DECEIT, DESIRE AND *THE DUNCIAD*: MIMETIC THEORY AND ALEXANDER POPE
— AND —
BIRTHING THE CANON: ELIOT, HEGEL, MARX AND LITERARY LABOUR

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ABSTRACT

Essay 1: This paper analyses Alexander Pope's depiction of apocalypse in his seminal satiric masterpiece, The Dunciad. Rene Girard's mimetic theory explains Pope's relationship to his literary rivals and his motivation in writing, expanding and obsessing over this work throughout the entire course of his life. This paper reads Pope's literary and critical efforts to control the literary scene of early eighteenth-century England in a Girardian framework.

Keywords: Pope; Girard; Dunciad; Theobald; myth; mimetic theory; scapegoat; plague

Subject Terms: Pope, Alexander; Girard, Rene; Theobald, Lewis; mimetic theory

Essay 2: This two-part study examines the process of literary canon formation. I begin by relating T.S. Eliot's theory of canon formation as discussed in the essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', to Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic from Phenomenology of Mind. In part two of this study I apply the Marxist concept of 'alienation' to literary production in the early 18th century. I argue that the level of 'alienation' an author experienced was a major factor in determining that author's chance at canonization.

Keywords: Eliot; Hegel; Marx; Eagleton; master; slave; tradition; alienation; labour

Subject Terms: Hegel, GWF; Marx, Karl; Eliot, TS; alienation; labour

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1: DECEIT, DESIRE, *THE DUNCIAD*: MIMETIC THEORY AND ALEXANDER POPE

Anxiety expressed over what is often termed "information overload"

(Tidline 485) is by no means solely a phenomenon of our electronic age. Recent

scholarship has traced this concern as far back as the early modern period. The

increased production and dissemination of books in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries was a source of "wonder and anxiety" for authors (A. Blair

11), and prompted a need for a "substantial reorganization of the intellectual

world" (Rosenberg 6). Seventeenth-century French scholar and critic Adrien

Baillet gave warning of an impending barbarism unless there was a "separating

[of] those books which we must throw out or leave in oblivion from those which

one should save" (as quoted in A. Blair 11). The most recognizable expression of

this imperative to sort the printed wheat from chaff comes from the voices of

some of eighteenth-century England's most studied, admired, yet also detested

authors, the Scriblerians. Of this celebrated literary group came "the three great

Tory satires, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, John Gay's *Fables* and

Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad*" (Thorne 532).

Christian Thorne, in his discussion of these works in relation to the rise of

the public sphere in early modern England, defines the Scriblerian rallying cry as

against "the rise of print culture... in which signification will run amok, flooding the

polity with an undifferentiated mass of contradictory opinions and arguments and

thus corroding traditional forms of citizenship or civic virtue" (534). Pope saw the

deluge of aspiring authors and their printed output as a destructive force, a force

that had a levelling effect on what he perceived as the traditional structure of the

cultural hierarchy. In this paper I will look specifically at the career of Alexander

Pope and his life long struggle against all but a small number of those who

populated what Samuel Johnson called the "Age of Authors".

Pope's career is indelibly marked with conflict. This conflict stemmed from

his untiring efforts to regulate the field in which he worked, to promote himself

and his friends, and to do everything at his disposal to thwart the efforts of those

whom he saw as threatening his literary endeavours. His adversaries, most often

the professional ranks of Grub Street writers and publishers, serve as fodder for

Pope's satire and are deeply entwined in Pope's literary output. However, the

adversaries he most wanted to be rid of – the primary target of his purposeful

and brilliant satire – were not the "hackney scribblers" typical of Grub Street, but

those most threatening to Pope's professional writing career: "verbal critics" or

literary scholars.[1] The threat comes in the form of the newly emerging critical

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[1] Jonathan Brody Kramnick refers to Pope's inclusion of university trained literary scholars under the umbrella of Grub Street as a "particular and important contradiction familiar to students of

techniques of philological scholarship. It is my contention that these scholars possessed knowledge that Pope showed himself to be desirous of, but was incapable of attaining.

In this paper I will apply René Girard's *mimetic theory* both to Pope's relationships with these scholars and to his depiction of them in *The Dunciad*. The application of Girard's theory helps to explain Pope's motivation in writing, expanding and obsessing over a poem that was seemingly more trouble than it was worth. The publication history of the poem, which is "exceedingly complicated" (Rogers 691), "cost [Pope] as much pains as anything [he] ever wrote" (Spence 103) and brought down an avalanche of ridicule and abuse on Pope, prompting many to wonder "[w]hat can possibly have impelled him to do what he did?" (Mack, *Pope* 473). This paper will go some distance in answering this question and will also give insight into how *The Dunciad* operated in service of Pope's attempt to shape the literary culture of early eighteenth-century England. As no critic to date has yet attempted, I will use Girard's theory to clarify the relationship between Pope's work with the classics and that of his rival classical scholars, and how these two threads are woven into his opus magnum, *The Dunciad*.

René Girard's insightful and controversial theory of the nature and origin of human culture may be grouped into three main hypotheses (Morrissey 18). The first hypothesis explains desire as a product of *mimesis*, or imitation. Our

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eighteenth-century culture" (8). I think we can go some way in resolving this contradiction if we acknowledge that Pope was threatened by the work of these scholars and attacked them in the best way he knew how, by associating them with what he considered the most marginalized and disreputable of the literary scene.

desire is imitative in that it is based on wanting what another individual has. For example, if one child has a ball and seems to be enjoying herself, suddenly the child next to her, who may have shown no interest in the ball a minute previously, will want the ball as well. The first child becomes the model or mediator of desire for the second child. Competition for the ball, the *object of desire*, occurs when one individual has taken another individual for a model and they are in a position to compete for this object. This competition leads to rivalry and a crisis. The crisis, if not resolved, eventually spirals out of control, creating a collapse of distinctions or hierarchy and chaos within a community.

Girard's second hypothesis reveals how a *scapegoat*, or *the scapegoat mechanism* becomes the resolution of the crisis. When a community is beset by violent and destructive rivalry, the only way to restore order is through uniting the combatants in turning a war of all against all into a "war of all against one" (Girard, *Oedipus* 24). The scapegoat is either murdered or cast out of the community and as a result, harmony is restored. Girard's third hypothesis explores the role of Christianity and the gospel in exposing the scapegoating mechanism.[2] I will not be focusing on this third hypothesis in this essay; rather, I will apply Girard's first hypothesis to the relationship between Pope, the philologist Lewis Theobald, and the shared object of their desire, and Girard's second hypothesis to the motivation behind and mechanism of *The Dunciad*.

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[2] This controversy is rooted in Girard's openness about his Christian faith and also in the ambitious nature of his theory of the origins of human culture. I have chosen to avoid discussion of both Christianity and the origins of culture not because they are controversial, but because for the purposes of exploring Pope's relationships and satire, they are not relevant.

Girard's first two hypotheses are especially applicable to Pope, to the literary scene of his time and to *The Dunciad*. The wealth of correspondence, literary works and general "Popiana" available detailing the life of this towering figure in the literary world makes possible an analysis of Pope's interaction and rivalry with his literary contemporaries in the framework of the first hypothesis. Girard's second hypothesis, the scapegoat mechanism, is also apt for dealing with Pope because Girard finds evidence of it in the content of myth. Although *The Dunciad* is technically a "mock-epic" written roughly 1700 years after the last of the sources for Western mythology was recorded, it may be considered as a mythic text for several reasons. According to Martinus Scriblerus (Pope's mock-scholar persona), the source of *The Dunciad* originates from the time and tradition of Homer (*Variorum* 22) and the form is a loose imitation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Pope, who was known as the "English Homer", filled much of his poetry with classical allusion and borrowed much of the form and content of it from the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome. Perhaps most importantly, ancient myth was the foundation on which he built his financial security; he made his fortune by producing editions of both Homer's *Iliad* (1715-1720) and his *Odyssey* (1725-26). The structures and mechanisms of mythic text that Girard identifies in his second hypothesis, and that Pope was so familiar with, became tools with which Pope shaped his cultural field. He understood what Girard identifies as the deep underlying function of myth, and used this function to achieve the goal of scapegoating (or at least attempting to scapegoat) his most threatening rival.

According to Girard's first hypothesis, *mimetic desire* is triangular (Girard, *Deceit* 2), as it involves a subject or disciple, a model for this subject's desire, which Girard calls the mediator, and the object of desire. There are two types of mimetic desire, external and internal. In externally mediated desire, the "disciple pursues objects which are determined for him, or at least seem to be determined for him, by the model [or mediator]" (Girard, *Deceit* 2). The mediator of desire is separated from the subject by spatial/hierarchal or temporal distance sufficient so that "the hero… proclaims aloud the true nature of his desire. He worships his model openly and declares himself his disciple" (Girard, *Deceit* 10). This external mediation can be illustrated by Pope's confessed and open imitation of ancient Greek and Roman literary models.

The *object of desire* of these ancient models was the expression of "Truth". Homer and Virgil were poets who expressed the origins and culture of their nations. Pope, in his (mostly successful) attempt to become the literary voice of his generation,[3] showed that he desired the same object as his ancient models, Homer and Virgil. Pope loved *The Iliad* and was inspired by it as a boy, claiming "Homer was the first author that made me catch the itch of poetry, when I read him in childhood" (Spence 167). As an adult he also produced adaptations and homage to the classical writers such as *Imitations of Horace* (1733) and fashioned his career path after Virgil's, progressing through pastoral to georgic and finally to epic, or in Pope's case, mock epic.

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[3] Pope's desire may even be on a grander scale (if that is possible) than his ancient models, as he attempts, through translation of Homer, to be the voice of the ancient Greeks in English, and also through his poetic ambition, to express the "Truth" of England in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The major educational influence of Pope's childhood seems not to have

come from his experience in the English school system, but from his appreciation

of books, especially those of the great writers of antiquity. Pope read John

Ogilby's "great edition [of Homer], with pictures", when he was "about eight years

old" (Spence 167). According to Mack, the Ogilby edition that Pope spoke of

"with a sort of rapture" (Spence 167) was not intended for children, as its text "is

surrounded like a tiny peninsula by a vast weedy sea of commentary rising

against it from three sides" (Mack, *Pope* 44). The impact of this formative edition

for Pope, with its large pictures and encroaching commentary, is revealed in

Pope's early attempt at translation (Spence 167), his interest in "the best critics"

(Spence 168) and in his own attempt at epic "in imitation of the Ancients"

(Spence 168). Pope's admiration and preoccupation with Homer and the writers

of antiquity as external models for his creative activity extended even into the

design of his own famed "grotto" at Twickenham, which may have been modelled

on Book Five of *The Odyssey*, where Odysseus is "entertained" by Calypso

(Mack, *Collected* 279).

Dryden was another external model for Pope, although one much closer to

his own time. Pope "learned versification" (Spence 169) and "was profoundly

affected by [Dryden]... as a poet, critic, and translator" (Levine 185). In his

Preface to the Works of Virgil (1697), Dryden sets out the delicate task to be

accomplished by successive poets, each imitating, but not copying the work of

their literary models. He writes,

by reading Homer, Virgil was taught to imitate his invention, that is, to imitate like him... And thus I might imitate Virgil, if I were capable of writing an heroic poem and yet the invention be my own: but I should avoid servile copying. I would not give the same story under other names, with the same characters in the same order, and with the same sequel. (as quoted in Levine 185)

Simple external mediation leads to a series of master-to-apprentice transmissions of poetical authority. This is precisely the model of transmission of authority that Pope was trying to preserve in a time which he felt had become plagued by an avalanche of unworthy attempts at entrance to, or attacks on the very nature of, this structure of successive literary authority. Pope was to be next in line after Dryden[4] in the literary tradition. A generation earlier Dryden asserted his cultural voice through his edition of Virgil, and Pope would do likewise by giving England an authoritative version of both Homer's works. Pope, for the most part, through his edition of Homer, achieved the object of his desire. However, slightly later, when he attempted to extend his authority closer in proximity and place with an edition of Shakespeare, he ran into serious problems. The root of his problem was competition from contemporary authors. Pope identifies what the reading public was confronted with during the rise of the "Age of Authors":

a deluge of authors cover'd the land: [w]hereby not only the peace of the honest unwriting subject was daily molested, but unmerciful

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[4] This is evidenced by the list of parallel attacks on both himself and Dryden recorded in one of the appendices at the back of *The Dunciad Variorum* (112).

demands were made of his applause, yea of his money, by such as would neither earn the one, or deserve the other (Pope, *Variorum* 23).

Unlike imitation of an external model, when imitation of a contemporary model occurs, it leads to crisis, as the subjects come into direct competition over the object of their desire. The motivation behind the production of *The Dunciad* was to resolve just such a crisis. In Girardian terms, the driving force behind the production of the poem is not external mediation, but internal mediation. Internal mediation occurs "when this same distance" that separates the apprentice and master in external mediation "is sufficiently reduced to allow these two spheres to penetrate each other more or less profoundly" (Girard, *Deceit* 9). This penetration leads to rivalry and a *mimetic crisis*. Pope's ability to capture the object of his desire, by imitation of his external models, was manifested in his textual authority over canonized literary works such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. This authority was vital to Pope's career as an editor, translator and modernizer. I argue that the superior knowledge of the philological scholars Richard Bentley and Lewis Theobald placed them in direct competition with Pope and created a situation of internal mediation. In their pursuit of the "Truth" of classical texts through their deep knowledge of Ancient Greek, they became obstacles for Pope and competed with his version of the "Truth" of classical texts.

Bentley, and to a slightly lesser extent Theobald, were the most respected voices opposing Pope's editorial and critical choices. Although they acknowledged the beauty of Pope's translation, it was clear to all involved that

"the new *Iliad* was unlikely to satisfy [a] Greek scholar. Pope knew his own weaknesses" (Levine 223) and was probably not shocked at Bentley's famous criticism, "'[t]is a pretty poem Mr. Pope, but it is not Homer" (Levine 222). These perceived "weaknesses" can be traced back to Pope's educational background. Information about Pope's schooling is patchy at best, but there is general consensus that it was "haphazard and irregular" (Levine 181). He may have known "little Greek and less of Greek scholarship" (Levine 192). Pope claims to have read the best of the Greek poets in their original (Spence 168). However, whether or not Pope knew Greek is debatable. In *Imitation of Horace* he claims that "[b]red up at home full early I begun/To read in Greek the wrath of Peleus's son", but this may simply be an answer to critics who attacked him for his lack of learning (Sherburn 38). Johnson perhaps sums it up best – "with an irregular education and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not likely that he overflowed with Greek" (488).

Although Pope may not have had the educational background he required to compete with the top tier of university-trained scholars, he did have what many noted to be a certain proclivity and skill in this area. Spence and others often contrasted Pope with the learned scholars of the universities as a "striking example of the force of nature or of natureal [sic] genius: untrained he seemed to them equal in scholarship" (Sherburn 40). Pope also dabbled in scholarly activities like archaeology (then called "antiquities") and was praised by George Berkeley in 1709 for both his "wit *and learning*" [author's emphasis] (Sherburn 41). Sherburn marks Pope's admiration of both William Walsh and Sir William

Temple's "fashionable air of erudition" (59) and sees his correspondence with Henry Cromwell as having a "hidden design... [of] practising his learning so as to see if it could pass muster" (Sherburn 60). This is especially apparent in the letter to Cromwell of June 10, 1709. This letter stands out from Pope's regular correspondence, not only because it is liberally peppered with Latin phrases, but also because there is a speculation of a possible error in Bossu's translation of Statius (1675) (Erskine-Hill 25). This type of textual emendation that Pope here shows an interest in is not dissimilar to the type practiced by Theobald and Bentley. Unfortunately, without a proper education, Pope's superficial learning was only sufficient for putting on the airs of gentlemanly scholarship.[5] When scholarship had an actual impact on the quality of his editorship, those who had a deeper more specialized knowledge revealed the superficiality of his learning, and became Pope's rivals.

Theobald and Bentley, by attempting to garner authority over classical texts by their specialized knowledge, challenged Pope's claim to be able to translate and imitate them accurately. As if this were not enough, they also challenged Pope's heroes, the original "Truth" bringers, the classical poets. Jack Lynch describes this aspect of the threat posed by this new form of philological

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[5] Pope's brand of scholarship may have been imitative of that of Sir William Temple's. Temple, Swift and then Pope all played leading roles as "Ancients" in England's version of the "the Ancients vs. the Moderns" debate. Richard Bentley and William Wotton were the main proponents of the "Moderns" faction. This important conflict is the historical backdrop to the smaller conflict between Pope and Theobald, and likewise, was driven in part by the rise of the disciplines of philology and antiquities (archeology). For an in-depth and comprehensive study of this important moment in the history of ideas see Joseph Levine's *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (1991).

criticism as an "allographic" apparatus,[6] one that "at once affirms and challenges the status of the primary text" (371). The commentary is offensive because it stems from a model of learning not of the same magnitude of spatial/hierarchal/temporal distance as Homer and, therefore, is certainly not deserving of space on the same page. Bentley's scholarship, for example his work on creating a more accurate version of Horace than ever before, comes at the cost of "his annotations completely tak[ing] over the text, burying it in discussions of verb forms, manuscript families, syntax" (Lynch 371). The "conjectures" of Bentley's style of conjectural criticism, although "not always correct or convincing... were always important [in his opinion]" (Levine 162). It was this arrogance supported by a scholarly knowledge unavailable to Pope that made this type of criticism particularly offensive. It was offensive for the presumptive imposition of the scholars' voices into the ancient texts and also for employing a superior technical knowledge that challenged Pope's own textual authority over the classics.[7] Because of his entanglements with the philologists, Pope now saw Ogilby's version of Homer, the edition with encroaching scholarly marginalia, as "an offense to the eye that [he] was careful not to repeat in his Homer translations" (Mack, *Pope* 44). (In Pope's edition of Homer the commentary is at the back.)

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[6] Lynch borrows the term "allographic" from Girard Genette. An example of Genette's usage may be found in 'Introduction to the Paratext', in *New Literary History* (Spring 1991).

[7] The critic's allographic technique – intruding their modern critical voice directly into the ancient text –puts them squarely in the role of "the *foreigner*" (Girard, *Scapegoat* 32). In the discussion of Girard's second hypothesis below, we will see that if Pope has his way, this *foreigner* will be "banished or assassinated by the community" (Girard, *Scapegoat* 32).

Before Pope became wrapped up in competition with his rivals he openly showed a keen interest in this "scientific" type of scholarship. As evidenced by his letters to Cromwell, Pope was invested and took a keen interest in the technical knowledge required to edit and produce modern editions of classic texts. The small fortune he made from *The Iliad*, which boasted a list of subscribers replete with "seventeen dukes, three marquises, forty-nine earls, seven duchesses, and assorted other celebrities" (Levine 194), would not have come about had he not convinced both his colleagues and the public of his literary and, perhaps by association, editorial aptitude. Sherburn speculates that Pope was actually much more invested in "Dunce-like" antiquarian learning "than he would have admitted to the Scriblerus Club" (218). Pope reveals this to Spence, remarking "I once got deep into Graevius, and was taken greatly with it: so far as to write a treatise in Latin, collected from the writers in Graevius on the Old Buildings in Rome" (as quoted in Sherburn 218). Mack's investigations into Pope's library reveal that he "showed a striking concern with exact learning [as a young writer]" (317). Mack writes, "I will make no secret of my belief that in his younger days Pope shows signs of the interest in word-catching that he scorned in others... the artist as a young man [was] too close for comfort to the literary pedant" (317).

Pope's change of opinion about this type of criticism and the strange relationship he developed to a task that he at once admired and detested is typical of Girard's *mimetic rivalry* – a rivalry based on the imitation of peers. Pope's own initial hostility to textual criticism, in light of his own flirtations with the

practice, grew "from unfortunate contacts with such men as Dennis [a critic Pope

has a conflict with earlier in his career], Bentley, and (later) Theobald" (Sherburn

80). It also came in part from his association with Swift and the Scriblerians.

Strangely enough, Pope's notes to *The Iliad*, which were of the same sort that

were so mercilessly pilloried in Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, did not prove to be the

embarrassment to him or the Scriblerians that one would have expected (Levine

205). Here was Pope, producing the very sort of "learned" commentary and even

diagrams that seemed to interrupt the flow of Ogilby's version, and not being

ridiculed by his friends, but praised. In addition, many of the notes and even large

parts of the translation, especially of Pope's second major editorial effort after

The Iliad, the translation of *The Odyssey*, were farmed out to those willing to sell

or volunteer their scholarly abilities. Pope attempted to employ the pedantic

learning of others and take credit for it. He then claimed to despise a similar

pedantry in others. Both Swift and Arbuthnot praised his notes and scholarship

(Levine 195). They did this while at the same time damning "the learning of the

scholars Bentley, Barnes, and Dodwell" who were practicing very similar critical

activities (Levine 195). Understandably, Pope employed the learning of his

friends to cover up his own editorial and scholarly shortcomings while publicly

condemning and ridiculing those who were threatening his efforts with attempts

at capturing the "Truth" of past authors in rival scholarly editions.

The progression of events in Pope's literary career that would trigger the

expansion, and publication (but not the origin) of *The Dunciad* began with Pope's

decision to edit the works of Shakespeare in 1721 (Sherburn 235). His

publication of *Shakespear* in 1725 was followed by a stinging indictment of his

editorial choices by Theobald in 1726. The full title of Theobald's publication was

Shakespeare Restor'd: or, a Specimen of the Many Errors, as Well Committed,

as Unamended, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of this Poet. Designed Not Only

to Correct the Said Edition, but to Restore the True Reading of Shakespeare in

all the Editions Ever Yet Publish'd. As is evident by the title, here we have Pope's

rival making a direct challenge to the object of his desire. Pope, similarly to but

perhaps not to the same extent as with his edition of Homer, is tapping into the

"Truth" through presenting an external model (in this case Shakespeare) filtered

through his editorial choices, and offered up for the reader. Theobald challenged

Pope by making it clear that Pope did not have the proper tools to get the job

done.

The careers of Theobald and Pope were similar in many ways, although

they came from markedly different backgrounds and eventually developed a

bitter rivalry. Theobald worked on some translations of Homer as well as some

Greek tragedies, praised Pope's edition of *The Iliad* "extravagantly" (although

later changed his mind),[8] satirized pedantic learning in his own journal called *The*

Censor (Levine 228), and even appeared as a coauthor with Pope of Book XIV of

a cheap edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 'by several hands' for a group of

publishers including Curll (Sherburn 183). Theobald and Pope may or may not

have been friends at an early date, but as they were engaged in very similar

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[8] Pope collected all published praise and every printed attack on himself. He used this material
to his advantage not only to make his enemies look foolish, but also to "set the record straight"
in the eyes of the public – see "Testimonies of Authors Concerning our Poet and his Works" in
The Dunciad Variorum.

activities for the same publishers, and had probably "crossed paths, even if only at Lintot's shop" (Mack, *Pope* 430).

Unlike Pope, Theobald was a university man and was also trained as an attorney. Also unlike Pope, he was widely read in the literature of the Elizabethan period (Sherburn 238). This being the case, Theobald's scholarship would have been a much-welcomed asset to Pope during his time of collecting, collating and annotating his edition of Shakespeare. Pope, in an effort to drum up support and publicity for his project, "request[ed] all lovers of the Author to contribute to a more perfect one [edition]" in the *Evening Post* in 1721 and again in 1722, but was offered no hope then or later by Theobald. [9] This may have been because the two had been engaged in a rivalry surrounding Pope's publication of an edition of Buckingham's *Works* in 1722 (Sherburn 223). The events are complicated and the material was politically sensitive, but concurrent with Pope's announcement Curll made a similar claim to publish Buckingham under the editorship of Theobald. The whole matter resulted in legal proceedings against Curll and the suppression of Pope's edition (due to possible underhanded activities by Curll) as well.

As for the edition of Shakespeare, unfortunately for Pope, his philology was not up to the task and he knew it. This fact impacted his view and valuation of his editorial duties, which he famously dismissed as a "dull task" in his

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[9] At the end of the lengthy footnote to the first mention of "Tibbald" in Book one of *The Dunciad Variorum* (ll. 108), it is explained that "[d]uring the space of two years, while Mr. *Pope* was preparing his Edition of *Shakespear*, and the published Advertisements, requesting all lovers of the Author to contribute to a more perfect one; this Restorer (who had then some correspondence with him, and was soliciting favours by Letters) did wholly conceal his design [that of producing his own edition of Shakespeare], 'till after its publication" (11).

introduction to *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear* (1725). It is unlikely that he

forgot it was his role as editor of Homer that had made him his fortune. Pope

must also have been well aware of "the requirements" of this "dull task," as

"critical editions of the classics were [very] much a part of the literary

atmosphere" (Levine 228) of his time. The publication of *Shakespeare Restor'd* in

1726, along with several other attacks on Pope's credibility as editor of *The*

Odyssey revealed the fact that Pope "while understanding to some extent the

nature of his duties [as editor] was too inexperienced and too ignorant to fulfill

those duties" (Sherburn 236). Faced with a lack of ability and confronted with

competition evolving to rivalry, Pope denigrated the task of editorship to "dull"

and attacked his rivals as dull pedants (perhaps deservedly so in many cases).

The scrutiny placed on Pope's edition of Shakespeare by Theobald and

other members of the rival Concanen Club was done clearly in imitation of "the

brilliant example of Richard Bentley," whose style promoted "wholesale

emendation of everything from Hesychius to Milton" (Sherburn 244). Theobald, in

the same vein as Bentley's criticism of Pope's Homer, "demonstrated that Pope

had failed with his [modernization] of Shakespeare" (Levine 230). Theobald wrote

in *Mist's Journal* March 30, 1728, "[l]et him publish such an author as he has

least studied, and forget to discharge even the dull duty of an editor." Theobald's

learned attack on Pope's attempts to edit an edition of Shakespeare "struck a

mortal blow at Pope's reputation as editor" (Sherburn 247), and is referred to as

a "clear-cut act of war" by Mack (*Pope* 431). Many of Theobald's clarifications are

valuable. However, they are also "accompanied and sometimes almost crowded

out by so much nonsense, so many tiresome displays of irrelevant learning, self-gratulations, gloatings" (Mack, *Pope* 428) that it is a study more of rivalry between the two men, than of Shakespeare. In his second edition of *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear* (1728), Pope silently included the majority of the corrections Theobald had suggested (Levine 232). Pope here is "the hero of internal mediation, [who] far from boasting of his efforts to imitate, ...carefully hides them" (Girard, *Deceit* 10).

In Girardian terms, Theobald, through superior knowledge, captured the object of desire and produced a version of the external model's (Shakespeare's in this case) text that was closer to the "Truth". Pope witnessed his object snatched away from him and also realized he did not have the tools needed to compete to get it back. Theobald showed him "the gate of paradise and forb[ade] him to enter with one and the same gesture" (Girard, *Deceit* 8). Pope's awareness that these philological scholars have become a model or mediator for him, in that he must imitate their brand of scholarship to achieve his object, creates

> an effort to hide his desperate admiration from others, and from himself[.] [H]e no longer wants to see in his mediator anything but an obstacle. The secondary role of the mediator (obstacle) thus becomes primary, concealing his original function of a model scrupulously imitated... according to him, it is the mediator who is responsible for the rivalry. Everything that originates with this

mediator is systematically belittled although still secretly desired.

(Girard, *Deceit* 11)

Numerous scholars, including Joseph Levine and Maynard Mack, have seen more than a hint of envy behind Pope's dismissal of his rivals and their criticisms of his scholarly activity. Levine writes "[a]nd yet, behind his contempt for... Theobald, so often reiterated, was there not perhaps just a glimmer of recognition, the barest sign, that his critics had scored after all and that Pope had in fact been mistaken?" (241).

Clearly outdone by Theobald's superior technique and grounding in Elizabethan literature and surely infuriated by Theobald's barely concealed arrogance and tone of condescension towards Pope's editorial efforts, Pope was to grant Theobald the "little Share of Reputation" (as quoted in Mack, *Pope* 433) he desired, but not in the way Theobald was hoping. Swift, after hearing of Pope's tribulations, recommended a course of action. He suggested that *The Progress of Dulness,* a satire of Pope's against pretenders to literary authority started in 1720, be expanded so that Theobald would receive the fame he deserved (Sherburn 302). The result was *The Dunciad.* Within its pages a vast array of intellectual endeavour is satirized, but through the whole of the work, "one theme is constant, the triviality and inconsequence of all learned commentary" (Levine 238). *The Dunciad* is the result of Pope focusing all his creative energy on belittling his mediator.

Pope's project of attacking his enemies in *The Dunciad* has several literary antecedents, most notably in the *Peri Bathos, Or the Art of Sinking in*

Poetry (1727), a product of Pope in cooperation with his fellow Scriblerians. The most relevant for the purposes of this essay is Parnell's *Life of Zoilus*, appended to his *The Battle of the Frogs and Mice* (1717). Parnell, who was engaged in helping Pope translate *The Iliad*, here makes a pre-emptive strike against potential critics of Pope's project. In *Life of Zoilus*, the title character, Homer's most famous and incorrigible detractor, is almost done away with in innumerable ways by mob violence as he moves from town to town denouncing the works of the blind bard. The demonstration in print, over and over again, of a mob disposing of Homer's critic is, in a much less subtle way than *The Dunciad*, a warning shot across the bow of any would-be detractor of Pope's project. Since the time of Parnell's *Zoilus*, Pope's interaction with a large number of the professional writers, critics and publishers who populated Grub Street could only be described as a "war".

The climax of that literary "war" can be pinpointed at the first publication of *The Dunciad* and the numerous responses to it, in and around 1728. There were undertones of violence and threats made against Pope. Spence relates a story from Pope's half-sister of his never leaving home except in the protection of his Great Dane "Bounce" and with pistols in his pocket (Mack, *Pope* 489). After the publication of *The Dunciad* there was also a story that circulated about Pope being cornered and given a severe spanking in retaliation for his satire (Mack, *Pope* 490). Whether or not Pope was actually in danger is debatable, as these events could be viewed as publicity stunts. As early as 1716 Pope had been involved in semi-violent pranks, such as that as described in his *A full and true*

account of a horrid and barbarous revenge by Poyson on the body of Edmund

Curl, a prank Pope justified as a legitimate retaliation against the profiteering

publisher. Nevertheless, the atmosphere of conflict and violence, be it real or

textual, is often noted.[10] For this reason it was probably no surprise when during

the first day of *The Dunciad*'s publication it was reported there was a near riot as

"[a] Crowd of Authors besieg'd the Shop; Entreaties, Advices, Threats of Law,

and Battery, nay Cries of Treason were all emply'd to hinder the coming out of

the *Dunciad*: On the other Side, the Booksellers and Hawkers made as great

Efforts to procure it" (Mack, *Pope* 457).

What Pope hoped to accomplish by this publication was a general

silencing of not only his main rivals, but also all those who had crossed him. He

confidently wrote before its publication, "[t]his poem will rid me of these insects"

(as quoted in Sherburn 302). Pope, through the mechanisms in *The Dunciad*,

was attempting to resolve a *mimetic crisis*, the result of *mimetic rivalry* run amok.

Girard describes the mimetic crisis as a slow destruction of the "regulated system

of distinctions in which the differences among individuals are used to establish

their identity and their mutual relationships" (Girard, *Violence* 49). As the events

escalate the actors become undifferentiated, a process that "generates – and in

turn is generated by – an ongoing replication of the strategies, actions, and even

rationale of adversaries" (Fleming 44). The very thing Pope was attempting to

cure, the "crisis of degree", the "lack of distinctions" (Fleming 44) that Pope was

rallying against in his battle against Theobald and also the "deluge" of unqualified

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[10] Another example, although perhaps hyperbolic, is Sherburn's comparison of the interactions
between Addison's "Little Senate" and the Scriblerians to "gang warfare" (149).

authors, seemed to be exacerbated by his efforts. Pope's satire, which was designed to be a cure for this crisis, only heightened it, at least in the short term.

The Dunciad and the attendant flurry of pamphlets in response to it[11] are scandalous, in Girardian terminology. All vie for the authorial final word, the "Truth", their object of desire, but "cannot obtain it, either because they cannot displace the model and acquire what he or she has or because the rivalry with the others in the group is so intense that everyone prevents everyone else from succeeding" (Girard, *Satan* xi). Thorne finds the locus of the Scriblerian anxiety in the levelling effect that the proliferation of voices had on the rise of the public sphere in early modern England. More specifically, it is this scandalous proliferation of authorial voices present in agonistic rivalry caused by internal mediation that Pope reveals his anxiety about, and justifiably so, as this crisis destroys the distinction between himself and his opponents and thus his very identity.

According to Girard, "it is in internal mediation that the profoundest meaning of the *modern* is found. The erosion of traditional social barriers favors the rise of internal mediation, and this in turn leads to a loss of distinctions between mediator and imitator, who are destined to end up as symmetrical rivals" (Girard, *Oedipus* xxxiv). An increased access to print publication and a transition away from older forms of coterie and patronage systems led to a breakdown of traditional literary hierarchy and a general levelling effect. Pat Rogers describes the Augustan anxiety as "not that things would fall apart, but that everything

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[11] Pope includes "A List of Books, Papers, and Verses, in which [he] was abused, printed before [and after] the Dunciad: With the true Names of the Authors" in his "Variorum" edition of *The Dunciad* (1729).

would somehow merge" (Ingrassia 50). Pope is forced to mimic Theobald in their rivalry over the production of Shakespeare. As their "antagonism becomes embittered, a paradox occurs: the antagonists resemble one another more and more" (Girard, *Satan* 12). Through their rivalry they become what Girard terms "doubles."[12]

The method Pope devises to both rid himself of his *double* and resolve the mimetic crisis destroying the literary community can best be analysed with Girard's second hypothesis. It asserts that the foundation of all myth is in real acts of collective violence. This is especially important in analysing *The Dunciad*. Girard analyses mythic texts by locating stereotypical themes that reveal the true events that are responsible for the generation of the myth. The five stereotypes are as follows:

1. A theme of disorder or undifferentiation

2. An individual who has committed some transgression (who is thus responsible for the state of undifferentiation)

3. The presence of certain stigmata or 'victimary signs' on the responsible party

4. A description of the killing or expulsion of the culprit

5. The regeneration or return of order   (Fleming 80)

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[12] Catherine Ingrassia also sees a doubling of Pope with his rival, not in editing and scholarship, but in the world of book distribution, Edmund Curll. She writes "in many ways Curll's actions replicated those of Pope, a man similarly interested in fame, status, and financial profit. Pope and Curll, each in his own way and for his own reasons, attempt to cast Grub Street and the more sweeping emergence of the print trade as a cultural site marked by oppositions, antagonism, and mutually exclusive categories. The more interesting and potent areas of that milieu exist in the margins, the seepage, the transgressions that ultimately define and empower the literary production of both men" (74).

A close reading of *The Dunciad* reveals the first three stereotypes. These stereotypes are present because Pope is employing them in an attempt to spur his readers into completing the mythic pattern by ostracizing his literary enemies (stereotype four) and thus restoring an orderly literary world in which he retains undisputed authority (stereotype five). After locating the five-fold stereotypical pattern of myths Girard further breaks mythic texts down into two types, or stages. A first stage myth contains the accusation and persecution of the scapegoat, the second: the scapegoat's reintroduction into the community as a sacred figure. *The Dunciad*, as myth, is of the first stage variety. It is "the act of accusing a scapegoat who[m] is not yet sacred to whom all evil characteristics adhere" (Girard, *Scapegoat* 50). The second stage comes "when he is made sacred by the community's reconciliation" (Girard, *Scapegoat* 50). However, as Pope is just borrowing the stereotypes of the first stage as tools in order to prompt a persecution, the second stage is not realized.

Girard's first stereotype of myth, the theme of disorder or undifferentiation, is common in satire in general and unmistakable in *The Dunciad* in particular. Fredric V. Bogel defines satire as best understood as a "literary mechanism for the production of differences in the face of anxiety about replication, identity, sameness, and undifferentiation" (Lund, *Laughing* 104). This undifferentiation is presented in *The Dunciad* as a type of plague,[13] spread by "Dulness" and her progeny (the Dunces). Thomas Faulkner and Rhonda Blair trace the complex

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[13] *The Dunciad* is not the only work in which Pope uses the threat of a plague-like undifferentiation in an effort to combat internal mediation. It is clearly portrayed in *An Epistle to Allen Lord Bathurst* (1733), lines 135-142 and hinted at in the memorable opening to *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735), lines 1-6.

chain of association and mythological allusive interaction Pope has pulled together for his depiction of Dulness, who he represented as an amalgam of mythic goddesses representing anti-Apollonian forces of disharmony and disintegration (239). Pope associates her with the cacophony of the Galli, with the goddesses of trickery and gaming, and with war, fog, night and a variety of debauched cults. Her rule brings a sickness to the land.

The plague, which throughout mythology "is universally presented as a process of undifferentiation, a destruction of specificities" (Girard, *Oedipus* ix), is most clearly developed by Pope in his last incarnation of the poem. His final edition,[14] which was published with the additional Book Four in 1743, contains this apocalyptic passage:

> Now flamed the dog-star's unpropitious ray,
>
> Smote every brain, and withered every bay;
>
> Sick was the sun, the owl forsook his bower,
>
> The moonstruck prophet felt the madding hour;
>
> Then rose the seed of Chaos, and of Night,
>
> To blot out order, and extinguish light,

---

[14] This edition replaced Theobald as the hero, with Colley Cibber. This may be because by this later date Pope's hostility against Theobald had abated somewhat, and Cibber, who was involved in a conflict with both Pope and Gay in 1717(Sherburn 197), and also, more importantly, later had aroused Pope's ire by publishing a tale about having to "rescue" him from a brothel, may have earned the hero's role (Mack, *Pope* 781). Furthermore, the fact that Pope most acutely develops the stereotype of plague in the forth book, which was produced 15 years after the original edition and 17 years after Theobald's catalytic offence is an interesting point. It may be testament to the importance of the poem, as a work that Pope returns to perfect, in its mechanism, before his death. This long gestation period may have also been necessary for Pope to look back on the events from a distance and in doing so create an indictment of his age in broader, darker and more serious tones (and also less specific and pointed as Bentley and Theobald's careers were on the wane and as Pope's security in his position in the literary world had solidified).

Of dull and venal a new world to mould,

And bring Saturnian days of lead and gold. (*The Dunciad* [1743],

4:9-16)

These days of "lead", meaning dullness, especially that of the brand of "verbal criticism" practiced by Theobald and Bentley, and "gold", a reference to what Pope portrays as the pecuniary motivation behind this critical practice, are the result of the contagion of scandal caused by undifferentiation spreading over the land. The result is a levelling of the literary hierarchy that extinguishes the "light" of true knowledge.

Girard analyses the almost ubiquitous description of plague, or use of it as a metaphorical tool in myth and literature, as having an "incredible vitality" (Girard, *Double* 138). This vitality stems from the ability of great writers to link social phenomena with the real fears of biological epidemic or disaster. Pope links the destructive and undifferentiating effects of a real plague, which strikes down its victims indiscriminately and destroys order and hierarchical structure in society, to what he perceives as a crisis in the cultural/public sphere. Girard, in his analysis of myth, theorizes about how real plague or disaster and social phenomena interact (Fleming 105). Pope seemingly understands this interaction as well and is capitalizing on the linkage that society has made over time between plague and social collapse. He warns of impending doom unless the transgressors of the social order, those infectious pedantic scandalizers, are cast out of the cultural community.

Before the "destruction of specificities" that the doom Pope foresees

brings, there is, according to Girard, "a reversal. The plague will turn the honest

man into a thief, the virtuous man into a lecher" (Girard, *Double* 136). Book Three

of *The Dunciad* locates evidence of this reversal in the poorly written works of

Pope's literary rivals. Pope references and uses what he sees as his rivals'

confusions, anachronisms and poorly constructed metaphors and allusions to set

up the conditions for the coming plague:

> Streets pav'd with Heroes, Tyber choak'd with Gods!
>
> Till Peter's Keys some christen'd Jove adorn,
>
> And Pan to Moses lends his Pagan horn;
>
> See graceless Venus to a Virgin Turn'd,
>
> Or Phidias broken, and Apelles burn'd. (*Variorum*, 3.100-105)

In *The Dunciad*, the source of the inspiration for Pope's rivals' poetry is "Chaos".

From the depths of Chaos, the creative works that creep forth from the minds of

the Dunces collapse opposites into one another, merging and erasing distinction

and difference, leading to:

> How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;
>
> How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race;
>
> How time himself stands still at her command,
>
> Realms shift their place, and Oceans turns to land. (*Variorum*, 1.67-
>
> 71)

Tibbald (Theobald), the hero of the poem, creates an entirely new world in which

there are no distinctions: "a new world, to Nature's laws unknown,/Breaks out

refulgent, with a heav'n its own" (*Variorum* 3.237-8). Pope also uses a line from one of Theobald's works to highlight the "monstrous absurdity" (*Variorum* 69) of undifferentiation, in which "Hell rises, Heav'n descends" (*Variorum* 1.233). The lack of differentiation that Pope describes as a result of Theobald's reign as the King of the Dunces is, in a Girardian framework, a signpost of a coming collective persecution (Girard, *Scapegoat* 30). Pope's poem is thus a warning to his rivals and a signal to his readership to persecute the culturally guilty.

Some have asserted that *The Dunciad*, overflowing with mock "verbal criticisms," suggests "that Pope suffers a kind of satiric contamination in the course of the poem... and begins to display a touch of what he attacks" (Bogel 844). These critics may be detecting the symmetrical rivalry and a loss of distinction caused by internal mediation. Bogel sees the seeming undifferentiation of the actual form of the poem as "not simply giving an account of the subversion of difference and thus of meaning. Beyond that, it demonstrates just such subversion" (846) as the poet and his work are subsumed in an "annihilation of individual identity as well" (847). The structural disintegration that Bogel locates in the poem complements and mirrors the trope of the plague and highlights the theme of undifferentiation that it represents and is a product of.

The second Girardian stereotype in the poem designates its hero. The individual who has committed the transgression and who is thus responsible for the state of undifferentiation is Theobald. Pope renames him Tibbald and crowns him King of the Dunces. Pope categorized the "Dunces" into "three kinds, Party

writers, dull poets, and wild criticks" (*Variorum* 24). Theobald, above and beyond

all the other Dunces, is said by Pope to be

> capable of being all three. This *phantom* in the poet's mind, must
>
> have a *name*: He seeks for one who hath been concerned in the
>
> *Journals*, written bad *Plays* or *Poems*, and published low *Criticisms:*
>
> He finds his name to be *Tibbald* [Theobald], and he becomes of
>
> course the Hero of the poem.[15] (*Variorum* 24)

As also mentioned in the footnotes to the poem, in the index to the *Variorum*

edition of the poem (1729) Pope nails down the exact reason he chose Theobald

as the hero. Theobald had "Conceal'd his Intentions upon *Shakespear* all the

time Mr. *Pope* desir'd Assistance and promis'd Encouragement toward perfecting

an Edition of him" (cxxiv). Here is a clear indication that it is the internally

mediated rivalry that is the driving force behind the poem.

Tibbald is responsible for bringing the crisis. He is the "Augustus born to

bring Saturnian times" (Pope, *Variorum* 3:317). Pope adds fuel to the fire by

depicting Theobald as having committed incest. The act of incest marks

Theobald with Girardian "victimary signs," mythic stereotype number three. The

root of the plague in Book Three comes from both Tibbald's relationship with and

physical proximity to Dulness. It is governed by a pattern related to the plague of

undifferentiation, depicted through the "curious kinship system of the Duncely

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[15] There is a doubling of similar accusations here, as Pope accuses Theobald of being guilty of
committing all the "Duncely" literary activities, earlier Gildon and Dennis accused Pope of being
a "creature that reconciles all contradictions; he is a beast, and a man: a Whig, and a Tory, a
writer (at one and the same time) of Guardians and Examiners" (*Variorum* 16). Likewise
accusations of monstrous form and association are made by both sides, Gildon and Dennis
liken Pope to the Devil (*Variorum* 2), and Pope does the same with Theobald (*Variorum* 1:115).

world, including that form of succession by which child proceeds from parent. Here again the problem is too much conjunction and too little distinction, a phrase that describes incest" (Bogel 850). The accusation of incest serves as a mark that "identifies the selection of a victim for persecution" (Girard, *Scapegoat* 31). When Dulness first sees Theobald "she ey'd the Bard" and "pin'd" (Pope, *Dunciad* (1743) 1:109-10). Pope links Dulness to a cult-like sexuality that extends from

> the unnatural coupling of literary genres (1:67-8), the 'insect lust' of
>
> the Dunces (4:415), and the allusion to homosexuality in the line
>
> 'Behold yon Pair, in strict embraces join'd' (3:179), to the
>
> incestuous birth of Dulness herself, who is the 'Daughter of Chaos
>
> and of eternal Night' (1:12). Hesiod's and most other accounts give
>
> Night as the daughter of Chaos, and Pope expands on the implicit
>
> incestuous origin of his goddess through her own incestuous
>
> relationship with her sons, the Dunces (4:19-20, 71-84). (Faulkner
>
> and Blair 228)

Girard explains, "incestuous propagation leads to formless duplications, sinister repetitions, a dark mixture of unnamable things" (Girard, *Violence* 75).

The culmination of the incestuous and parthenogenic procreative activity of Dulness is the end result of any scandalous situation: "if nothing stops [them]... these rivalries, as they multiply, create a mimetic crisis, the war of all against all. The resulting violence of all against all would finally annihilate the community if it were not transformed" (Girard, *Oedipus* 24). Both the "universal Darkness"

(3:356) at the end of *The Dunciad* (1728) and at the end of Book Four in the

1743 edition depicts just such a situation: "the sleep Dulness wishes for Britannia

is the sleep of death, the final all-burying darkness" (Faulkner and Blair 230).

Girard makes clear that the spread of the plague of undifferentiation ultimately

"overcomes all obstacles, disregards all frontiers, all life, finally is turned into

death, which is the supreme undifferentiation" (Girard, *Double* 137).

The poem is a warning. It is only a portent of a possible future, as

Tibbald's vision is only that in Book Three, and like a dream "thro' the Ivory

Gate... flies" (Pope, *Variorum* 3:358). Book Three, in its presentation of possible

catastrophe, and Book Four, in its depiction of apocalypse, both present the

dangerous consequences of failing to act to resolve the plague of

undifferentiation. These depictions of disaster imagined in such fine detail, are

portrayals of a potential literary world in which Pope and his circle are not present

to act as regulators and disseminators of cultural texts. The crimes committed by

Pope's literary adversaries and the resulting plague/crisis that they generate can

only be remedied by the expulsion of the guilty party. Pope is attempting to end

the rivalry caused by internal mediation that has multiplied like a contagion and

plagued the land, by "transform[ing it], in the end, into a war of all against one...

[in] which the unity of the community is reestablished" (Girard, *Oedipus* 24).

Theobald, Pope's closest rival, is to be singled out as the scapegoat. It is that

scapegoat that is the embodiment of the crisis, and it is the death or banishment

of the scapegoat that restores harmony to the community.

In accordance with Girard's theory, the scapegoating does not need to be "present [as] an explicit theme" (Girard, *Reader* 97), but if Pope's correspondence is examined, his intention is clear. Pope writes to Arbuthnot, "general satire in times of general vice has no force and is no punishment, people have ceased to be ashamed of it when so many are joined with them; and it is only by hunting one or two from the herd that any examples can be made" (Levine 257).

In many of Pope's works he envisions himself as a kind of sheriff of the literary landscape, driving outlaw hacks out of town. In *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace*, he wrote; "Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave/Shall walk the World, in credit, to his grave" (ll. 119-20), and in *Dialogue II of the Epilogue to the Satires* a similar verse; "Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see/Men not afraid of God, afraid of me" (ll.208-9). The reputation Pope had as a nasty and spiteful individual stems from "the dilemma of [the perception of] satire in his day: personal satire was lampoon, and the result of spite; general satire was indiscriminating and the result of venomous and impious misanthropy" (Sherburn 176). The theory that Pope's motivation is based on envy and rivalry does not absolve him from the charge of spitefulness, but it does situate that spitefulness in an understandable context. Internal mediation and the spiral of reciprocal violence and imitation it creates undermines Pope's self-fashioning as an objective aesthetic judge who justifiably uses effective satire to regulate and maintain a high standard of literary production in early modern England's cultural sphere. Pope is attempting to change the literary landscape by scapegoating his

rivals and as a result, through their banishment in the court of public opinion,

restoring his textual and cultural authority. However, the revelation of the

motivation and mechanism of Pope's satire does the opposite: it helps to remove

him from his self-fashioned external position of literary arbiter and place him

solidly inside the world of scandal, rivalry and cutthroat literary competition he

depicts in *The Dunciad*.

Pope's mechanism works by the illustration of the threat of "scandal" and

the undifferentiating pollution it produces. In satirizing the scandal Pope "aims at

preventing its repetition" (Girard, *Oedipus* 73). The "difference" created by Pope's

satire, "gives rise to separations and fire-breaks that prevent or neutralize rivalry;

this difference materializes in the form of taboos, hierarchical distinctions and

institutions that block the convergence of desires and eliminate the possibility of

confrontation" (Girard, *Oedipus* 73). The call for a scapegoating of his rivals, in

the long run, could be considered successful, as it is Pope's take on his literary

world that came to dominate in the centuries after his death. Pope predicts this

situation accurately when he states in the "advertisement" to *The Dunciad*

Variorum that "Of the Persons [satirized in the poem] it was judg'd proper to give

some account [by using their real names and revealing biographical information

in the footnotes]: for since it is only in this monument that they must expect to

survive" (3). In Girardian terms, Pope's satire serves a *prophylactic* function, in

that it "incarnates social hierarchies and forms of differentiation that prevent

conflictual mimesis by proscribing those behaviours that might lead, or have led

in the past, to social disintegration" (Fleming 54). In the long term, the institutions

that Pope created were so powerful, in fact, that the binary opposition between the Grub Street "Dunces" and the "high" art of Pope and his fellow Scriblerians lasted well into the twentieth century and remains a topic for study in the field of literary studies.[16]

Thorne points out that Tory satire and its relation to the public sphere is often seen as a "performative contradiction" (537), meaning that a text (i.e. one of the Scriblerian satires) that aims at criticizing the problems of a free public sphere must sully itself by participating in that same sphere, thereby nullifying its effect. The analysis of *The Dunciad* in a Girardian framework shows that Pope's satire and the motivation behind it does indeed situate him as a participant in the newly emerging public sphere. He does manage, however, to create the illusion of distance and mastery in the field due to his deft application of the stereotypes of mythological tradition that he weaves into his satire. Pope's cultural activity, although it is enacted within the public sphere, successfully performs the satiric function of establishing identity and difference, creating institutions of hierarchy and order which subvert the levelling effect and democratizing force of a proliferation of ever more equal voices in the rise of the public sphere in early modern England.

Girard's mimetic theory clarifies the motivation behind what many view as a puzzling move in the career of one of the most admired and dominating figures

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[16] The victims of *The Dunciad*'s persecution or scapegoating have relatively recently been reconciled to the world of "high" art or what are considered texts worthy of academic consideration. Interestingly, as outlined on page 67, second stage myth involves the scapegoated individual's return to a community as sacred. A good example of this cycle is the near-erasure of one of the early eighteenth century's bestselling female authors – Eliza Haywood – and the eventual "rediscovery" and gradual canonization of her texts by academics from the 1970s on.

of English literature. It also explains the potency and durability of Pope's successful attempt at fashioning his literary world, as the muck he raked over his rivals remains, to some extent, to this very day. The scapegoat mechanism, according to Girardian theory, is a foundational element of our culture, and Pope's deft, entertaining and effective use of it is a testament to his skill and importance in the history of culture and print in the early eighteenth century. Perhaps just as importantly, an examination of Pope's position as being deeply intertwined in a rivalry motivated by envy adds depth and colour to an already deep and colourful literary career.

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2:
THE BIRTHING THE CANON: ELIOT, HEGEL, MARX AND LITERARY LABOUR

Books always speak of other books, and every story

tells a story that has already been told.

— Eco

The fact is that every writer *creates* his own

precursors. His work modifies our conception of the

past, as it will modify the future.

— Borges

Part I

One man, consoling his heartbroken friend, remarked, "the sweet would not be sweet without the bitter." This sentiment is very Hegelian. This law of identity in difference, or the notion that something only comes to exist for us by virtue of it not being its opposite, also holds true of the concept of the "new". In our modern era, "newness" or "originality" is a much sought after, and perhaps

not wholly understood, concept in the arts. By Hegelian reasoning the very concept of artistic originality implies a "tradition" as well. In striving to earn prestige by creating something new, the writer works under the influence and pressure generated by the success and power of past artistic creation. This awareness of tradition and the consequent influence it has on the artist is especially pervasive in a time of an abundance of print material vying for a place in a competitive marketplace. Ignore the past, deny the fact that a new text is dependent upon the past, and the text remains immature. It is only through serious study of the past that the author is able to overcome tradition, creating something new that is paradoxically also traditional.

The tension that exists between the pressure of Tradition[1] and the process of literary production is the theme of the first part of T.S. Eliot's essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', written in 1920. In the field of literary criticism, T.S. Eliot is perhaps most famous for his theory of the depersonalization of art, outlined in the second and third parts of his essay, which would become a core theme for "New Criticism", the dominant school of literary criticism of the mid-twentieth century. However, for the purposes of part one of this study, I would like to concentrate mainly on the ideas of the first part of Eliot's essay.[2] These

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[1] Eliot begins his essay with a discussion of tradition in its adjectival sense. The usage of Tradition (with a capital T) I refer to in my essay is synonymous with Eliot's depiction of Tradition as embodying the canon or "ideal order" (432) of (Western) literature. This Tradition is the material on which the artist must perform a "great labour" (431) so as to earn the approbatory label "traditional". The texts that form the Tradition are physical manifestations of the "mind of Europe", the living past of which the poet must become "aware" (432).

[2] The ideas contained in parts two and three of Eliot's essay, which detail the relation of the artist's 'personality' to the artist's finished product, came under serious critical attack in the 1970s, especially by Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton – I will briefly discuss why at the end of part one of this study.

ideas most strongly reflect the contribution Eliot's early philosophical studies made to his literary theory.

In 1916 Eliot finished his doctoral dissertation entitled *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*. Bradley was a leading member of the philosophical movement known as British Idealism, a school of thought based on the original and most influential idealist philosopher, Hegel. To illuminate Eliot's theory of the relationship between Tradition and the text in the process of the latter becoming a "new" work of art, I will outline and apply some of Hegel's core concepts as presented in the sub-section of chapter four of his *Phenomenology of Mind*, entitled "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Mastery and Slavery". In relation to the application of Hegel's concept of Master/Slave to Eliot's theory, I will also discuss some of the problems that arise in the expansion of philosophic metaphor to areas outside their original application.

"Idealism", a hugely influential philosophic conception that came to fruition in the writings of Hegel, may have begun with Bishop Berkeley's famous formula – "*esse est percipi*", "to be is to be perceived" (Brooker 148). This subordination of external reality to the primacy of the idea, regardless of the fact that Berkeley attributes the source of the idea to God, is troublesome for its potential solipsism. Soon after Berkeley presented his version of idealism, varieties of dualistic idealism surfaced, the most notable being the "empirical realism" and "transcendental idealism" of Kant, which would posit an unbridgeable gulf between the objects of perception of the knower – "phenomena", the actual world

for the perceiving knower, and things-in-themselves or "noumena" – the unperceivable realm required, among other reasons, for moral action. The variety of idealism to which Eliot subscribed fully reunited subject and object and explained how both were inextricably related as part of a whole. It is this form of idealism that originated with Hegel and is referred to as "absolute idealism" or "(German) Romantic Idealism".

In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Eliot describes a struggle in which "two things are measured by each other" (Eliot 432). These two things are Tradition and the poet who is in the process of attempting to make a work of art. The poet-in-process must be aware of more than just a particular period of cultural history or of just a select few great authors. The would-be-artist must

> be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. (Eliot 432)

Eliot's "mind" Hegel refers to as "Geist", sometimes translated as "Spirit". The process of its development in which it "abandons nothing *en route*" Hegel refers to as "*aufheben*", often translated as "sublation".[3] This concept of mind and its development is the central concern of Hegel's philosophical enterprise.

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[3] "Sublation" may be an inadequate translation as it does not capture the entire meaning of the term *aufheben* – which means simultaneously preserve, negate and elevate. For this reason I will use *aufheben* from here forward.

Hegel's first significant work is *The Phenomenology of Mind.* If a "phenomenon" is something that appears during the course of history, then a phenomenology of mind is a study of the way that mind appears. When the perceiver of this process is taken as of this very same mind located at a particular moment of its development, then this entails that the thinking mind takes itself as the object of its studies. As Eliot notes, the development of mind carries with it its previous forms on its journey towards greater knowledge of reality. He suggests that poets, in attempting to foster their own development, must know the "whole" as it has developed until their time. To know the whole, or the current state of the discourse in which they are immersed, they must labour by studying the texts of the past. Only in first knowing Tradition can the poet then overcome it, and in doing so produce a "new" artistic work. I argue that the origins and mechanism of Eliot's portrayal of this aspect of the artist's development can be located in Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic. An explication of this important Hegelian concept may help to illuminate Eliot's theory, as Eliot's metaphysics were influenced by Bradley, whose idealism is of the Hegelian variety.

This Master/Slave dialectic is a hypothetical, non-empirical description of the result of the meeting between two consciousnesses on the verge of becoming self-conscious. This step from animal-like existence to the formation of a "self" which is able to recognize itself as both knower and known is a crucial one in the journey of mind. This development is "dialectical" as it posits that each moment of a consciousness contains the seed of that particular moment's

inadequacy. Awareness of this lack necessarily pushes the consciousness

forward through the process of *aufheben*, in an effort to elevate itself a little

further on the road to knowledge. This section begins by stating: "(s)elf-

consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for

another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or

'recognized'" (Hegel 43).[4]

Until this point in the *Phenomenology,* consciousness has only

encountered non-living, or living but non-self-conscious, objects. This

consciousness, in Hegel's dialectical conception of it, has within its being the

idea of its negative, or its other, or non-self. In encountering an object, it limits

itself and also defines itself as not "other". Now the germ of self-consciousness

comes into being as consciousness gains awareness that it has the power of

negation, a power that belongs to it. To recognize belonging, it must also

recognize lack, or need. But simple negation of objects, be it through

consumption or possession, is unsatisfying. For it to find self-consciousness and

break the endless mechanical cycle of satisfying temporary desires it must turn

its gaze inward and see itself as an object (and a subject). The traumatic event

that brings this about is an encounter with another proto-self-consciousness.

A problem quickly arises on this hypothetical stage where these two proto-

self-consciousnesses confront each other. They are each the centre of their own

universes, "individuals" negating all others. Unfortunately there cannot be two

centres of one shared universe, and in encountering another similar living self,

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[4] I will be using the translation of this selection from *The Phenomenology of Mind* by J. Baillie. London: George Allan & Unwin Ltd., 1964. 229–240 reprinted in *Nineteenth-Century Philosophy.* Ed. Patrick Gardiner. New York: The Free Press, 1969. 43–51.

their own identities become uncertain. This inevitably leads to a life or death struggle. The eventual victor will be the one to show that it is independent of both "Self" and "Other": of "Self" by risking its life in battle to show that it is "fettered to no determinate existence... and is not tied up with life" (Hegel 45), of the "Other" by destroying it. The victor will have to show it is willing to risk its own annihilation in the attempt to annihilate the other. But its own death, "the natural negation of consciousness" (Hegel 46), and the death of the "Other" – result in no recognition of one's freedom and therefore in no self-consciousness, and so defeats the purpose of the initial struggle. The purpose of the struggle is realized when the will of one consciousness gives in to the will of the other consciousness, thus preserving the lives of both. So the one who values life over freedom becomes the servant to the other consciousness, the master, whose "essential nature is to be for itself" (Hegel 47). The servant exists and "its essence is life... for another" (Hegel 47).

As a result of the outcome of the initial struggle, the master is then in a position to dictate the activities of the slave. The master, by threatening death, compels the slave to work upon objects, to "shape and fashion the thing" (Hegel 49). The master's consciousness is independent in that it has already proven itself to the slave, but is also dependent upon the slave. It is dependent for the very experience of existing as a master and for its material sustenance. However, it is the slave who is able ultimately to escape servitude and overcome fear of the master through work, for work gives the slave an external representation of the slave's inner individuality. Hegel writes,

shaping or forming the object has not only the positive significance

that the servant becomes thereby aware of himself as factually and

objectively self-existent; this type of consciousness has also a

negative import, in contrast with its first moment, the element of

fear. For in shaping the thing it only becomes aware of its own

proper negativity, its existence on its own account, as an object,

through the fact it cancels the actual form confronting it. But this

objective negative element is precisely the alien, external reality,

before which it trembled. Now, however, it destroys this extraneous

alien negative, affirms and sets itself up as a negative in the

element of permanence, and thereby becomes for itself a self-

existent being. (Hegel 50)

This final step, achieved through the slave's labour, validates and affirms the

slave's status as a self-conscious being.

Now that we have brought the actors in this life or death drama onto

centre stage, I will use the culmination of this struggle as a heuristic metaphor in

an effort to apply it to the struggle of the artist with Tradition. As a caveat to this

endeavour I offer Paul Valery's famous quote, "(t)he folly of mistaking a paradox

for a discovery, a metaphor for a proof, a torrent of verbiage for a spring of

capital truths, and oneself for an oracle, is inborn in us" (*Introduction to the

Method of Leonardo da Vinci* -1895). Nevertheless, there are past precedents for

a liberal application, such as the one I will attempt, of Hegel's hypothetical

situation. Hegel's poetic conceptual structure (despite the obscurity of Hegel's

actual writing) is built around the dramatic development of a consciousness. This consciousness develops by seeking self-knowledge through combat and then progressing through modes of philosophical being. Hyppolite and Kelly liken this development to a "philosophical novel" (Rauch 85) and a "*Bildungsroman*" (Rauch 90), respectively. Wahl interprets it as "Christian", Kojeve as "Marxist" and Hyppolite as "existential" (Rauch 125). So in the tradition of these past precedents, a closer look at Eliot's text through the aperture of Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic may lead us further on the path towards knowledge.

The modern poet in the process of creating is aware of a powerful and inescapable force, that of the living past, or Tradition. An avoidance of confrontation with this force can never lead to what Eliot calls "new" or "mature" art, and can never communicate an authentic message. The artist not engaging with Tradition can be likened to the proto-self consciousness not entering into the dialectic and remaining "merely pure self-existence, being-for-self" (Hegel 46). The other extreme is conformity without individuality, the result being that "it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art" (Eliot 432). This is the equivalent of the slave not putting his own "pure self-existence" into his work and so barring his work from becoming "externalized and pass[ing] into the condition of permanence" (Hegel 48). The "new" art must paradoxically both "conform" and also be "individual", for in it "we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other" (Eliot 432). So artists-to-be, in their quest to produce new art, must engage the oppressive force of Tradition and overcome, but not

superannuate, it by both conforming to the living past and at the same time being individual.

If we attempt to make a closer analogy with Hegel's dialectic, it seems the relationship of Tradition to hopeful artist is as master to slave. For example, Tradition does no work itself, but compels the artist to work upon objects, to labour on the texts of the past. Tradition compels the artist through fear, for the artist "must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past" (Eliot 432), and failing to meet these standards results in anonymity, failure and artistic death. Tradition is independent in that it has already proven itself to the artist by its existence in the form of canonized works of the past, but is also dependent upon the artist. It is dependent for the very experience of existing as a living tradition. Tradition is not itself a creative force, it compels the would-be-author to fashion, shape and ultimately drive the dialectic of cultural production. Tradition, like a language, is meaningless without producers and practitioners and is therefore dependent upon the cultural worker. The artist overcomes fear of judgment in relation to works of the past through labour. Tradition drives the artist to work for it (technically on the texts that it is composed of) and through this labour the artist produces a work of art that is an external representation of their inner individuality, a "new" artistic creation that validates and affirms the artist-to-be's status as artist. According to Eliot, if this work is truly "new", it may achieve permanence by achieving recognition as part the literary canon. Hegelian *aufheben* can be seen in Eliot's conception of the "new" artistic work in that it is paradoxically both traditional, in that it has preserved the discourse on which it

laboured, but at the same time "new" because it has transformed the discourse through labour.

It seems to me that the limits of my attempt to use these metaphorical philosophical tools have now been reached in this case, and that it is time to outline the major incompatibilities of Eliot and Hegel's conceptual structures. The major weakness in the application of the Master/Slave metaphor to Eliot's conception is in assigning the role of master to Tradition. There are three main problems. The first is that Tradition, unlike the self-consciousness that gains the upper hand and assumes the master role, was never on the same level as the slave. The fact that Tradition is not based, like the artist, in the desires of the human ego, but is composed of the "ideal order" of past texts manifested in the cultural "mind", divorces it from the humanity of Hegel's despotic master[5]. The second problem is that of teleology. Hegel's master is developmentally trapped in its dependence upon a being, whom it perceives as lesser, for recognition. Unlike the slave, who progresses as a cultural being, the master has come to an impasse in that his role as despot is reliant upon the slave who cannot provide him with an independent recognition of his self-hood. Tradition, on the other hand, is dynamic and dependent upon development for its survival as a "living" Tradition. Power for the master has stagnated its development and it, in essence, becomes irrelevant, whereas in the case of Tradition, dialectic is necessary for its survival as a "living" Tradition in the "mind" of culture.

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[5] Eliot seems to assume that an objective Tradition exists and that a critic is somehow free of the political biases that may impede his or her authority to determine which "monuments" are selected for its composition. For the sake of argument I will leave his assumption unchallenged at this point. Eliot's cultural "mind" is (of course) biased and political – human and despotic – which perhaps addresses this problem with the analogy.

There is a third important difference between Hegel and Eliot. It is true that Eliot's conception of the literary canon having both a "simultaneous existence" and making up a "simultaneous order" (Eliot 431) ever present in the developing "mind" of culture, is strikingly idealist. The "meaning making" is in a continual state of development as each new text alters all the past texts as it enters the mind. Thus Eliot famously compares the canon to a group of "monuments" that "form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them" (Eliot 432). So, when a new work is added, "the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted" (Eliot 432). However, the major difference between Eliot and Hegel's conception of development concerns the notion of progress. Hegel's project moves toward a final, absolute goal, the "whole" where subject and object are united. Eliot's development of Tradition does not imply progress. "New" texts, while being Traditional in that they have preserved the older texts in the discourse, seem to be lacking the true "elevation" of Hegel's *aufheben*, in that they are not an improvement over the older texts. Eliot firmly rejects the inevitable progress intrinsic to Hegel's project when he writes that "art never improves, but... the material of art is never quite the same" (Eliot 432). The refusal to say that one great work has done a better job as art than another simply because the chronologically later work must have dialectically built upon the earlier, is a critique of Hegel's teleology. Eliot leaves no doubt about his rejection of a Hegelian notion of progress: "this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any

improvement" (Eliot 432). The empirical reality of the twentieth century seems to

weigh heavily against teleology. After the First World War, certainly it is

inconceivable that the march of the dialectic towards the absolute ideal on the

world stage could have brought us an even more horrific Second World War.

Theodor W. Adorno once cynically remarked, "there is no history that leads from

slavery to freedom, but there is a history which leads from the slingshot to the

megaton bomb" (as quoted in Roderick 1992, audio *Self Under Siege*).

As mentioned earlier, parts two and three of Eliot's essay outline his

"impersonal theory". Although the parallels with Hegel are not as striking as those

of part one of Eliot's essay, they are worth noting. As parts two and three of

Eliot's essay deal with the role of the artist's personality in "new" art, the most

relevant concept of Master/Slave is that of the "fear" generated by the master

and its effects on the slave. The fear generated by the master that forces the

slave to "tremble[] throughout its every fibre", that creates "total dissolution in a

general way" (Hegel 49), is then followed by servitude in which "he cancels in

every particular aspect his dependence on and attachment to natural existence,

and by his work removes this existence away" (Hegel 49). There are echoes of

this in Eliot's explanation of the artist's development, as when the artist faces the

power and inescapability of Tradition and is faced with only one option, to make a

"continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is

more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual

extinction of personality" (Eliot 433). Similar to the slave who abandons "natural

existence" to work only for the master, Eliot's would-be-artists must abandon

their "ego" or their most self-satisfying aspect of their artistic expression, their "personality". They must submit to the impersonal authority of Tradition and then, acting as a "catalyst" (Eliot 434), fuse their emotions and feelings into the finished "new" product.

However, what Eliot hopes to achieve by his "impersonal theory" may be slightly at odds with Hegel's conception of self-actualization through labour. Eliot writes that the artist, who has surrendered wholly to his work, expresses "*significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet" (Eliot 437). The "personality" of the poet, including his "history" is, like a catalyst in a scientific experiment, not present in the final product. Therefore, in appreciating or evaluating the final product, one need not concern themselves with the details of the poet's "personality" or past. Eliot's concept of art excludes concern with the historical or socio-economic conditions of the artists or their contexts. In Hegel, the slave's self-actualization through labour and the expression of inner essence produced through work, does not exclude the slave's "personality" – as preservation is an aspect of *aufheben.*

Both Hegel's and Eliot's theoretical constructions are powerful and influential philosophic metaphors. The power of a good philosophic metaphor is that it helps reveal an aspect of our reality in a new way. The cultural "mind", as it changes over time, may favour certain views over others, and philosophers will be required to adjust their tools, be they analytic or metaphorical. Such adjustments must also be balanced by an attempted faithfulness to the text and the context in which it was created and applied. The fact that the cultural "mind"

has changed considerably from Hegel's time to Eliot's, and then from Eliot's time to my own, opens both new avenues for exploration of their ideas and also new pitfalls for the attempt of understanding those ideas in their original contexts. To remove a powerful metaphor from its original context completely is a betrayal of the importance of history. Viewing Eliot through Hegel preserves the historical reality of their shared philosophical tradition, while a recognition of where the metaphor strains reveals what is "new" in Eliot and in the cultural "mind" under which he laboured.

The historical conditions and context of philosophic metaphor are an important factor in determining the meaning and possible application of these tools. For example, without some knowledge of Eliot's education, the philosophical background of his critical theory may remain obscure and we lose this particular insight into his thought. Eliot's theory of canon formation however, implies that knowledge of the personal history of the poet is unnecessary. We find this sort of critique in Terry Eagleton when he writes about Eliot's critical theory as promulgating an aesthetics that suppresses historical differences with a result that art is "extricated from the material practices, social relations and ideological meanings in which it is always caught up" (Eagleton 19).[6]

Part II

If Eagleton's critique has validity, then we must fill in Eliot's impoverished conception of the formation of literary art with some details about the conditions

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[6] Eagleton's criticism of Eliot is extensive and scathing. See *Criticism and Ideology* (1976) pages 146-150.

of its production. These conditions may include considerably less romantic details such as the artists' bankbook balances and the state of the publishing industry and cultural climate in which they worked, lived and breathed. These, I will argue, are some of the important elements that help to determine who does, and who does not, become part of the canon. This is the idea that I will develop and examine in part two of this study. I shall do so by focusing on a particular period of history in the development of the English canon, the period that many critics would call its inception, namely the early eighteenth century. This is the period during which there arise the unique conditions of "print-capitalism"[7] – conditions that are famously lampooned by Alexander Pope, in his depiction of a deluge of would-be artists pestering him for help on their rise to literary fame:

> Shut, shut the door, good *John!* fatigu'd I said,
>
> Tye up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead,
>
> The Dog-star rages! nay 'tis past a doubt,
>
> All *Bedlam*, or *Parnassus*, is let out:
>
> Fire in each eye, and Papers in each hand,
>
> They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
>
> Epistle to Arbuthnot (1734) lines 1-6

What of those raving authors-to-be? What is the fate of those who do not make it into the canon, and what factors contribute to their failure? The most common epithet for a literary artist who has produced something that is judged

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[7] The phrase "print-capitalism" first appeared in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) and "refers at once to the trade in books and to the wider dialectics of modernization brought about by literacy and commerce" (Kramnick 6).

not to be art is the term "hack". The term's use in this particular derogatory sense was probably first heard and read in the early eighteenth century[8]. The "swelling of the book trade, the passing of aristocratic authority, the rise in literacy, the prominence of women writers and readers, [and] the professionalization of criticism" marked this period (Kramnick 1). The tensions created at this transitional period between writers competing in a highly competitive, newly emerging literary market place generated satires, literary criticisms, allegiances and divisions in the literary world. The identification of another writer's work as "hackneyed" is deeply tied into the history of this period and is also at the root of the formation of what we now refer to as the English literary canon, another legacy of the first two thirds of the eighteenth century.[9]

An author's socio-economic condition has, I will show, a role to play in determining the author's possible place in the canon. I will argue that the key indicator of where on the scale from literary genius to anonymous hack that the author falls is the degree of "alienation" to which the author is subjected. The idea of "alienation" that I am about to use, I take from Marx and Engels. As Marxist theory grows out of Hegel, I hope, in using Marx's concept of "alienation" as a tool to examine the relationship of artist to canonization, to further develop an understanding of canon formation as was begun with Eliot, in part one of this study.

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[8] For a greater explication of the history and origin of this term see page 62-63 below.

[9] Kramnick posits, and I would agree, that the canon grew out of the "battle of the books" and was "the battle's most lasting product" (3).

The terminology that we must employ when we refer to a concept such as "the canon of English literature" has a definition rooted in the development of the historical cultural past. Perhaps the first mention of a unique and national English canon occurred in 1761 with the comment by George Colman the elder that "Shakespeare and Milton seem to stand alone, like first-rate authors, amid the general wreck of old English literature" (as quoted in Welleck 19). Colman's literary criticism reveals the work of a newly professionalized breed of critics in creating a national tradition, singling out the "trinity of English ancients" (Kramnick 15) – Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton – as stabilized bedrock of English cultural antiquity on which to build a national literary identity. This critical occupation may also be viewed within the larger context of the shift of culture away from the dominance of the aristocracy and towards the ascendancy of the middle-class. This is the period of which "Habermas argues that the discussion of news and books in such places as the coffee-houses and salons, the establishment of the circulating library, and the growth of the popular novel, brought about a 'public sphere' involved in 'rational critical debate' over cultural and political norms" (Kramnick 5).

In defining the term "literature" we should also note that before the rise of aesthetic theory[10] the term "literature" was much broader in scope and was "understood to include all writing of quality with any *pretense to permanence*" (emphasis added, Welleck 20). Assuming in most cases that would-be-authors

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[10] Rene Welleck notes that "[o]nly very slowly was the term narrowed down to what we today call 'imaginative literature': the poem, the tale, the play in particular. This is a process intimately connected with the rise of aesthetics, of the whole system of arts which in older times was not clearly set off from the sciences on the one side and crafts on the other" (19).

were striving not only to put bread on the table, but also to create an identity for themselves as authors, it is reasonable to believe that, among those pestering Mr. Pope for assistance, there existed a general pretense to permanence, or at least, a striving for recognition. Finally, in contrast to Eliot's impersonal order (an order therefore seemingly divorced from the conscious manipulations of human agents), I would like to emphasize what seems a commonplace in our postmodern world; the literary canon is "a *construct*, fashioned by particular people for particular reasons at a certain time" (Eagleton 10). Although it is a construct, it is not synchronous, and its evolution over time allows a window for exploring the forces and social historical conditions that brought it into being. Marxist literary theory brings to light the fact that "art can embody and make conscious in disguised form some of the deepest conflicts in a society: namely, the hidden economic conflicts" (Jackson 4).

The first step in illuminating the way in which the place of an artist or an artistic work is determined on the continuum from "genius" to "hack" is by making some basic distinctions. Marx's conception of the role of labour in human development owes much to Hegel, although, in general, Marxist thought differs from Hegel's in (at least) three major ways. Their conceptions of history are markedly different – Marx conceived of society as a history of economic structures rather than political institutions. Marx was also more specific in his theory of history "in the fact that it ceases to present the Hegelian scheme in terms of human activity in general, and focuses instead on *productive* activity, or labor directed at satisfying people's material needs"(Wood 431). This leads to

another fundamental difference, namely, that of their conception of the working poor and that group's capacity for revolution. So, if we are to examine artists and their place in history (as represented through the canon) from a Marxist perspective, we must understand their "productive activity", or labour.

In Marx's analysis of capitalist production he divided labour into "productive" and "unproductive" labour. Labour is defined as productive when it creates "value", meaning capital, when performed for an employer. As Malthus describes it, "[t]he productive labourer [is] he that directly increases his master's wealth" (as quoted in Marx *Economic Works* 486). Unproductive labour may serve a much higher purpose in being man's expression of himself as he transforms nature by his labour, ideally for the benefit of all. Marx clarifies,

> Milton, for example, who did *Paradise Lost*, was an unproductive worker. In contrast to this, the writer who delivers hackwork for his publisher is a productive worker. Milton produced *Paradise Lost* in the way that a silkworm produces silk, as the expression of *his own* nature. (Marx, *Economic Works* 484)

Marx believes that the dualism between labour and capital will eventually be resolved by the "revolution" of the proletariat. He sees this revolution, which is fomenting from the state of his nineteenth-century world, as also eliminating the dualism between Milton and the hack writer. This future scenario in which all labour will be the expression of each labourer's "own nature", has its roots in Marx's definition of the essential nature of humanity.

Earlier definitions of what it is to be human were generally in line with the Aristotelian idea of human as "rational" being. Marx put productivity in the place of rationality, bringing human nature back to a firm materialistic foundation. A human being is differentiated from basic animal existence in her creativity, or expression of herself as she transforms nature. Labour performed merely for the sake of survival can be seen in the constructions of the animal kingdom. As Marx writes, "[a] spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality" (as quoted in Rader 239).

This imaginative creative force then made manifest in nature through labour as an expression and fulfillment of human potential is essential to human development. In labour humans no longer reproduce themselves "merely intellectually, as in consciousness, but actively and in a real sense, and [they] see [their] own reflection in a world which [they have] constructed" (Marx 278). One important thing to note is that animals labour as a result of physical need; however, humans "only truly produce[] in freedom from such need" (Marx 278). We must assume that this "[l]abour in its true form[,] [which] is a medium for [human] true self-fulfillment, for the full development of [our] potentialities" (Marcuse 2), will only be realized (on a universal scale) post-revolution when the yoke of capitalist oppression and private property has been thrown off and physical need will be satisfied through the just and equal distribution of the goods

required to meet our physical requirements. What we have in the differing cases of Milton and the average hack writer is interference in the realization of true labour by "physical need", which has transformed unproductive labour into productive labour.

While Milton was still an unproductive worker, he was not entirely free from alienation, as "[l]ater on he sold the product [*Paradise Lost*] for 5 [pounds] and to that extent became a dealer in a commodity" (Marx, *Economic Works* 484). So Milton decided to put a price on his externalized essence. By doing so he was able to transfer it as property from one person to another (to "alienate" it, according to the basic meaning of the word in its pre-Marx usage in political economy) and thereby, under the capitalist system, put five pounds worth of bread on the table. This was an innocuous form of alienation because it still allowed Milton to reach his human potential through his labour, as we can assume the content or essence of *Paradise Lost* was truly Milton's, and not requested, cajoled or a product of his intentional effort to pander to the whims of the publisher or popular market.

As I mentioned earlier, a backdrop to the application of Marx's theory was the change in economic conditions during the boom of the early eighteenth century that led to a marked expansion of the market for printed publications, increased literacy, the professionalization of critical practice and the beginnings of the formation of the English canon. The literary work as a saleable cultural commodity as read (or consumed) by a growing and increasingly literate market was a relatively new thing at this time. Before this time literature was written and

transmitted more or less in aristocratic "coteries", not for immediate economic gain, but perhaps as demonstration of the culture and abilities of ambitious courtiers, among other more political or amorous motivations. During the transitional stage between about 1670 and 1750, the general public gained access to and became acquainted with literary production in the role of economic consumers. What we know today as the concept of an "author", in relation to the economic consumption of a literary work, was in the process of development at this time. Basically, in legal terms, an author performs a function of "proprietorship; the author is conceived as the originator and therefore the owner of a special kind of commodity, the work" (Rose 1). It is only as a function of private property and after the advent of copyright law[11] that the notion of commercial authorship solidifies and forms what Foucault refers to as the "author-function" which produces the "solid and fundamental unit of the author and the work" (as quoted in Rose 1). This development creates a means for the public of accessing a literary work, through identifying desirable works by their classification under the banner of the name of an author. If the commodity achieves permanence then, through popularity, critical acclaim, eventual canonization and the perpetual reprinting of the work this entails, the name of the author also achieves permanence.

The legalistic and economic unit of author/work linked by the "author-function" describes to some extent the relationship of author to their saleable cultural commodity. The next step is to expand on this definition by identifying, in

[11] Statue of Anne (1709) or, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned"

a Marxist sense, what it is that is really for sale. According to Marx, it was the expression of Milton's own nature as embodied in the work that was eventually sold. Although the concept of selling one's essence is disturbingly Faustian, the sale does seem like a beneficial situation for all involved. Milton's work is distributed and enjoyed and some of his physical needs are satisfied with the money he has earned. The disturbing aspect of the valuation in monetary terms of the essence of an individual is balanced by the fact that the commodification and resulting author-function it generates, garners him an eternal plot in Parnassus, a home among the muses as a canonized fixture in our culture. Milton's career, however, lies before the pressures of the rise of "print-capitalism" and is a far cry from the "professional" authorship that Pope, paradoxically, was both part of and in opposition to.

Although he was not an aristocrat, physical need was not a major issue for Milton. He was fortunate enough to attend a public school, followed by Cambridge, and go on a "grand tour" where he improved his knowledge of European languages and culture. For others, unfortunately, such was not the case. Not long after Milton's time, in the period between 1670 and 1740, the "true professionalization of writing... emerge[d] when authors saw themselves as having something valuable to sell" (Hammond 24). It is at this time as well that our conception of a "hack", or at that time the adjective "hackney" as derived from "hackney coach" (a coach for hire), came into common usage. Pope and Addison,

among others, applied it to writers who hired out their skill.[12]

Lord Chesterfield, in condemning the Licensing Bill of 1737 – a bill that was bound to put a lot of early professional authors out of work – defined this "skill" as wit. He spoke before parliament: "[w]it, my Lords, is a sort of property: it is the property of those who have it, and too often the only property they have to depend on. It is indeed but a precarious dependence" (Hammond 39). For those not blessed with enough capital to satisfy their physical need so that they may attempt or carry on their "true labour", more alienating forms of labour become their only option. The true labour of fulfilling human potential becomes the alienated labour of fulfilling physical need. Marx himself felt "the imperative necessity of working for a living... [at] the New York *Tribune*... [which] cause[d] very great interruption in [his] studies" (Feuer 46).

If an author is in possession of "wit", the activity of its externalization may be hired out to help support the author's ideal labour. This may, as in the case of Marx, be for a wage, and therefore be productive labour. Productive labour, meaning the surplus capital generated by his living labour (the hours he contributed to the newspaper), went into furthering the power of the owners of that specific media's means of production. Since Marx most likely had creative control over the content of his articles, the alienation of his activity was not to the degree of some that we will examine shortly. This creative control that Marx was able to maintain when hiring out his skill was in direct proportion to his perceived

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[12] According to the *OED*, the term first appears as early as 1589, with Richard Harvey, who asks "Is it conscience or lucre, that spurgals thy hackney pen?" -- but for my purpose occurs most notably and pointedly in opposition to professional writers with the popular and widely disseminated writings of Pope (e.g. *Essay on Criticism*) and Addison (e.g. *Lover* No. 39) in the early eighteenth century.

stock of wit. In a capitalist framework, wit can be seen as "a form of capital situated somewhere between the stock of goods or investment funding required to launch oneself in any trading concern and the [pool] of knowledge improved by mental training required to prepare oneself for a profession" (Hammond 6). To develop the pool of knowledge required for the expression of saleable wit, the author must have not only the time, but also the access to this knowledge. This knowledge is present in previous commodifications of intellectual labour (e.g. books) and in the disseminations of "knowledge-mongering institution[s]"(Marx, Economic Works 484) that constitute the stuff on which authors must labour to develop their potential. But what Eliot saw as necessary labour on Tradition is not equally accessible to aspiring artists. The cost of admission to public schools and to the ancient universities, and of books, let alone paper and ink, was a definite barrier for some, even sometimes the most famous canonized artists.[13]

Marx situated the labouring subject firmly in a web of interconnectivity. This web involves both subjects and also the environment (both physical and intellectual) on which they labour, a process resulting in the formation of culture. This aspect of human and environmental intersubjectivity/objectivity Marx called man's "species-being" (Marx 276). The stuff on which the author must labour is only a narrowing of the range of "[p]lants, animals, minerals, air, light, etc. [which] constitute, from the theoretical aspect, a part of human consciousness as objects of natural science and art; they are man's spiritual inorganic nature, his

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[13] Pope famously reused paper from letters and manuscripts, and, as I argue in "Deceit, Desire and The Dunciad", the socio-economic fact of his not having a university education was a handicap on his cultural authority and is evident in his relation to Richard Bentley and Lewis Theobald, and in the production of, and his obsession with, The Dunciad.

intellectual means of life, which he must first prepare for enjoyment and perpetuation" (Marx 277). There are two aspects of the environment on which humanity is dependent. The first has to do with physical needs, or "the direct means of life" (Marx 277). This first aspect is a requirement that once met allows a human being to perform the second aspect, the utilization of the environment "as the material object and instrument of his life activity" (Marx 277).

Ideally this interchange of the first and second aspects occurs with the first being only a means of realizing the second, allowing "animal" – a being only concerned or able to fulfill its physical needs – to become "human" by performing a "life activity" (Marx 276). On Milton's side of our spectrum this is the case. It is when the second becomes compromised to a greater and greater degree in serving the first that we slide down the scale and arrive at the level of the hack. This fettering of human life activity, by the imposition of physical need, results in the labourer making life activity compromises, or even in a full denial of the goals of their life activity. In the worst-case scenario it forces the "human" to become an "animal" (Marx 276).

Outside of the ideal cases, all authors are alienated to some extent, as it seems the very environment (Eliot's Tradition in the form of books) on which they work, like the raw material supplied for an artisan by a factory owner, has already been commodified by the reality of the author-function. Today aspiring authors have the help of levelling institutions such a libraries and merit-based scholarships. In the early eighteenth century there was access to periodicals in

coffee shops[14] and perhaps support through the last vestiges of patronage. However, in both cases, the privatization of knowledge through costly books and educational institutions is a fetter on the free development of the wit-building life activity of the would-be author. If there are fetters on the process of creating a pool of knowledge on which to draw in order to create art, the art will be impoverished. This results in a catch-22 type of downward spiral as the ability to free oneself from physical need is dependent on being free from such physical need, as it is only in freedom from need that one might have the time and means to acquire the pool of knowledge, the skill or the wit to earn recognition and a foothold in the industry. When, as Lord Chesterfield stated, this wit must be auctioned off to put bread on the table, the unfortunate reality is that the wit, due to the fettered circumstances of its accumulation, is seldom of the finest quality.

Marx appreciated well-constructed, allusive, complex, and seemingly timeless literature. He was a lover of Shakespeare, and "he pointed out that Greek art and poetry 'still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment.' The social childhood of mankind with its artistic creations exerts 'an eternal charm' even though it will never return" (Rader 238). If we add a greater degree of alienation of the literary life activity to an author's situation, the art's "eternal charm" dissolves into writing that shows the "palpable design (in the Keatsian phrase) that we pay for it" (Hammond 5). The art becomes craftsmanship, the artist an artisan.

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[14] Although some public lending libraries were in existence as early as the early seventeenth century, the institution as we know it did not arrive in England until the Public Libraries Act of 1850.

Perhaps the literary opposite of the art that Marx loved was the genre pulp fiction produced in the U.S. during the late nineteenth century. It may be here that we see the full division within the market of high-cultural from mass-cultural products as defined as a characteristic of the modern period by Pierre Bourdieu (Kramnick 7). Meant for quick consumption by an uneducated, barely literate mass population, genre-pulp was shoddily constructed, formulaic or semi-plagiarized, simple, and very much of its time. The socio-economic conditions of its production were largely responsible for all of these factors. When an author is paid by the word, the literary economy of language is destroyed. When it is written under a deadline, time-consuming allusions become outright plagiarism. When a publisher tailors the subject matter for the sole purpose of market appeal, the author is forced to cater to the lowest common denominator of taste. Finally the product is completely alienated from the author by the effacement of literary ownership present in ghostwriting, pseudonyms, and serials written under one name but penned by various authors. This "hackwork" written in an effort to make what might be a vital "quick buck" is indicative of economic forces at work on the cultural field - "[a]s the traffic in literature and art expands, the economic field exerts a pervasively negative influence on the cultural field. Exchange value opposes itself to aesthetic value" (Kramnick 7).

In the early eighteenth century, many of the now-canonical writers such as Swift, Fielding and Pope, viewed the ideal of literary authorial production exemplified by Milton to have become corrupted by the emergent capitalistic professionalization of writing. In Fielding's satire The Author's Farce (1730),

authors "have become... the alienated labourers in a cynical and exploitative book factory, the nature of the output entirely specified in the requirements of the middle-man" (Hammond 30). This is indicative of an advanced state of alienation in which

> the worker becomes a slave of the object; first, in that he receives
> an *object of work*, i.e. receives *work*, and secondly, in that he
> receives a *means of subsistence.* Thus the object enables him to
> exist, first as a *worker* and secondly, as a *physical subject.* The
> culmination of this enslavement is that he can only maintain himself
> as a *physical subject* so far as he is a *worker,* and that it is as a
> *physical subject* that he is a worker. (Marx 274)

The hack, being poor and constantly toiling for subsistence, is alienated from tradition (the nature the author must transform through labour). The hack is therefore unable to perform the vital "life-activity" of externalizing themselves though labour into art. Their aspirations of producing a work that will achieve permanence are foiled as less-alienated authors and the emerging ranks of professional critics identify their work as "hackney scribbling".

The final phase of alienation is that "man is alienated from other men" (Marx 278). This phase is revealed in satire like Pope's *The Dunciad* (1728). Pope, who at that time had solidified his place as a literary authority through numerous successful publications, differentiates himself and his work from his competition by satirizing the failing economic efforts of the neediest of the "Grub Street" hacks. Ideally, in an alienation-free world, each author could recognize

the life-activity of every other as valid. However, in a competitive literary marketplace, an author like Pope exploits the alienation of the hack writer in order to create his own art and a profit. The exclusionary intent of authors like Pope, and their goal of highlighting this difference and hierarchy through satire, is symptomatic of this final phase of Marxist alienation.

In the literary world, the term hack is one of exclusion. Under the conditions of professional writing, exclusion through competition comes about through the reality of scarcity and demands of the economy. Perhaps in a post-revolutionary, alienation-free world, satirical attacks, criticism, and competition for a place in the canon would be unnecessary as all works would be valid art – in the Marxist sense that they are manifestations of free individuals performing their life-activity. However, in the competitive world of the literary marketplace there are a limited number of book-buying consumers and praise-granting critics. Money and praise, respectively, keep books in print and together determine, largely, what ends up in the canon. Alienated writers, e.g. Eliza Haywood, may write bestsellers[15], but without critical acclaim and the support of fellow authors, suffer erasure (and often critical damnation) in the future.

Not only is scarcity an issue, but if everyone were to have their turn as the "immortal bard", a lack of productive labour would also come about. If in order to

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[15] Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1724) was one of the top grossing books of the eighteenth century, but suffered erasure for several reasons, first, that the work was genre fiction – resembling what we would call a "romance novel", second, that it appealed to a female audience, and third, as a result of the first two reasons, was attacked by literary critics and authors of "high-art" like Pope. Haywood's impressive range and volume of literary output is testament both to her "stock of wit" (despite of her lack of a traditional education) and also to her alienation, as much of it was generated quickly to alleviate economic need.

write everyone abandoned their jobs, who would provide the physical means of

subsistence? The economy would collapse – Pope writes:

> Is there a Parson, much be-mus'd in Beer,
>
> A maudlin Poetess, a ryming Peer,
>
> A Clerk, foredoom'd his Father's soul to cross,
>
> Who pens a Stanza when he should *engross*?

<div align="right">

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (15-18)

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These complaints may be read as legitimate concerns or as a technique by Pope

to exclude those who do not already have a "stock of wit" (built through education

and literary labour) and also the money with which to supply their physical needs

while they embark on the path to Parnassus. According to Pope, the part-time

author should concentrate on performing their productive labour and leave artistic

creation to those better suited for the task (i.e. able to unfetter themselves from

the yoke of economic need).

An important and revealing aspect of the fact of general alienation, the

poles dividing by degree alone, can be seen in the marketing mechanism of

satire. This aspect is especially apparent in the works of Pope, perhaps the most

acclaimed literary writer during the rise of professional writing. Hammond and

many other theorists who write about the eighteenth century have revised the

stark superficial dualistic interpretation of hack/genius that was promulgated by

such works as *The Dunciad* to include a more nuanced view. Hammond writes,

"whereas Pope's writing has helped to shape a lasting distaste for profit as a

motive in the production of literature that the writer hopes will be considered of

enduring value, he was himself profit's creature" (4). Pope, in particular, was to

exploit the alienating socio-economic conditions of his competitors in the name of

aesthetics. In other words he used their alienation from their own labour as

ammunition to make damaging aesthetic judgments against them. Pope's

exploitation of the alienation of other artists, of worker from worker, according to

Marx's conception, is linked to that seemingly innocuous first step of Milton's in

alienating his essence for five pounds. Step-by-step, the path of the development

of print-capitalism leads to the exclusion, economic impoverishment and

historical erasure of countless artists who would attempt to perform the life-

activity of literary labour.

The commodification of cultural work and the resulting rise of the author-

function creates canonization for literary labourers with the cultural and monetary

capital to realize their "universal essence" and erasure for those unable to do so.

As is evident in Eliot's "impersonal theory" mentioned in part one of this study, by

the time we arrive at notions of canon formation in the early twentieth century,

the social and economic context of literary production has been culled from the

historic account by literary theory and critical attention is solidly focused on the

"timeless" qualities of "beauty" and "aesthetic harmony" (Eagleton 18). A chance

for a revaluation of some previously popular but alienated and non-canonized

writers, e.g. Eliza Heywood, would not arrive until after the waning of the

influence of Eliot and "New Criticism" later in the twentieth century.

One problem that comes up in an analysis of canon formation in relation to

Marxist alienation is Marx's own acceptance of the genius of past writers and

their achievement of human potential. While not surprising when considering

Marx's definition of humanity as creative, this does seem to conflict with Marx's

formulation of "superstructure". In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx wrote "that

man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness,

changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence" (as quoted

in Rader 237). If this is so, can Greek ideas still resonate with us today? If we

grant that Milton, being almost entirely free from alienation was able to create

"timeless" art, his material existence was not entirely different from our own. The

ancient world, on the other hand, was radically different. If we consider art a

manifestation of consciousness (superstructure) and maintain that it changes

with the dynamic "base" of material existence, would not the work of the Greeks

contain the ugly inequality of their slave-based economy?[16] Perhaps Greek

literature is "timeless" for us because its depiction of inequality reveals aspects of

inequality still present in our culture. There may also be a relation between the

artistry of exclusionary literary endeavours such as Pope's and the economic

"base" conditions of "print-capitalism" in which he operated. The competition,

division and struggle present in the literary marketplace to some extent shaped

and motivated some of the content of the literary art of that time. One might even

go so far as to say that the Marxist conception of the relationship between base

and superstructure may tie values such as "beauty" and "aesthetic harmony" to

conditions of inequality and exclusion.

The Marxist conception of the relationship between the conditions under

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[16] For an interesting discussion of this problem see Raymond Williams 'Base and
Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' (1967)

which the subject labours and the product of that labour is useful in enhancing or revising more idealistic or romantic conceptions of labour and creation. A Marxist revaluation of the process of canon formation calls into question Eliot's notion of canonized texts existing apart from the conditions of their production. When critical theory condones the examination of literary texts as reified and discrete art objects – "monuments" that seem to have a "timeless quality" – the traces of the active erasure of the struggles and social interdependencies of their production remain. This erasure stems from the fact that the "literary texts that have been most highly valued have been those that can most plausibly be examined in isolation from the broader culture of which they are an aspect – as the freestanding creation of an 'original genius'" (Hammond 15). When texts excluded from the canon remain obscure, when alienated hackwork is not part of the studied literary historical record, we not only lose these texts but also a chance at a closer perspective on the historical conditions out of which it, and the "higher" forms of writing, developed. From a Marxist perspective this seems especially damaging because the analysis of the material conditions of the production of the writing is an important reminder of the work to end alienation that has yet to be done. Part of this task may be a move away from traditional evaluations of art on a scale from "good" to "bad" or from "high" to "low". Terry Eagleton sees the "critic's task is not to range works upon an evaluative scale but to achieve scientific knowledge of the conditions of their historical possibility" (*C&I* 162).

We are able to achieve a deeper knowledge of Eliot's famous conception

of the process of canon formation through the philosophical tools of Hegel and Marx. Discovering the tradition on which Eliot laboured allows for an elaboration of his theory and for the conclusion that it does not present a full picture of the process that determines how an artist comes to produce art. A Marxist analysis of the conditions under which authors laboured at the time of the birth of the canon goes further in enriching and completing a depiction of this process. Works of art are not produced in isolation by original genius, but rise out of a complex set of historical conditions. The canonization or erasure of this art is likewise subject to historical determinates and is, to a large extent, dependent on the level of alienation experienced by the artist.

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