Michael Szczekalla:
"'Radical Evil' in Huxley and Burgess"

Much recent fiction seems to confirm a view of evil as "pointless negativity", a "mere whim" engendered by boredom (Sloterdijk 2005: 269). It may therefore be tempting to turn towards writers whose oeuvre still poses a challenge to the postmodern trivialisation of evil. My paper will be on the short twentieth century, Eric Hobsbawm's "Age of Extremes", as it is reflected in two major works of this period, Eyeless in Gaza by Aldous Huxley and Earthly Powers by Anthony Burgess. Separated by almost half a century, both novels are philosophically ambitious. It is my contention that Huxley's highly problematic critique of Western dualism is no less capable of stimulating intriguing discussions of evil than Burgess' carfully argued defence of free will.

The strength of Huxley's 1930s novel clearly lies in its sound and often prescient criticism of contemporary ideologies. Disillusioned with liberalism, the young elites of Europe betray "a passion for liquidating people". Thus Anthony Beavis, the novel's hero, makes the anti-utopian point that a government with a comprehensive plan for betterment always uses torture and therefore pleads for dealing with situations "as they arise" - "piecemeal". Ironically, Huxley's own brand of illiberalism may have helped him to suppress this truth when he started to write Island, his last novel. Eyeless in Gaza, in fact, marks a transition from the author's earlier cynicism to the semi-religious convictions of his late fiction. This transitional status is revealed by the characters themselves. They either belong to the earlier period or point into a new direction. Interestingly, the 'good' ones cannot claim to be more "enlightened" - to use Huxley's later quasi-religious jargon - than the others. Thus, Anthony's betrayal of his old friend Brian Foxe, an altruist with an incurable stammer, may almost be forgiven as the latter's idealism is the negation of true happiness. The title alludes to Miton's Samson Agonistes. Blinded, moving in a circle, succumbing to the drudgery of a daily of routine - to whom does this refer? At least the importance of literature is still taken for granted. If Hamlet had known as little as Polonius, he would have been happy. Tragedy consists in knowing too much. In Island, Huxley will fall back behind this insight. Here dogmatism is still held in abeyance.

Earthly Powers purports to contain the life and thoughts of Kenneth Toomey, a second-rate writer and brother-in-law of Carlo Campanati, a cleric who ascends to the chair of St. Peter. Dedicated to the debunking of optimis, which is revealed as a poor and lifeless abstraction, this novel has been called a "twentieth-century's Candide" (Gilbert Adair). Optimism is replaced - not by its opposite - but by life in all its variety. Even in purely quantitive terms, Earthly Powers proves to be much more informative about evil or radical evil than Eyeless in Gaza. It is impossible to refer to all the different locations the reader is introduced to - be it the Edwardian dental practice of Toomey's father, a gambling hall in Monaco, a dive in the old port of Marseille, a restaurant where the young Toomey meets the incessantly talking Havelock Ellis, the Paris of the lost generation, Nazi Germany, colonial Malaya where Toomey meets a doctor treating yaws cases, the frozen meat storage in Chicago where the eldest son of the cheese-exporting Campanati clan is found murdered by the mafia, Tangier, which once used to be the residence of choice for non-conformists of all persuasions, and so on. The novel doesn't solve the puzzle of the liberum arbitrium though it is as humane as Candide, albeit more knowledgeable.

It would be a mistake to chide either Huxley or Burgess for their adherence to traditional concepts of philosophy or theology. Rather than revealing an ideological commitment, these concepts have become tools for probing the multifarious nature of evil. At least in the case of Burgess, the result is not only a vivid rendering of the life of a twentieth-century hero but a philosophical tale which makes a serious attempt to engage with the century's major conflicts.

Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz:
"The Evil Empire: Representations of Evil in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction"

Colin McGinn in his study Ehics, Evil, and Fiction (1997) selects works of English and American literature to exemplify his theoretical approach, which says that ethical knowledge can best be aesthetically mediated and that not only the Ten Commandments are a form of moral discourse, but that the second one is the parable. Fiction, according to McGinn, allows ethical experience and promotes moral understanding through emotional fascination as well as ethical information.

Lately the absence or presence of moral values in postmoderinzed fiction has been the reason for controversial criticism. In my paper I propose to show that in recent works we have diverse manifestations of evil, which are presented with clear ethical labels: evil persons, evil governments, evil prinicples. Evil is often linked to physical violence or extermination, but also to psychological and emotional injuries; the novels express some kind of transcendental belief more often than not.

The texts I have chosen are from different Commonwealth countries. They epitomize that the representation of Evil can produce a wide scope of writing in diverse fictional subgenres: we find more or less realistic texts opposed by fables or allegories teaching a moral beside examples or metaficiton and the fantastic.

J.M. Coetzee's novel Waiting for the Barbarians (1980) has supplied the title for international theatre events, e.g. last year in Salzburg and this year in Duesseldorf; the title has come to lead an existence separate from Coetzee's novel, while the book presents an archaic fable about the One Just Man in the midst of Evil brought about by oppression and violence in a political system. Ian McEwan's Black Dogs (1992) assumes the character of a universal parable, mixed with topical events and superstition and resulting in the proclamation that Evil is the evil in us - in each of us.

Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997) presents a realistically portrayed world where individuals fall victim to other individuals, immoral and vicious ones supported by a society ignoring human dignity where it seems opportune. In Margarete Atwood's Blind Assassin (2000) the realistic stroyline about the fate of two sisters, one of whom becomes a fiction writer while the other one tells their biography, is intertwined with a second one which metafictionally unfolds a fantasy novel entiteld The Blind Assassin.

Patricia Plummer:
"The Return of the Gothic in Contemporary Anglophone Crime Fiction"

Since Edgar Allan Poe created his mastermind detective C. Auguste Dupin, crime fiction has developed from a marginal genre to a global phenomenon. It is written in most countries across the globe and has become a serious market force. While one major trend of the late 20th century was

the emphasis on the personal as the political, i.e. the creation of investigators that reflect specific lifestyles, confront social problems and are clearly targeted at various ethnic, social and/or gendered communities (e.g. feminist, African American, Native American, Black British, lesbian etc.), the first decade of the 21st century has witnessed a marked shift to fast-paced and decidedly violent mystery fiction.

One of the most popular contemporary crime writers is Dan Brown whose books have quickly captured an international audience. As I will argue, the success of Brown's thrillers Angels and Demons and The Da Vinci Code is based on a certain formula: Brown's Indiana Jones-style protagonist investigates mysterious codes, is sent off to lonely country mansions, palaces, dungeons, cemeteries or churches where he is confronted with members of secret societies / murderous monks / the Vatican and encounters massive acts of violence related in gory details – in short, Brown has successfully reactivated the Gothic mode and adapted it to a 21st-century popular fiction framework.

The proposed paper will compare representations of evil in Brown's neo-Gothic thrillers with selected works by crime authors Patricia Cornwell (US), P.D. James (UK) and Cathy Reichs (CAN). Neo-Gothic villains abound in Cornwell's Scarpetta-series (one of her most recent protagonists, a disfigured Parisian serial killer nicknamed 'Wolfman' is an obvious reference to Poe's early detective fiction), the genre is reinterpreted in a more subdued manner by P.D. James while Kathy Reichs' latest forensic mystery clearly parodies Brown's sensationalism.

The final section of the paper will address possible reasons for crime fiction's current obsession with the Gothic mode. Is it a mere whim, a clever marketing strategy or could it be more than that – a way of addressing (or escaping from) the 'evil forces' at work in today's globalised world: global economy, contagious diseases, terrorism?

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Frank Austermühl:
"'Fighting Evil'? The Strategic Use of Evil in British and American Political Discourse"

This paper analyzes the representation of evil in the discourse of British and American political leaders, focussing on both its semantic and pragmatic dimensions.

A staple ingredient of the War on Terror, the term evil has gained renewed topicality, above all in the context of the public speeches of U.S. president George W. Bush. The strategic use of evil in Bush's post-9/11 discourse is epitomized by his 2002 State of the Union address in which he famously referred to Iraq, Iran and North Korean as an "Axis of Evil." While commentators across the world have often criticized Bush's use of evil as simplistic and outdated, most failed to recognize that the first public figure to define the terrorist attacks of September 11 as an act of a (systemically) evil enemy and not as the work of a group of "evil-doers" (Bush), was not the American president but British Prime minister Tony Blair ("This mass terrorism is the new evil in our world today. It is

perpetrated by fanatics who are utterly indifferent to the sanctity of human life and we, the democracies of this world, are going to have to come together to fight it together and eradicate this evil completely from our world.") What has also been missing in recent analyses of the use of evil in political speeches is the fact that the representation of the opposing other as evil has a long tradition in both American and British public discourse.

This paper attempts to address the above mentioned shortcomings by presenting a diachronic and comparative analysis of the use of evil in the discourse of American and British leaders. Starting with speeches by Tony Blair and George W. Bush, the analysis will show that the use of evil in political discourse pursues a set number of pragmatic goals. While, in general, these goals do not differ between American and British discourse, we will show that U.S. presidential discourse is more long-term oriented than the discourse of British political leaders.

David S. Reynolds:
"'Evil Propels Me, and Reform of Evil Propels Me': Literary and Social Versions of Evil in the American Renaissance."

When Walt Whitman's persona in "Song of Myself" announced that he was propelled both by evil and the reform of evil, he was speaking for American culture as a whole. On the one hand, few other periods produced such resonant literary explorations of evil as the American Renaissance: one thinks especially of Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville. At the same time, few eras have witnessed so earnest and intense a devotion to ridding the world of evil as this one: witness antebellum America's countless reform groups, driven by an optimism that found heightened expression in the Transcendentalists. Whence this paradox of an era obsessed by evil yet confident of its reform? The evidence suggests that certain writers became deeply preoccupied with psychological or metaphysical evil, partly as a result of their keen perception of ambiguities in the very social or cultural problems that defined evil for many of their contemporaries. Others fastened on a particular social ill as evil and imagined a redeemed America cleansed of it. Still others-Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman in particular-took an expansive view of both evil and its reform, drawing heavily from Romantic philosophy and American liberal religion to forge freshly affirmative responses to the problem of evil.

Lutz Schowalter:
"Satan and the Anti-Christ: Fictionalizations of the Ultimate Evil in Contemporary North American Cultural Production"

The Christian book market in North America is currently going through a period of remarkable success. By far the most thriving publishing phenomenon within this segment of cultural production is Jerry Jenkins' and Tim LaHaye's series of Left Behind novels and related spin-off products that present a fictionalization of the apocalypse as it is foretold in the Book of Revelations. The main series of Left Behind comprises twelve novels that chronicle / imagine the seven-year period known as the 'tribulation' which supposedly takes place before Jesus' second coming and the ensuing millennial kingdom of God on earth. The premise of the Left Behind novels is that true Christian

believers are raptured [i.e. saved by God] before the period of tribulation starts. Those who are left behind on earth subsequently live through plagues and catastrophes of previously unknown proportions and also encounter the two beings which might be said to represent ultimate evil: the Anti-Christ and Satan himself.

In my paper, I shall attempt to do two things. First, I will briefly put Left Behind and its representation of evil into a historical perspective of ongoing apocalyptical thought in North America. The main part of my paper will then be concerned with questions of mediation. With the literalist claims of LaHaye and his followers, the Left Behind series obviously attempts to mirror what is laid out for the end times in the bible. And yet, even though there might be many references to the apocalypse in the bible besides the Book of Revelation, the fact that LaHaye and Jenkins expand these into a much larger textual corpus and that they translate them into a fictional universe leads to intriguing questions – questions about the properties of fiction in general and questions about what the fictional treatment of the end times in Left Behind might mean for LaHaye's truth claims and, most importantly, for conceptions of evil, both within the novels and in North American (Christian) culture in general. To engage with these questions, I shall present an analysis of the original Left Behind novels and also take into account the recently released Left Behind movies as well as the forthcoming Left Behind computer game.

Rüdiger Heinze:
"'Evil' Protagonists in American Fiction and Film: Charm and Persuasion of Psychopaths, Serial Killers, Murderers and Co."

The 'evil-ness' of fictional protagonists, especially in first-person narrative fiction, derives not only from their placement within a literary and cultural historical tradition of representations of evil but in large part also from an 'extreme' divergence of the character's actions, thoughts and values from the norms, values and conventions of the audience/readers receiving the text/film. The arising moral and ethical confrontation between reader and text constitutes a significant aspect of literature and film and their reception as well as of the aesthetic distancing of evil by its representations. Censorship debates regularly revolve around these issues. While it is relatively easy to condemn protagonists like those of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" or Bret Easton Ellis' American Psycho (leave alone monsters such as zombies, aliens and other 'creatures') because the narratives and their textual/filmic strategies offer little ground (for various reasons) for a complex moral evaluation, it is considerably more difficult to deal with the substantial number of apparently eloquent, sympathetic and charming murderers (Denis Johnson: Angels, Mark Childress: Crazy in Alabama, Robert Rodriguez: Sin City), serial killers (Stewart O'Nan: The Speed Queen, Joyce Carol Oates: Zombie), pathological liars and thieves (The Speed Queen, Bryan Singer: The Usual Suspects), as well as terrorists and potentially homicidal schizophrenics (Chuck Phalaniuk: Fight Club, Alan Parker: Angel Heart).

In my talk, I will analyze the textual and filmic strategies, narrative techniques and rhetoric of persuasion employed in the constitution of 'evil' protagonists in the aforementioned novels and films. Special attention will be paid not only to the attending notion of character but also to the moral and ethical confrontation between reader and text/film and the subsequent evaluation involved in the reception process. The talk will close with an attempt to systematize degrees of ehtical variance between text and context.

Hans-Ulrich Mohr:
"Neo-Noir Films: Evil and Postmodernism"

My paper wants to trace the representation of evil in the recent neo-noir movie. Films I will focus on are: Roman Polanski's Chinatown, Joel & Ethan Coen's Barton Fink, Jonathan Demme's The Silence of the Lambs, Quentin Tarantino's: Pulp Fiction, Mary Harron's American Psycho, David Lynch's Wild at Heart and Lost Highway.

In the 18th century, evil became functionalized in the context of an optimistic theogony (Physico-Theology). It became aestheticized as the fear and horror component of the two-step experience of the sublime which had its closure in a feeling of liberation. In Naturalism, horror and evil were relocated in everday experience. The inspiration of (early) film noir goes back to naturalistic texts or texts that took their clues from naturalism. Above all the writers Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler had articulated a response to the situation caused by the Big Depression of the late 1920s and the 1930s.The collapse of the Victorian society and of the monetary system led to an anarchic extension of human behavior beyond the existing social codes: men appear in a net of corruption, immorality, violence, sexual drives and greed for possession. The world is obscure, only the hard-boiled detective who is a free-floating, hedonistic, modern-time dandy, manages to survive cynically, keep up some justice and values because he does not hesitate to use the methods of the criminals.

The neo-noir descendants of this genre are not only characterized by turning black and white film shots into colors that still convey the noir mise-en-scène they also show a society that is characterized by the omnipresence of corruption and destruction. The human consciousness is a wild collection of drives. Society is the result of collective social construction and thus it includes all the irrational strata and drives of its members. This intertwining of good and evil makes these films correspond with basic tenets of postmodernism. David Lynch's Lost Highway is probably the most complex approach to all this. It thematizes the modes of human perception and blurs the line between consciousness and subconscious and deconstructs the repertoire of neo-noir modes of expression.