The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.
SEDIMENTATIONS: Reading Genre, Reading Across Genre

by

Shathley Q Abrahams

A mini thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the awards of the degree of Masters of Arts in Literary and Cultural Studies

Programme for Literary and Cultural Studies
Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
2002

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the awards of the degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this mini-thesis, from the work, or works of others has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: [Signed by candidate] Date: 18/6/2002
This thesis argues for, citing the example of four novels published at or near to the millennium, the establishment of an entirely new genre. But implicit in this is an investigation into what is meant by the term 'genre'. Further the nature of these novels makes central the way in which these novels should be grouped over the grouping itself.

These novels; Margaret Atwood's The Blind Assassin, Liza Dalby's The Tale of Murasaki, Amy Tan's The Bonesetter's Daughter and Mark Danielewski's House of Leaves, each incorporate the excavation of earlier parts (chapters or even chapter-fragments) as text read by other characters within the novel. What is therefore in question is no longer, whether to inaugurate the new genre of 'archaeology', but what this inauguration bodes for genre itself.

The introduction to this thesis describes these novels and other literary works which display sympathetic tropes. Among these; From Hell by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, Enigma by Peter Milligan and Duncan Fegredo, It's a Good Life if you don't weaken by Seth, Images: My Life in Film by Ingmar Bergman and Time within Time by Andrey Tarkovsky. Each of these works share the trait of text excavating earlier text. In the case of the comics this trope is often performed as redrawing earlier artwork.

The thesis continues in its first chapter to investigate what exactly is meant by genre, both in technical and common terms. This is to establish a functional definition of genre, since in later stages the thesis suggests that 'archaeology' both undermines and reinforces 'genre'. This chapter relies heavily upon the work of Will Brooker, Tzvetan Todorov and Michel Foucault, with the books; Batman Unmasked, Genres in Discourse and The Archaeology of Knowledge respectively. This chapter ultimately concludes that genre is a hierarchy of meaning and it would be better to speak in terms of genre's origin or genre's ongoing history.

The second chapter demonstrates how, the central literary works may be considered as genre. This chapter explains exactly which tropes appear in the works and how they appear in common across the seven focal texts. This chapter concludes that genre exists based on the categories for genre as established by the theorists mentioned in the prior chapter.

The third chapter examines in which ways these texts collectively undermine and sometimes openly contradict the notions of genre as
established in the first chapter. The central question has become not one of establishing a new genre, but whether the new 'genre' does not do away with the notion of genre entirely. This chapter relies heavily upon the works of Ingmar Bergman and Andrey Tarkovsky, in addition to Graham Hancock's *Fingerprints of the Gods*.

Making use of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, the thesis finally remarks upon the use of 'archaeology' rather than its seemingly inherent contradictions. Rather than speaking of 'archaeology' as being proto-generic or nouveau-generic, 'archaeology' focuses attention on the act of grouping texts together. In this way, 'archaeology' should be understood as a self-meditating genre.
My thanks to Professor Joan Hambidge for providing the Afrikaans translation for the abstract I have written to this mini-thesis.

- Shathley Q
Hierdie tesis ondersoek die werkinge van 'n nuwe genre aan die hand van vier romans gepubliseer aan die einde van die millennium. Onderliggend aan hierdie ondersoek is die implikasies van die konsep 'genre'. Ook die aard van die romans bepaal die groepering of wyse van groepering.

Die romans sluit die volgende tekste in: Margaret Atwood se *The Blind Assassin*, Liza Dalby se *The Tale of Murasaki*, Amy Tan se *The Bonesetter's Daughter* en Mark Danielewski se *House of Leaves*.

Elkeen van hierdie tekste inkorporeer die uitdelwing van 'n vorige gedeelte (hoofstukke of hoofstuk-fragmente) soos wat die teks gelees word deur ander karakters in die roman. Wat dus tersaaklik word, is nie die vraag na die instelling van 'n nuwe genre van 'argeologie' nie, maar eerder wat dit behels vir die genre as sodanig.

Die inleiding tot hierdie mini-tesis beskryf die struktuur van die romans en ander romans wat soortgelyke trope openbaar. Onder andere; *From Hell* deur Alan Moore en Eddie Campbell, *Enigma*, deur Peter Milligan en Duncan Fegredo, *It's a Good Life if you don't Weaken* deur Seth, *Images: My Life in Film* deur Ingmar Bergman en *Time within Time* deur Andrey Tarkovsky. Elkeen van hierdie romans behels 'n verhaal waarin 'n vorige verhaal opgediep word. In die geval van strokiesverhale word die troep vergestalt as 'n kunswerk wat her-tekens.

Die tesis ondersoek in die eerste hoofstuk die betekenis van genre in 'n tegniese en algemene betekenis. 'n Funksionele definisie word gevestig, aangesien daar later aangevoer word dat die 'argeologie' sowel betekenis ondermyn as bevestig. In hierdie hoofstuk word daar sterk geleun op die tekste van Will Brooker, Tzvetan Todorov, Michel Foucault, met hul tekste; *Batman Unmasked*, *Genres in Discourse* en *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Hier word aangetoon dat genre die hierargie van betekenis behels en dat dit relevanter sal wees om te verwys na die oorsprong en aaneenlopende geskiedenis van genre.

In die tweede hoofstuk word aangetoon hoe die sentrale letterkundige tekste 'n genre blootlé. Spesifieke trope word uitgewys en hul aanwesigheid in die sewe primêre tekste. In hierdie hoofstuk word daar gekonkludeer dat genre wel bestaan volgens die kategorieë van die bestaande teoretici soos aangetoon in die vorige hoofstuk.

In die derde hoofstuk word daar ondersoek ingestel in welke mate hierdie tekste kollektief die konsep van genre ondermyn en
kontradiktories daarmee werk. Die sentrale vraag is dus nie net meer om 'n nuwe genre daar te stel nie, maar in welke mate hierdie nuwe 'genre' nie die konsep genre as sodanig ondermyn nie. Hierdie hoofstuk slaan sterk op die tekste van Ingmar Bergman en Andrey Tarkovsky, in aansluiting by Graham Hancock se *Fingerprints of the Gods*.

Sun Tzu se *Art of War* word ten slotte betrek ten einde die gebruik van 'argeologie' te bevestig eerder as om in die teenstrydige gebruikte te verval. In plaas van om te verwys na 'n 'argeologie' as proto-generies of nouveau-generies, kan 'argeologie' aangewend word om tekste saam te groepeer. So beskou, kan 'argeologie' as 'n self-mediterende genre gesien word.
Introduction: First Circles

In recent days an entirely new genre seems to have emerged. Or is it a genre at all? At first it seems to be a genre of fiction, later it comes to undo our preconceptions, classical or otherwise, it comes to undo our 'natural' or rather received expectations of what genre is and what it can do. Genre, it seems, can do yet more, more than we dared imagine.

In recent days books have been written and projects undertaken. Perhaps it is the sheer weight of the Millennium bearing down that pushes us to excel, that pushes us to believe we can deal with situations by a completely different pattern than our mothers and our fathers have dealt with them. Perhaps something else entirely pushes us forward. Nevertheless, this thesis begins much like an adventure story. This thesis is the narration of a certain sequence of events, a narration of the observations that arise from those events. But before even being a narration of this chain of events, this thesis is a narration of the artefacts from which everything arises.

In recent days books have been written. In the Common Era year of 2000, Mark Danielewski publishes his debut novel House of Leaves, Margaret Atwood publishes her Booker Prize Award-winner for the same year, the Blind Assassin and Liza Dalby publishes her first work of fiction, the Tale of Murasaki. Near mid-2001, Amy Tan publishes her latest offering, the Bonesetter's Daughter. These artefacts, these novels are connected neither by location, nor by historical period. House of Leaves is set in Los Angeles, simultaneously in the inner city and the outer suburbs, in what eerily passes for the present day. The Blind Assassin spans a human lifetime, set sometimes in the Canada of the post-war nineteen-forties and -fifties, sometimes in what passes unerringly for the Canada of the present-day, sometimes in the pre-war Canada of the nineteen-thirties and sometimes on a different world altogether, on Planet Zycron. The Tale of Murasaki is set in medieval Japan, in the eleventh century, spanning two generations, from mother to daughter. The Bonesetter's Daughter is set concurrently in contemporary San Francisco and pre-war China.

These novels are not connected by topic or situation or chain of events. House of Leaves, deals with (at least on one level) the slow descent of an LA tattoo parlour employee into a secluded and fanatical madness and fear of the dark (on another level entirely, House of Leaves
is the story of a family settling into their new home only to find more space inside the house than out). The Blind Assassin, deals with the life of Iris Murdoch (nee Chase) and her association with her sister Laura, who authored a post-war novel entitled The Blind Assassin. At another level entirely, The Blind Assassin is Laura Chase's the Blind Assassin. Margaret Atwood's own novel contains the text of her character's novel. The Tale of Murasaki is the story of Murasaki, a "real-life", historical character who is quite possibly the world's first novelist. She finds herself rocketed from a dowdy country widow to an imperial courtier after writing Genji Monogatari (the Tale of Genji), a tale of political and sexual intrigue. At another level entirely. The Tale of Murasaki is the tale of Murasaki's daughter, Katako, reading her mother's journals and hitherto unpublished drafts in an attempt to publish an authorised edition of Genji Monogatari. And The Bonesetter's Daughter, relates at one level, the story of a mother and daughter relationship. Of LuLing Young, the bonesetter of the title now finding the ravages of ageing finally taking their toll, and her daughter Ruth, a ghostwriter by profession who, because of her talent for her art, finds it increasingly more difficult to communicate with her own words. At one level, the Bonesetter's Daughter is the life-story of LuLing Young, her days spent growing up in the village; near the archaeological site where the Peking Man was excavated, where dragon bones were mined in the hills nearby. At another level entirely, this manuscript of LuLing's autobiography, is found, read and set out for being ghostwritten by her daughter.

But these novels are connected. By the same strange, intangible threads that connect pieces of literature so disparate as John Wyndham's Day of the Triffids and Arthur C Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey. The simple answer is of course, genre. What connects Day of the Triffids and 2001 is the genre of science fiction; despite the characters in Day of the Triffids being completely earthbound for the entire duration of the novel while characters in 2001 are bound to the earth for less than one quarter of the novel. The connection also between the four novels mentioned earlier which form the centrepiece of this thesis could be said to be genre. But this thesis is testament to the fact that the simple answer is far from the most elegant, and equally far from the most accurate.
Let us admit, however, that it is true that genre connects these four novels. But already the question arises, how four so disparate novels can be connected by a single genre. This is of course no real objection. Not an objection, in any case, that discredits our traditionally received notions of genre. As we have seen, science fiction can accommodate topics\(^1\) as diverse as genetic engineering of plants against the backdrop of a pseudo-realist twentieth century world (in the case of *Day of the Triffids*) and the colonisation of outer space set against the backdrop of a scientifically plausible, yet fantastical late twentieth-, early twenty-first century world (as in the case of 2001). So too can the thriller genre accommodate such diverse works as Tom Clancy's *Rainbow Six* (which deals with international intelligence gathering and counter-terrorism) and Stephen King's *Bag of Bones* (which deals primarily with a small-town conflict between a writer and a tyrannical millionaire). What makes for genre is more style of narration than topic. The story of a single working day in a plumber's life, with exactly the same quality of narrative detail can, depending on how it is written, just as easily conform to the thriller genre, as to science fiction, as to crime fiction, as to romance, as to how ever many genres one would care to mention. A commonsense understanding would therefore see genre more as a list of traits, rather than a restrictive set of rules producing exactly the same product, time and again.

Thinking in such terms, the foremost trait then, that allows these four novels to be connected is the theme of excavation. Of a literary excavation, of a textual excavation. It is this theme that has led me to think of this genre as 'archaeology'. Each of the four novels contains a text that is best tangential to the story we initially encounter. Each of the four novels also "contains" this other text as a complete and segregate text, which is the primary trait that distinguishes 'archaeology' from other genre. For *House of Leaves* this tangential, secondary\(^2\) text is the Navidson Record. It is an unpublished manuscript that Johnny Truant, the tattoo parlour employee, discovers in the apartment of a blind man, Zampanò. The Navidson Record is Zampanò's

---

\(^{1}\) I suppose here the common parlance would insist on *science fiction can accommodate subjects* ...I instead use the word topic, since subject has a very different semantic value for me. What subject, and object, mean to me I explain later.

\(^{2}\) Secondary is a poor word here, it incites the false appearance of the unearthed text somehow being inferior or inadequate. This is not the case, the narration in 'archaeology' arises in the intermezzo between these two or sometimes more texts, the first text that unearths and the second and sometimes also subsequent texts that are unearthed. Power relations, if any exist at all are not so simple a matter as master- and slave-text.
commentary on the 'actual, real-life' video record of Will Navidson, his life-partner Karen Green and their two children settling into the new family home on the very edges of suburbia, the border where the city bleeds out into the fluid spaces of the country. (As an aside, something which I wish to discuss at greater length later: Zampanò is blind, so it is of course impossible for him to have seen Navidson’s three films, let alone comment on these. Zampanò’s work must be a fiction in its entirety, and it is of little surprise that Truant hardly recognises Navidson or his work despite Zampanò’s claim of the films having won “worldwide, critical acclaim” and the family Navidson having become a ‘household name’. Inside this clever narrational structure, Danielewski introduces the idea of the text having a viable, ‘real-life’ existence, with so-called ‘real-life’ consequences despite it being “only text” or “obviously fictional”. In other words, Danielewski already introduces his own text into our representational framework that we term the “real-world”, and with this the possibility of it having an effect in this “real-world”, while simultaneously acknowledging its position as “only text”. It is this narrational strategy to make look towards House of Leaves as more groundbreaking than any of the other three novels.) The unearthed text in Margaret Atwood’s The Blind Assassin is Laura Chase’s own the Blind Assassin. A second excavated text appears within the Blind Assassin however, the characters themselves begin to write a pulp science fiction novel set on Planet Zycron. This second textual excavation is, like the first, contained by the larger text of the Blind Assassin. In The Tale of Murasaki, Katako, in her own daily life, excavates the actual journals of her mother. While in The Bonesetter’s Daughter Ruth excavates and attempts to ghostwrite her mother’s autobiography. These texts are not reminiscences, awakening waves of nostalgia. These excavated texts are not historical documents that function at some indescribable meta-level to a primary text. The excavated texts in each of these novels are functioning viable parts of the novel. Integral parts that are necessary for the completion of the narration. In each of these novels, and perhaps others still, the narration is no longer fixed to a single situation any more than it is fixed to a single character. The narration arises between situations, as a kind of intertext, as an event of the intermezzo.

I will consider this genre as ‘archaeology’. For obvious reasons first, excavation is perhaps the foremost theme tying these novels
together. But I have also thought of this genre as 'archaeology' rather than simply archaeology. The quotation marks play an important yet decisive role. These quotation marks are code. A reminder that this genre does not wholly appropriate the discourse of archaeology. Or more simply put, 'archaeology' is not archaeology, the genre includes more than only that discourse. The same is true for archaeology, it is the discourse of a specific branch of scientific endeavour that includes more than what 'archaeology' encompasses. And yet, there is a point of integration between these two discourses. 'Archaeology' refers more specifically to that shifting-zone, that bleeding-in point where 'archaeology' as literary genre and archaeology as discourse of scientific endeavour intersect.

Perhaps I could at this point expand the scope of this investigation. If novels can function to excavate texts within texts, perhaps so too can other media. Notably in the medium of comics in recent years is the work of Seth, *It's a Good Life if You Don't Weaken*. This comics novella details Seth's 'real-life' search for a minor New Yorker cartoonist who in the nineteen-fifties, worked under the name Kalo. Also Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's melodrama based on the so-called Jack the Ripper slayings, entitled *From Hell*. The narration of *From Hell* appears in the intermezzo between comics melodrama and the annotations that are the fruit of years of research into the actual Ripper slayings. And finally in *Enigma*, Peter Milligan and Duncan Fegredo display the tale of Michael Smith desperately searching for cartoonist Titus Bird. Titus Bird's comicbook, *the Enigma*, it seems has 'come to life' with disastrous consequences for Michael Smith personally and Pacific City at large.

Again each of these works is tied together by the trait of a textual excavation. Seth excavates work of Kalo, Moore and Campbell the killings of the so-called Ripper, and Milligan and Fegredo the fictional works of Titus Bird.

In 'archaeology' we are not confronted with "stories within stories". There is a unique kind of security that comes with the metafiction of Geoffrey Chaucer. It ends with certain necessary presuppositions being made, and these presuppositions are always valid. The primacy of the storyteller is one such presupposition that is always valid. If the story is personal, that is if the storyteller is personally involved, auditors know that no sequence of events could have occurred to
injure or kill the storyteller. The storyteller's very presence at the outset, to relate the story is proof enough against this. In another sense, it could be said that metafiction always produces closed story circles. It is for this reason that it becomes possible perhaps even plausible for readers to conceive of Chaucer's the Canterbury Tales as incomplete. In itself, the notion of a text as being incomplete, is as intriguing as it is amusing. Not every character Chaucer describes in the course of the Tales, has an opportunity to tell a story. The agreement made at the outset of the journey to Canterbury then, that the teller of the best story earn a meal at the expense of the teller of the worst story, has not been fulfilled. For some readers and critics this seems to signal the text of the Tales as somehow being incomplete. Of course if the text is dealt with as a text rather than an incomplete description of a sequence of events, then a new and perhaps self-sustaining field of scholarship is opened. Nevertheless, Chaucer's meta-level text, the story of the journey to Canterbury, is falsely perceived as being incomplete. Something can only be incomplete if there is the preconception of it having to be complete at some point. This perception of incompleteness can only be sustained by a belief of the story as somehow falling prey to an already given cycle of events. Already then, a mythical or mythological pattern emerges. Events will have completed themselves when the pattern is re woven.

'Archaeology' functions by a very different technology. Rather than presenting stories-within-stories, 'archaeology' presents 'texts within texts' or more precisely, 'texts-alongside-texts'. The excavation process is not performed as a narratival function, where characters in a meta-level tell others of an event, or event-sequence. Unlike metafiction, 'archaeology' unearths text and not narration. Zampanò's own manuscript is excavated and reprinted within House of Leaves. Laura Chase's own novel, the Blind Assassin, is reprinted within Margaret Atwood's The Blind Assassin. As are Murasaki's journals excavated by Katako in The Tale of Murasaki, as is LuLing Young's autobiography unearthed by her daughter in The Bonesetter's Daughter. Similarly the work of Kalo is unearthed by Seth in It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken, the history of the Ripper by Moore and Campbell in From Hell, and the fictional works of Titus Bird by Milligan and Fegredo in Enigma.
In another sense altogether, 'archaeology' never "closes" itself. Since, as readers, we encounter multiple texts, we also encounter multiple timelines, so that the texts can never encircle or close themselves off. The primacy of the narrator is destroyed, no safety net is allowed for the storyteller to survive, no guarantee that the inevitable will not catch-up to and eventually overtake the narrator, since the "primary" timeline evolves at the same time as "secondary" or "tertiary" timelines. Further still, there is no hierarchy of texts (this is a lesson that becomes painfully obvious for Johnny Truant in House of Leaves). There is no way to close the book, stop the storytelling, laugh out loud and claim that it was only a joke, or a bad dream, or just pinch yourself in the hope that somehow you'd awake in the real world. The so-called real world is, after all just another in a series of texts, in a different location, just waiting to be unearthed.

But if such a genre as 'archaeology' does exist, where are we to draw the line as to what is included and what is excluded? Would we include a piece like Ingmar Bergman's Images: My Life in Film, wherein Bergman recounts his experiences making certain of his films? I certainly believe so, the process of excavation is surely unmediated by artificial character (Certainly the argument can be made that Bergman himself takes the role of a narrator/character in Images, but he is given no more scope as a character here than when he directs one of the films he speaks about). Or what of Dean Motter and Mark Askwith's The Prisoner: Shattered Visage, which excavates the nineteen-fifties television espionage series, The Prisoner? These excavations are of course, of a very different nature to the seven excavations I have spoken of earlier. Both these excavations cross the borders of media, firstly. Bergman excavates his films in the medium of the novel, while Motter and Askwith excavate the television series as a comicbook. But Bergman (and later Andrei Tarkovsky as well) becomes more interesting for a different reason entirely - Bergman breaches the divide between fiction and non-fiction. What starts out as fiction for Bergman (that is, his films) ends as a meditation on memory (that is, as an act of non-fiction). What is this genre then, 'archaeology', that can cross media, appear as fiction, and yet harvest in one sweep, both fiction and non-fiction?

More deeply than any other style of writing in recent years, 'archaeology' seems to probe exactly what it means to make genre. What is
demanded or expected of genre, and how much of this is "necessary" to the idea of genre, and how much of this is simply accumulated through a process of 'reception of what is natural' (for example our "naturally received" notion of light is that it is singular and transparent, an unseen medium. Yet refracting light through a prism shows us that light is in fact made up of a number of different components, seven of them visible. This simple idea demonstrates how easily what is naturally received, can be confused with what actually is.), or as tradition. More than any other genre in recent days, 'archaeology' has come to show how intangible and elusive the tool of genre can be. It is easy enough to grasp the notion of genre. But once grasped this new tool seemingly disintegrates in our very grip. In the past, it is entirely possible that the situations were not as "genre-driven" as they are today. Today genre is everywhere for any of us to see. Today artists generate genre with their very footfalls. The genre of cyberpunk has been inaugurated somewhere between William Gibson (with Neuromancer) and Phillip K Dick (with Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, which formed the basis for Ridley Scott's film Bladerunner). The videogame genre of the first-person shooter is inaugurated by Jon Romero with Castle Wolfenstein 3D. The genre of the sneak-em-up is inaugurated by Hideo Kojima with Metal Gear. But in the past, it is entirely possible that art-production was no entirely so genre-centred. It is possible that genre itself was only a by-product of the artefact. That genre arose as a more general description of the ends of certain groups of texts. More a case of genre from artefact than artefact expressing genre. In some ways perhaps, artefact could be thought of as predating genre.

But this view is in itself totalising and in some ways tyrannical. Artefact no more informs genre than genre does artefact. The tension between artefact and genre is similar to Louis Althusser's perceived tension between the history and prehistory of an object. For Althusser, as John Higgins (1991) points out, there is a clear epistemological break that inaugurates a new object ("object" is a term Higgins uses from Althusser himself. For my own purposes I prefer "artefact", but this preference is something I will explain before ending this introduction). But Althusser relies on a narrative structure to time (as opposed to narrational), and this is ultimately limiting. For Althusser, the clear epistemological break means that the object has been inaugurated, and
what ever follows is history, and what ever precedes is prehistory. Prehistory of the object is a unique and intelligent perception on Althusser's part that objects do not simply appear from the heavens. Rather that they are shaped by the turnings of the histories of other objects. To give an example the medium of comics say, which on a monthly basis showcase the adventures of Batman, Superman and the X-Men among others, has no connection to the medium of the novel. The epistemological break that introduces us to the "object" of comics is the publication of The Yellow Kid in 1896. Superman, Batman and the X-Men, as they appear today are a part of the history of comics, and yet despite the epistemological break created in 1896, they share a very close link with the caricature work perfected by Charles Dickens in an altogether different medium. There is a clear connection between Dickens and cartooning, albeit that Dickens never worked in the actual medium of comics, per se. Dickens therefore forms a part of the prehistory rather than the history of comics. A part of the medium of comics that is related to an altogether other medium, but an integral part that nevertheless is of great importance to the medium in question.

This is a very subtle and very creative reading art production. But as perspicacious and liberating this reading may be, it is still restricted by its reliance on a narrative-style perception of time (a "before-now-after" mythology to codify and order all its expressions. Narrative-style perceptions produce such time-objects, frozen and immobile, while narration, a process of an entirely different order, produces time-subjects, or processes. The differentiations between object and subject I use here are of the same ilk as the differentiations practised by Henri Bergson between the same terms. I will again speak of these discriminations when I explain why the term "object" has, for me at least, very negative connotations). Nevertheless, Althusser relies heavily on a narrative-style account for his discrimination between history and prehistory. At one point there is a very clear epistemological break. Everything before that break is prehistory to the object in question. Everything thereafter is history to that object. But does the epistemological break signal the end of the prehistory, or could the prehistory be ongoing? Phrasing the question as I have obviously predisposes me to believing the latter, that the prehistory is in fact ongoing, despite the epistemological break. I would argue that the
comments made by Walter Benjamin on the Angel of History pertain here. Benjamin believed that what humanity perceives as a sequence of events, as a history in other words, is seen by the Angel of History simply as a pile of images, since the Angel is outside of time. If all time is simply a pile of images, surely it is possible then for the history and prehistory of the so-called object to exist simultaneously?

With Althusser in the light of Benjamin, it becomes possible then to understand Dennis O'Neil's comments (The Many Lives of the Batman, p31) on comics writers Alan Moore and Frank Miller. O'Neil speaks of Moore as having 'the instincts of a novelist' and in the same breath of Miller as being 'in his soul, a visual writer... with the instincts of a movie maker,'. Given only Althusser's more rigid description of the pre/history tension as linear narrative only, O'Neil's comments would seem confusing. Especially since the commonly accepted epistemological break for comics predates the commonly accepted epistemological break for cinema. How then could Miller's writing point to cinema as a prehistory for comics? O'Neil's comments however, tend more towards a Benjamin-esque Angel of History perception of comics writing. A perception where the history and prehistory coexist simultaneously. The novel for Moore and the cinema for Miller then become part of a comics prehistory that does not cease once the epistemological break occurs. Instead of then being a point in a narrative, Benjamin transforms Althusser's epistemological break into a frame for understanding. It becomes as likely then, to take up our former example of comics, to understand how Don DeLillo's White Noise might be a part of Frank Miller, Klaus Jansen and Lynn Varley's Batman: the Dark Knight Returns, despite when they may have been published relative to each other.

In much the same way as delineated here between history and prehistory, a tactical interplay between artefact and genre could be said to exist. I have suggested earlier, that in the past art-production could have been highly different, not as genre-centred. That perhaps selling a television show to the entertainment-broadcast industry could have meant selling a television show and not a 'action-spy-thriller with a weekly romantic interest'. I do not necessarily believe that things were

---

1 Dennis O'Neil is group editor for monthly magazines which involve DC Comics' Batman and related characters like Nightwing, Robin, Azrael, Catwoman, Batgirl, etc. Comments made here about Moore and Miller can be found in an interview entitled Notes from the Batcave, published in the Many Lives of the Batman (work as referenced in Bibliography which follows after Conclusion). These comments may be found on page 31.
necessarily so in the past, and I do not yearn back fondly for a simpler, more innocent and more carefree time. Evoking the past here is a tactical engagement. It introduces the possibility of, 'in another time, in another place' things being not as we find them now. Given our situations, it becomes very easy to think of artworks as originating in genre. Given different situations, it is equally plausible to speak of genre as originating in artefact. However it is not a question of origins. It is a question of the tension between genre and artefact. Again if time is nothing but a pile of images, genre and artefact can necessarily exist simultaneously in a kind of a tension. Or in other words, genre and artefact can exist as distinct and distinguishable phases within the same process, much like ice and water-vapour existing as different phases of water on the same water-cycle. Rather than attempting to write a convincing history of artefact and genre and the breaks between them and how one becomes the other then becomes its "proper" self again... Rather than tracing this meaninglessness of a history, I would attempt to use this tension to describe genre and artefact as related by a cycle, or a circuit. In this thesis I would like to explore this tension between artefact and genre as different phases of the same cycle, in its relation to the production of text, especially in relation to the "genre" of 'archaeology'.

One final point is left to be made at the outset; an explanation of my paranoia around the use of the word "object". In truth this stems directly from Bergson's own meaning of the terms "subject" and "object". For Bergson an object is a thing which can be divided in any one of a number of different ways. A chair, for example, can be divided into its component parts, into metal, plastic, fibre. Or into use, production, location. Or into property and taxation. Or into anyone of a number of possible divisions. How would you describe a chair? In terms of its use-value, in terms of its agreed price? What if the chair were an antique carved from rare wood? How would its price be settled? And how would you account for the tree it had once been?

For Bergson a subject is of a different order altogether. Different states exist simultaneously within the subject. Hope. Fear. Joy. Sorrow. Health. Security. Peace. Anarchy. Internal Stability. For reasons sometimes internal, sometimes altogether different, one state bubbles to the surface and resurfaces the entire subject. A façade is created and an
entire subject is reinterpreted in terms of this façade. Happiness, if it is the "dominant" state, becomes an interpretive lens with which we may view the entire subject and its actions.

Objects are divisible into component parts, subjects remain indivisible. Not suspiciously freudian, but it remains as a rationalist reading the psyche. Objects produce objects, likewise subjects, subjects. And in my own reading, narrative (which relates the inherent English-language structure of subject-verb-object) with its before-now-after structure conforms to the production of objects. In this schema, the narratival "subject" can be no more than a mere agent, a mere drone running the course of its programming, not something capable of individual action or thought. Narration, on the other hand (which expresses itself in such sentences as "He smiled"), produces a state where focus of the "story" is turned in upon itself producing subjects in this way. Why would "he" smile? What will "he" do after he smiles? A different kind of question arises in response to a narration.

While objects are sterile and unproductive then, subjects are always involved in processes that are no longer merely themselves. But there is a limited apperception of the world as being merely composed of objects. If this kind of iron-fist thinking were true how could we even begin to explain phenomena like the water-cycle, symbiosis, bionics, the auroras, or even SETI. All of these ideological structures cast objects as being "no-longer-for-themselves". Water as fluid is already ice, or it will be soon enough. Yet in all its diverse forms, it is still named with the common noun, "water". A star is no longer a star, but it is on its way to becoming, a radiowave form monitored for aberration. And for bionics, a dolphin is already the precursor of the military-industrial complex. There is a way of perceiving of "things" as no longer being limited by three dimensions, but as existing as events, or processes. An artefact is an almost unique reference for such processes then. An artefact, when it is excavated, is already "here to go", as Warren Ellis might say. Already on its way to a museum. Even once it has arrived, an artefact is uniquely associated with another time and a different culture. An artefact, any artefact, always occupies a different cultural space. It may once have been a spoon, but now it is a clue to a lost civilisation. "Artefact"

\footnote{the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence}
\footnote{As he does indeed say in issues six and twenty-five of DC's monthly comicbook Transmetropolitan.}
then becomes a unique way of describing a "thing" as no longer being limited by three or four spatial dimensions, but a way of speaking of something across multiple dimensions, as the first stirrings of a process.

The remainder of this thesis is easily divided into four segments. The first of these considers the question of genre. What is genre and what it means to make genre. This chapter will provide the theoretical backdrop for what is to follow. The second chapter will consider 'archaeology' as a genre. What arguments could be made for 'archaeology' as a genre and why it is more plausible to think of 'archaeology' as being a genre distinct from other genres such as metafiction. The third chapter will deal with the problems which arise from considering 'archaeology' as a genre, and the conditions which ensue from these considerations. What, for example, is the role of the museum or the role of worship, and how does it imbricate itself with the genre of 'archaeology'? The fourth subsequent, and final chapter will contain my closing remarks.

First Chapter

What does it mean to make genre? If it is my claim that 'archaeology' is a genre such that once it is grasped at it disintegrates within our grip, if it is my claim that 'archaeology' contradicts our traditionally received notions of genre, then at least we should be able to understand what genre is, before we understand how it is contradicted. This chapter endeavours to explore what is meant by the word 'genre', and what is involved with making genre. I would first like to isolate the three most divergent senses in which I have encountered the use of the word. It is my hope that these three senses, segregate yet bound together, will form the basis of a map for what is fully meant by the term 'genre'. Following this I wish to discuss further implications of genre, both as term and concept, such as genre and hierarchy, and an altered apperception of genre in light of the work done by Stephen Knight, Will Brooker and Graham Hancock & Robert Bauval.

In common usage there are least two senses of the term 'genre', both of which at least seem to be correct. In the first sense, my own, genre
means something very small. It is a particular expression of something which is tied to a specific medium. It is a kind of collective agency, gathering up artefacts with similar traits, in a particular medium. If our medium were cinema, say, genre at our disposal would be the romantic comedy, the action-adventure, the thriller, the horror, the western, etcetera, etcetera. Genre, in what has come to be my own thinking, also seems in some ways immanent. The romance, the horror, the western, are strangely mobile and can skip across media. They appear with equal fervour in television as they do in theatre, as they do in comics and as they do in any one of a number of different media. It is not impossible then to see a melodrama in comics then (as one does with From Hell) or a tragedy in the form of cinema (as with the CE year 2000 production of Hamlet, featuring Ethan Hawke. This is, despite recent years’ productions, the first film version to genuinely apply cinematic technique to one of Shakespeare’s tragedies).

But there is another sense, one which seems to arise from colleagues and teachers, in which the term ‘genre’ is used. In this sense genre still refers to a collective agency, grouping together similar terms, but in this instance, the level of its grouping is taken up one notch. Instead of grouping together various traits within different media, ‘genre’ now becomes a term that collects different media. Cinema, television, painting, the novel, comics, theatre, the short story all become different genre of the arts or of entertainment. The romance, the western and similar of their ilk all become sub-genre in a way. Or are wholly, embarrassingly, or otherwise omitted from the conversation.

The Chamber’s Twentieth Century Dictionary, seems amenable to both of these interpretations. It says of ‘genre’ that it is either a “kind” or “a literary species” (1981, p543). If the understanding of genre as “kind” is applied, the second estimate of “genre” becomes more palatable. Comedy as genre is acceptably a “kind” of entertainment, or a kind of expression of the arts. As is comics, or the novel or the short story. Yet this does not resolve the problems of the disappearance of the so-called “sub-genre”. Of course, the notion of genre as a group of traits within a given medium, is just as easily accommodated. It fits conveniently with Chamber’s notion of “a literary species”. Instead of a narrow, more technical definition, we should ask of “genre” to incorporate a broader spectrum of meaning. “Genre”, after all, can be
etymologically related with the Latin genus, meaning "type" and the Greek genea, meaning "race". The word "genre" is therefore etymologically related to "generous", "generate", "genesis", "generic", "general" and "genitor". Plainly put then, the meanings of all these words reverberate with the word "genre". Genre is already a case of the aspecific in both an ideological (general) and technical (generic) sense. Genre is already a case of the origin (genesis) and execution (generate) and executive agency (genitor). Genre is already a case of family, birth and magnanimity (generous, genea). When we speak of genre, we speak first of a range of possible meanings related to birth, production and racial privilege (generous from the Latin generosus, meaning of noble birth. Hence generosity first enters as a privilege of nobility). It is possible then that the two senses of the term "genre" we have encountered thus far, point at least to the same frame of reference, if not exactly to the same meaning denotatively. Could we ask anything less of a word for "general type"?

But something else emerges, another pattern altogether, from the different, perhaps at first glance, conflicting sense of "genre". It is a pattern that comes more clearly into focus once we read what Michel Foucault means when he speaks of genre. In first chapter of The Archaeology of Knowledge, (entitled the Unities of Discourse) Foucault speaks to 'the major types of discourse' and the 'distinction' between these. The 'types of discourse' he proceeds to cite are 'science, literature, philosophy, religion, history, fiction, etc' (1972, p22). But in the same sentence Foucault proceeds to name these types of discourse with a special or particular name. Foucault writes: 'Can one accept, as such, the distinction between the major types of discourse, or that between such forms or genres as science...?' (1972, p22). While the emphasis is my own, there can be no mistaking that Foucault’s understanding of genre is one where "genre" refers to a type of discourse.

Foucault’s apperception of genre takes the understanding of the term one level higher than even the prior perception. Just as genre is not merely the romance or science fiction or the western, it is also not simply the novel or cinema or theatre. All of literature is contained as a single "genre" by Foucault’s perception of the term. For Foucault then, science itself is genre, as is literature, as is medicine, as is
philosophy. For Foucault all genre is simply expressive of discourse, all genre is genre of discourse.

With Foucault added into the body of theory on genre, something else, as I have suggested before, arises for our newly-evolving map of the term "genre". There is a certain hierarchy, a certain continuum. At one end of the continuum, is the first apperception of genre. Genre as it appears within the confines of the medium. Genre as the romance, the situation-comedy, the detective-story. Further along this continuum, although nowhere near its other extreme, is the second apperception of genre. Genre as medium. Genre as television or genre as theatre or genre as cinema or as the novel. Foucault's apperception of genre stands at the other extreme of the continuum. Genre as genre of discourse. All of literature is genre. As is all of entertainment. Industry. Physics. History. Mathematics. Theology.

In addition to Foucault, there is another theorist with pertinent comments on the origin and the use of genre. Tzvetan Todorov contemplates in his book, Genres in Discourse, the origin of genre as a means to understanding the broader existence of the phenomenon. He writes (1990, p15): 'There has never been a literature without genres; it is a system in constant transformation, and historically speaking the question of origins cannot be separated from the terrain of the genres themselves.' Todorov begins to adopt the broader view of genres as a by-product of the usual movement of literature itself. An essentialist view, wherein genre cannot be distinguished from the broader sense of the literature that birthed it. What stands out however, is Todorov's description of genre as a 'system in constant transformation'. What is clear then is Todorov's claim that genre is the microcosm of literature; whatever happens on the level of literature, is mirrored on the level of genre. Further, genre is a system in 'constant transformation', in other words, a system that is never the same from any given moment to the next.

More so than Foucault, Todorov begins to examine the inherent paradoxes involved in making genre. Simply that, genre on the one hand means establishing an enclosed system, yet as a microcosm of literature, it already infers communication with an outside. Further, we infer from genre being an enclosed system, that it is stable, yet Todorov describes genre only as a 'system in constant transformation'. It is these apparent contradictions that 'archaeology' is uniquely positioned to incorporate
and engage with, by the very nature of its inter- and intratextual games. But to understand Todorov's reliance on these apparent contradictions to explain genre we must understand his broader ambitions for the chapter where he tries to establish the 'governing dynamics' of genre, as John Forbes Nash might put it.

Todorov explains (1990, p16): 'The question of origin that I should like to raise, however, is not historical, but systematic in nature... Not "what preceded the genres in time?" but "what presides over the birth of a genre, at any time?" More precisely, is there such a thing... as forms which, while they may foreshadow genres, are not yet included within them?'. What is at stake then is not a historical question then of which came first, genre or literature. But an evolutionary question of how genre came to be, and what it could possibly have been before "it" became genre. Given its multiple levels of text, its interplay of different genres in the same text, 'archaeology' makes central this usually well-hidden debate around a historical- versus an evolutionary-past to genre.

An evolutionary- rather than a historical-past means of course, other things must be asked of genre. It is no longer adequate to think of genre in terms of a progression through time. We must more likely begin to think of genre as a cycle that courses through literature. Genre enjoys, as Todorov supposes, the kind of existence that is best expressed in phases. Genre, and both its precursor and successor lie on the same evolutionary path.

For now let us return to what Todorov initially mentions, "There has never been a literature without genres..." (1990, p15). This is perhaps the most telling phrase that is used to mark the existence, the origin and the use of genre. The uniqueness of the phrase is of course the way in which it demonstrates time. It is not the usual map of time, the usual understanding of history. It is not the pattern of historical development that Todorov himself names I-here-now⁶. The register of time used in this description of genre is not of the commonly-expected order of one moment after another, and so on. Firstly, let us observe, that there is an intuitive link that Todorov makes between, on the one hand, genre and on the other, time. He does this with the phrase: "there has never been". While there is a connection made, we must also observe that the kind of

---

⁶ For Todorov (1990, p14) all of history is easily reduced to the pattern of I-here-now, the self-defining ego which locates a single point of human perception both in place and in time.
time that genre is connected with is not the time of historical progress, rather it is a perpetual time, an immanent time, similar to the time of the seasons. Time here is itself treated as object, this is clear enough from the use of the perfect tense.

In some ways we could speak of the perfect tense being the restorative of time itself. In The Invisibles: Kissing Mister Quimper, Grant Morrison cites Mozart speaking of his music having architecture, of Mozart being able to enter his own music and move up and down or sideways through it. It is this apperception of Mozart's that Morrison uses to dislodge our usual sense of time, suggesting that like Mozart's music, we may begin to experience time as a geometrical supersolid with a multidimensional architecture. Time, in other words, is an object, Morrison suggests. And like Mozart through his music, we can move up, down and sideways through it. Not simply in the straight line that we always do.

This perception of time is of course, not accommodated by the idea of historical time. Time can not be both a multidimensional architecture and a straight-line progression. But time as architecture is alluded to by such timekeepers as a seasonal or lunar calendar. It is with such calendars that the recurrence of events and the repetition of the cycle is emphasised over the ego locating itself in both time and space. The perfect tense is more representative of such an insight, lending itself to the wisdom that "if not this winter, then the next". It is the perfect tense that lends a more geographical interpretation to time. This has always been there..., It has never happened before. What we therefore see, is Todorov implicating genre in a schema of time that is geographical rather than historic.

It is the first suggestion of genre as artefact, genre itself as a so-called "time-machine", a device that is able to communicate across various times. The role of the artefact is simple and clear. Briefly let me say that the artefact is a way of recording the communication between past and present. That is to say a fork in our culture is simply a fork, but one thousand years from now a fork excavated is perhaps a priceless clue to a lost civilisation. By then a fork would simply no longer be a fork but an object of scientific study. The fork then becomes the preexisting record of past and present culture.

---

7 Kissing Mister Quimper by Grant Morrison and various artists, New York, DC Comics, 2000.
Todorov's use of the present perfect tense to describe the situation of genre is insightfully indicative of the use of genre. It prepares us to interpret genre as artefact, as a device encoded with two disparate times. Like Mozart moving through his music as were it a supersolid existing in multidimensional space, so can genre be used to navigate time. Genre is situational, but in being situational, it is expressive of both time past and time present that have added to its current situation. This reading is affirmed when Todorov proceeds to make use of the semi-colon which is the grammatical index to indicate either an explanation or a list. This list or explanation would only be necessary if genre itself referred to more than one thing, and we know already from the first phrase that what genre is referred to is time. Todorov's intuits therefore, without saying out loud, that genre communicates time. At a very basic level, and not necessarily in the way that the science-fiction of H G Wells has taught us to imagine it, genre is a "time-machine". It is a device that records as it defines the unspecified time around it.

What do we precisely mean when we speak of "genre", then? The question is less irrelevant than it is revealing. Demanding precision of meaning in a word such as "genre" is demanding a certain kind of technocracy. A rule by the technicians of meaning. This and not that, the line is to be drawn here and not there. This much and no more. How much longer will we allow for such despotism? The call for standardisation of meaning is a thinly-veiled call for the centrality of single meaning and its domination of others. It means capturing a word that is essentially a process and locking it down into the fixed and limited, fixing and limiting dimensions of being an object. To ask for a "precise" definition is to take artefact, 'here-to-go', and cut it off from everything it has been connected to. "Genre" "precisely" means a range of things. It is tied with race and culture as much as it is tied to privilege, production and execution. Genre is agency. Genre already appears no longer for itself, but for its type, for its grouping.

In this sense genre becomes almost uniquely "self-aware". It is able to, as a word, express a relationship with its referent. The word "genre" reinterprets a connection with the concept of "genre". The word is able to map itself and "show" where it lies in relation to its own concept. This is unlike most other words where we find the connection between word and referent is arbitrary. "Dog" need not refer to "four-legged, mammal..."
house-pet", and neither does it. But "genre" resounds with the concept of type. It typifies itself.

But the idea of a single instance or artefact coming to stand in for more than itself is not an entirely new one. The idea of the artefact as hierarchy or continuum is not a novel one. It has appeared before. And I wish to discuss one such appearance in a book that has become crucial to the fabrication of the theory behind this thesis. Time and again, I will return to The Mars Mystery, written by Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval and John Grigsby, as exemplar of not only 'archaeology' as genre, but also of the patterns and theoretical difficulties of 'archaeology'.

Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby attempt an understanding of the threat posed by comets or other large heavenly bodies impacting upon the earth. The threat is a very real one, and for these three writers, it is a threat that has been explained by the ancient Egyptians, and the same threat that was responsible for the destruction of the Martian planetscape. A very large part of this investigation naturally then falls to the task of cataloguing various comets, meteors, asteroids and other large heavenly bodies that traverse outer space. Basing their discussions on and around the work of astrophysicists Victor Clube and Bill Napier, among others the writers discover what could easily be termed a genealogy of comets. The first observation made by the three writers pertains to the decay of comets along their orbital paths.

Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby write: 'It seems that a process of evolution is at work in the life of comets and that long-period comets gradually change their orbits through 'the build-up of gravitational interactions with the major planets' to become intermediate-period comets and finally short-period comets with shorter and shorter orbits - so short, eventually, that they must either fall into the Sun or become enchained in the gravity of a planet.' The writers already begin to introduce the idea of variance within certain fixed parameters. A comet is no longer merely a comet for itself. It is comet of a certain type. Yet interaction with other celestial bodies begin to demonstrate how arbitrarily these boundaries may be crossed. Over time and with interaction, long-period orbits decay into intermediate-period orbits, intermediate-period orbits decay still further into short-period orbits, short-period orbits decay even further until the very idea of the comet

Footnote as preserved from original text here reads: 'Hoyle and Wickramasinghe, Lifecloud, 100'
that moves through the galaxy, appearing once in a fixed period, is completely disintegrated.

I will return to this idea again later, this fluidity within definition, once I discuss Will Brooker's idea on the fluidity of the Batman as a cultural icon. But for the moment it is sufficient to observe certain implications of Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby's comet theory for genre. Essentially, the three writers defeat the notion of precision of meaning for comets. What it means to be a long-period comet, or intermediate-period comet, or short-period comet, becomes less relevant than what it means to be a comet. A similar argument could likewise be applied to the three apperceptions of genre. Given varying contexts, "genre" comes to be associated with one of various many shades of meaning. That a comet is a comet is never in doubt for the three writers, similarly that genre meaning is tied to "type" or "kind" is never in doubt. But there is preordained, fixed existence for "genre", just like In The Beginning Zeus, Wodin, Ra, Or Whomever did not step down from All-Reaching-Infinity to divide all the comets into the long-, intermediate- and short-period comets that they are today. Things change. Genre and comets, both, over time. But Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby go even further still.

For them, the hierarchical theory of comets can be expanded even further. In a chapter fragment entitled Fragmenting giant comets they write: '...there are countless billions of comets in the Oort Cloud and the Kuiper Belt,... some of these comets seem to be 'spiralling in' towards the Sun... and... many objects previously believed to be asteroids are in fact the remains of former comets. In a sense, therefore, it is no longer useful to think of asteroids and comets as distinctly different objects. Instead, they look like consequences of an hierarchical disintegration process in which giant comets from the outer solar system with very long orbits migrate into the inner solar system, fragmenting along the way into a multitude of smaller shorter-period comets which in turn either collide with planets... or manage to avoid doing so.' Their theory in a nutshell then, states that comets, given the correct gravitational contexts, can decay into asteroids, and given different gravitational contexts, asteroids can once more activate themselves as comets. Comets, asteroids, meteors and meteorites are simply different phases of the same
cycle, sharing a relationship much like liquid water does with water vapour and ice. A comet, in other words, as process.

In the light of the work of Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby and the work of Clube and Napier before them, it becomes more acceptable then to view genre as a typifying process rather than a preordained, prefabricated type. Genre becomes its own artefact, its own object-that-no-longer-appears-for-itself, but stands in for a process. Genre as no longer merely type then, but genre as its own process, genre as its own artefact, genre as its own continuum. Genre as it writes itself, but even its writing is a form of rewriting, no longer performed alone, always with someone else that can never be fully named.

What interests me, from this point onwards, is the upper and lower limits of what can be included in genre. How far does this continuum stretch, what are its outermost reaches? Can a group of texts never the same from day to day, perpetually changing over time (an oral tradition poem like Arabian Nights, say) constitute a genre? Can a single word constitute genre? What is the uppermost limit of genre? That is to say, once something has evolved past genre, what is it then? And similarly it interests me to know what the lower limit of genre is. Just before it became genre, what had it been then? Of course these questions tie together with the hitherto undisclosed question at the very heart of this thesis. Is 'archaeology' a proto-genre, a form of genre so old that it hearkens back to the very moment of the inception of the concept, or is it a preter-genre, a form of genre that epitomises the concept’s next evolution? Is 'archaeology' genre’s past, or its future?

By some strange twist of the investigation, the answers to two former questions (What is genre’s uppermost limit, and what is its lowermost?) find themselves answered in readings I am undertaking in critical approaches to the Batman, a DC comicbook character of some notoriety that has in recent years inspired the production of poorer and poorer films. Let us begin by answering the latter question first, what is the lowermost limit of genre? Or, in other words, what is the smallest most minimal affect of genre? We may begin by applying what we already know about genre. What is genre? More or less, give or take, genre is a kind of type. In other words, genre is a generalisation. A certain kind of generalisation that lists and yet at the same time collects together certain traits. A genre then is simply a narration which is generally
true for a certain group of texts. Is it possible then for single theme to hold together and tell the most general tale of a group of texts?

I would suggest that this is the case. And that the practice of writing superheroes in general expresses exactly that. Unlike other practices, superheroes (and especially the superheroes that have been in print continuously for longer than sixty years; Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman) are written by more than one writer over the period of their publication. In the past this was not always the case for comics. Winsor Macay was clearly identified with Little Nemo, Will Eisner with the Spirit, just as today Hiroaki Samura is clearly identified with Blade of the Immortal and Neil Gaiman just as clearly with the Sandman.

In the realm of mass-published superheroes however, things work slightly differently. My concern is slightly different here as well, and it is not one that has been unexpressed. In essence I appeal to argument made by Will Brooker in Batman Unmasked, that given changing times, changing political circumstances, different writers with different ideas, a superhero (Brooker speaks specifically of Batman, but what he says remains valid for any superhero with a rich publishing history) can come to shift its signifying position. Frank Miller, writer of the seminal Batman: the Dark Knight Returns and Batman: Year One, is himself not unaware of the multitude of possibilities opened by a text such as the Batman. He seems in agreement with Brooker’s thinking when he says of the Batman: ‘He’s a character you can describe in a few seconds. His parents were murdered in front of his eyes when he was a kid - he’s warring on crime for the rest of his life... And he looks great! And the whole character is so simple, that it’s open to the widest variety of treatments and interpretations.’9 Miller adduces correctly the wide range of possibilities that are opened by a text like the Batman. It would seem that the Batman is defined more by what is excluded than by what is incorporated in the text. In other words, the Batman becomes a convenient way of speaking of a range of different texts. As does Superman, Wonder Woman or any superhero published within a market industry where generations of writers add to a single continuity, a single text.

I turn to Brooker’s thoughts directly on this matter:

---

9 I found Miller quoted directly in Superheroes by Richard Reynolds (bibliographic detail appears later) but Reynolds himself unfortunately fails to reference his source.
If Bruce Wayne [the Batman’s alter ego and within the text, originator of the Batman identity] moves toward a background, organisational role within continuity, ‘Batman’ will have to take on a wider meaning within the comics themselves... the word ['Batman'] will connote a concept rather than a single man – ‘Batman and Robin can never die’ – and will no longer simply mean Bruce Wayne. Rather than Batman as an individual, we might have to start thinking of the ‘Batman genre’

Within a ‘Batman genre story’, variation would be allowed, indeed expected, within a set of familiar rules... Some of the codes would always remain – a Bat-costume, gadgets, crime-fighting, Gotham – but some would be missing or altered. Batman might not be Bruce Wayne; he might be Bruce Wayne and Terry McGinnis, or Barbara Gordon, or Ziggy and Ronnie. Just as the boundaries of the Western genre have stretched to include the comedy-Western, musical Western and science fiction Western without losing the basic identifying characteristics of theme, if not iconography, so we could see – as indeed we have already seen – the science fiction Batman story, the comedy Batman story, the romantic Batman story. ‘Batman’ as a genre could embrace variation and improvisation around its core template... The concept can, as the past sixty years have shown, undergo a lot of changes and still be recognisable as Batman; just as ‘Star Trek’ has for many years meant more than Mr. Spock and James T. Kirk... so ‘Batman’, I would venture, is bigger than Bruce Wayne in a costume. As the Batman of the 853rd century remarked in Grant Morrison’s far-future extravaganza DC: One Million, ‘One Batman? You believe there can only be one Batman? Batman is not a man. I’m an ideal.’

(Will Brooker, Conclusion to Batman Unmasked, pp327-8)

10 Footnote as preserved from original text reads: ‘I’m indebted to Harry Hood, Kevin Gater and Nick Forrer, students at the Southampton Institute, for suggesting this concept to me.’

11 Footnote as preserved from original text reads: ‘Chuck Dixon, Greg Land et al, Detective Comics # 1,000,000, New York: DC Comics (November 85,271).’
Brooker attempts to contextualise the Batman within a tradition of sixty years of uninterrupted publication, and within a tradition of more than merely one writer over that unbroken period. But his ideas of Batman as genre are most clear. His thinking, depends on Batman becoming less and less associated with a single individual and appearing time and again as for itself. A Batman that is no longer merely attached to Bruce Wayne for identity, but one that even, as Brooker claims, 'Ziggy and Ronnie' have access to. Brooker is also writing in against a background that is post-Batman: the Dark Knight Returns, post-Elseworlds. In 1986, DC published a prestige format book written by Miller, entitled Batman: the Dark Knight Returns. In this book Miller depicts a Batman aged to his mid-sixties, slowly crawling back from retirement. One of the debates that raged at the time was whether or not this was the actual future of Bruce Wayne, the Batman and Gotham readers were witnessing, or whether it was only one among many possible futures. Some seven years later, by the early-nineties, DC seemed to have sorted the problem, with the introduction of their Elseworlds concept, a kind of project that spans the entire "DC Universe", without having the ‘firm’ existence of a fixed monthly title or associated hero or group of heroes. DC itself explains Elseworlds: ‘In Elseworlds, heroes are taken from their usual settings and put into strange times and places - some that have existed, or might have existed and others that can’t, couldn’t and shouldn’t exist.’ By 1986 there was still some doubt as to how, or indeed if such works of explorative fiction formed a part of DC’s ongoing canon loosely termed its continuity. With Elseworlds such problems evaporated. Elseworlds became an effective means to, with great visibility, tell stories that need not necessarily fit with DC’s greater continuity.

By the time Brooker writes the above extract in Batman Unmasked then, DC already begins indulging in experimentations with wider ranging implications for their superheroes. Writing against this background, Brooker opens our awareness to the possibility of non-canonical readings of any superhero text. For example, what if the Thomas and Martha Wayne [traditionally the parents of Bruce Wayne, the Batman] had had no children of their own, instead adopting the last scion of a dying world, Kal-El, the Kryptonian child that will eventually grow to become

---

12 This exact text is set to appear somewhere within every Elseworlds publication. This time, I have quoted the inscription from the Golden Age by James Robinson, Paul Smith and Richard Ory (DC, 1995).
Superman? This is exactly the plot for *Superman: Stray Bullets*\(^\text{13}\). Haunted by the murder of his parents, Kal-El goes on to become a dark and avenging presence waging a never-ending war on crime, rather than the reaching towards the nobility of the Superman that has come to inspire such powerful reactions. For Brooker then, it is no longer possible to view the Batman, but as a genre itself. And if this much is true at least for the Batman, then this much is true at least for all superheroes that have been published continuously over a number of years and handled by a number of different writers.

For my own purposes, for the purposes of this thesis, it now becomes possible to speak of genre then, as appearing as a single word. Batman, Superman, the Shadow, Spiderman, the Hulk come to appear less and less for themselves, less and less for individual characters but more and more for a set of traits that certain texts share in common. Much work has been done in this regard, towards establishing a single superhero no longer as an individual but as an "ideal" or as a lineage or as a generational saga, by James Robinson and his run on *Starman* especially with the group of texts entitled *Times Past*.\(^\text{14}\) Jack Knight finds himself unwillingly drawn into the "family business"; the superhero identity of the Starman invented in the forties by his father, Theodore Knight. It is possible then to begin to regard genre's most condense form as appearing as a single word, as the name of a character. But the name of a character that lists specific traits. We've encountered this kind of phrase. We've even used it before. It's 'the Dean Martin of it all,' as Jeph Loeb puts it in *The Witching Hour*.\(^\text{15}\)

If a single name that stands in for a character is the most condensed form of genre, what is genre's most elastic form, what is its broadest possible range? Later in his conclusion to *Batman Unmasked*, Brooker has ideas on this matter as well. But as he is clear to point out both here and earlier, his work is something which is based on the work of others who have come before him. Brooker ponders the possible future of the Batman especially in the light of comments made by Dennis O'Neil, to the effect that Batman might only survive the next decade or so. 'What if, in 2010,' Brooker asks, 'Batman has vanished from DC's racks and

---

\(^{13}\) Published by DC, 1993

\(^{14}\) *Starman* is published as a monthly magazine by DC, circa 1994. The series is set to end shortly as of mid-2001, when I now write.

\(^{15}\) *The Witching Hour*, by Jeph Loeb and Chris Bachalo published as three separate chapters by DC Vertigo in 1999. This line is quoted from the first chapter.
Warners' merchandising; if - institutionally - he no longer exists? Then I conjecture that he will become not a genre, but a myth: he will endure, but in a different way.'

For Brooker myth is the upper limit of genre. Brooker proceeds to describe the first story of the second issue of Batman: Black & White\(^\text{16}\), called Legend. Legend unfolds the tale of a mother telling her child a bedtime story. Things were once dark in Gotham. 'Muggings. Beatings. Shootings. Killings. The four horsemen of the apocalypse raged unchallenged across an illimitable domain. And then, from the darkest pit of hell, a champion arose.' In this world made safe the mother tells her child of darker times, and weaves the legend of the Batman that mastered the chaos. Legend has it that eventually this Dark Knight will rise once again when his people are threatened. The closing sequence of the story pans outwards to show the price to be paid for this perfect city is martial law. For every street-corner there is a soldier or two or three. Tanks ride freely through the streets emptied of civilians. A curfew is no doubt heavily enforced. And along the sides of buildings, giant banners unfurl to show the State iconography of a clenched iron fist raised high. In the closing panels, a shadow sweeps across the city streets, cast over the tyrants that perpetuate martial law. Finally the shadow takes a familiar form, it would seem that the Batman has arisen again.

Simonson's short story seems to key Brooker into a particular reading of Batman. One similar to that which has appeared in the work of Stephen Knight on Robin Hood, Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott on James Bond, Ken Gelder on the Vampire and Roberta Pearson and William Uricchio on the Batman. In Simonson's tale, the Batman evolves beyond the Bruce Wayne identity into the legend of the sleeping king who will answer his the call of his nation's direst need. Much like Arthur Pendragon or Charlemagne. The four works cited above all appear in Batman Unmasked, as staging points for the discussion. These works deal with (especially the work of Stephen Knight) the shifting significations that their title characters come to take on over time. Everybody has heard of Robin Hood, but in the Middle Ages he was merely depicted as an opponent of the law. The Elizabethans portrayed him as outlawed nobility warring against a

\(^\text{16}\) Batman: Black & White #2 published July 1996 by DC in New York. The three-issue limited series comprised various short stories by a number of artists and writers. Legend was written and drawn by Walter Simonson.
corrupt church, while the Restoration depiction of him played up his role in the restoration of Richard the Lionheart. Over time, these books argue, the central characters - Robin Hood, James Bond, the Vampire and the Batman - have lost, to a greater or lesser degree, a connection with any actual textual roots. Robin Hood expresses the furthest point of this evolution. Within a more limited period, James Bond expresses perhaps the next-best such development. And similarly the myth of the Vampire. Brooker continues to cite non-canonical endeavours such as fan-fiction internet websites (Websites specialising in publishing stories involving the Batman or any other character, written by fans. Such text is public domain and not “authorised” by the official publisher) which might easily continue production of the icon should DC suspend official publication of Batman. Batman, as a text, still has a viable existence in the popular imagination, despite cessation of official publication. In other words, for Brooker, should Batman evolve even beyond genre what would it become then? Quite simply, Batman beyond genre becomes mythology.

It now becomes possible to speak of genre as referring to a range of type. At one extreme genre means something so simple as traits in common, the romance, the detective story, science fiction or the thriller. At the opposite end, even what has usually been understood as medium becomes a genre of discourse. But genre appears even more simply, in a far more condensed form, as a single name referring to the common traits displayed by a single cultural icon. Frankenstein, Dracula, Batman, Robin Hood, James Bond. Even historical figures that have been separated from our own time by the mists of obscurity become viable genres. Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Sordello, Alexander. And even further still, once sufficient separation from any official text has taken place, as when sufficient gravitational interaction eventually brings orbiting comets to rest, genre finally may evolve into legend, myth or archetype. Official text becomes overcoded to a point where authenticity and authority is guaranteed any storyteller, merely by their speaking of the genre.

The concerns for 'archaeology' become clear now. What do we mean when we speak of 'archaeology' as a genre? Quite simply 'archaeology' as a genre means 'archaeology' as one of a number of ranges of concepts, all closely related to type. 'Archaeology' may therefore refer to something so simple as a single word, or something as textually weighted and as
far-reaching as a mythology. 'Archaeology' may appear as a type of fiction, among other types like the romance, the thriller, the western. Or it may appear as a type of medium among other medium, the equivalent of theatre, cinema or the novel. 'Archaeology' may even appear as a genre of discourse, like biology, religion or Reason.

And of course, when we speak later of 'archaeology' contravening very principles of genre, we naturally mean that 'archaeology' is none of these things. And that it will never be any of things.

Second Chapter

Is it by chance that Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval and John Grigsby begin their latest collaboration, *The Mars Mystery*, with an autopsy report? In the third chapter I will offer this project, this book itself and the past works by its authors, as a kind of 'archaeology' all of its own. This book is of great importance to an understanding of the broader ramifications of 'archaeology'. Hence my returning time and again to it, and later perhaps, more generally the work of Hancock and Bauval. Furthermore, I believe that autopsy is an important legend, in the sense that a legend is that which provides the key to understanding a map, to 'archaeology' itself. The theory of autopsy is therefore also of great importance to the project of mapping what could perhaps be termed the genre of 'archaeology'. It is therefore autopsy that I wish to speak about for the opening stages of this chapter, thereafter I will move on to discuss traits that are shared by the seven centrepiece texts (mentioned earlier in the introduction), and how these texts unfold in the light of autopsy theory. It should come as no surprise then, that I choose to open this chapter, choose to set its tone by examining possible connections between Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby's *The Mars Mystery*, and the field of the autopsy. Is it really by chance that these three writers begin their book with the report made after an autopsy?

When the announcements for their then newest project, *The Mars Mystery* were made, Hancock and Bauval were riding atop the crest of high acclaim for their previous collaborative work; *Keeper of Genesis*. Keeper

---

17 In the past Hancock and Bauval have written separately on mysteries to be found in ancient monuments. This is their specialised field, and together they have written *Keeper of Genesis*, book which delves the mysteries of the Egyptian Pyramids. This is their first book together with John Grigsby.
of Genesis had achieved more than a mere unearthing of new mysteries around the Egyptian Pyramids - it had proposed a new and very radical way of reading the Pyramids as a text. Most of the existing mysteries, Hancock and Bauval argued, evaporated like a fine mist in the morning sun if archaeologists, Egyptologists and numerous other scholars simply accepted a new view of ancient Egyptian history. What if the Egyptians credited with the construction of the Pyramids were really renovators, and human civilisation stretched as far back as 15 000 BC? The book details alternative studies providing solid evidence to support this claim. To its credit, this theory goes a long way to understanding the Pyramids, while at the same moment opening the Pyramids as a text for even further study.

Nothing is closed, nothing is explained away, and yet far and away, what Hancock and Bauval bequeath the field of Egyptology is an entirely new way of looking at its texts, a new way of studying its artefacts. More than anything, with Keeper of Genesis Hancock and Bauval have bequeathed the field of Egyptology a new way of reading the Pyramids. One that incorporates not only archaeological excavations, but also astronomy, geology, meteorology and a wide variety of other discourses. It is no longer enough to incestuously hold to the old patterns that have single-mindedly dictated terms since before the twentieth century. For Hancock and Bauval, it becomes necessary to now involve other branches of scientific discourse, and use these discourses to evaluate the validity of what has come to be the traditional view of the so-called Ancient World. Keeper of Genesis had also earned Hancock and Bauval a reputation as being in some senses professional debunkers of traditional academic discourse on the matter.

It was against this background then, that certain expectations of the then-forthcoming Mars Mystery came to the fore. It was generally expected that in their new book, Hancock and Bauval would challenge the traditional NASA\textsuperscript{18} view of the complex at Cydonia. In the seventies, during the period of unmanned satellite photography of Mars, Viking satellite missions photographed an arrangement which looked uncannily like a human face staring back. The satellite photos were of poor quality and subsequent missions have not re-photographed the area known as Cydonia. While NASA claims that the photograph is a trick played on the

\textsuperscript{18}The United States of America's, National Aeronautic Space Administration
eye by the way light hits natural contours at a certain angle, other scientists have engaged in studies to demonstrate how this photo cannot possibly be a hoax. Still others have ventured NASA has engaged in a conspiracy to cover-up the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence. Much to the surprise of anticipators, Hancock and Bauval, together with Grigsby remain remarkably silent on the Cydonian complex for the first part of the book. For them, rather than a face staring back being proof of extraterrestrial intelligence, the central Martian mystery is why the planet has died.

In the first section of the book, entitled the Murdered Planet, Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby paint a picture of Mars deduced from current observations. Mars was, contrary to popular scientific opinion, a vibrant and habitable planet some ten thousand years ago. Today Mars is a desolate planet, it is uninhabitable, barren and seems even incapable of supporting such basic requirements for life as water or an atmosphere. Water remains fixed as polar ice and the lack of a productive atmosphere means no water cycle exists to circulate the life-sustaining liquid through the planet. On the other hand, studies indicate that Mars was as life-giving and lush as the Earth itself. Suddenly, it seems that Mars was transformed, terra-formed into a bleak and inhospitable desert planet. All indications point to a single event as being responsible for this transformation. That whatever had happened, happened over a period of mere years, or perhaps as short as a period of months. What ever destroyed Mars, was both sudden and irrevocable, which accounts for its succeeding so well. What was responsible then for Mars being transformed from a life-sustaining planet to barren waste land, becomes the pivotal point of the investigation for Hancock and Bauval, along with Grigsby.

The Mars Mystery, or at least the section entitled the Murdered Planet, then reads like a work of crime fiction. Mars is dead. Whodunnit? Why? How? What was the sequence of events that lead up to the "murder" and what can this tell us about what is in store for the neighbour one door down, the Earth? Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby, begin with an examination of the flayed planet itself before launching into exposition of any theories they might have. Of course for my own interests, the entire process of reading that they engage in, is akin to performing an autopsy. And autopsies are central to a new apperception of text. Because for the autopsy, the body of the victim is no longer simply the end of a
human life, but the beginning also of an entirely different field of study. For the autopsy, the deceased body of the victim, the corpse, is no longer merely an object, but an artefact that is already reaching across strata. The corpse as here-to-go. The corpse that is on its way to the morgue. The corpse that becomes a register or a list of tiny clues that point to a killer and a sequence of events. At this point it becomes productive to refer directly to the work of Elisabeth Bronfen and Ian Rijsdijk on the topic of the autopsy.

Rijsdijk begins by describing the ages-old fascination with the corpse. For him the corpse, and the subsequent autopsy (be it in the formal, clinical environment of the medical examiner's morgue, or in the chaotic disarray of the crime scene) sets the bar for a strange mix of both fascination and repulsion. Writes Rijsdijk¹⁹: 'The investigation of the corpse is one of the most suspenseful and mesmerising scenes in films involving criminal investigation... the moment of contact between the investigator and the corpse creates a confluence of tensions that unsettle, disgust, but always fascinate the viewer. In that rarefied atmosphere that surrounds the body, and the clinical, distanced process of attempting to understand, the postmortem scene often transceeds the confines of the film to occupy a space of eerie significance.'

The encounter with the corpse presents a moment that is no longer fixed in time. Which is to say, the encounter with the corpse eludes signification. The corpse as an asignifying practice. Rijsdijk is very clear on this. The corpse, the postmortem scene often 'transceeds the confines of the film'. It 'occupies a space of eerie significance'. What is meant by these terms and how are we to read them? How does a scene in a piece of cinema, with obvious syntagmatic links to prior and ensuing filmic sequences come to 'transceed the confines of the film'? Surely Rijsdijk cannot mean that the text is magically transformed into something beyond itself? That there is a point where the filmic text ceases being an act of cinema and somehow becomes experience, or biology, or something else entirely? Surely Rijsdijk cannot be speaking of alchemy here? Rijsdijk’s comments must be taken into account in their entirety. It is no longer sufficient to hold him literally to his words, how ever economically they may disintegrate after once seeming so substantial.

¹⁹ In Inter Action 5 published by University of the Western Cape Press, 1997, edited by G Baderoon, C Roper and H Wittenberg. Rijsdijk’s paper is entitled Reading the Body: Postmortem Investigation and Relations within the Space of Autopsy.
Key to the reading of Rijsdijk I propose is the phrase ‘eerie significance’. This phrase stands not only at the end of a sentence but at the end of a paragraph, hence there is a clear connection between this phrase and a grammatical form of climax. Eerie significance seems to stand out as a highpoint of not only the sentence, but also the paragraph, evermore so since this phrase appears at the end of the opening paragraph of the essay. Rijsdijk’s writing seems to position this phenomenon marked by the phrase eerie significance, as something that specifically stands out above other phrases in the paragraph and more generally in the essay as a whole. This phenomenon marked by the text as eerie significance must be interpreted within the confines established by the text, further it would seem that eerie significance behaves in some ways like the state in a bergsonian subject, and the paragraph or essay as a whole as the bergsonian subject itself. Eerie significance, it would seem, comes to cover the paragraph and allow the entire paragraph to be read within its own terms. Significance has an obvious connection with Signification, that old devil of human endeavour. Significance, possibly as a state of signification. Significance as the existing state wherein things are signified. Eerie of course means strange, unearthly, macabre, mysterious or supernatural. Eerie significance then comes quite easily to be read as the state of signification that has somehow turned in on itself. Signification that no longer follows its own rules. Signification as it has managed to undermine and contravene itself. Significance that no longer observes its usual rules. Hence it is understandable that the postmortem scene should ‘transcend’ the signifying practices\(^{20}\) of the filmic text. The postmortem scene encapsulates time in an entirely new way, so as to confound Signification, so as to produce the sequence that transcends the filmic text, so as to create ‘that rarefied atmosphere that surrounds the body, and the clinical, distanced process of attempting to understand... eerie significance’.

Already there is a conflict of time in the postmortem scene. It is this conflict of time that makes the field of autopsy theory so important to ‘archaeology’. Already time is encapsulated, ordered by a very different process than the usual machineries of Signification. The corpse is out of time, displaced within a usual continuity. Elisabeth Bronfen

\(^{20}\) John Higgins, 1991 in Media Matters suggest that all cinema is composed of five signifying practices: Image, Dialogue, Music, Noise and Written Text
will attest to this when she describes Gabriel von Max's nineteenth century painting, *der Anatom*. The corpse records a time past, it is the culmination of a long string of clues that point to a disturbance of the usual process of signification. Transcending the film, it is as if cinema itself is dissected with every postmortem investigation. The processes of Signification have been interrupted, the dead body holds the clues. The dead body is uniquely positioned outside of time. It marks not only the end of a human life, the severance of connections with peers and colleagues, but also the body as text, the body on its way to somewhere else, the body as here-to-go. The body is already on its way to the sterile laboratories of the morgue. The clues point to a time that arrives along an altogether different vector, the past. The body remembers and records the traces of times passed by. And there is always the third vector which ends, marking the end of life and human achievement. It is no wonder then that Rijsdijk speaks of this moment as the 'rarefied atmosphere'. Three times tug at the corpse. The postmortem scene, however precursory the examination of the dead body may be, always elevates itself, transcends beyond the usual signifying elements. What is proffered here is not the dead body which starts the piece of crime fiction, but the dissection of the very medium which transmits that narration. In some ways, the postmortem scene is made from language. And as such its agenda always turns to its own uncompromising awareness of the signifying elements it is involved with.

In her 1992 book, *Over Her Dead Body*, Bronfen is herself very clear on the points raised by Rijsdijk. On the rarefied atmosphere, the clinical distanced process of attempting to understand, on the body as it transcends and on the eerie signification. In her opening chapter she begins with an analysis of *der Anatom*, a painting which details an investigator, quite possibly a medical examiner, peering down at a female corpse, covered fully but for its head and shoulders. The examiner has pulled the shroud down so as to see the corpse's face. Alongside the corpse on the examining table sits a tiny moth, in the background the examiner's study can be seen, a desk holds a great number of books. For Bronfen, the corpse is caught halfway between two segregate orders.

Bronfen suggests: 'As an object of the anatomist's gaze, it [the corpse] belongs to the paradigm of writing, so that the analogy presented is not only one between the corpse and art object but also one between
deanimated human body and text as a body of dead letters. If a corpse poses a 'hermeneutic task', the conjunction, in this particular case, between the dead body and the anatomist's paraphernalia suggests the promise of an answer to the enigma of mortality, sexuality and the origin of human existence. As an object of his analytic gaze the corpse is positioned between three sets of signifiers - his books, other fully decomposed heads and his manuscripts. The corpse will be read as a body of signs in relation to and in comparison with these other texts; with the readable skulls. More significantly the production of signs the corpse will in turn engender are his own writings. Because signification works on the basis of replacing an object with a sign, one can see it as supplementing and substituting its material objects of reference. Therefore signification can be understood as implying an absent body or causing the signified body's absence. The dead body as text serves as a metaphor of the correlation between designation, as well as interpretation, and absence.' (1992, p6).

The emphasis in points, is entirely my own doing, but even without these emphases the point is unmistakably clear. The corpse never appears for itself, never appears within a well-structured, well-ordered, here-the-world-makes-sense kind of time. The corpse already implies a kind of absence, a substitute or an act of signification. And the corpse is almost uniquely situated between the secrets of human origins on the one hand, the secrets of life immortal, and on the other, a healthy and continued further existence as text of the anatomist's writings. The corpse already bleeds together two genres, as Foucault might apply the term. Biology (or anatomy or autopsy) and literature. The corpse no longer belongs to either order but for the first time appears as an artefact keying us in to a larger process. Like the crossing of strata engendered by symbiosis. The corpse is the exact moment where the wasp appears as the becoming-orchid. The corpse as here-to-go. What was once a living human being is now on its way to becoming the object of dissection or writing. The corpse will endure, either as dissected organs placed into jars, floating in formaldehyde, or as a body of writings. From absence, the corpse as artefact is awaiting its return to absence, its return to the processes and machineries of signification.

21 Note as preserved from original text reads: 'M. Higonnet, 1986.'
Are we at all surprised then to find that Liza Dalby's *The Tale of Murasaki* opens with Katako's memories of her mother? Or that these memories appear in the form of a memory written down in a letter to Katako's own daughter? Dalby's novel opens with Katako's letter to her own unnamed daughter. The letter is a description of the day of Murasaki's funeral. Katako, Murasaki's only child, is pregnant with her own daughter. The letter appears not only as the opening chapter, but also as a frame for the subsequent chapters which detail Murasaki's journals and her work on *Genji Monogatari*.

Dalby herself seems clear on a connection between a life in letters and the moment of death. She has Katako write of her mother: 'She had been living in seclusion for some time. Some people, on hearing of her death, were surprised that she had still been alive.' (2000,1). And later in that same letter: 'I'm sure my mother became a recluse in order to disentangle herself from Genji. The work had come to envelop her life.' (2000,1). It is not by chance that this meditation upon memory of Katako appears in a letter, it could appear nowhere else. Katako's busy life of pregnancy and tending to her grandfather would not have allowed for it. Yet, the letter seems to allow for a kind of *eerie significance* to be engaged. Katako is able to transcend the medium of her life and put her thoughts down to paper. Such thoughts that would not be allowed for in the usual reign of ordinary affairs. And yet, Katako points to almost the opposite position in her own mother's life. That Murasaki's letters, her writings '...had come to envelop her life.' And that only the sanctity of isolation at Ishiyama Temple could somehow restore the balance. Katako's own writing, her letter to her daughter, is uniquely out of time. It is an autopsy of her mother's life, referring to the moment of her mother's funeral, written as a memory to a grown daughter that recalls a time when that daughter was unborn. Time folds around the letter that opens: 'I was pregnant with you when my mother died, but my condition was far from normal.' And time folds around this letter in such a way that it is no longer easy to mark the letter as fitting easily into a narrative-style description of time. And as such, the letter that opens the novel, sets a tone of *eerie significance* for the entire novel. Time is not a simple condition in *The Tale of Murasaki*. Time always seems to involve a looping-back, a rereading, a revisiting of text where everything is
absent, its absence pointed to by text. And the text that stands-in for
the thing that is absent is already only here-to-go.

Dalby's end to her debut novel is no different. Uncommonly, the
Author's Note appears after the novel has run its course rather than
before. And while this is perhaps not painfully groundbreaking of
tradition, it is in the very least unusual for an author to forego her
commentary as a means of introducing the text. Like Rijsdijk's eerie
significance, Dalby's Author’s Note appears as the highpoint of the
novel. Moreso, as its content begins to engage a process of summation.
The Author’s Note is the skin, the seal to the body of reading that we
have just completed.

It is not to be taken lightly that Dalby opens her concluding
remarks with her own memory: '...when I was sixteen. I read it slowly over
the course of a summer, and each time I opened the book I was transported
from a humid backyard gazebo in Indiana to the Japanese imperial court of
a thousand years ago...'. And it is not to be taken lightly that she uses
her own memory of the text to lead into a larger point about artefacts
standing ground in place of an absence: 'Legend has it that [Murasaki]
wrote about Prince Genji in a frenzy of inspiration prompted by gazing at
the full moon during a religious retreat to Ishiyama Temple. Indeed one
may see the "Genji Room" at this very temple, complete with a life-size
mannequin of Murasaki sitting at her writing table, with an appealing
little girl meant to be her daughter, Katako, peering out from the
background. This is a fiction, of course, but Japanese have an
irrepressible urge to fix the place - for homage if nothing else - by
asserting that this is where her Tale was created.'

Within the contract of the Author’s Note, Dalby already meets
certain conditions. Her own memory becomes imbricated with the memory of
a text. It is no longer a simple case of her memory standing in for
the text, but her memory always leading her away from the Indiana of the here
and now and backwards to a time that could never be her own, that of the
Japanese imperial court. But of course, within the contract of the
Author’s Note, this memory is only prelude. What is of real interest is
that not half a world away a nation has sprung up that has taken a
fiction, a legend (how treacherous a word, 'legend' that at once means
both 'fabrication' and 'explanation'), a nation that has taken text and
dragged it kicking and screaming into the so-called real world, 'for
homage if nothing else’. An artefact here-to-go now occupies the same space once occupied by Murasaki Shikibu. With awe and reverence, visitors may enter Ishiyama Temple and, in that rarefied atmosphere inspect the display. Dalby is quick to remind us ‘This is a fiction, of course,’ but the use of the subsequent coordinating conjunction, ‘but’, indicates a pending contradiction or silent nod of assent when she continues: ‘but Japanese have an irrepressible urge to fix the place.’. In other words, the place must already be escaping in some ways, in some imperceptible direction, else it would need no fixing.

We see this trend of fixing the place clearly appear in Danielewski’s House of Leaves. In his Introduction, Johnny Truant (Danielewski’s fictional character, used as the reader’s frame for reading the novel) begins by recalling to events that lead up to his discovery of the manuscript secreted in Zampanô’s chest. Truant writes: ‘In fact I slept all the time. That was before my friend Lude woke me up at three in the morning and asked me to come of to his place. Who knows, if I hadn’t heard the phone ring, would everything be different now? I think about that a lot.’ Truant plumbs the depths of his memory even further, later in the same introduction. He recalls his then-current circumstance to provide a backdrop the events he is about to unfold. He proceeds to recall: ‘I’d been in the throes of looking for an apartment after a little difficulty with a landlord who woke up one morning convinced he was Charles de Gaulle. I was so stunned by this announcement that before I could think twice I’d already told him how in my humble estimation he did not at all resemble an airport though the thought of a 757 landing on him was not at all disagreeable. I was promptly evicted. I could have put up a fight but the place was a nuthouse anyway and I was glad to leave. As it turned out Chuckie de Gaulle burnt the place to the ground a week later. Told the police a 757 crashed into it.’

Danielewski weaves into his work the themes of absence, authenticity and substitution with great skill and subtlety. In the first instance he makes use of a memory to uncover a path to the discovery of Zampanô’s manuscript. It is quite simply Lude’s telephone call that drives Truant along the path that he now finds himself on. Already the character, Lude, through the telephone call, appears first as an absence. A double absence, he appears first as the memory of a telephone call. Later, Truant will, humorously no doubt, but nevertheless, mistake the
landlord's claim of being Charles de Gaulle as being the airport rather than person for which the airport is named. Again Danielewski emphasises the absence of any firm reality. De Gaulle, the former president is no longer among the living. In his stead stands an airport, meant to honour him and his achievement made during his lifetime. Truant deliberately misreads 'Charles de Gaulle' as the legend which has come to replace the name. This not a subtlety that eludes the landlord, who later makes use of the idea of the monument's function (landing air traffic) to conceal his crime. He claims with Truant's own terms, that a 757 had crashed into the building he burnt down. Again Danielewski introduces the idea of substitution, of a name standing in for something that it can no longer fully grasp. Danielewski is very clear on the impossibility of names to convey meaning. He concludes Truant's Introduction: 'And then for better or worse you'll turn, unable to resist, though try to resist you still will, fighting with everything you've got not to face the thing you most dread, what is now, what will be, what has always come before, the creature you truly are, the creature we all are, buried in the nameless black of a name'.

Across the seven centrepiece novels, time and again, 'archaeology' appears with certain common traits. Time is always folded, it never appears for itself, for its own moment but always hearkens back to earlier moments, or times that no longer exist or never have existed. It is not unusual then for 'archaeological' texts to open with memories. Or to appear as a story that is already being told. With the reoccurrence, over and again, of the themes of text substituting text, 'archaeology' arises uniquely as a genre among other genres.

When we speak of 'archaeology' as a genre we speak of a specific deployment of language. An understanding of language in its most military of senses. 'Archaeology' as genre means that language always appears as its own artefact. There is an absence, now at this very moment. We as readers are left with a number of clues at disposal to reconstruct events, to reconstruct the sequence of events leading up to now. Not least of these clues is an artefact, the corpse, which is trapped between two genres of discourse; what it once was and what it will as yet become. The artefact, as clue, uniquely folds time so as to produce what Rijsdijk has termed an eerie significance. A point where the usual machineries of Signification no longer function for themselves. 'Archaeology' stands in
for its own text. It appears when the landlord claims a 757 crashed into
the building, leaving no traces of itself, other than his own language.
It appears at Ishiyama Temple as a display replica of Murasaki at her
writing table. Or again as the Author's Note wherein Liza Dalby remembers
how during the course of one Indiana summer, she was transported time and
again, to the Japanese imperial court of nearly one thousand years ago.
It appears in Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, where Ruth Young can
no longer speak with her own words, but begins slowly over time to evolve
into her self by ghostwriting her mother's autobiography. Her language no
longer pertains to herself, but stands in place of another's.

When we observe these themes, appearing time and again, together for
perhaps the first time, across such a wide range of work, it now becomes
possible to speak of 'archaeology' as a genre. It becomes possible to
think of 'archaeology' as a type, whether that type be as simple as a
single name, or already on its way towards becoming a mythology. Under
such circumstances, not speaking of 'archaeology' as a genre would be
impossible.

Third Chapter

To return to Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby's *The Mars Mystery*. But this
time searching out different clues, means finding different values.

The writers begin their third chapter, entitled the *Mother of Life*,
with the search for life on Mars. Quickly this possibility evaporates and
they are left with a search for the possibility of life on Mars. This
means the search for water. Already Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby have
engaged an artefact. Nobody knows what causes life, they lament as they
echo biologists Stanley Miller and Leslie Orgel, but scientific endeavour
has yet to encounter water without encountering life. While the life­
giving cause is annihilated, can no longer be pointed to, the artefact of
life, water, appears in its stead. By now there is little doubt that *The
Mars Mystery*, while not fiction definitely mounts up on the back of
'archaeological' processes and themes. But the search for water is only a
lead-in, a way of cueing our attentions to a wider project that has been
undertaken since the opening chapter of the book. What is this project?
Nothing less than a mapping of the Martian planet.
Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby write in the first chapter, *Parallel World*, about Martian geography that has been studied from the earth in any one of four principle ways. These are; satellite observation of the planet, earth-based observation of the planet, analysis of Martian soil samples made by landing-probes and analysis of Martian meteorites that reach the Earth. By means of these four methods, humans have a very good idea of what the Martian planetscape looks like. 'Mars today is a freezing hell...' write Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby, complete with 'icy polar caps, mountains, deserts and dust-storms'. The writers continue to paint a picture of Mars where an degree of elevation is arbitrary, since no sea level exists by which to gauge elevation. Mars is a planet of great heights and equally great trenches. But this is of very little concern to me, or directly for the purposes of 'archaeology'. Rather, I would like to examine further the notion that Hancock, Bauval and Grigsby begin by making a map of Mars.

This is not the first book that Hancock opens by unfolding the narration of a map. An earlier work, prior to *Keeper of Genesis*, undertaken alone, begins itself with a map. In *Fingerprints of the Gods*, in the first section the *Mystery of the Maps*, Hancock narrates the tale of the Admiral Piri Reis World Map.

The map was rediscovered by Professor Charles Hapgood of Keene College, Massachusetts. It was first drafted in 1513 by the admiral, Piri Reis (then of the Persian Fleet), describing the lost southern continent. The continent is today termed Antarctica, and the map conforms to our exact and advanced geography of the landmass. The map shows the continent as it appears uncovered by ice, only in the twentieth century could our civilisation attest to the accuracy of this map, since the technology needed for such mapping did not exist before that. Hancock does not open with the map itself however, as obviously 'archaeological' as that tactic may well be. He does however open with a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Harold Ohlmeyer of the 8 Reconnaissance Technical Squadron of the United States Air Force. Briefly summed up, the letter states there was no means prior to the twentieth century to map Antarctica, and that there is no way to reconcile the obviously accurate map with the general state of mapmaking knowledge of the sixteenth century. The map should not exist. And yet it does. And the Air Force can neither explain nor deny.
It is intriguing that Hancock should not only begin his book with the narration of a map, something that already points to absence, but with a letter that refers to the map in its absence. The double artefact, the letter points to a map that is already here-to-go, which in turn points to a mystery, which is itself marked by absence. A letter stands in for a map which stands in for a mystery. Hancock's opening chapter, his opening section is a tally of the clues that point to a process. But unlike the artefacts we have encountered earlier, unlike the artefacts that warp time only, the map as artefact warps space also.

The map appears in the absence of the terrain. But already this is no longer true. The corpse is an artefact that appears in the absence of a human life, time is warped, this is grasped at easily enough. But the map is not only the warping of time. Map in hand, a reader can stand on the exact spot to which the map points, while looking directly at that spot. What can we say then, when the X, the great unknown that both marks the spot and signifies the solution, is corresponded with the exact point it is meant to represent? What can be said? It can no longer be claimed that the map appears as the corpse does, simply warping our received notions of time. The map already warps the space around itself, in such a way that that space is never the same. That, that space never appears for itself anymore. But beyond even this, the map and its mysteries run deeper than that of the autopsy. Or at least, I should say, parallel.

For this chapter, I wish to speak of maps. This much at least is clear. How maps appeal to a very different 'archaeology', and how this 'archaeology' appears less and less as genre. With this 'archaeology', the genre does the one thing that genre in our day has come to never do. That is, it has come to cross the barrier between fiction and non-fiction. The centrepiece for discussion in this chapter will be Images: My Life in Film by Ingmar Bergman, It's a Good Life if You Don't Weaken by Seth and From Hell by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell. During the course of the chapter I will also refer, time and again to the work, sometimes together, sometimes apart, of Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval. In speaking of maps I wish to show how something very primal in 'archaeology' contravenes what we have come to expect of genre. Just as maps warp space, in the same way that the autopsy warps time, something in the genre of 'archaeology' appears to undermine that very position of
'archaeology' as a genre. 'Archaeology' it seems, always appears, no longer for itself, but as a project, rather than a genre.

'Archaeology', unlike other genre, crosses quite easily between fiction and non-fiction. In other words, like the map it begins to warp its own medium, space. This is seldom seen more clearly than in the comicbook. And this is why Seth so clearly states: 'From here, I don't need a map', in Part Four of It's a Good Life If You Don't Weaken. I reproduce pages 89 though 91 of Seth's comicbook in the Addendum to this thesis. At this point in the story Seth has finally managed to track the mysterious Kalo (whose gag cartoon appeared in the New Yorker one generation ago) down to his old hometown of Strathroy in Canada. After finding the house where Kalo, now discovered to be Jack Kalloway, died, and being unable to pursue the investigation further, Seth takes this opportunity to retrace a path to the house where he grew up in. From the outside Seth studies the house, but realises: '...it's not the house I lived in. That house is gone - a thing of the past. That house only exists inside of me now.' Seth begins to re-produce the objects themselves, as he finds them, as artefacts. The house that no longer exists, the tree that always had the hornets nest. The sheer multiplication of artefacts is so overwhelming, that he is soon drawn back into a memory of how the rain had always gathered in a puddle. The introduction of rain at this point again indicates a cycle. That rain will eventually evaporate, only to fall again. But more interesting to me are the two panels which appear at the top of page 91. 'From here,' writes Seth, 'I don't need a map.' The first two panels are the only panels to appear in the first row of the page. Neither of the panels bleed into a gutter, each bordered neatly by a four-line frame. The first panel occupies about three quarters of the row, while the second panel occupies the remaining quarter. The aforementioned quote comprises the only words in this two panel sequence, these appearing in a caption box above, yet within, the first panel.

A standard reading of the first panel would emphasise how word cannot correlate with image, how they are essentially of two different orders. But Seth's mastery penetrates deeper than this. In the picture-text he echoes a pattern which appears in the worded-text. The pattern of the comma followed by the 'I', is reinterpreted in the picture-text as a

22 When panel art exceeds the panel's frame to fill the blank space usually used to separate panels, this is termed a bleed.
street-sign followed by a telegraph pole. The proportion of this graphical fixation is slightly exaggerated, this only emphasises the street-sign/telegraph-pole complex. There is a double hint here, we see that the top of the telegraph pole is cloaked in shadow. Similarly, Seth chooses for the representation of his own ego to have its face cloaked in shadow. Reading the telegraph pole as an image of Seth's ego clues us in to other readings. The telegraph pole is meant to straighten out and hold upright the telegraph wires it spans. But instead, the telegraph pole in Seth's panel warps the telegraph (or perhaps telephone) wires. The telegraph or perhaps telephone wires already imply an absence, these wires stand in as an artefact of the actual conversation. It is this artefact that is being warped by the ego which the pole represents. The top of the pole, the area which effects the warping, is covered in shadow, similarly, the area of the street ahead of Seth is covered in shadow. Since the act of walking implies a timeline which is horizontal, since the telegraph/telephone wires imply a similar horizontal progression, and the pole itself implies a vertical transmogrification of these two orders, we as readers are ushered into a reading where not only time is warped, but space as well. Seth himself has appeared as his own artefact, warping both time and space. It is now painfully clear why Seth has no need of a map. He himself has come to stand in for a map. He himself warps both space and time. This is why not needing a map is the first thought to occur to him after a childhood memory involving the cyclical evolution of the water cycle. Taking a long-shot of his walking through the city street emphasises how Seth himself has come to warp his environment. We are not seeing a city scene here, but we are seeing a map, a representation, a view of Seth taken from outside himself.

Maps are the gateway to memory, for Seth at least. This explains the pre-eminence of maps on the rear cover of the book. The cover is divided roughly into half. On the right-hand side half, the blurb and the critical reception is printed. Quotes from the Globe & Mail, from the City Pages and the Portland Press Herald appear. The blurb follows these various recommendations. The left hand side is completely different. It shows a cartoon caricature of Seth himself, holding a map in his left hand. He is positioned in such a way as to read the recommendations and the blurb (moreso the recommendations that appear at eye-level). The drawing of Seth is superimposed over a real-life street map of the
section of Canada described in the comicbook. The map he holds projects onto the right-hand side of the page and warps the text of the blurb. The hand, symbolic of action, holds the map that disturbs human language. Seth stands upon a single line which represents the ground, this line also crosses the divide between word and picture. In some ways, this line seems to suggest, both word and image arise from the same origin.

The rear cover emphasises the centrality of maps to the comicbook, *It's A Good Life If You Don't Weaken*, in much the same way that the photography in *Images: My Life in Film*, disrupts the text and emphasises the ideal of mapmaking. I will explain.

Bergman is most clear on what he intends to achieve with the book. On page fifteen he writes: 'I was going to return to my films and enter their landscapes. It was a hell of a walk.' Perhaps something is lost in the translation, perhaps not. Nevertheless, there is an interesting shift of time which occurs between the two sentences. *I was going to*, says Bergman, implying that the action had as yet not been undertaken. The very next sentence: *it was*. The past tense implies the conclusion or completion of action. The end of the pronouncement. As with Seth we begin to see the emergence of walking. Seth essentially produces a walking map of the Canada of the past, and a walking map of the life of Kalo. Bergman has much the same agenda. He intends to excavate not the life of another artist, but of himself. His own life and work up until the point where he writes *Images*. He describes this intention behind writing the book, in the body-text of the book itself, rather than in a separate Author's Note or Introduction. This seems to publicise the book as something other than merely a memory, the book seems to already appear as its own map. As an artefact rather than an object, as that which warps its own space, while always reminding us that it is already a process. Not surprising that Bergman chooses the exact point where time is warped to introduce the idea of warped space. The idea of warped space is exactly what is excited by the mention of the word *hell*. Foremost, hell is that place where our spaces are no longer usual. River of fire and brimstone, fallen angels, lost souls that have abandoned all hope, demons aloft instead of birds, before hell is anything, it is an alien architecture. One of the strange places.

But Bergman's announcement of his intention for the book appears in the shadow of his proclamation of the means he intends to use. He opens
the book with a meditation on a prior work: 'In available photos from the
time, the four of us are neatly combed and smiling politely at one
another.' This is the opening line of the first chapter of *Images*, and
already it provides a clue words to come. Firstly, however, Bergman goes
on to describe who the four are (he and three young journalists) and what
they are smiling just to be polite about (a new book, the year is 1968,
called *Bergman on Bergman*). And the problems. The younger generation is
of a different ethic, the project is as contrived as anything else.
Bergman sees himself as the old Monster through their eyes. They have,
but for one among their number, no background in film, therefore no
context with which to engage him.

Bergman writes of the journalist he finds something most in common
with: 'One of the three, Stig Björkman, is something of an exception.
Since he was a talented movie director himself, we were able to speak in
concrete terms on the basis of our respective professional backgrounds.
Björkman was also responsible for what is good in the book: the rich and
varied selection, and exquisite montage, of pictures.'

What arises between these three extracts? On the one hand Bergman is
to write a book about a past. This is a past that is familiar, since it
can be walked, yet its spaces are no longer the same, since the activity
involved is in some ways an evocation of hell. The centrality of the
photograph is assured. If for no other reason, this is why Bergman opens
the book with a memory that almost uniquely arises from a photo. The
opening of the book sets its tone, the memory stands in for the photo,
just as the photo stands in for reality. Each is a process trapped
between two processes. The memory is caught between two books, just as
the photo is caught between journalism and film. But one journalist
strikes accord with Bergman, and more than anything, Bergman remembers
his profession as 'a talented movie director', and that he was
responsible for the one success, in Bergman's own estimation, of the
book- its pictures. The opening page winds readers from photography
through memory, through past endeavour (the previous book, but also the
suggestion of prior films as the grounds for that book), back towards
photography. Does it come as any surprise that the final page is a
photograph of Bergman, his back to the camera, sitting alone on a jetty?
The very mention of photography at the outset seems to warp time and
space as effectively as the mention of the word hell in the quotation taken from later in the chapter.

This book, *Images*, is about photography. This is why the photographs appear according to a very different standard, as usually published. Books from movies, books containing photographs usually contain an inset. Four or a multiple thereof pages, to tie in with the constraints of printing. The pages are usually of a different, glossier texture. These special photograph pages are usually segregated from the text of the book. Not so with *Images*. Compared with *Fingerprints of the Gods*, the *Mars Mystery* or even *Time Within Time*, which obey the standard, *Images* is radical. The photographs appear as part of the text. Above, below, on facing or opposite pages. The photographs appear as an integral part of the book. How much control did Bergman himself have over the positioning of the pictures? Was the layout effected by him, or merely approved by him? The photographs interrupt the text. Bergman's very next mention after the mention of hell is of *Wild Strawberries*, one of his films. Bergman writes: 'Wild Strawberries is a good example. With *Wild Strawberries* as a point of departure, I can show how treacherous and tricky my "now-experience" can be. Lasse Bergström and I saw the movie one afternoon in my movie theater on Fårö (Sheep Island). It was an excellent print, and I was deeply moved by Victor Sjöström's face, his eyes, his mouth, the frail nape of his neck with its thinning hair, his hesitant, searching voice. Yes, it was profoundly affecting! The next day we talked about the movie for hours. I reminisced about Victor Sjöström, recalling our mutual difficulties and shortcomings, but also our moments of contact and triumph.' Page twelve, appearing two pages earlier, is dedicated to depicting an enlarged photograph of a close-up of Victor Sjöström, the actor. The inscription to the photo appears on the following page, below the text, and reads: 'Wild Strawberries: "Victor Sjöström's face, his eyes..."'. The space is already warped, even if it only appears once, even if it only appears for the first time. Also, it is not by chance that the body-text in which the mention of hell is made, appears below a cross-page sequence depicting Sjöström's in-character dream of seeing himself in his own coffin.

This is an important point and I should explain in a little more detail. In *Wild Strawberries*, Sjöström plays the character Isak Borg. Borg is a professor who, during the celebrations of his fiftieth
birthday, is to receive an honorary degree from Lund University. He sets about making preparations for the cross-country trip with his daughter-in-law. On the journey’s eve, he dreams of walking through an unknown city that is completely deserted. A wagon rides by, from which a coffin tumbles. As he ventures near the coffin to inspect it, a hand suddenly grabs at him. He looks inside only to see himself in the repose of death. The movie has yet to reach its quarter mark. What appears in the book is this. Spanning pages fourteen and fifteen, a sequence of four photographs. These photos depict the aforementioned dream sequence. From left to right, these follow in a straight line, contravening the laws which separate the pages into individual units. The first picture shows Sjöström in long shot, in the background while maintaining the hearse in the foreground. The second photo is specifically expanded laterally so as to accommodate its position close to the crease of the spine between the two pages. It shows the coffin sliding from the hearse. The third photo shows a medium close up of a perturbed Sjöström. The fourth photo shows Sjöström again, only this time as a corpse in the coffin, silent, yet troubled.

Will Eisner, a writer artist who has been working in comics since the early days of the 1940s, who in 1978 coined the termed ‘graphic novel’ for his then-latest offering, A Contract with God, has certain things to say about the continuity of the page in his book Comics and Sequential Art. Eisner writes: 'The (western culture) reader is trained to read each page independently from left to right, top to bottom. This, ideally, is the normal flow of the reader’s eye. In practice, however, this discipline is not absolute. The viewer will often glance at the last panel first. Nevertheless the reader finally must return to the conventional pattern.' Eisner is of course speaking of comics when he suggests the reading of the last panel first. Above this quote a graphic appears detailing the ‘reading track’ (Eisner’s own term, not mine) which moves the reader along a two page spread. This reading track is superimposed over a comicbook two page spread, and moves the reader through various panels. At the same time it must be taken into account, that, given the nature of prose, one would not accidentally ‘glance’ at sentences near the end of the book, or even near the end of the two page spread without reading what has come before. That is unless the reader does so intentionally. Nevertheless, there is no opportunity for the
'glance', as Eisner suggests it, to arise in the reading of prose. But the photography that appears above the two page spread of pages fourteen and fifteen in Images, already begins to undermine this stability of prose. In a very literal sense, the space is being warped. It now becomes easier for the reader to forego the 'conventional pattern' as Eisner puts it, and pick up reading text on page fifteen. The reading eye can now follow the sequence of photography, and move downwards onto the text of page fifteen, to mark something in the text which strikes accord with the photography. Perhaps the mention of Sjöström's face? Perhaps the mention of Bergman's lost notebook, the sense of loss connecting with the sense of isolation in the photography? Nevertheless, it now becomes possible for a different reading track to assert itself. Eisner's glance, which was once the exclusive delight of comics, now becomes possible while reading prose. Page fifteen can be glanced at without engaging page fourteen first. On a wider reckoning, Eisner's idea of the glance can come to account for a very different reception of the book. It now becomes possible for the glance to apply to the book as a whole. The reader skims through the pages, and reads momentarily the text that pertains directly to the photograph that has caught their attentions. If Eisner is correct, then later the reader should return to the 'conventional pattern' proposed by the reading track as depicted. The reader should return to the pattern of left to right, top to bottom. But before the 'conventional pattern' reasserts itself, there is an opportunity that perhaps would never have existed without the photography. An opportunity for the glance to arise in prose.

In Images the photography begins to reinterpret the experience of the book. The experience of Images would not be the same without the photography. It could be argued that the experience of reading Images arises somewhere between the experience of reading the text, and the experience of reading the photography. Somewhere in the intermezzo. In other words the experience of reading Images becomes much like the experience of reading a map. Word and image intertwine to produce a conveyor of information that cannot properly be accommodated by either medium individually. It is not surprising then that both Eisner and Scott
McCloud\textsuperscript{23} attempt to deconstruct the idea of words and pictures as segregate orders. By different means, Eisner in \textit{Comics and Sequential Art} and McCloud in \textit{Understanding Comics}. The map is the thing, then. Seth knew this when he drew a single, rough line from a cartoon (superimposed against a street map) across the border to a body of text. Both sides of the rear cover map the territory that is the book, only each uses different means. This is also why there is a continual multiplication of panels not showing any human life in the book. A map of the area is being drawn up. A very specific map which in no way suggests itself as the 'truth', or as 'objectively true', but very specifically warps the space of the search for Kalo. We do not see everything, but we can find our way through the story. The story in other words, is less of a narrative and more of a navigable narration of events. It is for this reason that the ethic of mapmaking is highlighted in Moore and Campbell's \textit{From Hell}.

By all readings, \textit{From Hell} conforms ideally with the Japanese genre of a monogatari. This genre, while often including factual detail, is ultimately a work of fiction. A fictional narration incorporating so-called real-life incidence and character. Other examples perhaps include James Ellroy's \textit{American Tabloid}, the Great African Spider Writers' \textit{Finding Mr Madini}, John Berendt's \textit{Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil}, Art Spiegelman's \textit{Maus: a Survivor's Tale} and Antjie Krog's \textit{Country of My Skull}. Liza Dalby, in a brief Foreword to \textit{The Tale of Murasaki} writes of the monogatari: 'In Japanese a tale, monogatari, means a story-literally a telling of things. There may be stout threads of fact woven into a tale, but as a genre it is considered fiction...'. Bearing this description in mind, it becomes easy to understand \textit{From Hell} in these terms. Moore and Campbell take an unusual approach to the scribing of the tale of the so-called Jack the Ripper murders that were perpetrated in and around Whitechapel, London in the waning days of the nineteenth century. Rather than approach their topic as an opportunity to write a whodunnit, Moore tends towards writing a melodrama. Moore has a very different agenda to merely solving the crime. As he writes\textsuperscript{24}: 'For my part

\textsuperscript{23} Along with Eisner, McCloud is one of the few artist/writers working in comics today that has set out to produce theoretical work on the medium. His theoretical studies include \textit{Understanding Comics} published by Kitchen Sink Press in 1993, and \textit{Reinventing Comics} published by Paradox Press in 2000.

\textsuperscript{24} In one of the numerous interviews which appeared during or following the release of \textit{From Hell}. I first remember him say this in an interview that appeared on \textit{the Anti-Gravity Room}, a Canadian television show on comics, comicbooks and comicbook writers. But this quote appears again on the rear cover of the edition of \textit{From Hell} that I purchased. It is from here that I quote it, since great difficulty is involved in referencing the tv show.
I am concerned with cutting into and examining the still-warm corpse of history itself. In some of my chilliest moments I suspect that this was his foremost pre-occupation also, albeit in pursuit of different ends...''.

From Hell, arises from between its own pages. There is a very low-level of excavation that occurs, almost on any page that you care to open to. It appears as early as the first page of the first chapter. The first panel appearing on the page is a title panel, a simple black background with white stencilling to indicate the chapter’s name and number. The second panel, the only other panel in the same row, shows the low-level excavation that is so frequent in From Hell. A pair of hands move across a store shelf. The shelf holds some brand names that are recognisable still today, some that are not. The norm for the artwork is simple line drawing, but these recognisable brand names are made to stand out, their detailed sketching makes them unusual within the given confines of the panel’s simple line drawing. This is an excavation of a very primary nature. The more-than-hundred year old text of chocolate candy boxes are excavated and used for a very different purpose in the text of From Hell. A proto-kind of ‘archaeology’. But there is also the appearance of a very different, far more complex kind of ‘archaeological’ excavation that is undertaken in From Hell. It involves the complicated and intricate pattern of connections that link the comicbook text and the first Appendix which details Alan Moore’s annotations to the text.

Unlike standardised annotations, From Hell’s first Appendix is littered with illustrations made by artist Eddie Campbell. Sometimes these illustrations appear with captions, sometimes without. There is no need to draw the explicit parallel between the function of these illustrations here in the first Appendix, and the function of the photography as it appears in Images: My Life in Film. Campbell’s illustrations appear asequentially, illustrations pertaining to chapter five need not necessarily appear within the text of chapter five, for example. But the illustrations do appear in close proximity to the text pertaining to associated chapters. The illustrations always serve to highlight a certain incident or person appearing in the chapter to which they pertain. A very different story arises from the annotations and illustrations. The process of writing and drawing From Hell is detailed, the process of the production of From Hell is brought into the light of day. It is not by chance then that Moore’s intentions for the book is
printed as part of the quotes from critical reception. *From Hell* is precisely that dissection of history for which Moore had hoped. The annotations are incisions made into the body of text that theorises the sequence of events from August until November of 1888. The process of reading *From Hell*, in other words, centres around being able to read the story, against a background of the text which has created the legend and history of Jack the Ripper. It is for this reason that *From Hell* is not written as a piece of detective fiction.

**Final Meditations: Of Art and War, After Words, Endsong**

**First Meditation.**

At this point, auditors would no doubt expect the summation of, perhaps even a summary of the argument I wish to make with this thesis. I defer. I wish to speak of Sun Tzu and the *Art of War*. Sun Tzu was a warrior, a military strategist and theorist and eventually a commander of an army. He is accredited with writing the military theoretical text, the *Art of War*. The *Art of War*, in its current edition, was more than likely completed circa CE 200. It was not introduced to the West until 1772 when Jesuit missionary Father J J M Amiot, upon his return from Peking, published his interpretation of the manuscript. The text achieved notoriety with Lionel Giles’s 1910 translation, and was cemented in the mindset of post-eighties culture, this time as a business tool, when filmmaker Oliver Stone modelled his ruthlessly effective lead-character in the movie *Wall Street*, on principles espoused by the text. There has, over the years, been some dispute as to the veracity of Sun Tzu’s existence, but in this connection, I disregard the idea that Sun Tzu was a theoretical pattern much like the Hellenic Homer, and find Samuel B Griffith’s argument in the 1971 Oxford University Press edition convincing and most likely accurate. It is the only study that so far, attempts to engage with and fully explore the arguments of those opposed to the idea of Sun Tzu’s existence. Sun Tzu occupies a position in broader Oriental culture (albeit that he is Chinese, the *Art of War* is widely accepted across Asia) similar to the that occupied by Plato in Occidental culture. In China, Sun Tzu, together with Buddha and Confucius, forms the basis of the classical philosophical tradition.
Cartoon editions of the Art of War are read on MRTs, on the way to work by blue- and white-collar workers alike. All in all, this says nothing about the text itself.

What is immediately apparent in the title, The Art of War, is a kind of a paradox. The text’s thirteen chapters which range from thoughts on Terrain, Calculations, Waging War to the Use of Spies, Energy and Attack by Fire, detail how Sun Tzu is able to reduce every aspect of war to calculation. Writes Sun Tzu: ‘Thus a victorious army wins its victories before seeking battle; an army destined to defeat fights in the hope of winning.’. It is this quote that echoes the closing remark of the first chapter, the Estimates\(^{25}\) Sun Tzu refers to the verse: ‘Observing the matter in this way [that is by using the calculations], I can see who will win and who will lose.’.

Contrary to the title, war is not involved with the formlessness implied by Occidental deployment of the term, art. War is specific, strategic, tactical and moreover, it is calculated until the finest possible detail. For thinkers of the Occident, art is something, formless, transcendent, pointing often to something immanent, outside of the usual experience. But according to the Chinese philosophical tradition, the precepts concerning form and formlessness are very different. This tradition revolves around an understanding of the balance of two universal forces of change, yin and yang. Things can only be said to be once these forces are balanced. Form and formlessness are therefore tied together, bound within the same paradigm, enclosed inside the same perimeter. Teaching a martial art like shaolin or tai chi, means eventually teaching a kind of formlessness that is adaptive to any combat situation. But it also means teaching formed movements that develop, over time, the martial artist’s skill and ability to eventually becoming formless. Thomas Cleary in his Translator’s Introduction to the 1998 Shambhala Dragon Editions printing of the text quotes from The Book of Balance and Harmony, a ‘medieval Taoist work’ as he himself describes it: ‘To sense and comprehend after action is not worthy of being called comprehension. To accomplish after striving is not worthy of being called accomplishment. To know after seeing is not worthy of being called

\(^{25}\) According to Samuel Griffith’s translation, the title should read the Estimates, while Thomas Cleary in the 1998 Shambhala Dragon Edition translates the first chapter’s title as Strategic Assessments. Lionel Giles in my 1910 online edition translates the first chapter as Laying Plans, while R L Wing in the 1989 Aquarian Press edition translates it simply as the Calculations. The quote is taken from the Thomas Cleary translation.
knowing. These three are far from the way of sensing and response./
Indeed to be able to do something before it exists, sense something before it becomes active, see something before it sprouts, are three abilities that develop interdependently. Then nothing is sensed, but comprehended, nothing is undertaken without response, nowhere does one go without benefit.' Immediately thereafter, Cleary goes on to qualify: 'One of the purposes of Taoist literature is to help to develop this special sensitivity and responsiveness to master living situations.'

Shaolin, tai chi, wing chun – Chinese martial arts depend upon a mastery of an initial paradox. Formlessness is achieved through learning form. Sensitivity and responsiveness are cultivated by the sheer rote patterning of repetition. War itself depends upon calculation. And yet art is uniquely something else. Something alien to this world of rigid, unwavering estimation. Art exists somewhere outside this world. And yet Sun Tzu names his work, the Art of War. As if to suggest that somehow, after battling its way through the grim world of calculation, the Skilled Commander earns the right to make of the calculation of war, an Art. Sun Tzu himself of course writes, 'All warfare is based upon deception'26. And deception has no place in a world of calculation. Already Sun Tzu begins to suggest war, and by implication the text of the Art of War (as a map to the making of war), as a process, an artefact. Trapped between two orders, war is on its way somewhere else, here-to-go. War is already halfway between where it is at the moment and the formlessness of an art-form. Like the autopsy, like the map, Sun Tzu's conception of war as a central coeval of a nation's existence, is a conception that sees war only as a tool in restoring balance and harmony. As such, war never appears for itself, always and only in association with the need to bring political stability and security for the nation. War is therefore in some senses, in many senses, in the important senses, 'archaeological'. It is the record of an excavation. That excavation is of an artefact which in that society, in that text which unearths it, comes to hold and move through more cultural spaces than the text which birthed it. Ultimately, 'archaeology' is a question of technologies vying.

26 Both Lionel Giles and Samuel Griffith agree on this translation of this specific verse.
Second Meditation.

Someone was recently asked, I was in their company at the time, 'If you could use only one word to describe the state of modern theory today, what would it be?' Like others present, I sat with anticipation. The first came as, 'Meteorology,' then the amendment, 'No, meteorography.' Which was later explained to me, the writing down of weather conditions, but also in a more subtle vein, the way in which our weather, or our conditions write. In other words, how much our environment determines our existence, and how much that existence is a product of writing. By what measure, that is, are we made from language? Weather patterns! A poor answer to be sure, but a memorable one nonetheless. Salient in its absence of even a glimmer of 'archaeology', and yet, it becomes central to open a meditation upon 'archaeology'.

Weather patterns are marked with a specific notation on maps. I'm not only speaking about the kind of weather patterns that move hither and thither across maps like cold-fronts and hot-air troughs, but more specifically I'm speaking about the kind of weather-front that moves in cells. Cells of high pressure, cells of low pressure, cells of warm air, cells of cold air, storm-fronts, cyclones, hurricanes, monsoons. Moving in cells, weather-fronts have a very specific notation. Areas, zones, regions of equal pressure, of equal temperature, of equal precipitation are connected by a single line, each point along that line having the same pressure (or temperature, or rainfall, or snowfall, or, or, or, whatever it is that happens to be connected), each zone reduced to a single point. The terms used to name these lines change each time a different quantity is connected. Isotherms means the lines connect zones of equal temperature. Isobars means that the lines connect zones of equal pressure and so forth.

There are two aspects that arise from the practice of iso-linearity. The first, lines that move across a map, connecting points that resonate with connection. Even without the lines, these points have something, a great deal in common. And second, the same lines are used time and again. In two senses. In the first sense, zones of intensity equal to 100 millibars will be connected by one line, while zones of intensity equal to 94 millibars will also be connected by one line. These lines, by some sheer chance, always seem to fall in concentric circles. Some maps will mark the pressure (or what have you) measurement on the line itself, many
do not. In the second sense, the lines connecting equal pressures, connecting equal precipitations, connecting equal temperatures are the same line. A line, is after all a line.

Two aspects then. The same line is used to cut across different units of pressure (or what have you). Quantitative measure of a phenomenon such as pressure or temperature becomes a fluid, open space therefore. The measure is simply an expression and re-expression of a single quality. The argument here is in many ways similar to the one put forward by Deleuze and Guattari in their second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 27. In the penultimate chapter entitled *the Smooth and the Striated*, Deleuze and Guattari write about how, for the nomads, space is conceptualised by a very different means. Space is apperceived as fluid and open since the fabric used to clothe nomads is the same fabric used to house nomads, is the same fabric that is derived from the source of nomad wealth, cattle. Can we say then, that the use of the same line makes for a similar fluidity? This time, this kind of fluidity perceived as a fluidity of quantity? Can we say that the use of the same line to denote different quantitative values makes of quantification a fluid kind of space? A smooth rather than striated space, in the same sense as Deleuze and Guattari use these terms. The second aspect, quite simply then, is that the same kind of line cuts across different values altogether. Pressure and temperature are conveyed by the same line. What differentiates between these two values, what separates the confusion and convolution of their measures is the legend that interprets the map. For one map, the legend will determine the lines that traverse its surface as isotherms, and readers will understand that these lines that traverse inform them as to temperature. For another map entirely, or for the same map reprinted somewhere else, the legend might declare these lines as isobars. The lines will move across the map, connecting different points. And a different measure will be pencilled in above or below the lines themselves. Yet the lines have made of quality a fluid kind of space according to this second aspect. Different lines representing different values have been drawn. Is this the proper time to suggest the connection with Sun Tzu's estimation of the battleground? With the drawing of battle lines? And the calculation that it entails? Different qualities are

---

detailed by the same lines. Like quantity in the suggestion of our first aspect, quality itself now becomes opened as a more fluid, more smooth kind of space than it was before. It is the lines that change this. The lines that operate as artefact, trapping themselves between two orders. Warping space and time, in this instant warping with equal facility, quality and quantity. It is the lines that achieve this.

Closing Meditation

There may still be some questions around ‘archaeology’ itself. What exactly is it, this ‘archaeology’, this genre that is not a genre? How does it differ from other genres. I have attempted to show this in the course of this thesis. But I can no longer defer the summation. Sooner or later, everything becomes inevitable.

With this final meditation, with these closing remarks I wish to pose, if not necessarily answer the question; ‘Is ‘archaeology’, in the light of everything investigated thus far, a proto-genre, what genre has always been, rediscovered and made applicable for own shining-new, postmodern, post-human era? Or is ‘archaeology’ in some ways a preter-genre, does it stand at the very end of the long line of the evolution of genre? Is ‘archaeology’ what genre will be in the future?’

The question is of course a loaded one. In the past Scott McCloud and Will Eisner have done great work in terms of destroying the false boundary that has over the centuries arisen to divide word from picture, and both word and picture from number. The origins of both word and image are the same, tools to represent a state of existence, so the unbreachable barricade between the two is a false one. Eisner deconstructs the meaning using posture, while McCloud deconstructs it using the concept of use-value. I will not reiterate these arguments here, but will mention in this connection the idea of their deconstruction of a false barrier. In many ways the question which I have posed on ‘archaeology’ turns on a similarly initially-false understanding that the past and future are in fact segregate ideals. My question assumes a binaried, oppositional, status between the past and the future. And yet it is so easy to produce this question. Despite ‘archaeology’ teaching us that transposition is possible.

28 Their arguments may be reviewed in Eisner’s Comics and the Sequential Art and McCloud’s Understanding Comics, respectively.
In many ways I would argue that a central paradox is involved in 'archaeology'. But as with Chinese philosophical regimen, this paradox must be used as a staging point to overcome inherent difficulty. The Greeks have a word for it. The word is crisis. It means, or meant if you accept that Hellenic culture has come to an end, and it has, that whatever learning has been undertaken, whatever skills have been gained, must now at the moment of crisis be employed to secure safety and prosperity. A crisis is that point at which all knowledge coincides. Like the Chinese before them, change is essential for growth and development according to the Greek philosophical tradition.

For this paper, the central paradox in play is that 'archaeology' is at the same time, both a genre, in the classical sense of the meanings of the word genre, and not-genre, absolutely in no sense could 'archaeology' be mistaken for a genre. In this connection it becomes very easy to attempt to subject 'archaeology' to a narrative conceptualisation based on time, one such as evolution. It becomes very easy to say, 'archaeology' begins here, as one thing, and slowly over period of time, after a number of events, becomes something entirely else. Or something not so very different. But the idea of the artefact disturbs this warm and easily-won notion of narrative.

Like the corpse for the autopsy, like the map, like the iso-lines that appear on the map, like war itself, the notion of the artefact warps the time and space around it. The artefact is already on its way somewhere else. It always appears as being caught between two moments. Trapped between two orders. In the past the artefact had a great value. It was a value very different from the value it has now. It was a tool. Or ornamentation. Or an emblem of power. It was something else. Something other. In the future, in the days to come, the artefact will have again, a very different value. Its use-value will have altered completely. It will exist in a museum, on display, as something very different. As a reminder of a forgotten, fallen civilisation. As a memory of something else. It will eventually come to represent its civilisation. An ambassador of the forgotten to those who no longer need to remember. After a fashion, the artefact will begin to stand in as a crisis of its culture. But at the moment it is unearthed, at the moment of excavation, the artefact for good or ill, better or worse, warps both time and space. At that moment, the artefact is neither what it once was nor what it will
yet be. Caught in a moment, the artefact takes on, once again, a very different value. It becomes a summary, it becomes a summation of a process. It becomes that process itself.

The artefact means that time becomes more fluid, more smooth. Its value is undercoded, I as excavator can hold the past with my very hands. Already time is warped. I, as excavator, know that this piece of times past is on its way to somewhere else. Undercoding means that value and meaning have as yet not accumulated around a specific incident. It makes possible the apperception of the object as process. The object as artefact, caught in a moment. It is here that the artefact is still brimming with possibility, with the potential to become something else. But this is ultimately a potential that is turned in upon itself, and used to contravene its own spaces. It is a potential that shimmers brightest between a history that has come to define its artefact and a destiny that will at any moment secure that artefact. The corpse will go on to the morgue, will become a body of letters. Just as it once was a productive and valued human life.

But the artefact also warps space. It transposes itself. It has become a list or a register of clues, of evidences, of information. It spatialises an understanding history and evolution. By inscribing these processes with a very radical rereading. The artefact makes the past navigable just as it simultaneously makes the future navigable. We know what happened in the past, the artefact holds the key to that. And we know what will become of it in the future. By its very definition the artefact holds the key to that. The artefact fully captures both historical and evolutionary processes. It captures these processes and reconceptualises of them a new kind of process. One that appears always in connection with the process of a genre. The artefact makes it possible to conceive of 'archaeology' as a genre. It means that because of the appearance of the artefact, connection between the process of 'archaeology' and the process of genre is established. The artefact means that the process is already typified. The process of the artefact is made into a type. This would explain the reoccurrence, time and again, of certain themes. Of the telephone call, the memory, the telephone pole and its wires. The appearance time and again, of the very excavation of text within text. 'Archaeology', if anything arises in the spaces between the excavated texts. Somewhere between Margaret Atwood's The Blind Assassin.
and Laura Chase’s *the Blind Assassin*. Somewhere between Laura Chase’s *the Blind Assassin*, and her own characters’ chronicle of life on Planet Zycron. Somewhere between Zampanò’s manuscript, entitled *House of Leaves* and Johnny Truant’s annotations which also incorporate his excerpts from his personal life. Somewhere between Murasaki’s journals and Katako’s letter to her own child. ‘Archaeology’ appears as a generic equivalent of the interphase of cell division. That phase of cell division when no division occurs, when the usual processes of the cell function are undertaken.

On the other hand the artefact is also already the warping of the process of genre. The artefact makes it possible to cut across the usual processes of reading. It makes possible Rijsdijk’s *eerie significance* or his *rarefied atmosphere*. It makes possible Eisner’s *glance*. It makes possible the excavation of texts across different media. Film can be excavated as prose. Filmmaking can be summoned up in journal writings. Journal writings themselves can be published as manifestos, as is the case with Andrey Tarkovsky’s *Time Within Time*. Or television shows can be summoned up in comics, as is the case with Dean Motter and Mark Askwith’s *the Prisoner: Shattered Visage* which resurrects the 1960’s television show, the *Prisoner*, and finally concludes the story in a 1988 comicbook. But Bergman’s book, *Images: My Life in Film* introduces a wholly different concept as well. An entirely new kind of transpositioning. And to a lesser degree so does Tarkovsky’s *Time Within Time*. It introduces the idea of cutting across the barrier between fiction and non-fiction. In these terms then, it becomes less and less practical to continually refer to ‘archaeology’ as a genre. In no sense, not from the strictest to the most wide-ranging, can a genre, can a single type, account for the grouping together of both the, work and the meditations upon that work. Tarkovsky himself is adamant on this point. He writes in an essay appearing in *Time Within Time*, entitled on *Hamlet*: ‘Mountains of books have been written about Shakespeare and *Hamlet*, but nobody has ever explained it totally...’. By which Tarkovsky questions the value of critical writing, but unquestioningly accepts critical writing’s segregation from the work itself.
In an interview with The Comics Journal's Gary Groth, Seth will later confess (in response to a question regarding the meaning of his book's title) that "basically I'm trying to show myself as a character - without trying to map out exactly what the story's about - as a person who doesn't seem to be able to exist within the world." While the emphasis is my own, Seth's meaning remains abundantly clear. It's a good life if you don't weaken, correlates the depiction of real-life characters (Seth) with the processes of mapping and finally this is correlated in turn with "exist(ing) within the world".

Beyond even its localised meaning, which pertains to his book alone, Seth's words go to the heart of the question posed before; whether 'archaeology' is in fact the distant past of genre, or it's future. Seth speaks of his textual alter-ego as artefact, which must journey through the making of a map, in other words covering territory already covered (in the interview he denies "wanting to make a map", simply because making a map is already so integral to the process that he is involved with) in the same breath as existing in a world that is already preordained. We have already seen that the map bends both space and time, reminding us of the past even as it echoes of the future. Simultaneously then, the artefact "Seth" must deal with both past and future, while already existing in a world that has limits. Or in House of Leaves, Johnny Truant realises that despite Will Navidson and the three films only being fiction, only existing as text, they already have an effect on the so-called "real world".

'Archaeology' can never comfortably fit the answer to a question around past or future. The genre that is not-genre simply bends time to its own purposes. 'Archaeology' is a cycle, more-or-less like water which simultaneously exists as both ice and as steam, or like bionics which exists both as the whale and as the submarine. At the behest of the poststructuralism bequeathed us by Deleuze and Guattari, we dare engage the paradox of which came first, ice or steam. Eclipsing the notions of origin and hierarchy is the notion of the cyclical, the ever-returning. It is in this way that 'archaeology' becomes central to the debate of not only literature, but also of literary and cultural theory. 'Archaeology' is able to rearrange our perceptions of our place in relation to art,

---

29 The interview in question is published in The Comics Journal #193 (January, 1998), but may also be found on the Journal's website at www.tcj.com.
literature and the production of culture. In other words, 'archaeology' makes us realise that the answer to the question of origin or destination is no longer as important as being able to pose the question.

Cape Town, January 2002
Michael Almereyda (dir), *Hamlet*
Miramax Studios, Double A Films, 2000

Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*
London, Bloomsbury, 2000

John Berendt, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*
London, Vintage, 1994


Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*
Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992

Will Brooker, *Batman Unmasked*
London, Continuum, 2000

Mike Carlin (ed), *Superman: Stray Bullets*
New York, DC Comics, 1993

Tom Clancy, *the Sum of All Fears*
United States of America, Harper Collins, 1993

Arthur C Clarke, *Rendezvous with Rama*
London, Orbit, 1973
Liza Dalby, *The Tale of Murasaki*
London, Random, 2000

Mark Z Danielewski, *House of Leaves*
London, Anchor, 2000


Philip K Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
London, Voyager, 1968

Will Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art*
Florida, Poorhouse Press, 1995

---, *A Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories*
New York, DC Comics, 1978

Warren Ellis & Darick Robertson, *Transmetropolitan: Lust for Life*
New York, DC/Vertigo, 1998

Warren Ellis & Darick Robertson, *Transmetropolitan 25* (monthly)
New York, DC/Vertigo, 1998

James Ellroy, *American Tabloid*
London, Arrow, 1995

Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*
London, Routledge, 1972

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*
London, Voyager, 1985

Graham Hancock, *Fingerprints of the Gods*
London, Mandarin, 1996
Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval & John Grigsby, *The Mars Mystery*


Stephen King, *Bag of Bones*
London, New English Library, 1999

Antjie Krog, *Country of my Skull*
London, Vintage, 1999

Jeph Loeb & Chris Bachalo, *the Witching Hour I: Wishes*
New York, DC/Vertigo, 1999

Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art*
New York, Kitchen Sink Press, 1993

- - -, *Reinventing Comics*
New York, Paradox Press, 2000

Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli, *Batman: Year One*
Canada, DC Comics, 1988

Frank Miller, Lynn Varley and Klaus Janson, *The Dark Knight Returns*
Canada, Titan Books, 1996

Peter Milligan & Duncan Fegredo, *Enigma*
New York, DC Comics, 1995

Alan Moore & Eddie Campbell, *From Hell*
Canada, Eddie Campbell Comics, 1999

Jonathan Morgan (director, Great African Spider Writers), *Finding Mr Madini*
South Africa, Ink Inc, 1999
Dean Motter & Mark Askwith, *the Prisoner: Shattered Visage*
New York, DC Comics, 1990


Dennis O’Neil (ed), *Batman: Black & White*
New York, DC Comics, 1996

Richard Reynolds, *Superheroes*
Manchester, Batsford, 1992


James Robinson & Paul Smith, *the Golden Age*
New York, DC Comics, 1995

James Robinson & Tony Harris, *Starman: Sins of the Father*
New York, DC Comics, 1996


Seth, *It's a Good Life if you don't Weaken*
Canada, Drawn & Quarterly, 1996

Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale I: My Father Bleeds History*

Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale II: And Here My Troubles Began*

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans, Thomas Cleary, Boston, Shambhala Dragon Editions, 1998 (date of original text indeterminate)


Amy Tan, *the Bonesetter's Daughter*
London, Flamingo, 2001
