that Ellenore first lived with the Comte de P***, that she left him, and went to live with Adolphe; they separated; she later joined him in Paris, etc. On the other hand, there is no way to establish with the same certainty whether Adolphe is weak or merely sincere.

The reason for this duality is that the text evokes facts according to two different modes, which I shall call signification and symbolization. Ellénore's trip to Paris is signified by the words in the text. Adolphe's (ultimate) weakness is symbolized by other factors in the imaginary universe, which are themselves signified by words. For example, Adolphe's inability to defend Ellénore in social situations is signified; this in turn symbolizes his inability to love. Signified facts are understood: all we need is knowledge of the language in which the text is written. Symbolized facts are interpreted; and interpretations vary from one subject to another (1980, p. 73).

History in detective fiction is determined because, first, it has an end, a final judgement and a final solution, second, it is intelligible. The “signification” and “symbolization” of Todorov reminds of the “historical” and “spiritual” senses of Bible. Aquinas in *Summa Theologica*, in “The Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine”, Hugh of Saint Victor in *Didascalicon*, and Dante in his letter to Can Grande della Scala writes about four senses of the holywrit. First is historical. It means what bible says is literal, in other words, it is history, what it says actually happened. The following ones are spiritual senses. Second is allegorical, or typological, it means the Old Testament is a forecast of Christ. Third is moral, or tropological, it means that Bible is a story that tells about the morals of God, the stories are moral stories. And the fourth is anagogical, it deals with eschatology. The four senses are not present in each part in bible, not uniformly. The foundation is historical, and any given sentence from bible may or may not have the other three senses. In detective fiction the whole story of crime is signified, that is, historical. In

Todorov's terms, it means there is no room for interpretation; the reader can only confirm. The spiritual, or, symbolic in detective fiction is the story itself, both the story of crime and the story of detection, as they symbolise the integrity of the authority. By integrity, I consider the senses "the state of being whole and undivided", because the source of conflict is cancelled, and "the condition of being unified or sound in construction" (Oxford English Dictionary). Of course, the connotations of the word "integrity" as rectitude and trustworthiness are considerable in this case, because the detective story confirms the morality of the authority as well, though its morality is inscribed as "natural law". Thus, detective fiction is an allegory of the authority's rightness. If the story of detection is historical as opposed to fictional in that it is written in verbatim, and transforms the story of crime into history (as discussed previously), then history is a pretext to confirm the authority. Granted that the *end* of "history" is what confirms, the story becomes anagogical.

On the other hand, the history, not in the sense of each individual event but in the sense of the total of these events, has an end in detective fiction as well (see the discussion of apocalypse and eschatology in Part 1; see footnote 2). Holmes asserts that "[h]ow often have I said to you [Watson] that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth" and "[i]t is an old maxim of mine that when you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth" (*The Sign of Four* and *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*). Here, Holmes' methodology of reaching the truth suggests a Hegelian logic reduced to "understanding", or Johann Gottlieb Fichte's famous model "thesis-antithesis-synthesis."²¹

²¹ Karl Löwith observes the traces of a Joachite (Joachim of Floris) anticipation of a "progress toward a historical *eschaton*" in Fichte's philosophy (from *Meaning in History*; 1949, p. 146, pp. 208-9). "Joachim's eschatological scheme consists neither in a simple millennium nor in the mere expectation of the end of the world but in a twofold eschaton: an ultimate historical phase of the history of

With regard to its form, the logical has three sides: (α) the side of abstraction or of the understanding, (β) the dialectical or negatively rational side, [and] (γ) the speculative or positively rational one (Hegel, 1991, p. 125).

Hegel defines a thing-in-itself as a thing that is determined through its negation of others, such a thing is an abstract. Such a determination represents to Hegel the process of “understanding”. Understanding is when the object is apprehended through what it is not. It stabilizes the thing, which is living according to Hegel. Thusly, the thing’s becoming is fixed, that is, cancelled in this process. He asserts that not being anything else, the thing-in-itself is self-identical; this sort of a perception of a thing is nothing. Hegel defines this nothing as “an abstract universal” (2010, §80). That is to say, to Hegel, what is an abstract universal is nothing. The dialectical stage defines the process when the thing violates boundaries between what it was supposed to be and what it is not. It is when the thing becomes unstable (p. 219). Dialectics for Hegel represents the negation of this determined self-identical being, because the thing has a becoming, i.e., the thing is in motion, so it becomes what it is not; whereas the dialectics of thesis-antithesis-synthesis takes the production of knowledge of a thing as a one-sided process, and defines dialectics as only a matter of conscious. Hegel grants things a becoming, a life: “Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there Dialectic is at work” (2013, Note to §81).²² Thusly, dialectics

salvation, preceding the transcendent eschaton of the new aeon, ushered in by the second coming of Christ. The Kingdom of the Spirit is the last revelation of God's purpose on earth and in time (p. 151)”. In the Appendix I, “Modern Transfigurations of Joachimism”, Löwith argues that at times modernism substitutes education for revelation. This replication implies that a progress in human knowledge represents a motion through salvation and therefore an *eschaton*. Granted that Fichte’s model of thesis-antithesis-synthesis entails a historical progress, it presumes an eschaton as its final synthesis as well. Detective fiction representing such a final synthesis, the attainment of an unshakable, absolute truth, the end of detective fiction represents an eschaton, the restoration of the order, the confirmation of the authority being synonymous with the salvation of the human kind.

²² And the speculative is the positing of the difference the thing produces, a confirmation of its becoming of what it is not.

does not mean to Hegel “an adventitious art”; it is a matter of the inner conflicts caused by the self-motion of things (§81). From Holmes’ point of view, it *is* adventitious. Dialectics in detective fiction defines a process of eliminating the “delusive” ideas that concern what a thing may be, a negation of wrong interpretations, which has nothing to do with the inner-life, the inner-motion of things, and has everything to do with the interpreter. Thusly, in detective fiction, things are posited as stagnant abstracts, if I follow a Hegelian terminology. Stowe writes that the way detective reads and understands “clues” involves “a purely logical process of elimination” (1983, p. 371).

As asserted above, Hegel defines such a process as “understanding”, which means “the fixation” of a thing (§79-80). Through such a logical approach, the detective fixes things he interprets. His understanding depends upon a synchronic examination of things, as opposed to investigating diachronic data. To him then, things he interprets are dead, inert abstracts; they do not change through time. Such a positioning against things (objects, people, anything that is interpreted, anything that is an object of consciousness) represents “the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus” from which “[h]istory is always written” (Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 2005, p. 23). Through such a fixation of things, the “synthesis”, the result after negation, represents an ultimate end, the revelation of the ultimate truth in detective fiction. “The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb ‘to be’, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and . . . and . . . and . . .’” (p. 25). The result of the dialectics of detective fiction is the fixation of the thing to a meaning through the utilisation of the verb “to be”. Such dialectics implies a belief in an accessible genesis (a root), and the end of history.

The hermeneutics denoting the sense of interpretation I have mentioned above is the hermeneutics Dilthey defines: “hermeneutics determines the possibility of universally valid interpretation” (“The Rise of Hermeneutics”, 1996, p. 238). Dilthey adopts a Cartesian point of view, that also represents the standpoint of detective fiction. Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method* suggests that “Dilthey thought he was legitimating the human sciences epistemologically by conceiving the historical world as a text to be deciphered”, whereas Dilthey assumes any text to be intelligible, just as Holmes would suppose (p. 233). Hence, such notions of history and text combined, the consequential theory necessarily posits that history is intelligible. Gadamer acknowledges Dilthey’s half-heartedly take on Hegel’s philosophy:

“The result was that history was ultimately reduced to intellectual history, a reduction which Dilthey accepts in his half-negation, half-affirmation of Hegel’s philosophy of mind . . . Everything in history is intelligible, for everything is text. ‘Life and history make sense like the letters of a word’ Thus Dilthey ultimately conceives inquiring into the historical past *as deciphering and not as historical experience* (p. 234).

The statement that “history is intelligible” does not only mean that the past is accessible through ratiocination, but that any mystery in history can be revealed. Granted that revelation of the mystery is the solution to the crisis in detective fiction, it means that any crisis in history can be solved. William Stowe quotes Stephen Knight in order to make this point regarding detective fiction: “it is merely suggested that strange and terrible things can happen and a clever man will be able to explain them . . . A comforting fable for skilled and dedicated readers is brilliantly fabricated” (Stowe, 1983, p. 373; Knight, 1980, p. 44).

Dilthey’s claim that the function of hermeneutics is to reach universal truths (which Holmes and Dupin posits) is paradoxical, an oxymoron. If there is a universally valid information, there is no interpretation, but only right and wrong

readings. Interpretation connotes the senses of translation, agency [*interpre*s].

Concerning the interpretation of the detective figure, it defines a translation of things, people, and events into meanings. The first part illustrates that Dupin and Holmes define things as “simple”. Then it discusses how the figures use the term “simple”. It argues that their notion of simplicity involves a sense of doubling that describes an undifferentiated duplication. The first part of this chapter asserts that the “simple thing” (as pictured by detective fiction) is what is equal to its meaning. It is “self-evident”, as Dupin puts it. That things, people, and events in detective fiction are self-identical, that is, that they are equal to their meanings that are clear as daylight suggests an immediacy, which cancels out the possibility of interpretation, given that interpretation carries a sense of mediation, as discussed above.

Thusly, detective fiction represents a colonisation of hermeneutics, an attempt to cancel diversity of interpretation for the sake of its own truth. Detective fiction renders its truth as the only one by rendering this truth as the final revelation, the final judgement, that represents a conclusion to a crisis that detective fiction renders apocalyptic. Detective fiction nullifies the exegetical strives for meaning through representing the truth that serves the consolidation or restoration of the authority like the truth of God.

2.1 involves a quote from Ernst Bloch asserting that the crime in detective fiction “happens like the fall of man or even of the angels (pardon the mythical coloring) – outside of history”. Following Bloch’s imagery, the restoration of the order (what detective fiction does, as Holquist suggests) then represents a solution to something like “the fall”. Such a solution companies a relationship between things and signs, positing that to the detective, “a thing and its name were interchangeable”, and this represents a return to a prelapsarian language, a hermeneutic return to Eden,

which means the cancellation of hermeneutics (Auster, *New York Trilogy*, 2006, p. 43). Such a theme is overtly treated in *City of Glass* in *New York Trilogy* by Paul Auster. The mentioned work by Auster is an example of metacognitive mystery. It plays with detective fiction's treatment of hermeneutics and undermines it.

City of Glass consists of a story of a person trying to find a solution to the hermeneutic results of the fall:

Adam's one task in the Garden had been to invent language, to give each creature and thing its name. In that state of innocence, his tongue had gone straight to the quick of the world. His words had not been merely appended to the things he saw, they had revealed their essences, had literally brought them to life. A thing and its name were interchangeable. After the fall, this was no longer true. Names became detached from things; words devolved into a collection of arbitrary signs; language had been severed from God. The story of the Garden, therefore, records not only the fall of man, but the fall of language (p. 43).

This man called Peter Stillman Sr. isolates his son, following the thoughts of a scholar called Henry Dark, to reverse the fall. Stillman isolates his son in the belief that if his son would not be exposed to the good or evil, or any language that could teach them to him, he will be able to speak the language of God, and call things by their true names. Dark's writing is as follows:

If the fall of man also entailed a fall of language, was it not logical to assume that it would be possible to undo the fall, to reverse its effects by undoing the fall of language, by striving to recreate the language that was spoken in Eden? If man could learn to speak this original language of innocence, did it not follow that he would thereby recover a state of innocence within himself? We had only to look at the example of Christ, Dark argued, to understand that this was so. For was Christ not a man, a creature of flesh and blood? And did not Christ speak this prelapsarian language? In Milton's *Paradise Regained*, Satan speaks with "double-sense deluding," whereas Christ's "actions to his words accord, his words/To his large heart give utterance due, his heart / Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape." (p. 47)

The attempt to escape from such a Satanic language as this chapter discusses is a characteristic of detective fiction. Holquist equates such a mode of writing concerning detective fiction with that of kitsch and reads Benjamin: "Kitsch seems to

appropriate art by robbing it of the demonic, not just its ‘aura’ as Walter Benjamin has argued, but its dangers” (“Whodunit”, 1971, p. 137, Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 2007, pp. 217-252). As opposed to Satan's “double-sense” language, the detective is the apparatus of the authority that lends it the true, “Edenic” meanings of things. *City of Glass* goes on as

Turning to the Babel story, Dark then elaborated his plan and announced his vision of things to come . . . If Babel lay to the west of anything, it was Eden, the original site of mankind. Man’s duty to scatter himself across the whole earth—in response to God’s command to “be fertile . . . and fill the earth”—would inevitably move along a western course. And what more western land in all Christendom, Dark asked, than America? The movement of English settlers to the New World, therefore, could be read as the fulfilment of the ancient commandment. America was the last step in the process. Once the continent had been filled, the moment would be ripe for a change in the fortunes of mankind. The impediment to the building of Babel—that man must fill the earth—would be eliminated (2006, pp. 47-8).

Cancellation of interpretation and hermeneutics in the sense of acknowledging things and meanings as unmediated doubles of each other, that is, cancellation of diversity for the sake of a singular truth that Dark and Stillman consider as the truth of God, is (potentially) enabled through the colonisation of America. The colonisation of hermeneutics means the hermeneutics of colonisation, according to Stillman and Dark.

Stillman wants to see things as things-in-themselves, in a Heideggerian mode. It means that he wants to identify the thing as it occurs to his conscious with the thing’s nature. Hence, he looks for items that “resist” the language in order to subdue them, and make them rational, legible objects. Stillman Sr. says

Not only is an umbrella a thing, it is a thing that performs a function—in other words, expresses the will of man . . . What happens when a thing no longer performs its function? Is it still the thing, or has it become something else? When you rip the cloth off the umbrella, is the umbrella still an umbrella? You open the spokes, put them over your head, walk out into the rain, and you get drenched. Is it possible to go on calling this object an umbrella? In general, people do. At the very limit, they will say the umbrella is broken. To me this is a serious error, the source of all our troubles (p. 76).

Arguably, the story acknowledges that the world is like “a neverland of fragments, a place of wordless things and thingless words” (p. 71). *City of Glass* admits that things as opposed to objects, that is, things without function resist being defined, and most significantly, that there is a life of things outside of consciousness. But a return to an Edenic state is impossible: all endeavours of Stillman fail. He collects a vast amount of “data”, a “junk heap”, objects that are “no more than broken things, discarded things, stray bits of junk” (p. 77, p. 59). “Stones, leaves, and twigs all found their way into his [Stillman’s] bag. Once, Quinn observed, he even stooped down for a dried dog turd, sniffed it carefully, and kept it” (p. 60). But Stillman is never able to turn such data into history, a coherent whole. He is never able to identify things with their meanings, i.e., suggest the truth of things.

It turns out later in the story that Henry Dark is actually a character fabricated by Stillman Sr., so as to put the blame for suggesting extreme ideas on someone else. “The initials H.D. in the name Henry Dark refer to Humpty Dumpty” (p. 80).

Stillman takes Humpty Dumpty as a representation of the human after the fall.

We are pure potential [eggs like Humpty Dumpty], an example of the not-yet-arrived. For man is a fallen creature— we know that from Genesis. Humpty Dumpty is also a fallen creature. He falls from his wall, and no one can put him back together again—neither the king, nor his horses, nor his men (p. 80).

The state of the human after the fall is unrestorable, *City of Glass* posits this idea as well, unlike detective fiction.

The hermeneutics of detective fiction represents a totalitarian politics that silences multiple voices and possible interpretations, contradicting the single truth it authorises. Such hermeneutics depend on the assimilation of various readings under a mode of reading that claims its legitimacy by assuming to see things through and access things as they are. This is what I call the colonisation of hermeneutics.

I have discussed hermeneutics of Todorov up until this point to some extent. Here, it is useful to assert that Todorov's own writing epitomizes how detective fiction works. He asserts that "[i]t is hard for me to say whether the situation I observe in the most varied kinds of fiction is universal or whether it is historically and culturally determined"; but then propounds that "[l]et us admit that this determinism is universal; what is certainly not universal is the form it takes in a given case" (1980, p. 74). Todorov here does not only offer a set of structural and functional categories of a fictional text, the elements that make a text functional (as Barthes does in his *S/Z* for example), but he universalizes the experience of reading as well. He refuses potential cultural differences in ways of reading. Thus, he colonizes the ways of reading, and assimilates probable differences to offer a uniform reading mode. He anthropologise reading, which here means to define "the human" as the "Western subject".

From the beginning of the Western metaphysics, the priority of the categories and individuals over one another has been an important discussion. In Plato, the priority is of the categories, that are ideals. Generic and archetypical examples of a group of similar things, freed from accessories and does not have any deficiency. Categories are divine. In Aristotle, on the other hand, the priority is of what he calls *hypokeimenon* over *kategoroumenon* (2002). *Hypokeimenon* is the individual, the bodily existing, substantial thing; it is commonly compared to Kant's *noumenon*. *Kategoroumenon* is what is said of things, a category. We know that in political history, it is a fascistic attitude to assimilate the individual into a class. This mostly takes the form of reducing the individual into a citizen, or a patriot, or whatever that defines him with reference to the nation and state. Such is the attitude of detective fiction in the sense that it reduces things into clues, abstracts.

After we have constructed the events that compose a story, we begin the task of reinterpretation. This enables us to construct not only the "personalities" of the characters but also the novel's underlying system of values and ideas. A reinterpretation of this type is not arbitrary; it is controlled by two series of constraints. The first is contained in the text itself [. . .]

The second series of constraints comes from the cultural context. If we read that so-and-so has cut his wife up into little pieces, we do not need textual indications to conclude that this is truly a cruel deed. These cultural constraints, which are nothing but the commonplaces of a society (its 'set' of probabilities), change with time. These changes permit us to explain why interpretations differ from one period to another" (Todorov, 1980, p. 75-6).

Despite Todorov acknowledges cultural diversity, it is from the point of view of a historian as Deleuze depicts. His only example shows that this text takes culture as a historical, temporal construct (as in "the Victorian entertainment culture", "twentieth century pub culture", etc.): "For example, since extramarital love is no longer considered proof of moral corruption, we have trouble understanding the condemnations heaped upon so many fictional heroines of the past" (p. 76). Todorov writes history from what Deleuze and Guattari calls "the sedentary point of view", suppressing opposing voices; and to suppress the opposing voices he historicises. He does not take cultural diversity as a concept that renders his theory an individual account of its object, but he acknowledges cultural diversity so as to imply the omnipresence of his theory's accuracy. The nomadic then, is not another subject that multiplies interpretation, but it is an object of the theory. In this sense, the nomadic serves the authority; it is instrumental to the establishment of power. The example of the nomadic in Doyle is "The Baker Street Irregulars", "half a dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs" (2012, *The Sign of Four, A Study in Scarlet*, "The Adventure of the Crooked Man"). Similar characters are Billy in "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" and Cartwright in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. These marginal characters submit to Holmes, and act as his instruments: his eyes and ears on the street. Belonging to the streets, they are "homeless" (not necessarily in a

literal sense) and therefore unstable. These characters once represent an erratic flux to an authority are employed by Holmes, transformed into apparatuses of the authority. Holmes asserts that they are “[a] division of the detective police force” (2012, *A Study in Scarlet*). Thusly, acknowledgment is replaced by assimilation; and the homeless, the nomadic, is domesticated.

This part illustrates that *City of Glass* compares such a gesture with the actual colonisation of America. Both, the colonisation of America and the colonisation of hermeneutics represent an eschatological solution, a return to the prelapsarian state of humans. “For Stillman”, writes Jeffrey T. Nealon, “a thing is its function; when a thing (like an umbrella) ceases to perform its function, it is no longer that thing, no longer that word. Stillman's analysis of the world, then, bases itself on instrumentality -- as does, for example, Heidegger's famous analysis of worldhood in *Being and Time*” (1999, p. 124). I would rephrase Nealon as “Stillman *wants to* identify a thing with its function”. The function of a thing in the totality of an order represents what the human may have access to. Heidegger notes that “[a] sign is not a Thing which stands to another Thing in the relationship of indicating; it is rather *an item of equipment which explicitly raises a totality of equipment into our circumspection*” (*Being and Time*, 2001, p. 110). Detective fiction enables the colonisation of hermeneutics by assimilating things into signs, mere instruments of authority. In a Hegelian sense, things depicted in detective fiction are mere abstracts, equal to nothing. Put another way, things in detective fiction are posited as anything but things. On the other hand, as discussed in *City of Glass*, metacognitive mystery opposes detective fiction's venture to colonise hermeneutics by rendering it impossible through acknowledging that things well exist outside of human consciousness, and in that, they partly remain as wordless things. The purpose of this

chapter is to compare two hermeneutics that regard detective fiction and metacognitive mystery. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the discussion of the hermeneutics of metacognitive mystery, and some questions about the genre that this chapter may have raised are answered there.

2.3 Crisis as a passage in metacognitive mystery

This part discusses metacognitive mystery's treatment of the notion of "end", comparing to detective fiction's treatment of the subject as discussed in parts one and two. This part argues that metacognitive mystery does not illustrate history as a determinate concept. On the contrary, to metacognitive mystery, the history is "open", as Terry Eagleton asserts in *The English Novel* (2005). This means that the future and the past cannot be written authoritatively as in detective fiction. The notion of "open history" in metacognitive mystery implies that neither history nor nature follows rules and laws through the understanding of which the human can determine when something will happen, had happened, or as Sherlock puts it, "Niagara Falls from a drop of water". By comparing detective fiction and metacognitive mystery's treatments of the notion of ending, in this part, I illustrate what William W. Stowe calls a move from semiotics to hermeneutics, from detective fiction to metacognitive mystery, whereas Chapter 3 discusses the hermeneutics of metacognitive mystery.

I have discussed in the previous parts that to the detective figure in detective fiction, things are merely abstracts. I have initiated a dialogue between Doyle and Poe's detective fiction stories and David Frisby, Walter Benjamin, G. W. Friedrich Hegel, and Martin Heidegger in order to suggest a definition for the notion of "abstract". The previous parts argue that detective fiction renders things illustrated as

the objects of the detective's investigation as variables of a function, the function being history. Conceived as such, things are instruments in a Heideggerian sense that act as tools at the detective's service in his quest for re-establishing, securing, or consolidating the established authority. Benjamin and Frisby suggest that such an abstraction of things in detective fiction represents an escape from the experience of living where sensation is dreadfully intense. This abstraction is an oversimplification of things, which is the precise perception of the figures both Holmes and Dupin, as they assert numerous times that even the "matters" that seem the most complicated are "absurdly" simple. The abstraction of things in detective fiction acts as a defence mechanism for the reader, Frisby implies, that represses the terrible complexity of the experience of living. Translating things into tools, signs, detective fiction renders any crisis soluble. By reading the detective's methods of investigation in Doyle and Poe through Hegel's "Logical Doctrine/domain" [the first is a translation by William Wallace and the second, Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom], the last part argues that the detective figure reduces things into self-identical objects, that do not change, i.e., do not live. Thus, a thing represents dead data and renders other things dead because if it is a non-changing entity, which is manifested through being different from everything else, everything else must not change to maintain the difference that manifests this thing. Hegel defines things as such as "abstracts", "nothings".²³ I argued that detective fiction suggests such a

²³"Nothings" are things that are not anything else but themselves. Hegel asserts that a negative confirmation of a thing (confirming a thing by what it is not) does not actually speak about what a thing is. OOO posits that things exist in themselves as concrete entities (as opposed to abstracts) but what OOO defines as a thing-in-itself is still something that produces a difference, that is, something alive as opposed to Hegel's thing-in-itself. They are not things understood by OOO, but things that live independent from human consciousness. I wanted to remark the difference between two definitions of a thing-in-itself, in order to avoid confusion later. I use a thing-in-itself as OOO defines it unless I say otherwise.

nothingness through illustrating things as anything (and mostly symbols that relate to power relations) but things, these things are *nothings*.

2.1 argues that detective fiction directly promotes the figure of human qua interpreter to the top of the Scala Naturae. Thusly, the interpreter human takes on the guise of God. I argue, the genre depicts the human (that the detective represents) whom it equates with God as an instrument that transforms things into instruments. The definition of the human as such conforms to the Augustinian program's definition of God: "On Christian Doctrine 1.5-6: 'So every sign is a thing, since what is not a thing does not exist. But it is not true that every thing is also a sign' God is that thing, and the only thing, which is referred to by other things, but refers itself to nothing else (for if God referred to something else, that thing would be God)" (Gumpert, 2012, pp. 104-5). Setting aside the problem of reification, which is to assume that what is imaginable is necessarily real, Augustine defines God as a *nothing* in Hegelian terms, which is explained above. This is a degradation of humans and things, in terms of they are rendered by detective fiction nothings. On the other hand, it can be seen as a promotion, as things and human undertake a God-like guise. Here, I observe a link between science and capitalism, as the latter is closely related to the fetishization of things as properties, whereas the former transforms things into gods, by rendering them nothing but properties (instruments). 2.1 argues that detective fiction is humanist; now I add that this humanism means the translation of "the critical premise of the hermeneutic program in the West" represented by Augustinian hermeneutics into the hermeneutics of capitalism. However, I will abandon now the temptation of following the capitalist vein of the hermeneutics of detective fiction, for it would be a whole another subject of focus.

Michel de Certeau asserts that modernity engenders a spatial uncertainty, making the city uncanny and dubious. Detective fiction provides the modern reader with a temporal certainty that substitutes for the spatial. D. A. Miller in his work “The Novel and the Police” illustrates this as a substitution of “a temporal mode of mastery for a spatial one” (1983, p. 320). I define this temporal certainty by Holmes’ words that the history “is a chain of logical sequences without a break or flaw” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*). Such a temporal continuity amounts to what I have called the revelation of genesis (of crime) in the previous parts. Miller submits that because of such continuity, “nineteenth-century narrative is generally conceived as a genesis: a linear, cumulative time of evolution” (p. 320). On the other hand, metacognitive mystery depicts history as discontinuous, with ruptures and fractures. Frank Kermode in “Novel and Narrative” writes that these stories involve “discrete, discontinuous scenes . . . [and a] lack of ‘temporal and rational links and transitions’”, a “turbulent . . . temporal flow” (1983, p. 178, p. 185). The detective in detective fiction is an instrument of the authority that validates itself by totalizing the experience of living, making life completely intelligible, with a purpose, a *telos* as Holquist puts it. This purpose is to confirm the authority, whereas the detective’s function is, as Dennis Porter puts forward in “Backward Construction and the Art of Suspense”, “closing of the logico-temporal gap that separates the present of the discovery of crime from the past that prepared it” (1983, p. 329).

By reverting the temporal structure, that is, by not allowing the detective to make history a coherent whole, an intelligible story, metacognitive mystery releases the detective and things from being mere tools. The detective in metacognitive mystery is not able to mend the ruptures in time. He is dysfunctional. And it admits that things cannot be reduced to symbols; they are alive in the sense that they become

and shift, and they resist being arrested and fixed. By acknowledging the incomprehensibility of things, metacognitive mystery implies that not every enigma can be decoded, and things cannot be reduced to signs out of which a history, the history of the authority, is written. So, the crisis in metacognitive mystery is not eschatological. No judgement is final, there is no crisis the solution to which may lead to *the* truth as in detective fiction. Metacognitive mystery allows no revelation that may expose a genesis. Rather a crisis leads to other crises. There is not an absolute crisis the detective's solution to which is an absolute solution. There is no "perfect order" like the order of God (as in detective fiction like the order established with the "absolute solution"). Crises may lead to progress, but this progress is neither categorical nor necessarily positive. Moreover, the crisis is not defined as a natural construct as in detective fiction (because detective fiction never questions what defines a crisis, but takes it for granted) but is depicted as a sociocultural construct. The main questions that haunt the detective figures in *The New York Trilogy* and *Mulligan Stew* are "why are they doing what they are doing", and "if they should do what they do", almost nothing is taken for granted. Thusly, everything is under the detective's consideration. "To a great mind nothing is little" Holmes remarks (Doyle, 2012, *A Study in Scarlet*). Metacognitive mystery may affirm Holmes' understanding, but it refuses that one can make things meaningful by studying them, or, they do not conform to these meanings. Interpreting clues in metacognitive mystery means fixing and determining things (in a Hegelian sense), which elude getting fixed or determined; and this is an endless process itself. To fix also means to make a dysfunctional thing function again; it defines the strives of Stillman to find a proper word for a broken umbrella, to invent a function for it, or in Stillman's case, to discover its function. The detective's wearisome investigation of all the things in

his environment in metacognitive mystery proves unfeasible and fruitless.

Metacognitive mystery thusly suggests another reality than detective fiction, by suggesting that it is a paranoid mental state to presume everything as a clue, and presuming that anything is a clue does not necessarily follow that everything *is* a clue.

Such a relationship between the reader and signs represents to Stowe a movement from semiotics to hermeneutics. Stowe argues that “[t]he code reader assumes a clearly defined message” in both detective fiction and metacognitive mystery (1983, p. 368). The difference between the both is that the detective in detective fiction is successful in encoding a code and revealing a truth whereas in metacognitive mystery he fails. Stowe asserts that metacognitive mystery affirms that subjectivity cannot be avoided in interpreting a text; hence, every interpretation is creative by nature. In other words, interpretation does not lead to revelation but invention. This is the Gadamerian understanding of hermeneutics which OOO problematizes. Because Gadamer’s phenomenology does not necessarily reject treating things as tools. Put another way, phenomenology does not necessarily trouble a wilful overlooking of the thing’s existence in itself and reducing things into sensible, meaningful objects. Hence, it champions a philosophy based upon the omission of the thing-in-itself. Phenomenology may well get along with a Cartesian view in that they may reject a speculative philosophy. How phenomenology refuses here about a Cartesian approach to hermeneutics is in that it propounds that a reader may only have access to the *thing qua instrument* (that is, the thing as it appears before its onlooker’s senses) and not to its “reality”. The consequential statement that

“interpretation necessarily involves subjectivity” is valid from an OOO sympathetic point of view as well, and is useful for and convincing from my point of view.²⁴

What Stowe defines as a motion from semiotics towards hermeneutics is parallel to what Gumpert would call from “[p]re-[s]emiotic” to “semiotic” (2012, p. 134). In *City of Glass* Stillman Sr. wants to return to a “prelapsarian state of innocence”, where things are equal to categories, that are, as defined by Aristotle, what are said of things. Gumpert remarks that “[b]efore the Fall, there are no classes of objects, only objects per se” (2012, p. 137). Stillman’s attempt at first sight may seem like an endeavour to cancel classes and categories, and invent words as many as things. The unordered and random character of his collection, which makes his collection an oxymoronic one, implies a strive for cancelling categories. Gumpert continues and explains why prelapsarian is pre-semiotic: “There is no such thing, then, as an innocent sign. The birth of semiosis itself suggests a moral fall: shame is the very precondition of the sign” (p. 137). And yet, Stillman’s attempt is an utterly moral one. The very *demand* to be innocent is to deviate from the state of innocence, because a state of innocence is not self-aware. Thus, Stillman’s wish involves the knowledge of good and evil, which is a post-fall quality in human. What he wants is not a pre-semiotic language, but a semiotics that would make him exercise power over the world. He tries to obtain a language by which he can appropriate and instrumentalise things, make them sheer signs. Stillman wants to have it both ways: he wants to collect the world, and not naming it as a collection, a class of things,

²⁴ Again, I made use of Benjamin’s approach to detective fiction and followed his thoughts to some point, as if he would champion metacognitive mystery against detective fiction. But although Benjamin tells that “the object itself is not ‘in truth’”, and Frisby follows him by asserting that “[u]nder the conditions of that modernity, the continuity of tradition, the immediate totality, and the fixed point of reference no longer exist”, they maintain that there *is* a truth, albeit hidden (Benjamin, W. (1973). “Addendum to The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire”, in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. New Left Books. p. 103; as cited in Frisby, 1994, p. 93).

which is theoretically possibly only through collecting everything. Because only when you collect everything there is nothing to compare what you have with, and thus your collection may not be a collection, a class of things, as there would be nothing with reference to which this collection represents a class. Again, he wants it both ways, in that Stillman tries to remove the stigma from the sign, which, reading Genesis, Gumpert defines as “the very precondition of the sign” (p. 137). The novel, *City of Glass*, renders what Stillman Sr. wants to do impossible. Moreover, Stillman Sr. tries to recreate this innocence by isolating Stillman Jr. from society, from the knowledge of “the good and evil”. Even in Jr.’s state of not knowing what is *not innocent*, the novel renders a pre-semiotic language impossible. The political implication of Sr.’s studies and attempts is that he only wants the innocence in language and not in himself. Seeing things *as they are* but knowing “good and evil”, he would not be the new Adam, but God himself. The story consolidates such a perspective by asserting that, to Stillman Sr., reaching the state of innocence as he understands it involves the colonization of America: the occupation of the farthest parts of the world, a state of omnipresence and omnipotence, and building the new Tower of Babel.

Detective fiction’s “assumptions”, suggests Stowe, are what “Hans-Georg Gadamer attributes to classical scientific thinking as it was developed by Descartes and his Enlightenment successors and that are based on a radical distinction between subject and object and a belief that *thought and language are best understood as neutral, transparent instruments that man uses to gain power over the world*” (1983, p. 373; my emphasis). The theme of transparency of -- the essences of -- things in metacognitive mystery is treated in various ways. In *Ghosts* by Auster, the passage concerning the assumptions of the detective figure, Blue, is as “[w]ords are

transparent for him, great windows that stand between him and the world, and until now they have never impeded his view, have never even seemed to be there” (Auster, 2006, p. 144; my emphasis). But “[f]or the first time in his experience of writing reports, he [Blue] discovers that words do not necessarily work, that it is possible for them to obscure the things they are trying to say” (p. 145). His object is called Black, thus, the story implies the object’s inaccessibility. Black is the object of inquiry, the spied, the speculated of Blue’s watch. And Black represents an aenigma that Blue cannot decipher, meaning, he is a “thing” in Heideggerian terms: “Black is no more than a kind of blankness, a hole in the texture of things”; he cannot be transformed by Blue into an instrument, a brick in the structure of a certain text, a history (p. 143).

In *City of Glass* the character of transparency is attributed to Stillman Jr. who was caged and isolated by Stillman Sr. so that he would speak the true language of God, where words and things are “interchangeable”, like the language of Adam, if Jr. would not be exposed to the symbolic language of humans.

“Against the pallor of his skin, the flaxen thinness of his hair, the effect was almost transparent, as though one could see through to the blue veins behind the skin of his face . . . As their eyes met, Quinn suddenly felt that Stillman [Jr.] had become invisible (p. 15).

Jr. is dragged by his father to extinction. His father wanted to pluck him off the society. Thusly he would have been words, which are identical with the things they point at. In other words, he would be the window that opens to the register of things as they are. And yet, his transparency resembles a mysterious creature of deep seas, or dark caves, and his invisibility thusly becomes far too visible. He, who was designated as a window, becomes the very centre of attention.

Now, the failure of the detective in metacognitive mystery suggests that language does not offer access to the reality of things. In the rest of this chapter, I

will read *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, *William Wilson*, *Mulligan Stew*, and *The New York Trilogy* and investigate how they treat and represent the notion of crisis, which is primarily a hermeneutic one. I argue that crisis is not apocalyptic in these stories, but is a passage, where the boundaries between the interpreter, author, and the interpreted disappear. The crisis in metacognitive mystery offers textual liminality, whereby the ontology of the human manifested in a Cartesian mode as discussed is rewritten in OOO's terms.

The Mystery of Marie Roget is a story by Edgar Allan Poe, written as a sequel to *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. If *The Murders in Rue Morgue* and *The Purloined Letter* are prototypes of detective fiction, *William Wilson* and *The Mystery of Marie Roget* are prototypes of metacognitive mystery. It is a story in which Poe's famous detective Dupin analyses a case, the murder of Marie Roget, through the accounts in the newspapers. His investigation is a process of eliminating the "fictional", the "spicing" that the newspapers add in order to make the story more striking and alluring, from the "factual". Although Dupin is a person of high analytical skills, the story renders him unsuccessful. In the end, he is not able to reveal the story of the genesis of the crime, but he is only able to suggest possibilities all of which may or may not have happened. Thusly, Poe cancels the disclosure that brings the sense of an ending and entails the restoration of the order. The story does not include a closure in the history it writes and leaves it open-ended.

In *William Wilson*, the narrator investigates the person who tracks him and who looks just like him. Here, the writer of the history becomes the narrator himself. The double of the author, the authorial voice in the story doubles the detective. That he tracks who tracks him generates confusion about who represents the object to whom. In that, the detective becomes an object of observation; and the boundaries

between the onlooker and the looked are troubled. The events that the crisis causes (the tracking of the tracker) represent a possibility of an encounter on the same level for the two people in question. The *telos* of history that is present in detective fiction is cancelled. The confrontation of the two people is not predestined to end with the victory of one side. The future is not (pre)determined. At a masquerade, the narrator reports, he encounters the man he was tracing that was tracing him. "He was attired, as I had expected, in a costume altogether similar to my own . . . [I] plunged my sword, with brute ferocity, repeatedly through and through his bosom". After this sequence of brute violence, the narrator sees a mirror that he did not realize before. In this mirror he sees his image, his image is then doubled in the face of his "antagonist". The man who is stabbed to death tells "in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself". The story ends with mixing the victim with the criminal, the criminal with the detective, and all with the author. At this point the narrator becomes undependable. His senses are questionable (Sweeney, 1999, p. 250). We do not know whether this is even a story of crime.

William Wilson seems to suggest a disclosure, but this disclosure complicates things rather than solving a crisis. The disclosure of the story leaves us with a larger crisis. This crisis is about a crisis: It makes the reader question whether there was a crisis in the first instance as narrated, or was it a man fighting with his "shadow" (Poe, 1966). The detective's process of identification and unfolding fails, or his perception of things is insanely subjective. Is it a story of an inner conflict, a loss of identity? If this is the case, through investigation identity is not fixed or restored but *destroyed* instead. If not, so it is as well. Identification in *William Wilson* turns things into *nothings* as in detective fiction but this is not a happy occasion, this is a suicidal move. The process of identification makes the detective equate himself with what he

tries to identify. He becomes his object, or, his object becomes him. In this liminal space, where the detective interacts with his object of investigation, the detective is “dead to the World, to Heaven” (Poe, 1966). He is dead to heaven because there is no salvation for him through reaching an *eschaton* as in detective fiction when he would give the final judgement. He is dead to the world because he fulfilled his purpose as a detective. This death is metaphorical, for we know the narrator lives on and tells the story. Even death is not final in *William Wilson*. It is the death of the narrator’s identity. This death does not present a confirmation of the methods of the detective, or a restoration of the order as it was, but a reconstruction of the detective’s identity. The crisis in *William Wilson* is whereby the detective changes.

Mulligan Stew is a novel by Gilbert Sorrentino. In this novel, there is a novelist called Anthony Lamont, a writer that tries many fictional genres. He is on his last work, which he defines “as a kind of elaborate jigsaw puzzle”, “a mystery novel . . . plus” (Sorrentino’s ellipsis, 1981). Lamont’s story has two main characters who are themselves in the publishing business; his narrator Martin Halpin, and his friend and colleague Ned Beaumont. The mystery is Beaumont’s death, and the question is whether Halpin is his murderer or not. On the other hand, who knows the possibility that Halpin may have murdered Beaumont is only Halpin and Lamont, and they are the ones who investigate if he did murder Beaumont. Halpin says “I must face up to the possibility that it is I who killed him.” He wants to complete “the incomplete jigsaw puzzle that is [his] life”. He undertakes the role of the detective, who repairs the rupture in history by rendering history a flawless logical sequence. He asserts that “if I could remember the events of the evening! If I could logically, chronologically present them to myself, follow them up to that moment when the pistol harshly barked!” The book however presents the premise, and then consists of

a big digression. The matters not being solved and questions cluster one over another, the book is arguably a digression. There are other characters, Daisy, and his husband Tom Buchanan, some women from the industry of entertainment who are significant to Beaumont's life, and so on. These are the characters of the story in the story. The characters in the story mainly consist of Lamont, Sheila (Lamont's sister), Dermot Trellis (Sheila's husband, a writer himself), Roche (an associate professor who has a course on American experimental novel), and others.

Halpin is a character from Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, Beaumont from Dashiell Hammett's *The Glass Key*, Lamont, Sheila, and Dermot are from Brian O'Nolan's *At Swim-Two-Birds*, and Daisy and Tom from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. None is said overtly but implied. They sometimes talk about their previous jobs, especially Beaumont and Halpin, and talk about the writers whom they worked for. These characters do live outside Sorrentino's book, as well as Lamont's. Hence the writing is not in the possession of a single writer. Lamont's characters have a place, in which Lamont depicts them. Halpin keeps a journal (that Lamont does not know of). This journal is as follows:

There is the living room and the den, but we have not been able to find any other rooms. It seems as if there are other rooms, but when we approach them, they are—I don't quite know how to put this—they are simply not there! There is no kitchen, no porch, no bedrooms, no bath. At the side of the living room, a staircase leads "nowhere." Oh, I don't mean to say that it disappears into empty space, it simply leads to a kind of . . . haziness, in which one knows there is supposed to be a hallway and bedroom doors: but there is absolutely nothing (1981).

The novel involves many other accounts of the textual spaces that Halpin and Beaumont experience. There is a town nearby where Halpin and Ned are free to go and socialise with other characters from other books when Lamont is not using them. They always wonder what if Lamont starts writing and realises that Halpin and Ned are not there. However, since they get bored of Lamont's excessively avant-garde

style and dialogues he gives them, and the events he situates them in, they gradually increase the duration of their ventures outside.

Lamont has no idea that his characters have a life as such. But still, he complains to his sister Sheila that “[t]he strange thing is that Halpin (my narrator) seems to be bursting with the desire to say and do things that I don’t want him to say and do”. Later in his notebook, he remarks again, “[m]y new book is proving difficult, if not quite intractable”, and “I don’t think I am in control here”. His notion of the relationship between the author and the text becomes so shaken in the process of his writing that he writes “I have created Halpin—such as he, my God, is—*somebody* has created me. I don’t feel like a writer at all. A fake”. Lamont summarises the situation as “It is, you will agree, difficult to handle a novel whose characters shift and blur. Oddly enough, I have begun to feel like a character myself.” And at the end, two of his main characters escape, and leave him for good.

In *Mulligan Stew*, there are two notebooks. There is Lamont’s and there is Halpin’s. Lamont is the author of Halpin, but Halpin writes about Lamont as well. These notebooks almost cancel the boundaries between the writer and the written. Halpin is not able to control the actions of Lamont through his writing, but Lamont is not in control of Halpin’s either. Nevertheless, Lamont’s life depends upon his writing as he is an author; and through his choices, Halpin shapes Lamont’s life as much as Lamont Halpin’s. Thusly, the text becomes a space where the author and the signs interact as equals and shape each other. Lamont is not able to write a story (a history, *une histoire*), a coherent narrative. And *Mulligan Stew* is unfinished and with ambiguities, critically indigestible chunks of signs, as much as Lamont’s story. Thusly, what is designed to be history becomes a stew, a jumbled compilation of events and things.

Mulligan Stew concerns two crises. The crisis of the characters denotes the ambiguous horizon of their future, which could be solved through the end of their story, which never happens. The crisis of Lamont is his lack of control over what he writes. None gets solved. *Mulligan Stew* does not represent a history that is left open, that lacks an *eschaton*, but it troubles the possibility of history. History, like theory, represents a sequence of events that can be depicted as consistent to form a coherent story, and excluding events that would appear inconsistent in that story. According to this definition, some events will be rendered substantial, and others digressional. To *Mulligan Stew*, history is but a digression. There are no laws that conduct history, turning events into facts, intelligible occasions that function as pieces of a story. Halpin says that “[s]oon I shall call the police, and face their crude questions, their ceaseless and unimaginative probings for, the ‘facts.’ As if the ‘facts’ could possibly explain what has happened here tonight!” Thusly, Sorrentino problematizes the traditional Western understanding of history. The book’s name, *Mulligan Stew* is a homeless soup. The idea of returning home expresses the western notion of history. Be it a return to Eden, or Odysseus’ return to his home, *nostos*, or the restoration of a disturbed order as in detective fiction. Western classical music until modernism generates a sense of an ending by returning to home (the tone) in the last cadence. *Mulligan Stew* renders the drama, the conflict, the crisis, as an ongoing condition (or one leading to another), and it rejects the possibility of such a return. To it, the human is just thrown into the world, which she can neither control, nor make complete sense of; and thusly, the human is a homeless creature.

Mulligan Stew depicts “crisis” as a situation which does not lead to a restoration, or an establishment of order, but a passage in which the assumed statuses of the human and objects are suspended, so they interact as equals, changing each

other. Neither the author/detective nor objects are depicted as tools by *Mulligan Stew* because there is no totality in which they may function. There is no truth of things that can be grasped by words, or other signs, by the intellect. The story orbits around “what happened”, but never reaches the eye of the storm, so to speak. Halpin says

“With this hand, I seized—oh, I will not go so far as to say “seized”; clutched, perhaps, grasped, no, not so much grasped, clutched, would more precisely describe the action of this hand—I, then, clutched Ned Beaumont’s listlessly placed one” (1981).

But “clutch” does not present what actually happened as well. *Mulligan Stew* includes a considerable number of passages like this, where the writing orbits around an origin. But it turns out there is no origin. What the characters deem to be the origin is always displaced, and they find themselves orbiting around nothing. Fixing and arresting, that is, defining things is impossible. Halpin asserts that “[p]erhaps the truth can then be seen, emerging like the image in a jigsaw puzzle”. Such a puzzle stands for a “totality” in detective fiction as I have argued earlier. In *Mulligan Stew*, the puzzle proves incompletable, therefore, there is no puzzle.

I have discussed the first story of *The New York Trilogy*, *City of Glass* in the previous part, and I will investigate it more in Chapter 3. In this part, I will discuss the second story *Ghosts*, regarding its treatment of “crisis”. *Ghosts* is a story where there is a private eye called Blue. A client called White hires Blue to spy on a man called Black. White provides Blue with an apartment across Black’s from the street and asks Blue to send reports on Black’s activity on a weekly basis. Blue settles into the apartment and starts watching Black, but it occurs that Black does nothing but reads and writes, and occasionally goes out for groceries to the neighbourhood market. Time goes by, and weeks and months pass, but still, Black follows the same routines, except for one or two occasions that make Blue suspicious at the time, but they turn out insignificant. He wants to write a history “Blue thought that he was

going to get a story, or at least something like a story, but this is no more than blather, an endless harangue about nothing at all” (2006, p. 160). He decides there is nothing to reveal, but spying on Black becomes his life, so he carries on. Once he grows impatient merely observing his object from a distance, he confronts him a few times in disguise. At the end of the story, he reveals that White and Black are the same person. Black tells Blue that his gaze is a confirmation of Black’s life, and Black needs it. However, now Blue knows that Black is White, the business must, says Black, come to an end. Black pulls out a gun, provokes Blue to attack him, and gets murdered by Blue.

He [Blue] rides the subway, rubs shoulders with the crowd, feels himself lunging towards a sense of the moment. As he takes his seat at the ball park, he is struck by the sharp clarity of the colors around him: the green grass, the brown dirt, the white ball, the blue sky above. Each thing is distinct from every other thing, wholly separate and defined, and the geometric simplicity of the pattern impresses Blue with its force (p. 156).

In the following parts of *Ghosts*, everything gets intermingled. Identities get mixed. And the clarity of things as separate items is no more. The authority that the detective works for turns out to be the same person that the detective observes. The authority becomes the same person as the victim and then victimizes Blue, his tool, once he wants to seize to be his tool. Black needs Blue to confirm his existence (p. 178). But such a confirmation is through Blue making Black a prisoner of his gaze. Blue himself becomes a prisoner of the case, as his life is constrained by the activity of spying. They become what Stowe calls “prisoners of method”, unable “to avoid the semiotic trap” (1983, p. 375). Because as *Mulligan Stew* puts it, detective fiction in which “the methods or the ideological assumptions” of the detective are out of the question represents a “pigeonhole” for who operates these methods, be it the detective, or the author. Blue breaks this chain by, first, ceasing to be someone who looks from afar and is reduced to an eye that does not interact with his object,

second, and most importantly, disrupting the boundaries between the author-narrator-detective and detective-object-authority. What generally represents a solution in detective fiction, the revelation, Blue's revelation that White is Black, muddles things in *Ghosts*. Black as the authority (the client who tells what to do without getting questioned about the morality of what he wants) identifying himself with the object is a masochistic way of subverting the method of the detective-confirming-authority line. And once the definitions of the detective, the authority, and the object of investigation blur, and the detective steps out of his given role as an allegedly objective lens, the fascistic authority becomes self-destructive. Deleuze and Guattari, following Paul Virilio, define the difference between the totalitarian state and fascism as "[w]hen fascism builds itself a totalitarian State, it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of a war machine²⁵ taking over the State. A bizarre remark by Virilio puts us on the trail: in fascism, the State is far less totalitarian than it is *suicidal*" (2006, p. 230). Black transfigures the established relations between the authority and detective (in Deleuzian terms, Black deterritorializes what represents in the story the institutions of "the State" and "the detective"). Then, as the vector of mutation who is the authority himself, Black drives himself and his servant Blue into destruction as the possibility of transformation of the usual categories fails when Blue figures things out and confronts Black. Virilio maintains that "Telegram 71 is the normal outcome: *If the war is lost, may the nation perish*".²⁶ Black is the authority is who has the gun in his hand (literally), but it is held against his own head (metaphorically); he uses the gun to provoke the detective, Blue, into beating him,

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari define "war machine" as a vector of mutation, a flow against the State, "which in no way has war as its object" (2006, p. 229). It is "directed against the State apparatus" (p. 290). When it sets itself as a State apparatus, it is only capable of destruction.

²⁶ Quote from "L'insécurité du territoire" in *A Thousand Plateaus* by Deleuze and Guattari (2006).

Black, to death. Thusly the book renders a catastrophic event, Black's death, and Blue being a murderer. But it is not an answer, a solution to the conflict, but it throws Blue into an even more obscure future. After this death, Blue can be sure of one thing he will not be able to repeat what he did yesterday, and the day before, and so on.

Virilio characterises the totalitarian state by its obsession with paralysing and fixing what is alive and in motion. And he implies that such a determination and fixation abstracts and instrumentalizes the living (1976, pp. 39-41).²⁷ Virilio's depiction of the politics of a totalitarian state parallels the way I portray the politics of detective fiction previously. Here, what is taken for granted in detective fiction, namely, a) the laws of the authority, are troubled by who presents himself as the authority, and b) the methods of the detective, by who assumes the role of the detective. The totalitarian politics are vitiated in *Ghosts*, but the two mutations that seem similar conflict with each other, and through this conflict the detective, his object, and the authority encounter each other bearing the same status.

This part argues that crisis in metacognitive mystery represents a fork, a liminal point, where the statuses of the sign and the interpreter are mixed. It is when the laws and definitions accepted before the crisis do not work, and may change after it. Borges' detective story *The Garden of Forking Paths* [GFP] represents an end by suggesting the possibility of many histories²⁸. Thus, it propounds that history does

²⁷ "On sait de quelles persécutions ces notions dynamiques de l'espace social que sont, par exemple, les diverses formes de nomadisme, font l'objet dans les États totalitaires: le traitement des tziganes et bohémiens sous le troisième Reich, et, aujourd'hui, les lois d'assistance qui visent à les sédentariser. Cette répression des dynamiques *sauvages* a toujours été au premier chef un problème d'armée et de police". And "[une telle politisation de l'espace] ne prendra son ampleur tragique que dans le cas de disparition totale du milieu vivant sous la structure instrumentale (situation urbaine généralisée), l'eau, l'air, le mouvement du corps ou son arrêt devenant droit à la vie ou condamnation à mort".

²⁸ Like *The Mystery of Marie Roget* but different from it in that GFP does not offer a number of likelihoods about what might have happened, several potential answers, one of which is probably true,

not follow a single direction, a destiny. And crisis is a means of change, not necessarily a means of a positive progress; nor it is a means to confirm any authority by silencing any opposition.

Arnold van Gennep in his work *The Rites of Passage* notes that a rite of transition consists of three stages: "rites of separation . . . rites of transition . . . rites of incorporation" (1960, p. 10). Victor Turner elaborates this classification as:

The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening "liminal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated (1991, pp. 94-5).

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial (p. 95).

During the crisis in metacognitive mystery, the detective is free from the conventions and methods he assumed before the crisis. These are the conventions and methods of detective fiction. At this stage, he surrenders his status as a detective, what he becomes is ambiguous. For example, it is not certain that if he is an author, a reader, a criminal, or even a sign, a text. The examples of the genre generally end without depicting a stage of consummation, where the detective's role becomes more stable.

Metacognitive mystery thus represents a crisis as a threshold, a transitional phase, where the roles established or assumed in the past change. These are the roles of the author, reader, interpreter, as well as objects. The instrumentality of these roles is cancelled. They abide by or conform to no well-defined rules. So, they are no instruments to the authority as in detective fiction. Such a transformation, writes

but GFP confirms all the possibilities as valid as any, all of which actually happen in multiple universes.

Turner, “is not simply, as Fortes (1962, p. 86) has cogently argued, a matter of giving a general stamp of legitimacy to a society's structural positions. It is rather a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society” (1991, p. 97). However, I believe the liminal phase that metacognitive mystery represents is not necessarily limited to human society. It certainly rewrites the status of the human as the reader, against things or other humans as signs. The crisis in metacognitive mystery is a textual one and concerns the relationship between a reader and things before him. It is about things as much as humans. Hence, the liminal phase as discussed concerns ecology -- in the sense that it includes both humans and non-humans. In other words, the crisis in metacognitive mystery does not re-establish the roles and statuses of people who go through it in human society but in ecology. Thus, I would replace Turner’s term, “*communitas*”, which defines the “modality of social relationship” in a community “during the *rite de passage*” (pp. 96-7), with “*omnia*” [all things] to include the non-human.

Another term that metacognitive mystery brings into question is “interpretation”. I have suggested that interpretation stands for the activity of the detective in metacognitive mystery. Interpretation acknowledges that the deductions of the detective are inventive rather than unmasking. And the term implies that the detective is not able to access the truth of things, but rather speculate about them. In *Ghosts*, Blue, the figure of detective, tries to elude the speculative assuming what would remain will be the objective, the truth. However, the story goes on to assert that “[t]o speculate, from the Latin *speculatus*, meaning to spy out, to observe, and linked to the word *speculum*, meaning mirror or looking glass” (2006, p. 142). Assuming that the image on the mirror is only a representation of the thing that appears in it, a speculative sort of relationship provides the detective access to a

representation of a thing under investigation. This in metacognitive mystery is all the detective can do. And yet, if the first part of the term “interpretation”, inter-, helps define the relationship between things and their onlooker as the detective, the second part that comes from the PIE root “per-“ does not help so much. “Per-“ means “to traffic in, to sell”. Therefore, interpretation connotes the sense of possessing an object (as a sign that is interpreted) and handing it out for someone else’s possession, which is not the case in metacognitive mystery. Hence, I propose the term “interchange” or “interact” instead of “interpret”. These words imply the reciprocal relationship between the detective as the reader and things as the read, whereas one cannot, for instance, say interpret “with” or “between”.

Finally, metacognitive mystery subverts the totalitarian ideology of detective fiction mainly by stripping the solution from it. Then, “crisis” is not a concept that is generated by the authority and used by it as a vehicle that confirms its methods and laws and the naturalness of its right to rule. Metacognitive mystery depicts the detective’s way of reading his environment, events, and so on as imaginative and subjective. Hence, it troubles the notion of history and asserts that history is fictional rather than factual. As per the detective and the objects of his investigation, that is, his environment, including things, people, etc., metacognitive mystery cancels their functions; and renders them uncontrollable, and unfixable. The crisis in this genre denotes a threshold, a liminal space, where the status, the definition of the role of who involves in it changes. In Chapter 3, the notion of crisis and how metacognitive mystery renders it is discussed in greater depth.

CHAPTER 3
OBJECT ORIENTED HERMENEUTICS
OF METACOGNITIVE MYSTERY

3.1 The Miltonic hermeneutics in the *City of Glass*: The hermeneutic pandemonium

This chapter reads the three novels focal to this thesis, *The New York Trilogy* by Paul Auster, *Mulligan Stew* by Gilbert Sorrentino, and *The Serialist* by David Gordon; and investigates how these novels represent a hermeneutic pandemonium, the sense of which the introduction discusses. Chapter 2 discusses that detective fiction implies that “thought and language are best understood as neutral, transparent instruments that man uses to gain power over the world” (Stowe, 1983, p. 373). It means that things are intelligible, and their meanings, their truth, can be grabbed through processes and procedures of decoding. Metacognitive mystery on the other hand rejects this understanding and proposes that a thing is more than what it presents to the human perception.

Detective fiction as I define it implies that things can be reduced to a singular meaning, which is their truth. This understanding is treated in the first story of *The New York Trilogy*, *City of Glass*, through a dialogue with Milton. Detective fiction’s understanding of language is the language of Christ as Milton defines it: “Christ’s ‘actions to his words accord, his words/To his large heart give utterance due, his heart / Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape’” (2006, p. 47). Metacognitive mystery suggests that things always resist getting reduced into signs, and being treated as such. I have argued that it is the mechanisms of a totalitarian authority that assimilates the environment that is alive into an “instrumental structure” (Virilio,

1967, p. 40). This also is the assimilation of the individual into a totality, which metacognitive mystery rejects.

Thus, things are translated into abstract instruments that validate the structure like puzzle pieces that point and affirm the existence of a puzzle; and their meanings are equal to their functions in that structure, they are not self-governing and their self-significance is cancelled. The earlier parts discuss that detective fiction takes anything as a clue, which is rendered by the genre legible as opposed to metacognitive mystery. The detective reads them, deduces their one true meaning. And by becoming this fixed meaning, a fixed signified in semiotic terms, what Heidegger calls in *Being and Time* “*an item of equipment*” [Heidegger’s emphasis], the thing’s thing-ness becomes invisible. It becomes an empty vessel, like the purloined letter in Poe, the content of which is abolished through paraphrasing as Barbara Johnson argues. Then this hole in the text, the emptied chunk of text is filled not only by Lacan as Derrida accuses him of, but by the story “Purloined Letter” as well, as it becomes an item/fetish of power, the meaning of which is *attached* to it in political terms. Thusly, things become abstracts, puzzle pieces, the existence of which are only manifested through their function in establishing authority. As becoming puzzle pieces *successfully*, they indicate, validate, and licence the mechanism in that they function, because their existence is manifested under “ontological pretensions”, which is to say that their meanings are not attached but deduced, revealed, by the detective, and thusly become their natural truths, as discussed in the introduction and 2.1. Metacognitive mystery rejects this sort of abstraction and liberates things: They cannot be reduced to functions, instruments, and not into singular meanings, truths. Auster’s story implies that this language is a Satanic one in Miltonic terms. *City of Glass*, again, quotes Milton and remarks that

“In Milton’s *Paradise Regained*, Satan speaks with ‘double-sense deluding’” (2006, p. 47). Metacognitive mystery offers crisis as a liminal concept, whereas its function is to reassure in detective fiction because it is able to be solved. The liminal stands for a phase when things don’t mean what they used to mean; and when laws and codes do not work. This is certainly the case for metacognitive mystery. As the crisis represented by the genre is when things occur ambiguous and obscure, open to multiple interpretations (or none), the crisis stands for a pandemonium: Metacognitive mystery represents a Satanic account of things, nothing is clear cut.

I have suggested that because of its take on the language and the reader-read relationship, Holquist compares detective fiction with Benjamin’s kitsch: “Kitsch seems to appropriate art by robbing it of the demonic, not just its ‘aura’ as Walter Benjamin has argued, but its dangers” (1971, p. 137). Kitsch is what renders things in a “reassuring familiarity” which is what the detective in detective fiction does. The criminal mystifies things to the authority, and the detective, revealing their meaning, reincorporates them into the mechanisms of the established authority. This hermeneutic process in detective fiction, through which things become instrumental, invisible in Heideggerian terms, “familiar” again, represents the solution of the crisis, reinstitution of the order, and the production of kitsch. Kitsch may seem to be ugly, even eerie and sinister in the way it generates a sense of familiarity. However, this ugliness and eeriness is a consequence of its resemblance to the representations of mass media under totalitarian reigns, which asserts that everything is happily ordered and controlled, repressing a sense of insecurity through uncritically terminating the unknown; and this resemblance is not presented sarcastically or ironically. Hence, in this sense, kitsch is not a negation of mass media controlled by totalitarian governments, but a form of it. Given this definition of kitsch, some examples of

metacognitive mystery are not high-art (grounding themselves in assumptions opposite those of kitsch), but self-reflexive kitsch, which assess their own assumptions and *negate* them.

Kitsch as defined above is characterised by unrealistic cancellations of strangeness, it constitutes “particular patterns of reassurance”:

Tourists travel from the Istanbul Hilton to the Athens Hilton, the only difference being in the quality of the plumbing and the "motif" of the hotel restaurants. There is no strangeness. Our international airports are all the same; they collectively constitute a country all their own, have more in common with each other than they have with the countries in which they are actually located. And that is what kitsch is a country all its own, unlike any other, but giving the sense of reassuring sameness. It is not real, but it is familiar (p. 137).

Metacognitive mystery opposes kitsch in that it engenders an effect of estrangement “which more often than not is the result of jumbling the well-known patterns of classical detective stories. Instead of reassuring they disturb” (p. 155). Metacognitive mystery thusly embraces the satanic.

The crisis in metacognitive mystery is about the relationship between the detective as an interpreter and his environment as his object of investigation. It is a crisis of criticism, as I can define criticism as the business of deciding meanings.²⁹ It is a crisis of hermeneutics as well. Because the detective’s methods of interpretation do not work as expected. The reason for this crisis is the “double-sense deluding” (Satanic) nature of things. Things turn out not to be something they are considered or anticipated to be. Thusly, the world that the reader and the detective are exposed to represents them a hermeneutic pandemonium during the crisis. And it is always crisis -- a crisis following another crisis.

This hermeneutic pandemonium represents a threshold, when we allow the term threshold to mean a liminal place, somewhere between the old and the new,

²⁹ See the discussion of the etymology of the words, crisis and criticism in 2.1.

with the features of the neither. Turner asserts that “[l]iminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (95). The state of what or who goes through this threshold, this liminal state, “is ambiguous: he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (“Betwixt and Between”, 1979, p. 235). Turner likens this stage to “bisexuality”. Meaning that the person in the liminal phase has a potential to engage with whatever. Nevertheless, bisexuality is a conventional sexual identity, and therefore does not meet the state of being ambiguity. Rather than “bisexual”, I suggest that a person experiencing a liminal phase is more “queer”, as queer is defined as “a sexual or gender identity that does not correspond to established ideas of sexuality and gender” (Oxford English Dictionary). “Queer’s identity”, Annamarie Jagose writes, “is often cited as the reason for its mobilisation” (2005, p. 96). This mobilisation corresponds to the indeterminate character of the non-instrumental as suggested in Chapter 3. In this sense, queer is not defined through a negative dialectics, by differing from everything else, but becoming what it is not, and affirming it in a Hegelian sense (see Chapter 2). In *Making Things Perfectly Queer*, Alexander Doty notes that “As Adele Morrison said in an OUT/LOOK interview: ‘Queer is not an ‘instead of,’ it’s an ‘inclusive of’” (1997, p. 2). Queer does not define a desire for established binaries, but it eroticises “becoming”. I refer to queer here not as a sexual or gender identity, but a continuous desire to become. Then, I can remark that the Satanic is queer in metacognitive mystery because its “double-sense” does not refer to accepting two preestablished senses of a thing these senses concern (it is not bisexual), but one sense that is well-established and one other that allows many possibilities at the same time -- like a threshold that represents a passage from a defined status to an

ambiguous future. Were these two senses two preestablished ones, the delusive nature of Satan could be avoided with a critical plan B.

Steven E. Alford affirms that Paul Auster's *City of Glass* renders the text as a liminal space by asserting that "[u]ltimately we will discover that the space of signification is . . . not a 'nowhere' but a 'neither-here-nor-there'" (1995, p. 614). But these "here" and "there" are not determined places (at least one of them), the binarism between here and there is actually non-binary but queer, the double is multiple, because "there" is open-ended. Therefore, Alford continues as, this neither-here-nor-there "is a neither-here-nor-there"; "for the verb we should perhaps employ the Heideggerian *sous rature* -- his 'under erasure'" (p. 631). Under erasure is the gesture of writing a word or a set of words in order to acknowledge that the words written under erasure are inefficacious to define what they refer to.

Identities are written under erasure in Paul Auster as well; identities of things, people, anything, especially the detective, who is generally a "caricature", a "monster of idiosyncrasy" in detective fiction (Irwin, 1999, p. 28). Surely, there is another kind of monstrosity in the things and people depicted in metacognitive mystery, a species that Antoine Dechéne studies under the heading of sublime. There is a strangeness, a darkness to the things; their limits are obscure, their semblances are not merely vague, waiting to be discovered and conquered, but are shuffling and shape-shifting. These features of metacognitive mystery allow Holquist to depict the genre as the opposite of kitsch.³⁰ If kitsch offers an unrealistic beauty by stripping off the strange, metacognitive mystery forgoes the beautiful for the sake of the strange and eerie, that is, in a reductive sense, sublime. Then, the sublime is synonymous with the demonic

³⁰ I certainly do not mean to suggest any work as a specimen of either kitsch or metacognitive mystery here, and I acknowledge the literary works this thesis deals with represent a mixture of both. But in order to define the generic features, I compare this genre to what it negates, and discuss how it negates. Hence, I depict these genres, metacognitive mystery and detective fiction in opposition.

in metacognitive mystery. It also parallels to its queer character in rejecting the binarism for the sake of a more liberal pluralism.

In Poe's story, *William Wilson*, the figure of the detective William Wilson and the person who stalks him and whom William Wilson tries to identify, called, William Wilson are doubles, or, binaries of each other (see Chapter 2). This binarism in *City of Glass* is cancelled. The detective figure is actually an author called Daniel Quinn, who writes mystery stories and hard-boiled by the name William Wilson, but identifies himself more with his detective character Max Work. He starts detective business when he receives a call for someone called Paul Auster. The person on the line wants to hire Paul Auster as a private eye. Quinn, knowing that he will not be able to get the payment, because the payment will be made by check for the name Paul Auster, and without knowing who Paul Auster is, confirms that he is Paul Auster and accepts the case. The mystery, "the maze" is the same with Auster himself: there are "Paul Auster, the writer of the novel" and "the unnamed 'author' who reports the events as reality" and "'Paul Auster the writer' a character in the story" and "'Paul Auster the detective', who may or may not exist in the novel" (Cook, 2011, p. 167). "On the level of the primary narrative, Quinn acts out the postmodern turn, illustrating how 'agency begins where sovereignty wanes' (Butler 16) by literalizing the gradual dissolution of the private I, the Cartesian—sovereign—subject, into the postmodern agent" (Sylvia Söderlind, 2011, pp. 4-5). Söderlind asserts that the instability of the subject as a reader, an interpreter "identifies that subject as a boundary-crossing nomad or cosmopolitan" (p. 4). Passing through the linguistic threshold, the hermeneutic pandemonium, which is where the subject and object and their relationship and their statuses as subject and object are unstable, the subject and object *surpasses* their non-nomadic, sedentary,

Cartesian sort of definitions (sovereignty of the subject), which is their initial state in the story (in the beginning Quinn adopts the methods of the detective in detective fiction, which then he realises do not work).

The problem of self-identification constitutes only a part of the crisis in *City of Glass*. The other element that constitutes the crisis is the impossibility of identifying the other, things, people, and their motives. This second crisis begins when Quinn takes the case, and the sense of entering a threshold becomes apparent: “She [Quinn’s employer] opened the door for Quinn. As he crossed the threshold and entered the apartment, he could feel himself going blank . . . The apartment loomed up around him as a kind of blur” (2006, p. 14). Things that travel through this space come out different: “He decided to light a cigarette. He blew the smoke into the room. It pleased him to watch it leave his mouth in gusts, disperse, and take on new definition as the light caught it” (p. 14). Quinn then is informed that his employer’s husband (Stillman Jr.) is facing the danger that his father (Stillman Sr.) who abused him when he was a child is now out of the asylum, and may come back to find him. Stillman Sr. sought the language of God, which “cannot be translated”, that is, a language that lends people the true meaning of things, a language that would not allow interpretation. This is the story of crime. The story of detection proves that such a language is not possible. At the end of the *City of Glass* which is the end of the story of detection, nothing is illuminated or solved but even the reality of the story of crime becomes contestable.

The story of detection becomes a quest for an answer to if there can be real meanings to things. “He [Quinn] wondered if Peter [Jr.] saw the same things he did, or whether the world was a different place for him. And if a tree was not a tree, he wondered what it really was” (p. 36). Then the story acknowledges that names are

symbols. “Auster was no more than a name to him [Quinn], a husk without content” (p. 61). *City of Glass* asks the question Halpin asks in *Mulligan Stew*: “After all, what portends in a name?” A tree for example, is depicted in *City of Glass* as a symbol, completely charged with political and ethical meanings.

For if there was no evil in the Garden, neither was there any good. As Milton himself put it in the *Areopagitica*, “It was out of the rind of one apple tasted that good and evil leapt forth into the world, like two twins cleaving together.” Stillman’s gloss on this sentence was exceedingly thorough. Alert to the possibility of puns and wordplay throughout, he showed how the word “taste” was actually a reference to the Latin word “sapere,” which means both “to taste” and “to know” and therefore contains a subliminal reference to the tree of knowledge: the source of the apple whose taste brought forth knowledge into the world, which is to say, good and evil (Auster, 2006, pp. 42-3).

A tree is thus a reference to apple and therefore to taste and therefore to the knowledge of the good and evil, and also to the fall, and to the loss of innocence, and so on. And then the connotations of tree take a more haphazard character.

Remember what happened to the father of our country. He chopped down the cherry tree, and then he said to his father, “I cannot tell a lie.” Soon thereafter, he threw the coin across the river. These two stories are crucial events in American history. George Washington chopped down the tree, and then he threw away the money . . . Of course, it’s unfortunate that the tree was cut down. That tree was the Tree of Life, and it would have made us immune to death. Now we welcome death with open arms, especially when we are old. But the father of our country knew his duty. He could not do otherwise. That is the meaning of the phrase “Life is a bowl of cherries.” If the tree had remained standing, we would have had eternal life (p. 84).

The tree myth in question tells that when George Washington was a child, he chopped down a tree with an axe given to him as a gift. His father was mad and asked little George that who was it that cut off the tree. George said “I cannot tell a lie”, and said it was him who cut the tree. His father honours him for being honest and said “his son’s honesty was worth more than a thousand trees” (Weems, 1836, 2:12-4). The honesty of George gets mixed with the honesty of Christ, as manifested in Miltonic terms, through the parallelism drawn by *City of Glass* between the fall

and the Washington myth, as Stillman Sr. defines the tree Washington cut off as the “Tree of Life”. This honest language is what makes the human honesty (an abstract, a category) comparable with trees, as honesty “was worth more than a thousand trees”. Thusly, trees become abstracts. In Genesis it is the same, in the sense that, according to bible, the tree of life was a concrete object to humans until the fall that happened after Adam’s confession of what they had done, after which the tree became an element of a narrative, a part of history, a concept. Furthermore, what reduces the tree into an abstract may be the fall, but it is “honesty” in language that *identifies* things with abstracts, which is licensed by father Washington, or Father God, as in George’s language, or Milton’s Christ’s. “[I]t’s unfortunate that the tree was cut down”, because it represents the loss of “prelapsarian innocence”, whereby the connection between the “essences” of things and language is lost (2006, p. 84). However, “the father of our country knew his duty”, because the destruction of the tree represents in Stillman’s narrative the first phase of representing the political as ontological, the transformation of the tree into an abstract. Then, the second phase, whereby language supposedly expresses the essences of things is reached through “honesty”, of George that the story renders as analogous to Christ’s, which Milton represents as the reinstitution of Adam’s prelapsarian innocence, with the addition of “the knowledge of good and evil”. Both of the stories, Genesis and Washington myth, argue that honesty as a virtue *naturally* grants the honest an access to things as they are, or as Stillman argues, makes “[a] thing and its name [. . .] interchangeable” (p. 43). Genesis displays that honesty is an institution that is acknowledged by the law-giver father, and therefore the father’s decision is then what enables the equalization of things with concepts. As the father figure in Genesis is the originator of the nature, his law *is* the law of nature. Through the replication of father-

Washington with Father-God in the Washington myth, the laws of the authority-father are represented as the law of God, whose laws are claimed as the laws of nature. Then, Stillman Sr. through comparing Genesis with the cherry tree myth transforms the political (arbitrary, humanly) into ontological (natural).

On the other hand, as illustrated by *City of Glass*, the tree as a sign is “a husk without content”, a metadiscourse as Lyotard puts it (which is discussed in the introduction especially and Chapter 2). A tree, as people see it, is a sign, and *City of Glass* asserts that signs do not betray things. No meaning of a tree is its one true meaning, its “essence”. As Nealon puts it, “[s]igns, in fact, do nothing other than point beyond themselves, and this comprises their ‘ontological’ character as ready-to-hand” (1999, p. 126). In the story, a tree even becomes an instrument to make the point that things do not admit a single meaning, a truth, and that signs are imbued with politics and ethics, which are not the categories of ontology, that is, signs do not exhibit things as they are. *City of Glass* implies that signs do not have anything to do with the ontology of things except for the epistemology of the ontology of things. Put more clearly, signs say about things, they may constitute wisdom about ontology, they may offer observations about things, but they do not grant immediate access to things as they are.

Chapter 2 briefly explains four senses of bible, and I have compared them to the hermeneutics of detective fiction. In metacognitive mystery, the allegorical in terms of signalling a saviour does not exist. For example, in the examples of detective fiction, I argued the world is a text, but a *pretext* to confirm the methods of the detective and the given order of the authority. Thusly in those examples, things are allegorical in biblical sense, anticipatory of the detective as the crisis solver. Not in metacognitive mystery, or, if they do initially, the genre proves this allegorical

sense wrong later. As per the moral (tropological), it is lacking; or I may confirm its existence in metacognitive mystery as long as its *non*-existence promotes a kind of morality. And the anagogical is missing for good. What is there is historical, however not literal. Not literal because metacognitive mystery argues that words do not and cannot indicate the essences of things. Certainly, metaphor does not vanish. This sort of an exegetical function is defined by Aquinas as parabolical: “The parabolical sense is contained in the literal, for by words things are signified properly and figuratively” (Aquinas, 2014, 1,q. 1,a., 10). Then, parabolical defines a textual element which is neither “proper” (literal), nor spiritual. The spiritual reading takes the scripture as a symbol, either of God’s omniscience, or morality, or justice, or many of them at the same time. “The proper” is when words refer things, when assumedly the word is clearly the same thing as the thing itself. Parabolical is another term for metaphorical without “the spiritual” content. Then, the parabolical is when a text does not represent a pretext for confirming certain totalitarian politics or promoting a certain morality. Parabolical also suggests that the displacement between what a reader sees in a thing and the thing itself is acknowledged. The cancellation of the anagogical indicates that this textual element is indeterminate, is open-ended. On the other hand, the cancellation of the “proper” means that the text cannot simply be read as historical: Things are not present before human perception as they are. The intervention of psyche or what is called the subject into the process of discerning things, that is, the subjectivity of reading is somewhat owned. Then metacognitive mystery as I define it is parabolical. And its parabolical characteristic is what makes it diabolical.

He had nothing to fall back on anymore but himself. And of all the things he discovered during the days he was there, this was the one he did not doubt: that he was falling. What he did not understand, however, was this: in that he was falling, how could he be expected to catch himself as well? Was it

possible to be at the top and the bottom at the same time? It did not seem to make sense (Auster, 2006, p. 115).

Learning that words do not grant access to things as they are is a catastrophic occasion for Quinn and Peter Stillman Sr. It has a fall effect on Quinn. The fall represents in *City of Glass* a movement from a singularity to a plurality of meaning. Stillman Sr.'s study in the story renders Eden a place where things are present to humans as they are; and through the fall, that is caused by humans learning the good and evil, things occur to them impregnated with politics and ethics. In Miltonic terms, it is a movement from the language of Christ to the language Satan. For Quinn, it becomes at the end of the story certain that nothing is certain. He acknowledges to be a Humpty Dumpty, and at that time he falls. Furthermore, if anyone Quinn is the person to catch himself, which is rendered impossible by *City of Glass*. Thusly, the story cancels the possibility of the omnipresence of the detective/author as the representative of the authority. There is a hunger for omnipresence in *City of Glass* and *Ghosts*, represented as Quinn dedicating himself to spying and reducing his body into a video record, a CCTV in the end of the book, and by Quinn's recurring will to be at least in "two places at the same time" (2006, p. 62, p. 115, p. 125). In *Ghosts*, the figure of detective expresses this hunger by thinking: "For if Black must be watched, then it would follow that he must be watched every hour of every day. Anything less than constant surveillance would be as no surveillance at all" (p. 141). On the other hand, Sherlock for example achieves this omnipresence through employing "the Street Arabs" as his eyes on the streets, or being intellectually omnipotent, just glancing at the traces and knowing "the fact". Auster's works in question that this thesis calls metacognitive mystery rejects presenting the human figure as omnipresent and omnipotent.

Quinn finds Paul Auster the private eye, he visits his apartment, and learns that he is not a private eye but an author. They have a very intriguing conversation, time goes on, and Auster asks Quinn if he would like to have something to eat. Auster prepares an omelette, and asks Quinn, “[h]ow does a ham omelette sound?” (p. 95). The conversation about the omelette does not go further. But in “Humpty Dumpty in New York”, Söderlind suggests that a ham omelette in *City of Glass* connotes the broken Humpty Dumpty, and then writes, “one answer” to Auster’s question “would be: like the Lacanian ‘hommelette’” (2011, p. 5). Lacan’s hommelette (or lamella) is an organ that does not “exist, but . . . is nevertheless an organ” (Lacan, *Seminar on The Purloined Letter*, pp. 197-8). This organ represents “libido, . . . the immortal life, or irrepressible life, . . . indestructible life” (p. 198). It is what is taken from the sexed being. Being a sexed, a differentiated being means to be mortal. Death, the loss of endless life, is what every signifier represents the subject that recognizes the Other, the symbolic (symbolic is where the subject is exposed to language, the idea that the world is not a whole, but consists of distinct objects, defined politically and ethically; then, symbolic is where the subject becomes political and moral). Because the signifier, asserts Lacan, signifies, if nothing else, the existence of *another* subject. By indicating the existence of an “other”, any signifier signifies division and separation, involving the separation of sexes, thus, death. A broken egg (and a tiny human), an “hommelette” is an organ that offsets separation and differentiation. An hommelette as a human, Quinn, in *City of Glass* represents an organ that compensates for separation by denying assigning definite and determining meanings to signs, in a Cartesian sense, in terms of practising control and power over the world. An hommelette is a queer being, which is not fixed, and recognises the signifier as something that is not fixed. Söderlind

propounds that it “reverses the Lacanian narrative of individuation” (2011, p. 6). One can assert that an *hommelette* being an organ is an instrument, but this organ is without a body, and to be an instrument it would need a mechanism, a body in which it can function. Hence, this organ is no instrument.

Considering another resonance of “ham omelette”, Hamlet, the story still suggests the broken egg as, in simplified terms, a person who does not make critical decisions, but critical decisions that would establish authority. In *Hamlet*, the critical decisions Hamlet cannot make are about practising political violence (killing his uncle, himself, and so on). Then, this *hommelette*, or Hamlet, is what reverts a mode of criticism (and in *City of Glass*, criticism concerns interpretation, an interaction between the critic and the signifier) that would construct or help construct an authority. Being a *hommelette* in *City of Glass* though does not mean to deny differentiation, the other, but it means to acknowledge that this otherness is not fixed, that a thing may intermingle with what it is not. Lacan’s *homelette* is an organ that offsets the prospect of death, an energy that nurtures life. So it is in *City of Glass*; the person who represents *homelette*, Quinn, is who grants the signifier a life. He does not see interpretation as an exercise of negative dialectics, but he also acknowledges that dialectics is about the inner-motion of a thing. In other words, Quinn as *hommelette* does not define a thing with what it is not, but with its capacity of becoming something else. Hence, Quinn acknowledges words as double-sensed, and the world as a hermeneutic pandemonium.

Söderlind compares this imagery in *City of Glass* with Spivak. She asserts that “Auster’s humorous treatment of this process presages Gayatri Spivak’s observation when she defines Melanie Klein’s description of the infant’s initial

coding of 'nature' into 'culture'" (Spivak, 2003, p. 13 from Söderlind 2011, p. 6).³¹

On the other hand, Terry Eagleton takes Humpty Dumpty as someone ignorant of cultural codes. In his *Literary Theory* he writes:

The target which Hirsch has firmly in his sights is the hermeneutics of Heidegger, Gadamer and others. For him, the insistence of these thinkers that meaning is always historical opens the door to complete relativism. On this argument, a literary work can mean one thing on Monday and another on Friday. It is interesting to speculate why Hirsch should find this possibility so fearful; but to stop the relativist rot he returns to Husserl and argues that meaning is unchangeable because it is always the intentional act of an individual at some particular point in time. There is one fairly obvious sense in which this is false. If I say to you in certain circumstances, 'Close the door!' and when you have done so impatiently add, 'I meant of course open the window', you would be quite entitled to point out that the English words 'Close the door' mean what they mean whatever I might have intended them to mean. This is not to say that one could not imagine contexts in which 'Close the door' meant something entirely different from its usual meaning: it could be a metaphorical way of saying, 'Don't negotiate any further'. The meaning of the sentence, like any other, is by no means immutably fixed: with enough ingenuity one could probably invent contexts in which it could mean a thousand different things. But if a gale is ripping through the room and I am wearing only a swimming costume, the meaning of the words would probably be situationally clear; and unless I had made a slip of the tongue or suffered some unaccountable lapse of attention it would be futile for me to claim that I had 'really' meant 'Open the window'. This is one evident sense in which the meaning of my words is not determined by my private intentions - in which I cannot just choose to make my words mean anything at all, as Humpty-Dumpty in Alice mistakenly thought he could. The meaning of language is a social matter: there is a real sense in which language belongs to my society before it belongs to me (2008, p. 61).

When words are instruments that belong to a savoir-faire of some social contact, they can be limited by the context of the practice in which they function, and be

"situationally clear". But when words represent things, they may certainly mean one thing on Monday and another even on Monday evening, because things change.

Eagleton suggests that Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty neglects the social and cultural aspects of hermeneutics. But I suppose this is an oversimplification of

Humpty Dumpty. I consider him as the perfect detective figure for detective fiction:

³¹ Spivak, Gayatri. (2003). "Translation as Culture." *Parallax* 6:1 (2000): 13–24. Winthrop, John. "A Model of Christian Charity." *Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 6th ed. Vol A. New York: Norton.

He takes everything as a riddle, and trusts that he can use words in any sense. What assures him that he can do so is the king's backing of him. Humpty Dumpty does not represent Heideggerian or Gadamerian hermeneutics, but a capricious licensing of a discretionary meaning through the authority's support. Again, Eagleton seems to overlook the contingencies and marginalities that construct a society when he writes that the society makes the meaning of words clear. He appears to consider society as a totality, a consistent whole, with no conflict, or at least in which the conflict is defined and determined -- probably through a voluntary overlooking of micro-conflicts in a society that are probably harder to point and treat, which is very characteristic of certain factions of Marxism.

And Söderlind represents Humpty as a translator of the natural into cultural. But this I believe is an understatement as well. The natural is already initiated into culture before Quinn becomes an *hommelette*. Quinn's transformation into an *hommelette* represents a negation of established cultural codes, that is, the ways in which culture represented by Max Work for example (Quinn's detective character in his detective stories, whose methods Quinn thinks would work in "real life") appreciates things (same with the other character in *City of Glass* who pursues a quest of detecting, namely Stillman Sr.): as inert and lifeless abstracts.

Quinn as Humpty Dumpty is broken. And brokenness as a Heideggerian concept defines an object in-itself as opposed to an object as an instrument. In this sense, Quinn is emancipated. "It was the red notebook that offered him salvation" (2006, p. 62). The red notebook is where he entertains speculative ideas about things rather than what he deems to be facts; or, in the narrator's words, where he "jot[s] down a few casual comments" (p. 62). The red notebook is where Quinn ceases to be a detective. As a detective, he tries to avoid speculation by writing down "every

detail” he observes, but these details only make him realise that “[h]e was ransacking the chaos . . . for some glimmer of cogency” (p. 68). And such a cogency proves impossible. The lack of cogency is the crisis. Furthermore, Quinn’s experience of crisis throws the narrator into the same kind of crisis eventually. The narrator says he tried “to resist at all costs the perils of invention” but “[e]ven the red notebook, which until now has provided a detailed account of Quinn’s experiences, is suspect” (p. 112). The story the narrator tells about Quinn, about the case, and so on was meant to be about nothing but facts according to the narrator. But it fails to be so. Even experience (of Quinn), an already abstract category is not able to be reached as it is. Once it becomes an object of investigation, a text, it can only be translated as the experience (of the narrator) of the experience (of Quinn) -- which will be the experience of the reader.

The end of the story brings yet another ambiguity. It reads “[t]he last sentence of the red notebook reads: ‘What will happen when there are no more pages in the red notebook?’” (p. 129). And the narrator remarks that “[a]t this point the story grows obscure” (p. 129). Thus, *City of Glass* represents a hermeneutic pandemonium, which entails a hermeneutic crisis that represents a threshold, a liminal space. In this liminal space, the interpreter becomes an organ without a body that offsets the prospect of death, by assigning a life to things; and it restores the certainty of differentiation and separation by acknowledging a motion of things towards what they are not. Thus, this organ sets things and identities into an endless passage, the first end of which is separation, and the other is consummation, as defined by van Gennep and Turner. The life of things is illustrated by the story through their instability. In this threshold, both the reader and read (detective and things) drop their instrumentality and thus are emancipated. It does not mean though

that there are no definite senses of things that are determined by the practice in which they are utilised. But the story asserts that things are not limited to any practice. Therefore, the question: “What happens when a thing no longer performs its function? Is it still the thing, or has it become something else? When you rip the cloth off the umbrella, is the umbrella still an umbrella?” (Auster, 2006, p. 76) These two modes of being are what Heidegger calls the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand (the thing as an instrument or the broken thing; see the introduction). These senses may represent the Satanic double-sense of things, which surpasses binarism. The first sense of a thing is rather determined by practice, but the second is as unstable and shifting as a living being.

3.2 Joycean and Pynchonesque catalogues in *Mulligan Stew*: Annihilation of the predicate

Mulligan Stew by Gilbert Sorrentino thematically includes catalogues and lists, and this part aims to explore how they contribute to the generation of a hermeneutic pandemonium. These catalogues are in many ways similar to Joyce’s catalogues in especially *Ulysses* and *Finnegan’s Wake*, and even more to Thomas Pynchon’s as in his *Gravity’s Rainbow*. Surely, the examples of the sort of listing and cataloguing in *Mulligan Stew* are not limited to Joyce and Pynchon, but are traceable in certain schools of poetry, and a number of fiction writers, from Rabelais to Georges Perec, and Joan Didion to James McCourt. The reason this part includes Joyce and Pynchon’s novels instead of some other works to study along with the lists in *Mulligan Stew* is that the lists in them have the greatest similarity with those of *Mulligan Stew*, and more visibly work to the same effect.

The part of this thesis called “Crisis as a Passage in Metacognitive Mystery” offers some information about the content of *Mulligan Stew*. In addition to this information, the novel depicts that the characters of Lamont’s creation, namely, Halpin and Beaumont, have to toil to make some sense of their environment and understand people or each other. Their failure to do so forces them to the edges of insanity, a state of paranoia, where they violently try to understand things and each other, trying to squeeze their meaning. They end up torturing each other and themselves. This is how it is in Lamont’s story. Almost at the beginning of the book, this is established in a couple of pages overwhelmingly satiated with a search for meaning, and fear of missing out:

“A drink, Ned Beaumont?” I said.

“That would hit the old spot,” he barked.

“What would you like? I mumbled. I have everything here . . . vodka, bourbon, gin. . . .”

“Scotch would be fine,” he sighed. “With a splash of branch.”

“What is ‘branch,’ Ned Beaumont?” I inquired pleasantly.

“Branch? Branch is a kind of swell, pure water,” Ned Beaumont whined. He sat heavily in a chair, distracted.

“Will plain ‘tap’ water do?” I asked, moving swiftly toward the little bar of which I felt strangely and inordinately proud.

“Of course,” Ned Beaumont replied wearily. “The word ‘branch’ is a sort of affectation usually used in the affected term, ‘bourbon and branch.’”

“I don’t follow you.” I was doing my very best to be genial, but cold fury was sweeping through me. “Bourbon?”

“That is the drink I mentioned in order to give you an example of how the word ‘branch’ is most often used. ‘Branch’ is a kind of terrific spring water, or well water, or stupendous crystalline-stream water. It actually means ‘something’ and water . . . I mean that I want Scotch and water, that’s all.”

“I follow you now, Ned Beaumont,” I chortled. “What you need is a tall Scotch and water. Rocks?”

“What? Come again?”

“I say: Rocks?”

“What in God’s name are you talking about?” Ned Beaumont sputtered.

I could feel the cold fury, that had not ceased to sweep through me, turning, to glacial ice! He was looking at me as if seeing me for the first time, always a bad sign with the great hulk I called “friend.”

“I merely wanted to know if you prefer your drink on the ‘rocks’ or not, Ned Beaumont.” My eyes were filled with the unwanted—yet oddly

pleasant—pain of my incredible, my overweening anger, and I felt as if I could crush his hat, then and there.

“What is ‘on the rocks,’ man? For God’s sake!” He was trembling visibly, with anger, fear, or was it overweening frustration?

“The rocks? The rocks? Surely, Ned Beaumont, you are joking with me. Why treat Halpin this way? The rocks, Ned Beaumont, the rocks! Think, man! Think!”

“He stood up and very slowly turned toward me. I noticed, with a sudden loathing, his heavy jowl, his blue-shadowed face, his rumpled shirt, sweat stains peering out from beneath his armpits like a brace of obscene jokes.”

“I laughed brusquely, a chill traveling the length of my spine. “You did, Ned Beaumont, you most certainly did. That’s what I asked and that is what I still want to know!”

“I realized that I had been standing in the exact position for what seemed minutes, hours, days perhaps. I could have sworn the clock had stopped. I had no idea how long we had been discoursing. I was sweating visibly”

[. . .]

“Ned Beaumont,” I stated. “Ned Beaumont, ‘rocks’ is an expression somewhat akin to ‘branch.’ It means ‘ice cubes.’ That’s all. It is a kind of slang term—or perhaps a jargon. I did not mean to bait you. I didn’t know “I felt myself softening toward him, the great polar cap of my anger melting and flowing like . . . branch water. I crashed into plangent laughter.

“That is extremely interesting. That is interesting in the highest degree. Rocks,” he grinned. “I can see now how that term might come to be used. It is superbly inventive. Chuck, superbly inventive!” He threw his head back and laughed his Great Laugh, the Laugh that Daisy, I knew, adored. His Laugh was like Art. I could not bear to tell him that I had not invented the term.” (Sorrentino, 1981).

The quoted part in the first line is ungrammatical, and the reply to it in the second line is proverbial. Thus far, to these characters, the language is made out of formulaic expressions; expressions that fit certain situations. Making sense of phrases of this nature involves no reasoning, but only experience. One cannot deduce what a formulaic expression “expresses” if she does not have an experience of a situation in which the phrase is used, or a knowledge about the usage of a particular phrase of this species. The language as such is a metaphor. Thusly, these characters already acknowledge or mark the displacement between epistemology and ontology of things. A metaphor is an indirect way of referring to things, and if all language is metaphorical, things can only be perceived as formulaic expressions: situationally

clear -- not naturally. This is a reversal of detective fiction's method of identifying things as this thesis discusses in earlier chapters: arresting them, and thusly identifying them with fixed meanings, which implies a totalitarian anxiety of control. The agency of the language and the alteration or distortion [*metapherein*] it causes is somewhat indicated here in metacognitive mystery. Nevertheless, the dialogue is transposed, that is, delivered by a narrator. And the transposed version is grammatical. The perception of language in the dialogue is not supported by the narrative that recounts the dialogue. With this gesture, the story avoids depicting words and phrases as things, as discrete articles as they are, but affirms the language's instrumentality, suggesting that words cooperate with each other in a system. Combining the two modes of discourse and language, the story renders language as a system that follows some rules, but this is the language of the narrative: such a language is a narrative language, it is speculative, thus, its rules and laws are not "laws of nature"; in "reality", which is represented by the verbatim, things are not very clear, people are not very eloquent. The laws and rules of the language furnishes it with an authoritative look. This authority is repeatedly troubled by colloquialisms, slangs, jargon. These elements of language indicate a haphazard departmentalization of society, that the society is not a coherent whole. The failure of totalitarianism and the recognition of that the totality is a category, a concept as opposed to a thing, enables the story to problematize the authority of the language over nature, the notion that things are what words make of them.

The excerpt I have included follows the same method as detective fiction. Todorov writes in his work "Reading as Construction", "[d]irect discourse is the only way to eliminate the differences between narrative discourse and the world which it evokes: words are identical to words, and construction is direct and immediate. This

is not the case with [. . .] transposed discourse” (1980, p. 70). I have argued that in detective fiction, the narration is “verbatim”, that it is *not* “unlikely that [the character quoted by the narrator] used words [. . .] identical to those which follow the ‘he told me that’ formula” (p. 70). Thus, the story is somewhat represented as historical, “real”. However, the history, the “reality” that *Mulligan Stew* depicts is a history that is unable to write a history, to make sense of the events, what has happened and is happening. It is a reality that is unable to define what reality is.

The rest of the conversation suggests the same approach to language. The words “tap” [water], “branch”, “rocks” are written in quotation marks. The text marks these words as odd pieces, emphasizing their strangeness. Again, they speak in clichés like “What in God’s name”, or “for God’s sake”, or “as if seeing me for the first time” (the characters in the following parts of the novel complain that Lamont, their writer, makes them say a lot of clichés, the primary one of which is “as if seeing someone for the first time”). This metaphorical character of language, which leads a character not to understand “precisely” what he is dealing with, generates a nerve effect on these characters, which almost connotes a sense of alienation. As language to them is of formulaic expressions, expressions that fit certain situations, and these particular ones are the situations in which they are, not being able to make sense of words, the characters seem not to situate well in their environment. They seem like they are thrown into it, they have just found themselves there. And this is the case. Their writer throws them in such a situation, the beginning is in medias res. Surely that the story of detective fiction is mostly the story of detection that tries to reveal the story of crime. And the beginning of the story is generally after the commitment of the crime. In this regard, the beginning of detective fiction is generally in medias res. However, mostly the sense of thrownness regards the reader, and its effect is at

most times only suspension, because the beginning of the story of detection still feels like a beginning: When life is in its ordinary course, we witness an event that emerges and changes this course. This event is not the crime, but a client's or police's arrival at the scene to ask for the detective figure's aid. Anyway, the thrownness does not concern the detective in detective fiction. Holmes, or Dupin, or Father Brown, or Poirot, and so on, for example, does not seem distressed and appalled, or even surprised though intrigued. In *Mulligan Stew* the beginning in medias res produces a sense of thrownness not only to the reader, but also to the characters. Thusly, the story that the novel represents historically indicates that "in reality" people are thrown into the register of things, and depicts the distance between things and people. This distance in Heideggerian terms is tantamount to a closeness. The closeness of things to someone in a Heideggerian sense means that when a thing is dysfunctional, or odd, it becomes more present as a thing to the person who experiences this thing. This presence generates a closeness between the thing and the person, whereby the person may recognise the thing's obscurity, its resistance to lend itself to the human perception. Such closeness is through an alienation. It comes with a vertigo effect, where the thing that is backgrounded (not calling for attention) nears uncannily.

The characters have a life outside Lamont's novel. Thusly in *Mulligan Stew* Halpin and Beaumont become equivalents of Lamont: not the characters of the story inside the story, but the characters of the story, just like Lamont. Lamont recognises this as he writes "It is, you will agree, difficult to handle a novel whose characters shift and blur. Oddly enough, I have begun to feel like a character myself." In their private life, they complain that Lamont renders them so unbelievable, making them talk about the most absurd things for an inordinate amount of time. They reject

Lamont's ways of writing, and condemn his perspective. But their own reality which is partly constructed by Lamont, and partly not confirms a sense of thrownness, which they try to deal with.

For us, this house [into which Lamont situates Halpin and Beaumont in his novel] is the living room and the den. It certainly seems to belong to someone, but it certainly isn't mine, and Ned laughed when I tentatively suggested that it might be his. The only clue to who might own it lies in the old periodicals, papers, and books that are in the den. But they are so diverse that one cannot imagine them being the property of any one person, unless he is a "renaissance" man. Ned and I spent the better part of a morning (or part of a "night," considering that we were inside the house [it is always night time in the house]) going through this stuff", and, after weeding out different issues of the same periodical, etc., we came up with an inventory, of sorts, that I think it valuable to set down here. I make no claim to completeness, since there may well be other materials in those "rooms" that do not "exist" (Sorrentino, 1981).

In *Postmodernist Fiction*, McHale writes "[n]ormally neither the reader nor the character who shares the same world with such a house notices this vagueness". I understand from "normally" in this excerpt "traditionally", which is the case in detective fiction (2004, p. 32). McHale then remarks that "Sorrentino's characters, however, are aware of being inside a fiction, and so find this house anomalous, with its permanent gaps where a real-world house would be ontologically determinate" (p. 32). The environment to these characters is always vague, Halpin writes: "The most amazing discovery is that it is always nighttime only inside the house; that is, when one ventures outside, it is day", or, as in the excerpt above, "[i]t seems as if there are other rooms, but when we [Halpin and Beaumont] approach them, they are—I don't quite know how to put this—they are simply not there!" The construction of the space is vague, which brings a sense of liminality, indicated by a lack of boundaries. In this liminal space, things appear to these characters through a glass darky, which means, not transparent, or, in biblical terms, "face to face". "Ambiguous" places, McHale writes,

may project ambiguous objects, objects which are not temporarily but permanently and irresolvably ambiguous. This is not a matter, in other words, of choosing between alternative states of affairs, but rather of an ontological oscillation, a flickering effect, or, to use Ingarden's own metaphor, an effect of "iridescence" or opalescence" (p. 32).

Thusly, the text occurs as of a "neither transparent nor tautological but a translucent material screen" as Gumpert remarks, explaining the Augustinian hermeneutics.

However, in metacognitive mystery, it cannot be seen through, as Augustine aims.

And this, McHale suggests, is not simply because of the interpreter's lacking skills as a critic, but because of the thing's very ability of becoming something else, ontologically. In other words, this oscillation is not because that the ways the interpreter perceives things change, but because things change.

Still, Halpin and Beaumont want to make sense of their environment, that is, transform it into a narrative that indicates something, i.e., into a sign. The method they follow is to take an inventory of all the things that surrounds them in order to make a coherent narrative out of them. Through regarding *everything*, they try to observe them as a totality. But they fail. They "read" books in order to identify whom they belong to, and consequently whom the house belongs to. However, Halpin remarks that the books only give out a haphazard character, or, no character at all.

"The list is as follows:

BOOKS: The Orange Dress by Sheila Henry; Daredevil by John Charleville; Stolen Fruit by Jymes Vulgaro; The Dry Ranges by Gilford Sorento; The Ouija Kiss by Harry Bore; Cobbler, Rend My Shoe! by Thorn McAn; Acey-Five by Richard Tracy; Crab Hunting by Joseph Bush; The Model House by Iolanda Puttana; Buccal Violation by Carmine Rod; The Male Lesbian by K.Y. Geli; Stupid Bastard: The Life of Harry Purim by Meier Meier; American Vector by Guy Lewis; Lubricious Lubricants by Reg Margarine; Mary, Mother of God by Xavier Amice, S.J.: Jackoff in the Old Red Barn by Ricky Dickey; Girls, Grapes, and Snow by Aristotle Rich; Red Flanagan's Last Throw by William Tracy; Stick 'Em Up by "Toni"; The King's Son by Hurley Lees; Thank God for My Gonorrhea by Joseph Viejo; Tie Your Own Tubes by V.A. Szechtomijh; Put It Right There by Vera Panting; One Thousand Occasional Sonnets by Gordo Kelly; Crazy for

Corsets by Van Raalte; The Truth About Vegetables by Harry Krishna-Rama; Sexual Fulfillment in the Woods by Birch Humpper; Men's Room Madness by Gabriel Power; The Boon of Unemployment by Milhous Hoover; Lace Me Tighter! by Merrie Widdoe; "30 Days to a Bigger Thing by Novena Lodge; It's Great to be Champeen by Gorman Sailer; The Cry of the Serbo-Croats by Boris Crzwcwzw; Schultz is Dead by Una Cazzo; 10 Days to a Hairless Body by Alice Gune; Yes, We Have No Bananas by "Sister Veronica"; Myth and Methodology in the Albanian Novel by Julius Naranja; The Big Lie: Myths About the Third Reich by Sepp Schutz-Staffel; Country Album by Nicholas de Selby"³² (Sorrentino, 1981).

The list goes on for a few more pages (and there are numerous lists of the same nature in the novel). Then Halpin notes down in his notebook:

Whatever one may make of such a list I don't know. Certainly, Ned has no idea what it means. There doesn't seem to be any particular uniformity to the materials, they leap from one subject to another, one "entertainment" to another, one discipline to another, in the most haphazard and bewildering way.

The problem of identification and self-identification is thematised all over the novel.

In his brief autobiography, Lamont writes that "[m]y mother read to me from the Bible, *Treasure Island*, *Pilgrims Progress*, *Growing Up Straight and Sound*, *Scales and Feathers*, *Modern Business English*, and other books in our little library. My schooling was haphazard". Ordering things is an attempt to deal with this problem.

³² This list occurs in a striking similarity with one in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*: "a layer of forgotten memoranda, empty buff ration books, phone numbers, unanswered letters, tattered sheets of carbon paper, the scribbled ukulele chords to a dozen songs including 'Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland' ('He does have some rather snappy arrangements,' Tantivy [another British serviceman spying on Slothrop] reports, 'he's a sort of American George Formby, if you can imagine such a thing,' but Bloat's decided he'd rather not), an empty Kreml hair tonic bottle, lost pieces to different jigsaw puzzles showing parts of the amber left eye of a Weimaraner, the green velvet folds of a gown, slate-blue veining in a distant cloud, the orange nimbus of an explosion (perhaps a sunset), rivets in the skin of a Flying Fortress, the pink inner thigh of a pouting pin-up girl . . . a few old Weekly Intelligence Summaries from G-2, a busted corkscrewing ukulele string, boxes of gummed paper stars in many colors, pieces of a flashlight, top to a Nugget shoe polish can in which Slothrop now and then studies his blurry brass reflection, any number of reference books out of the ACHTUNG library back down the hall—a dictionary of technical German, an F.O. Special Handbook or Town Plan—and usually, unless it's been pinched or thrown away, a News of the World somewhere too—Slothrop's a faithful reader" ([1973] 1995, p. 18). Timothy Krause in "Twentieth-Century Catalogs: The Poetics of Listing, Enumeration, and Copiousness in Joyce, Schuyler, McCourt, Pynchon, and Perec" defines the listed items as "textual detritus" (2012, p. 244). The "textual detritus" to Kraus is an allegory of "a facet of the American soldier's life" in *Gravity's Rainbow*. However, it also implies the dysfunctionality of these items, which makes them as indescribable and thingly (thingies) as the broken umbrella, and other odds and ends collected by Peter Stillman Sr. in *City of Glass*.

Listing is paratactical. Parataxis is to place phrases one after another. *Para-* meaning (be)side, and *tassein* arrange, the term means ordering things one next to another. The most familiar practice of it is some Biblical verses. Such as:

¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

¹² And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1: 1-12).

Eric Auerbach in *Mimesis* defines parataxis as a structure, the characteristic of which is to lay things together with the conjunction and: . . . and . . . and . . . and . . . (2003, pp. 70-1). Through using parataxes, the narrative represents an uninterrupted history. This narrative is all but events, hence, generates a documentary effect (p. 75). 11 out of 12 lines start with the word “and” in the excerpt. Such is the case for the other parts of Genesis. Auerbach traces the paratactical structure in Exodus, and Numbers, and Augustine’s *Confessions* as well. The paratactical writing has the effect of rendering detached things temporally engaged by linking them with the word “and”. Traditionally (I am considering a Judeo-Christian tradition here) “and” assembles the things it connects, and it presents these things as a collection.

Thomas Docherty in *The Philosophy of Transparency* writes that the “linking of narrated events by ‘and then ... and then ...’, [is] the very condition that E.M. Forster would much later describe as the absence of plot” (2012, p. 45). Forster defines plot as a story, the causality of which is unfolded (2002). However, the difference Forster defines, although practical, is not thoroughly convincing. His famous example is as follows:

“The king died and then the queen died,” is a story. “The king died, and then the queen died of grief” is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again: “The queen died, no one knew why, until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king.” This is a plot with a mystery in it, a form capable of high development (p. 61).

The plot necessarily involves a disclosure according to the two examples. Is the disclosure or the causality what makes a plot? I suppose not. The story as opposed to a plot may contain a certain premise that answers all the questions about causality, such as “the will of God” that makes the story in Bible a plot in the sense Forster defines the terms. One can ask why to each line in the Bible and get the answer, because God wanted so. It is simple. On the other hand, why he wanted so is not so clear though, considering that there are many different responses to it. Similarly, that “queen died of the grief at the death of the king” is not a final answer that ends questions, but a statement that may come with other questions like is it simply because she loved the king, or is it that the country will undergo a crisis after the king’s death, or both, and so on. In this regard, every narrative may be a story, but it is questionable if some stories are plots. The plot as Forster defines is a slippery and an unsound notion. Now, the question a text could raise may be that if there is a reason in (hi)story, or if (hi)story is eventually a gathering of scattered and unlinked events.

The second notion of story I call chronicle, a not arranged set of scattered data, and the first one history, as an arrangement and interpretation of chronicles, finding a causality. In the second chapter I have argued that detective fiction turns chronicles into history, a cogent narrative. Detective fiction is obsessed with causality, and renders that history is a plot without any doubt. Its final revelation is an illusion of a final answer that ends all the questions. *Mulligan Stew* subverts this notion through a paratactical writing. And it undermines the Biblical mode of parataxis in order to achieve this effect.

Mulligan Stew subverts the Biblical mode of parataxis in that it does not order *events* one after another without intervention to display a documentary sort of history, but it writes one *thing* after another, cancelling action. The action cancelled, there is no history. The Biblical verse as in Genesis represents a temporal sequence that suggests an origin. This implies a notion of history as a tree that from its present end one can follow the beginning of the root. Of course, this is not how plants work, the root grows as well as the trunk and branches, and one can assume a certain origin; but the course from the point of origin to the tip of the branches, which history claims to offer, cannot be traced just like that -- several analogies may be drawn concerning the idea of the growth of the root through time and certain approaches to history. Yet, the imagery of tree is employed by philosophers such as Deleuze and Guattari and later adopted or treated by a large number critics, so as to discuss a perception of history, which assumes that things can be related to each other through cause and effect, and which assumes an access to an origin. Deleuze and Guattari writes that “the tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb ‘to be’, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and . . . and . . . and . . .’” (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 2005, p. 25). The

paratactical ordering of things in the list in *Mulligan Stew* truly depicts a rhizomatic connection between things, as the “and . . . and . . . and . . .” structure is not followed by a predicate. And thusly, the novel subverts the detective fiction’s notion of history as a plot in that the “and . . . and . . .” structure does not generate a sense of relatedness that may enable the reader to observe a “plot”. Halpin writes things down, expecting them to signify the personality of their owner, to suggest a consistent identity. In *Mulligan Stew*, the conjunction “and” is unable to depict the things it links as a collection, but it only indicates that these things coexist. As Robbe-Grillet observes, concerning *nouveau roman*, in *Mulligan Stew* too “[things] can well hide a mystery, or betray it, but these elements which play with systems have only one serious, obvious quality, which is to be there” (2012, pp. 31-2). By excluding human action, or any sort of interruption as an attempt of interpretation, an attempt of mingling with things, this arrangement of things in *Mulligan Stew* consolidates the feeling that the reader and the characters, are thrown into the register of things.

In *Mulligan Stew*, there are a couple of stories that are interlaced. Lamont’s relationship with academy that is represented through his letters to a professor of literature, Lamont’s personal relations and feelings, represented by the letters he writes and his notes on his diary, the novel he writes, the private life and feelings of the characters, and their relationship with other characters from other novels, represented through Halpin’s notebook. The stories all seem to be connected to each other. Yet, there are also “book reviews” (reviews of books that does not exist), catechistic Q&As, excerpts from books that the story makes up, or lists about pretty much anything, such as “a list of phrases to be used in rejection letters”, cliches most used by writers, and so on, or essays on a variety of thing. These moments mostly

seem detached from the more connected parts of the book mentioned. In this sense, the lists and catalogues in the novel may seem like intervals.

These intervals are like what Gerald Prince calls “reading interludes” in “Notes on the Text as Reader” (1980, p. 234). Reading interludes are when the text stops and reads itself.

Consider the following narrative passages:

(25) Joan was more and more tamed under John's yoke.

(26) Joan was more and more tamed under John's yoke. This was a mystery (p. 233).

According to Prince, the second sentence in number 26 is a reading interlude. It is whereby the text suggests the function of the first sentence in the text. This suggestion surely could be a red herring, or later can be rejected by another character, or the flow of the narrative, the disclosure, or it could be valid. Thusly, reading interludes may undertake numerous functions, which here I have no intention to classify. Regardless of the specific function a reading interlude has, it tells an attitude of interpretation, signifies a certain mode of reading, exercised either by the narrator or the narrative voice, or any character.

The lists in *Mulligan Stew* have the exact opposite effect. They stop the story, and represent a bunch of items. Surely, these lists tell something, that is, things are still signifiers in those lists, so I interpret what they are, what they do, and how they do. However, what they say is that things do not belong only to (hi)story, but they exist as they are: without being predicated. They say that things do not *necessarily* say something, as for example the characters who observe the books, the listed items, cannot make sense of them. Such interludes are in this sense represent an anti-reading, and I can call them anti-reading interludes. I assert that anti-reading interludes are like reading interludes, as anti-theatre is still theatre, or anti-novel

novel. These lists still implicate a certain notion of interpretation just as reading interludes.

Another term I have to address here is “interpretant”. Interpretant is “the interpreting character”, or the authorial voice, or the narrator -- “it is used by Charles Sanders Peirce in a very different context” (Schor, 1980, p. 168). Schor maintains that the interpretant is a vehicle for the author to submit his take on hermeneutics to the interpreter, that is, the reader, the critic (170). In Prince’s example “Joan was more and more tamed under John's yoke. This was a mystery” the voice who tells “this was a mystery” is an interpretant according to Naomi Schor (p. 233). The failure of the character Halpin in offering an interpretation even that may prove wrong indicates that things may resist being assimilated into a narrative. This failure makes Halpin an anti-interpretant. The novel thusly establishes its hermeneutics through depicting the interpreting character as an *an*interpreting character. Through the anti-interpretant, the novel still communicates a certain hermeneutics, which maintains that things are not only hermeneutic objects, or, object of hermeneutics.

It is common for both traditional and untraditional hermeneutics to consider a text as a large sentence. Schor asserts that “in their actual readings of texts, such bona fide poeticsians as Gerard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov have repeatedly focused their attention on metalinguistic commentary incorporated in the texts themselves, tending thereby to make the authors they examine (e.g., Proust in Genette's "Proust et le langage indirect" or Constant in Todorov's "La parole selon Constant") appear to be (Saussurian) linguists before the letter” (p. 167). As the novelist creates a universe, she creates a language as well. Considering the novel as a large sentence, the novelist who excludes the end from her novel (establishes a sentence without a predicate) creates a language without predicate. In the

introduction I have included a passage from Roland Barthes' *S/Z* that follows "once the subject is provided with its 'true' predicate, everything falls into place, the sentence can end" (2002, p. 86). And I have argued that "the end is the closure, and the end, in classical texts, is when the 'ultimate predicate' falls into place, which Barthes defines as 'disclosure'" (p. 84). *Mulligan Stew* excludes the end, the ultimate predicate.

Some of the lists in *Mulligan Stew* are answers to catechistic questions. The introduction assert that catechism is a dialogue that claims to offer answers to the questions about the quintessence of being and existence. And the only answer in *Mulligan Stew* is that there *are* things. It does not attempt to establish what they are and rejects that the human has access to them as they are. The novel depicts a hermeneutic crisis, a pandemonium by not allowing the characters to order things, and leaves the crisis unsolved by excluding the "ultimate predicate". The crisis only serves to level the author (Lamont) and his characters (Halpin and Beaumont). Thus, the novel represents a threshold where the conventional hierarchy between the interpreter and the interpreted collapses.

Through this collapse, the two layers of investigation stories entangle. One story (Halpin's) mimics the other (Lamont's). As the ontological hierarchy between them becomes doubtful, the origin gets cancelled, the original model exists not anymore, and the two stories appear as the mimicries of each other. Here, the structure is rather rhizomatic as there is no point of origin. There is a form of mise-en-abyme, as Lamont is an experimental writer that mimics Sorrentino, and Halpin is a publisher, almost like a doppelganger of Lamont, as both have control issues. But placing the story (Halpin's investigation represented by his notebook) *beside* the story (Lamont's mystery novel) inside the story (*Mulligan Stew*), again, the

utilization of a paratactical structure, enables *Mulligan Stew* to cancel the hierarchical relationship between inside and outside. The inside is neither an origin, the essence, and what is outside is thusly a parergon, nor a “mere imitation” in a Platonic sense, a defiled, defective version of the first story layer. Brian McHale in *Postmodernist Fiction* treats the concept of heterocosm, which defines that the fictional world that is connected to but other than the world (2004, p. 28). The existence of this concept is problematic as *Mulligan Stew* renders it very dubious that if there is a universal world, writing about which as a determined one thing is possible. The meaning of the world is itself mimetic, which is represented by the world’s mimesis of the novel. If there is a heterocosm, it is the world itself as it is perceived.

Thus, the author is not an invisible but the presence of whom is necessarily acknowledged God anymore, but not dead either. He takes on a role from his very own structure. In *Mulligan Stew*, the author is criminalized:

Reading a read of a novel he’d [Lamont] pull out a phrase or a line; he ransacked the news; squeezed out the juice from advertisements; was pleased when a song had a word he could use; in the blues he perversely found humor; from Natchez to Mobile he ranged, from the shining mind of heaven to the primordial ooze. A persistent and underground rumor ran thus: that with unparalleled insolence he stole his very characters (Sorrentino, 1981).

The author is represented as a thief, who steals his material from other authors, which is the case in *Mulligan Stew*, as the characters are from works of authors, Flann O’Brien, Dashiell Hammett, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and James Joyce. The author appropriates them, and uses them as he will, reforging them as instruments of his own narrative. Thusly he violates the established meaning of them by reorienting them in a different context; though this reorientation in *Mulligan Stew* is disorientation, in the sense that the novel renders them as elements of a homeless soup of whatever. And in becoming a criminal the author becomes his own story’s

object, paralleled by Lamont's criminalization by Halpin, when Halpin seeks who Lamont is. In this regard, the story partly becomes a self-portrait of the author with a Droste Effect (which is the repetition of an image inside itself), where each repetition differs from one another, the "original" of which is unreliable and unstable as much as the representations; and this means what is Platonically perceived as the "original" or "ideal" is a representation itself. The problem of identity and identification in metacognitive mystery that this part discusses is studied in the following part more exclusively.

3.3 The disseminated voice: The spectre of identity

The primary focus of this part is *The Serialist* by David Gordon. This novel is the one that is closest to detective fiction (could be classified as detective fiction) amongst the three novels the thesis reads. *The Serialist* conforms to many conventions of detective fiction, such as suggesting a neat ending, a final revelation that illuminates every aspect of the crime in the novel, and the restoration of the order. It promotes the same idea as Doyle and Poe stories of detective fiction the first part discusses, which is a crime is not a crime as long as it serves authority. The novel raises this argument in the same way as Doyle and Poe, specifically, as the police and FBI almost arrests the protagonist (detective) for breaking into crime scenes, and violating law in some other ways, when he is a suspect of the murders he investigates and half-causes and let him do what he has to do as he proves not guilty. On the other hand, it treats some major themes of metacognitive mystery, and thusly, hugely contributes to this thesis' discussion. The theme this part is focalized around is the hermeneutics of *The Serialist* represented by its depiction of the narrator-author.

The Serialist is a novel where the protagonist, Harry Bloch, is a ghost-writer of a porn magazine, and some nasty vampire fiction, detective fiction, sci-fi, and so on. He is the named author of some of his writings, but these are false names. One day he receives a mail from Darian Clay, a fan of his stories in the porn magazine, who is an inmate, calling him for a visit, so that Clay would tell the unrevealed story of the crimes he committed and Bloch would record, and turn into a book. Darian Clay is known as “the Shutterbug, aka the Photo Killer” (2010). He is guilty of killing four models he worked with after photographing them and separating their limbs; though, the heads are never found. During the visit, Clay informs Bloch that the favour should be reciprocal. Clay has a large fanbase now, sending him obscene letters, erotic photographs, and so on. So, what Clay asks for in turn are Bloch meeting these people and writing stories of sexual intercourse between Clay and them with pornographic details. For each story, Clay offers a chapter, the story beginning from his childhood. Bloch accepts, and starts meeting Clay’s fans, and writing stories, but way before Clay reveals his crimes, the women Bloch meets are found dead in the same way as the ones Clay convicted of killing before. Through accidental encounters, in the end, police and Bloch finds out the murderer of the women who got killed while Clay is prisoned. It is Clay’s long-lost mother, who turns out to be Clay’s lawyer. She confesses murdering all of the women regarding the case, and appeals the court for his son’s release. She says she was jealous of the girls his son was seeing, so she killed them, lest they take Clay away from her. However, investigating the photographs that Clay took, Bloch decides that the girls were already dead when they were getting photographed, regarding the vacant look of their eyes, and convinces the police. The way the story differs from detective fiction is that Clay murdering his victims before shooting them does not represent a

revelation, “the lab” is not able to prove or confirm it, but it is just an opinion that convinces the court.

Again, the story using the conventions of the genre “thriller” diverts from detective fiction. The ways in which the final disclosure is achieved is not through ratiocination as in Poe or Doyle, but through the murderer showing himself violently. Thriller is a format that the detective becomes a target, conventionally. Thus, it subverts the representation of the detective in detective fiction as an “eye” that observes like a guard in a panopticon, who sees without being seen, and whose methods of revelation only concern mental procedures. The capturing of the criminal may be physical in detective fiction, and there are such scenes in Doyle for example, but the disclosure is a product of analysis. This means that in detective fiction the solution of the crisis depends upon successfully transforming people and things into signs, that is, clues. Furthermore, in detective fiction, detection is a means for solving the mystery, whereas in *The Serialist* it is what engenders mystery. Bloch’s attempt to get to the bottom of the story of crime, its genesis, triggers a sequence of events, ends up with new murders. Again, this is a characteristic of thriller that differs from detective fiction. Thus, the story suggests that a venture of writing the truth leads to other mysteries. As for that these mysteries are solved, it is only coincidental, depends upon the irregular motives of criminals unpredictable through analysis.

The Serialist suggests three different accounts of authorship, represented by the antagonist of the novel, the narrator of the novel, and the novel’s take on them. The first one is the narcissistic author, whose art completely and overtly depends upon his intervention in the nature, almost in a surrealistic vein. Such an art comprises arrangements of disconnected limbs, blood, plucked flowers, and so on. It is a mode of destruction. Clay says “[t]hen I started wanting to create instead of just

destroy, I guess, or to create through destroying”. To him, art is criminal, it must be a counterflow against the established authority and morality. But Clay’s art depends upon the same control mechanisms as the authority: it concerns arresting. Given that he is a photographer, arresting is what he does. But he drags this to the extremes, that he cannot afford an unexpected blink, or an unwanted contraction of the pupil, or a twitch that would even scarcely alter the pose. He says the hardest part of art is “getting them [the models as objects] to hold still”. So, he kills his models. Models as dead objects, whose bodies are still intact is a characteristic of glamour photos, fashion art, as rendered by the novel. It is numbing and deadening. As per high art, it takes a form of fragmentation, it is horrifying and awful, perhaps sublime, but still, it relies upon utter control of the environment, to the extent of killing it. His object, that is, the signifier he uses is arrested and fixed in both versions. And the murder of the signifier tantamount to the death of the author as well, because this kind of an art leads to capital punishment.

This kind of an art, I may argue, is totalitarian in that it demands the utter control of the bodies it uses. This control means not to allow any unwanted or unpredictable motion that would potentially transgress the order that is established by the author, the absolute authority. Such an art is designed, by Clay for example, as an allegory of its author -- like bible. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, to draw upon the distinction Paul Virilio makes, and later Deleuze and Guattari adopts, between totalitarianism and fascism, such an art is a fascistic practice (Virilio 1976, pp. 39-41; Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 230).

“To be tried and punished, these are no hardships for me. In the old days criminals dressed for the gallows as though they were going to their own weddings, and the crowd threw flowers and cheered. To be publicly executed for our crimes is the highest honor that our society can bestow” (Gordon, 2010).

It is antithetical to the established authority, but it wants to establish itself as the authority, it is nihilistic, it is a means of destruction, and it is suicidal from its beginning. Clay sees his death penalty as the crowning of his art. But as long as his art represents a mystery, that is, as long as the authority not reveals and proves the story of crime: Clay remarks “I had to make sure that somehow my work lived on, even if only in a file in a police station basement. It will find its way, like all art does”. Once the case is closed, the mystery solved, it is certain that his “work” will find its way through a shredder after a number of years.

As per Bloch’s perception, the author is phantasmagorical. He is a ghost, a transparent agent, who displays the object as it is to an onlooker. He does not intervene in nature; he does not appropriate or distort. In the novel, Bloch writes the story of crime, and he assumes himself as a medium that “transcribes”. It is a voice that does not speak; it is as if coming from nowhere, the subject that speaks it is missing. The identity of the speaking (or writing) subject is thusly dissipated. Bloch as narrator writes:

“It began as a hired job, what we in the book business call an ‘as told to.’ But the teller is gone, permanently ghosted, and he left the story with me, whether I like it or not. Of course, now that it is mine, who will bother to read it? Who cares what the ghost has to say?” (2010)

and

“Who cares what I thought? I was just the ghost” (2010).

The successful narrator to him is the one that leaves things *as they are*. The reader who cherishes such an art the most, Bloch remarks

is the porn fan. He (or she!) is a prisoner trapped in a finite body and an unaccommodating world that will never fulfill desire’s impossible demands. Seeking ecstasy, they escape into language, which goes everywhere, touches everyone, and never ends. What love poem, what manifesto, what high cry of art has ever done what the lowest, dumbest scratch of dirty words can do to a lonely soul late at night? (2010)

Bloch's account parallels to Matthew Arnold's understanding of the function of literature: It solaces and reaffirms, just as detective fiction does, as this thesis argued previously. It is escapist and satisfies an anxiety of control through suggesting an illusion of omnipresence and omniscience, that is, the ability to "go everywhere", "touch everyone". As porn, fiction suggests a fantastic flawlessness, a cosmeticized cosmos, that is, an order (cosmos) through anaesthetization of things, as people with botox, cosmetic surgery, etc., and transformation of them into mere objects, like plasticised meat lumps doing what the scenario tells them.³³ This sort of fiction depends upon the erotization of control.

However, the novel renders this unfeasible. It cancels the hierarchical and panoptical distance between the author and his objects. Once the narrator-author, the ghost, begins transcribing his story, he becomes a character in it. His involvement is inevitable. Bloch assumes the role of the detective in classical detective fiction when he starts writing Clay's story. A mind, an abstract, or a ghost, who is invulnerable. But the ghost becomes an opaque thing, he becomes visible in his story: Bloch says "all I could think about was not becoming a character in it", and then he becomes one. He then realizes how detective fiction works. Claire, a friend of his, tells him "with all the books you wrote, you should be a pretty good sleuth by now. You could go out there and find some clues. Just do what Mordechai would do." But he replies as "'[y]ou're right. I am pretty good at finding those clues. Want to know why?' I poked her little feet with mine. 'Cause I'm the one who put them there'". Thus, he develops another opinion about the nature of the relationship between the interpreter and the interpreted: "Instead of the clues leading us to a mystery, I sometimes think

³³ The word "κόσμος" resonates two meanings, one is "order", "the world" (as in "παντὸς [all] κόσμου"), and the other "ornament", "decoration", "fashion". The institution of cosmos, in this sense, parallels to the ornamentalisation of nature. In other words, being in order, perceived as such, means being decorous.

it's the mystery that suddenly turns everything into a clue." Then, things are not clues by nature, but they are perceived as clues under certain circumstances. This perception, however, does not prove that they are clues.

At this stage of the story, where the ghost appears in an opacity, the boundaries between the author-narrator and the detective and the victim are cancelled. The author as the detective and the victim become the same person. The reversal of the concept of author as a phantasm which leads to the dissipation of the authorial voice entails the dissipation of identity in another way. The assumed boundaries between the author and the victim are cancelled. Thusly the text becomes here a liminal space where the established laws and conventions do not work, and identities mixed. Now, writing is not a process of solving mysteries but creating them. The first crisis, the mystery the writer wants to reveal is followed by another crisis. Here, the ghost is no longer a category, an abstract, but a substance. And transforming from an abstract into a thing, the narrator notices existence in a Heideggerian fashion: as being thrown into the register of things. He remarks that "I tend to stumble through life as if lost in a deep forest with an out-of-date map that I can't figure out how to fold." The quotation indicates Bloch's acknowledgement of his inability of transforming things into instruments as a detective, he cannot turn real space into a textual topography, a readable map, and of the vitality of things as a force against being transformed into signs, space is something that grows and changes, out-dating maps.

And even when the narrator was not involved, things lent themselves with something like a Rashomon effect. The term "Rashomon effect" is named after an Akira Kurosawa film, where the testimonies of all the participants of an incident differ from each other. The term defines the indeterminability of the truth, when

there are contradicting accounts of things or events and it is impossible to decide accurately which one is right. I write “something like” a Rashomon effect, because confirming the Rashomon effect means to acknowledge one of the testimonies is true; in the novel’s case, truth of any is doubtful and questionable.

Bloch’s initial perception of the artist is the opposite of Clay’s. If art to Clay depends upon the absolute presence of the author, to Bloch, on the author’s absolute absence. Both are refused by the story. The story acknowledges the subjective contribution of the author to the story, but troubles his authorial control over things. One cannot fix and define things as she will. Art, that does not suppress the vitality of things and try to immobilize them is rebellious. The drive to live, that is, desire is criminological. Desire is what gets the women murdered in *The Serialist*, the narrator notices that “[d]esire was lawless and obeyed no one. Or perhaps it was the other way around: desire was the final law under which all others broke.” Desire defines the individual’s will to survive, and laws of the authority the social and economic mechanisms. Here, the acknowledgement of the individual in art is the acknowledgement of life. Thusly, it eroticizes crime, and this opposes an authority totalitarian by nature. In this regard, identity is a ghost, an apparition of the individual that is arrested, defined, determined, immobilized, and thusly “killed” through a totalitarian or a fascistic gesture. Defining an identity is enabled as long as the real living subject is annihilated. The introduction argues that “if the predicate is one thing that is necessary for a well-made sentence, the subject is the other (at least in English and French, the languages of the texts this thesis concerns)”. Barthes asserts that:

just as any grammar, however new, once it is based on the diad of subject and predicate, noun and verb, can only be a historical grammar, linked to classical metaphysics, so the hermeneutic narrative, in which truth predicates an incomplete subject, based on expectation and desire for its imminent closure,

is dated, linked to the kerygmatic civilization of meaning and truth, appeal and fulfilment (2002, p. 76).

On the other hand, the author is analogized to a vampire in the story for a few times. A vampire is someone who nor lives neither dies, and who sucks life out of her objects. One example is as follows:

“Vampires,” he said, as he walked me down the hall. “That’s what James Gandolfini said too, you know. I read it in an interview.”

“Who?”

“Tony Soprano. The actor who played him?”

“Right.”

“He said writers are vampires who suck the life out of people. He said it about the “guy who wrote the show” (Gordon, 2010).

Here an author as a vampire is a hybrid creature that takes the life away from her objects, showing characteristics of both things (humans) and categories (instruments). A vampire lives as long as she sucks blood, in that, she has a purpose, an end; as an author, it means she exists as long as she defines (immobilization through contextualization), but also, she is like a human, her thinginess is not taken away from her like a ghost. She kills, that is, as an author, defines her objects, but her involvement is visible. Meanwhile, there are parts in the novel from vampire fiction that Bloch writes, and vampires are defined as creatures that has the ability to turn others into vampires. Doing so, she turns other things into vectors of that transmit vampirism. In the Chapter 3 of *The End of Meaning*, Matthew Gumpert coins the term “semiodemics” and defines it as “in the semiodemic, signs operate in the manner of viruses, hijacking their hosts and thereby turning them into new vectors of disease; or in this case, new vectors of signification” (2012, p. 53). Here, the semiodemic takes the form of vampirization, a vector creating other vectors; a thing noticed as of a hybrid existence, as present-at-hand and ready-to-hand, transform some other things into beings of a similar existence. Thusly the identity is vampirized as well, the spectre, the apparition of the dead is cancelled. Things appear

as treated by the author as a vampire in a liminality, in an unconventional, even hostile form of existence. Not only these things are pulled into the text as a liminal space by the author, but they gain the ability to drag other things with them. Thusly, their reliability from a totalitarian point of view becomes questionable, defining reliability as calculability and predictability. As their thinginess is not stolen, they may evolve. And the very possibility of an unsupervised (or, unsupervisable) evolution is an objection to totalitarianism and fascism. To conclude, there are two kinds of dissipated voice in *The Serialist*. One, that is of the narrator as a ghost, a voice without a subject. This is when the writing and interpreting subject is conceptualized and instrumentalized. The other is the voice of a subject the identity of whom cannot be defined, when the boundaries between the subject-object, or, narrator/detective/author-victim is troubled. This is when the writing and interpreting individual is visible. The first one belongs to detective fiction, as initially adopted and idealized by Bloch. The second one is the possible one as implied and portrayed by the novel.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This part discusses the limits and achievements of the thesis, and offers final conclusions and suggestions that relate to the discussion of the two previous chapters.

The second chapter of this thesis defines the genre metacognitive mystery, through comparing it to detective fiction, in other words, offering what it is not. In this regard, the second chapter somewhat adopts the same kind of analysis that it negates, which it attributes to detective fiction. The second chapter partly represents a production of knowledge that I defined as a Hegelian mode reduced to his process of “understanding”. It renders metacognitive mystery as anti-ratiocinative, in the sense that the detective in metacognitive mystery conducts investigation through ratiocination, but the genre portrays the failure of his methods. Describing the genre anti-ratiocinative, the second chapter defines metacognitive mystery as an “anti” of something. Still, the analysis includes moments of generic transitionality, and avoids assimilating any fictional work it reads into a pretext or allegory of the hermeneutics and ideologies I discussed. Instead of doing so, it includes certain parts from particular examples of detective fiction, and moments from them that helps the thesis define the generic features of detective fiction so that it could offer some features of metacognitive mystery through comparison. Furthermore, the second chapter mostly discusses the characteristics of both detective fiction and metacognitive mystery through supporting with close readings, and thusly observe them individually, and not only through negation and immediate comparison.

The third chapter mainly reads three particular examples of metacognitive mystery and discusses their treatments of hermeneutics, how they represent a hermeneutic pandemonium, treat the diabolical element, and how this hermeneutic pandemonium becomes a liminal space, where the author-narrator, the detective, and the objects of investigation are somewhat levelled, that is, democratized as OOO suggests. In this space, liminality brings a sense of thrownness to the detective-narrator-author, and the reader homologously, into the world, since the conventional hierarchies and modes of relatedness do not work. The imagery of thrownness in detective fiction troubles a sense of an ordered hierarchy between the interpreted and the interpreter. Thusly metacognitive mystery deconstructs the hierarchy, and reconstructs a more liberal order through thrownness. This is enabled through not confiscating the thingness of the things by a mode of interpretation that identifies them with signs that refer to them as in detective fiction as I define it. The democratization mentioned represents a trend from Platonic to Aristotelian, as discussed in 2.2, i.e., the ontological prioritization of the particular as opposed to the class it is inscribed under. The flattening of the hermeneutic and ontological hierarchy is a consequence of the acknowledgement of the thing's ability of producing difference. For instance, in *Mulligan Stew*, Lamont confirms that maybe he is a character, and in that he seems to be degraded to the level of characters from the ladder of producers; however, metacognitive mystery subverts the traditional hierarchy as argued, as the character, Halpin created by the character Lamont writes "I must be turning into a novelist", and the story validates his thought of him by rendering he himself a writer, a producer of meaning. Furthermore, the difference things produce stands for their ability of becoming. Thus, they resist being determined and fixed, and being perceived as allegories of the categories that say

about them. Here, a Derridean *différance*, which he describes as the remainder of a sign from its interpretation, a chunk of meaning possibility that defies such-and-such interpretation, and therefore as the cause of the eternal deferral of the meaning, the fixedness, the determinacy, is in dialogue with the production of difference that OOO attributes to things as the basis of existence. What defines the thingness of things is what causes the hermeneutic deferral, the hermeneutic pandemonium, the liminal text.

Detective fiction as discussed in Chapter 2 through Doyle and Poe describes the story verbatim, with rare interruptions of the narrator, to the effect of rendering the text historical. The narrator paraphrases at times, and leaves the text more open to interpretation, and cancelling for a moment the illusion of determinacy, but this generally occurs as an element of suspension. Peter Hühn observes this process as he writes

The story of the crime is mediated in the discourse of the detective's investigation; and the story of the detective's investigation, in its turn, is mediated in the narrator's discourse (for instance in Dr. Watson's uninformed written account of Holmes's detection). In both cases the story is hidden for the most part so that the reader is doubly puzzled (1987, p. 452).

But then, all the possibilities of interpretation are cancelled when the detective comes up to the stage and solves the mystery once and for all; the denouement is unmediated at this point, as the detective speaks in his own voice. Or, when the mediation in the story (as opposed to word-by-word representation of speeches) is more intriguing and interesting, such as in *The Purloined Letter* by Poe, where the content of the “letter” is leaved out for good through paraphrasing, the effect is the absolute translation of the object into a symbol, as the “letter” in Poe becomes merely a symbol of power. Such a mode of narrative undermines the existence of the letter as a thing-in-itself. Paraphrasing as such in *The Purloined Letter* is not a

strategy whereby the story renders the thing as hermeneutically unreachable through obscuring the *inside* of it, but it is a cancellation of the “inside”, making the letter an empty vessel. Thusly, it is transformed into a symbol the meaning of which is defined by power relations. In conclusion, through historicizing the text, the detective fiction validates (i.e., makes a historical fact) the detective’s ability of historicizing, that is, making sense of events and render them a cogent narrative, in other words, totalizing them. When the historicization of the text through verbatim in metacognitive mystery takes place as in *City of Glass* and *The Serialist* the effect is the implication of the vanity of totalizing history.

As per the representation of the speaking subject, the use of verbatim, there is much use of Derrida. He makes a very resourceful distinction between the written word and the spoken word. He asserts that “logos” (words -- or actually signs in general -- which he considers are traditionally means for humans of exercising power over nature, or other humans) “is its father” as “the ‘speaking subject’” (1981, p. 77). “Logos is a son” for whom his father speaks. It means that the “interpreter” may ask the speaking subject what he means, and then the meaning assumedly becomes clear through his answer (p. 77). Surely the inquisition may ask what he means by the answer of the first question, and thusly the process may continue infinitely, which is what Charles S. Peirce calls “infinite semiosis”. And hence, the meaning never catches the sign. But the point in speaking father being responsible for his son logos in this imagery is that the father may offer an intended meaning, and cancel the *différance*, which would lead to an ambiguity, and therefore multiplicity of meaning. On the other hand, the written word is patricidal, there is no one to speak on behalf of him. This is when things get interesting. In detective fiction, what brings the fixity of the meaning is the appearing of the detective as the speaking subject. Him speaking

for them implies that he makes things his. Thusly, his denouement speech functions as a tool of control. However, the imagery of father-son relationship implies that logos is invented, that it was born. On the other hand, what the detective speaks for are things he does not invent but he finds. One could argue here that the father of logos is absent. The father becoming invisible is what equates logos with things because when the implication of invention is cancelled, meaning seems to lie in things as it is.

Things as signs are instruments in Heideggerian terms, and as OOO acknowledges. Then, it follows that the invention of logos means to define the functions of things. This thesis argues that detective fiction identifies things with their functions. Such an equation is the transformation of the hermeneutic, symbolic, moral, political, into ontological, as discussed in the introduction and the second chapter. The authority then becomes an absent father so as to enable this transformation. In detective fiction, the interpreter, the detective, undertakes the role of the speaking subject as a dummy-father-prefect, and clarifies authoritatively the meaning of things. Prefect because the detective is an instrument as well, not an authority, something same species as his objects of investigation. The generation of the dummy-father-prefect and the absent-father in semiotics conceals the sense of invention, and thusly the functional, the instrumental appears ontological.

Regarding the familial relations that represent semiotics, the assumption of father implies the existence of a mother. Then, I may ask where the mother is. In metacognitive mystery the mother is the thing itself, which in both detective fiction and metacognitive mystery the detective attempts repressing. In detective fiction the mother is abducted, as the detective becomes successful. In metacognitive mystery, his failure makes mother visible. The patriarch fails, that is, things cannot be reduced

to instruments, fixed meanings, cogent stories, historicised, and so on, because a matriarchal force, say, a chaotic and anarchic law of fertility contradicts the law of the father. The thing is a mother that produces *différance*, or “difference” as OOO suggests, and consequentially different meanings. If father is a pole of stability, mother is a pole of obscurity. Here the father may occur as a father eating his babies to crown one of his sons. Thusly the invisible mother as the thing itself in detective fiction is represented by one single meaning, in this sense, it is equalised to this single meaning. On the other hand, the acknowledgement of multiplicity of meaning in metacognitive mystery cancels the sense of identification of the meaning with the mother, the thing. Obviously, the sort of semiotics that is related with the former is not represented by a healthy family at peace. Regarding such a semiotics, the political, social, or economic laws, the laws of the figure of father are at odds with the nature, existence.

One certain issue to be dealt with is that one could suggest that the detective in detective fiction does not interpret things but situations. However, these situations are things in which the revealed events are inscribed. Things are containers of history, like the purloined letter in Poe, or, encoders of history. Then the detective may say “this pavement is that history of crime”. In this process the pavement itself becomes invisible as the tools of Heidegger and OOO. The pavement becomes visible, a forensic object that stands as a mystery, first, because it becomes dysfunctional, it becomes a means of crime, its function resides outside the mechanisms and laws of the authority. Then detective makes it become functional and therefore invisible again as he successfully transforms them into clues. The attention neglects or overlooks the thing as it focuses on what the thing points at. Thus, the order is reinstituted through the re-instrumentalization of objects.

Dysfunctionality is the violation of the law of the father in a Derridean sense; and certainly, the Freudian and Lacanian senses can be traced, though this is not what this section does.

Detective fiction investigates situations because the detective tries to reveal the meaning of, for example, *this* sort and form of soil, given *those* circumstances. However, he can only reveal the meaning through the knowledge of things. Things are encoders of history, and their knowledge that represents things themselves in detective fiction is the key to the facts, the events they encode. Concerning that there *are* methods by which the encoded information can be decoded, the encoding is also methodical, and therefore, things represent in detective fiction purposeful elements, which conform to cognition. This is what metacognitive mystery negates.

What this thesis achieves is suggesting and describing the hermeneutic features of both genres, detective fiction and metacognitive mystery. Again, it redefines the genres through the characteristics such as their treatments of ending and crisis. Yet, not everything that may be of significance is explored or discussed in the greatest depth, which may leave the reader with certain ambiguities. One cause of these ambiguities may be that this thesis does not discuss the history of detective fiction, which might have helped the reader in seeing more clearly how this thesis redefines the genres. To give an example, the story of Oedipus by Sophocles is conventionally analogized to detective fiction. Yet, although it more or less has an ending, this thesis would classify it more as a psychological thriller; thriller because the revelation is a product of violence (of Oedipus against Tiresias, and the public), not ratiocination, and psychological because this violence leads to angst more than bloodshed; or classify it as a metaphysical mystery, since the revelation, the success of his investigation, is not a consequence of ratiocination but of prophecy, a

metaphysical means of disclosure, and since it depicts history as a series of coincidences. Granted that these almost impossible coincidences are a confirmation of “fate” in Oedipus, the story somewhat looks like a detective fiction as this thesis defines it, because fate connotes an eschaton in Oedipus. However, the authority behind fate is not concealed, or, though concealed, not tucked away, that is, insinuated and dissipated slyly in the accepted methods and laws of interpretation, as in detective fiction, like the authority whose face is concealed with the development of modern law as Foucault observes. Though Oedipus depicts history as a concept that has a predetermined final destination, gods does not take the form of reason, analysis, lens, or science, and so on. Moreover, the story does not substitute the human authority with the authority of gods, but is traditionally observed as the punishment of the human that resists the authority of gods (in insulting Tiresias for instance, etc.). And the story, Oedipus, “blur[s] the ontological categories that used to separate the detective from the victim and the criminal”, as Dechêne following Dubois, states that metacognitive mystery or what other critics call metaphysical detective fiction does (2018, p. 29). As per the “Foucauldian links” in the “unrepresentation” of the authority in detective fiction, it remains to be studied on its own.

Lastly, as a conclusion I would like to offer the term metaepistemological mystery for the novels this thesis reads in the third chapter, concerning that the genre does not ask questions of epistemology as much as it questions epistemology, that is, its limits. Nevertheless, I do not necessarily propose this term in lieu of metacognitive mystery, but may be as a genre that is closely related to it, or a subgenre of it. Another term would be “ontic mystery”, which I suggest through modifying a term coined by Elena Gomel to classify the novels and stories that have

similar characteristics with the works the third chapter of this thesis reads, namely “Ontological Detective Story”. Oxford English Dictionary defines ontic as “relating to entities and the facts about them; relating to real as opposed to phenomenal existence”. And I define the fictional works in question as ontic mystery because they represent mystery by acknowledging that things have a mode of existence that does not conform to experience or cognition. Studies that would focus on the ontic or metaepistemological character of the genre are to be conducted in the future.

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