

Susan C. Brantly

Painting Clio's Portrait: Metaphors on the Postmodern Palette

In her book, *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time* (1992), Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth suggests that in postmodern fiction a historical paradigm shift has occurred which she expresses in terms of a shift in regulative metaphors. The historical paradigm that postmodernism seeks to abandon is represented by the train track, a linear structure regulated by mechanical time.¹ Postmodern temporality, argues Ermarth, resembles jazz, “swing time” (51). Although I have not been struck as forcefully as Ermarth by the presence of jazz time in postmodern fiction, Ermarth's study, among others, has inspired me to collect metaphors of history and time in order to discern what they might reveal about shifts in recent historical paradigms. Alexander Demandt is somewhat ahead of me in this with his book *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (Metaphors of History: Images and Similes in Historical/Political Thought).² Demandt's work supplies a rich survey of historical metaphor, but most of his sources date to before the 1950s. It seems worthwhile to take a closer look at some historical metaphors from the past thirty to forty years, if one aspires to detect the emergence of new historical paradigms.

¹ Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992), 45.

² Alexander Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (Metaphors of History: Images and Similes in Historical/Political Thought) (Munich: Beck, 1978).

Metaphors help us to organize our knowledge of the world, but metaphorical comparisons are not innocently illustrative, as C. Behan McCullagh seems to think when he maintains that “metaphors reveal connections without *making* them,” a position that Max Black rejects.³ Hans Kellner writes about “regulative metaphors of history, which generate explanations rather than adorn them.”⁴ To borrow a word play from Torbjörn Säfve, the maker of metaphors is a cosmetician, making up the world, both in the sense of decorating it and creating a sense of cosmos.⁵ In the writings of Hayden white and his successors, entire historical narratives have been referred to as metaphorical. My use of the term is somewhat more specific. I have been in search of regulative metaphors that suggest a model, an analogy, or an image of history, and in so doing provide an explanation or paradigm of history. When such metaphors occur in a text, they reveal many of its implied premises, and further, engage the text in a debate with other texts invoking similar or contradictory metaphors.

In this paper, I will focus on three areas of “metaphoric discussion” which seem to strike at the heart of postmodern sensibilities about history. My sources include not only Swedish historical fiction, but also historiographers, historians, and theorists from the rest of Europe and America. The notions of play and contingency are issues raised again and again in discussions of postmodernism. The first section of this paper adopts a familiar linear approach to the evolution of gaming metaphors in history, although the careful reader will note that these metaphors resist standing in a neat chronological line,

³ C. Behan McCullagh, “Metaphor and Truth in History,” *Clio* 23(1993):38. McCullagh is responding to Max Black’s “More about Metaphor” in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge UP, 1979).

⁴ Hans Kellner, *Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked* (Madison: U. of Wisconsin P, 1989), 8.

⁵ Torbjörn Säfve, *Molza, älskaren* (Molza, Lover) (Stockholm:Prisma bokförlaget, 1988), 302.

despite my efforts. The metaphor of chess highlights the changing perception of the role of human agency in history, and a distinct postmodern sensibility emerges in contrast to previous systems of thought. The second section focuses on temporal metaphors. One of the chief ambitions of this section is to demonstrate how postmodernism has challenged the regulative metaphor of linear time that seems constitutive of the modern era. Further, in an effort to avoid a simple binary opposition, I present four different metaphorical alternatives to linear time and remark upon the inevitable consequences for narrative form. The third section examines metaphors of historical interpretation and the implied possibility of historical truth.

Something unusual has been going on in Sweden since around 1960. Sweden's population of roughly eight and a half million has been producing and consuming historical fiction at an astonishing rate. I have made a careful study of hundreds of Swedish historical novels written since 1960, ranging from trivial literature, to standard historical romance, to Marxist historical sagas, to historiographic metafiction. Nearly every Swedish author of merit has tried her or his hand at the historical genre at one time or another. Accounting for this phenomenon is not part of this paper, but I suspect it has to do with the Swedish nation's need to address its past in order to recreate itself as the Welfare State, as well as the literary legacy of two Nobel Laureates, Eyvind Johnson and Pär Lagerkvist, who introduced the possibilities of historiographic metafiction to Sweden at a very early stage. I am hopeful that a by-product of the present study will be to enrich the postmodern canon (an oxymoron), or at least spark an interest in these Swedish texts which speak so eloquently to these central concerns of postmodernism.

In the sources I have consulted, gaming metaphors enjoy a rather high profile. This is not the case in Demandt's book, where gaming metaphors take up only five of the 453 pages. The reasons for this may simply be accidental: Demandt admits that he has collected metaphors as he has run across them in his professional reading as a historian. Perhaps it is a function of having omitted recent sources and of neglecting fiction. Perhaps as a professional historian, Demandt has not been particularly interested in the rather old-fashioned issue of the driving forces of history, which belongs to the field of the philosophy of history.

Chess is a well-established metaphor for history and tracing its development casts a suggestive light on the development of historical thinking. In the evolution of metaphors, however, it is not a matter of one metaphor replacing another in linear succession. As Demandt notes, "In intellectual history, nothing 'dies' easily."⁶ At any given time, multiple metaphors may be in operation, but perhaps a few may be singled out as dominant.

According to Demandt, in the middle ages one imagined God and the Devil playing chess and controlling the lives of men (366). The forces that guided human history were beyond the control of men, who were subject to divine order. After August Strindberg's religious crisis at the end of the nineteenth century, he adapted this image for his own views on the course of world history. In "Världshistorians mystik," (The Mysticism of World History), Strindberg describes history as "a colossal chess game with one player."⁷ Rather than God and the Devil, Strindberg's "Eternal One" is in charge of all the pieces. This metaphor, which suggests a divine plan for world history, pervades

⁶ Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, 3. My translation.

⁷ August Strindberg, "Världshistorians mystik" (The Mysticism of World History), *Samlade skrifter, Efterslätter* 54 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1920): 352.

the many historical plays Strindberg wrote around the turn of the century and illustrates Demandt's point that powerful metaphors do not easily die.

With the coming of the modern age and the Renaissance, humans begin to take over their own destinies and relegate divine forces to the background.⁸ The chess metaphor adopts perhaps its most familiar form at this time. Chess embodies the Great Man theory of history, the type of historical thinking that makes historians interested in kings, generals, and battles. Chess is, after all, the premier cerebral game. Contingency does not enter into the game, only the skills of the players. Leaders play against each other for control over the political chessboard.

Cardinal Richelieu was one such political chess player.⁹ Goethe often referred to diplomatic measures as "chess moves" and considered himself one of the players: the "chess game of politics" was for him "a game in which it is my profession to serve my land and my country."¹⁰ This form of the metaphor has been particularly long-lived, so that in a relatively ordinary historical romance about Rollo, the Viking founder of Normandy, the narrator Heirik writes when Rollo succeeds in enlarging his territory at the expense of the King of France: "I could only admire Rollo for that chess move."¹¹ Even in a less conventional historical novel, Säfve's *Molza, älskaren*, every time

⁸ For the sake of clarity, I follow the usage of most of the theoretical and philosophical works on these issues, which refer to the "modern" age as the period between the Renaissance and the turn of the twentieth century. "Postmodernism" is roughly what follows. This usage of "modern" and "postmodern" is at odds with the usage of literary history, in which "modernism" takes off around the turn of the twentieth century, and "postmodernism" surfaces after World War II. So, in this essay, James Joyce is a postmodernist! Do we need any more evidence for the arbitrariness of historical periodization?

⁹ Leo Braudy, *Narrative Form in History and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970), 129.

¹⁰ Quoted in Demandt, 366. My translation.

¹¹ Rune Pär Olofsson, *Normandernas hövding* (The Chieftain of the Normans) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1987), 147. All translations from Swedish texts in this article are mine.

characters succeed in manipulating Vatican politics in their favor, it is referred to as “a genial chess move.”¹²

The shortcomings of this form of the chess metaphor are revealed in Sven Delblanc’s *Prästskappan* (The Cassock), a novel set in the late 1700s.¹³ The family crest of General Waldstein is a chessboard and he has arranged his garden like a chessboard, with statues of his ancestors arranged as chess pieces. In the style of the French Classic garden, not a twig is out of place, and not a weed is admitted. The General’s taste in landscaping becomes a symbol of tenacious grasp upon the Great Man view of history and the powerful individual’s ability to control the unruly forces of nature. The scene in which the proletarian Johannes breaks the statues exposes the weakness of the model and provides a foretaste of revolution. What happens when the chess pieces develop a mind of their own? This real threat to the General’s model of the world is averted in this case by the General’s refusal to acknowledge it. He has the statues repaired quietly at night so no one will notice they have been broken.

Although a narratively innovative member of the *Annales* school, George Duby still compares battles to chess games in *Le Dimanche de Bouvines* (The Sunday of the Bouvines).¹⁴ In an interview, Peter Englund explained that the writing of his popular and controversial book, *Poltava* (1988), was inspired by a reaction against the chess metaphor of history: “The battle was described, as most wars are described, like a sort of chess game between generals. Move meets countermove. Pawns and horses are along in order to be sacrificed according to previously devised plans. It is as if the results of war are so

¹² Säfve, *Molza, älskaren*, 271. Further such references include “the brilliant chess move” (287) and “a clever chess move” (421).

¹³ Sven Delblanc, *Prästskappan* (The Cassock) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1986).

¹⁴ Philippe Carrard, *Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992), 203.

extraordinary that they must be the result of premeditated decisions in order to be comprehended.”¹⁵ Englund felt that his predecessors in describing Charles XII’s decisive defeat as a lost chess game did not want to admit the extent to which contingency affects the outcome of war. Englund’s book tries to narrate the chaos of Poltava by intermittently exchanging a panoramic view of the battlefield for a close-up of the individuals involved in the skirmish. Englund also makes it clear that the overview he has mustered in retrospect was impossible for the participants in the battle.

As we move into the nineteenth century, the chess metaphor for history becomes less appropriate. Ranke’s historicism is not interested stories of progress, where the skillful maneuvering of great individuals wins the game. Ranke was more inclined toward organic metaphors in which the state was compared to an individual that might enjoy good or poor health.¹⁶ Marx had little use for the chess metaphor and tended to choose instead technological metaphors, as in his famous discussions of basis and superstructure and in his comparison of history with a locomotive that is fueled by production and demand.¹⁷ In *Sigismund*, Lars Gustafsson updates and parodies Marx’s image by referring to capitalism thus: “The dreadful machine rushes forward like an eighteen-wheeler in which the driver has fallen asleep but the pressure on the gas pedal merely increases.”¹⁸

This does not prevent the chess metaphor from returning in the twentieth century in strangely modified forms. Walter Benjamin begins “Über den Begriff der Geschichte” (On the Concept of History) with a metaphor to describe the relationship between

¹⁵ Mats Holmberg, “Poltava början på vår välfärd,” *Dagens Nyheter*, 31 October 1988.

¹⁶ Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, 82-83.

¹⁷ Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, 296 and 229.

¹⁸ Lars Gustafsson, *Sigismund* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1976), 211.

historical materialism and theology. The metaphor entails a chess-playing machine containing “a puppet in Turkish dress with a water pipe in his mouth,” who wins all the games.¹⁹ Unseen within the booth is a hunchbacked dwarf who is a chess master and who manipulates the hands of the puppet with strings. The puppet is historical materialism and the dwarf is theology. One must suspect a good deal of irony in this metaphor, particularly considering the exotic details of Turkish costume and the hunchback dwarf. At first glance, the chess game of history is run by historical materialism, a mechanical force with a life of its own and a rather nineteenth-century notion. The choice of an automatic chess machine seems to make fun of Marx’s preference for mechanical imagery. Appearance can be deceiving, however, and theology, which as been banished from sight in historical discussions, continues to pull the strings that win the game.

Ferdinand de Saussure, whose writings form the foundation of structuralism, uses chess as his metaphor for historical change in language. As Alan Thiher explains:

In likening historical change and the fixed states to the moves in a chess match, Saussure claims that any given move in the game brings about a new fixed state that corresponds to the synchronic system at any given moment. After each diachronic change, after each move, the respective value of each piece in the game, or linguistic system depends on the position of the piece on the board, much as in language each entity has

¹⁹ Walter Benjamin, “Über den Begriff der Geschichte” (On the Concept of History), *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Works), I.2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974), 693. My translation.

value through its differential relation opposing it to all other terms in the system.²⁰

The result is a succession of complete systems and a focus on the synchronic rather than the diachronic. Notice that Saussure has omitted players from his metaphor. The structuralist is interested in the rules and grammar of the game, not in the forces that create change.

From a postmodern point of view, the chess metaphor becomes problematic: no one believes any longer in the god-like rational control of the political chess master. Both Lars Gustafsson and P.C. Jersild have appealed to the feature of castling, in order to give an aura of postmodern uncertainty to the metaphor of chess.²¹ Both Gustafsson and Jersild must, however, count on the absence of the proverbial chess master in order to achieve the element of surprise. In Jersild's plausible but not factual world history, *Geniernas återkomst. Krönika* (The Return of the Geniuses: Chronicle), Leonardo da Vinci invents the idea of running a state by lottery machine. Citizens would have their fates decided for them once a year by the luck of the draw: "Now and for all time Urbino was transformed into a chess game where every pawn, knight, craftsman, judge, beggar, and tax collector would move according to predetermined and unassailable rules."²² The chess machine that Leonardo sets up does not work, because the chess pieces do not

²⁰ Alan Thiher, *Words in Reflection: Modern Language Theory and Postmodern Fiction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984), 78-79.

²¹ In Lars Gustafsson's *Bernard Foy's tredje rockad* (Bernard Foy's Third Castling) (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1986), the notion of castling is central to the structure of the book. In P.C. Jersild's *Calvinols resa genom världen* (Calvinol's Journey through the World) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1965), a book full of surprises, "Life castled" (172).

²² P.C. Jersild, *Geniernas återkomst. Krönika* (The Return of the Geniuses: Chronicle) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1987), 130.

behave as mindless pieces of wood and an invading army eventually comes to wipe out the board.

In *Arken: Berättelsen om en färd till tidens ände* (The Ark: The Story of a Journey to the End of Time), Peter Nilson has imagined what a postmodern variant of the historical chess game might look like. Benjamin, during a nap in the madhouse, is swallowed by a large metallic fish. The belly of the fish is laid out like a chessboard, with the white and black squares being separate rooms. Benjamin engages the Black: “There was an opponent in this chess game of Time, but since he was manifold one could not point him out and say where he was.”²³ Benjamin has no overview of the board, the pieces are as large as he is, and he has no idea how the pieces are set up on the board. Benjamin formulates the lesson learned: “If one understands that the world is a game, one has understood a lot, but one does not know whom one is playing against, what the rules of the game are, or how the game will end” (210).

This suspicion of the chess metaphor is not new to this century. One of the patron saints of the postmodern canon, Thomas Fielding, objected to the chess model already in 1739:

For my own part, I differ so entirely from those Great Men, that I imagine
Wisdom to be of very little Consequence in the Affairs of the World:
Human Life appears to me to resemble the Game of Hazard, much more
than that of Chess; in the latter, among good Players, one false step much
infallibly lose the Game; whereas, in the former, the worst that can happen

²³ Peter Nilson, *Arken: Berättelsen om en färd till tidens ände* (The Ark: The Tale of a Journey to the End of Time) (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1982), 209.

is to have the odds against you, which are never more than two to one; and we often see a blundering Fellow who scarce knows on which side the Odds are, dribble out his bad chance upon the Table, and Sweep the whole Board, while the wisest Players, and those who stick close to the rule, lift up their Eyes and curse the Dice.²⁴

Postmodern language is filled with references to play and contingency. Games of chance, rather than the rational game of chess, come to serve as metaphors of history.

Both Caesar and Bismarck referred to casting dice in order to invoke the uncertainty of historical decisions.²⁵ In both cases, they were still Great Men with control of the dice and the power to decide whether to take a chance or not. In Jersild's *Geniernas återkomst*, Henri Beyle, Stendahl's unsuccessful older brother, contemplates his fate: "I find myself in a die large enough, or small enough, so that I can reach its corners with my hands and feet" (220). Trapped in the dies, Henri Beyle is at the mercy of contingency and has no control over the rolling of the dice. The shift in paradigm is more or less the same as we saw in chess: the subject moves from a position of overview and control, to one of hopeless entanglement in the game itself. One is player and piece at the same time.

Metaphors of history and time are closely linked, since time is perceived to be the element in which history unfolds. The current array of temporal metaphors seems to have been shaped by a common object of resistance: the metaphor of linear, mechanical time, which is perceived as the metaphor of dominant discourse. Each of the temporal

²⁴ Quoted in Braudy, 129.

²⁵ See Demandt for Caesar's famous "The die is cast" (365) and Bismarck's reference to "the iron dice" which determine the battle" (367).

metaphors discussed below has been conceived as an alternative to linear time. The ocean metaphor is not a reaction to organic time, nor are time atoms a reaction to frayed time.

They are all responses to the single time line.

The relationship between linear time and one of its rivals is evoked in a quote from Vibeke Olsson's *Krigarens sköld* (The Warrior's Shield):

Time is an endless plain, without horizon or landmark, an endless plain, exposed to a harsh and indifferent light. At the same time, Time shrinks together, becomes a narrow band, a thin strip, a stream between cliffs or an alley in Rome or Alexandria, a narrow alley between tall buildings. Every day is an expanse without landmarks. But the weeks, the months, and the years are squeezed together into a narrow stream.²⁶

This passage reveals the tension between the metaphors of the endless plain versus the road, and in another form, it is the tension between the ocean and a river. If time is an endless plain or an ocean, then it eludes our mastering glance. Everything cannot be taken in at once. Moreover, everything is subject to an "indifferent light"; no point is more important than any other. If there is movement, waves on the ocean or billowing grass, it is not purposeful movement. It does not lead to any fixed goal or destination. In Olsson's metaphor, human divisions of time—weeks, months, and years—shrink the endless plain into a small alley or a stream. Here we have the metaphor of linear time. It is immediately surveyable and it has a particular direction: a road always leads somewhere and rivers run to the sea. One need only consult Demandt to discover how

²⁶ Vibeke Olsson, *Krigarens sköld* (The Warrior's Shield) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1988), 346.

popular the river metaphor has been since Plato, and the road and track also receive a good share of attention.

This special matrix appears to have a predominantly horizontal dimension, but there is an implied vertical dimension as well. Where is the vantage point from which the historian views time? Louis O. Mink's version of the spatial metaphor reveals the vertical dimension: "To comprehend temporal succession means to think of it in both directions at once, and then time is no longer a river which bears us along but the river in aerial view, upstream and downstream seen in a single survey."²⁷ The historian of the time line, of objective historical discourse must extract her/himself from the flow of time and stand outside it. In contrast to this model, Jakob Burckhardt, Hayden White's model satiric historian, chooses fairly consistently to use the metaphor of the ocean rather than the river. The historian's task, Burckhardt writes, is "the identification of which wave of the great storm-tossed sea we are drifting on."²⁸ The alternative to the aerial view is drifting along in the flood. In another context, Burckhardt makes the difficulties of separating oneself from the flood of time even more acute: "We would very much like to know the wave, upon which we drift in the ocean, but we are the wave itself."²⁹

Shifts in temporal metaphors have a direct correlation with narrativity. The "natural" confluence of linear time with linear narrative has been one of the most powerful tools of history writing. As readers, we start at the beginning of a narrative and stop when it is over. We read in a linear fashion. So, when events are narrated in a

²⁷ Louis O. Mink, *Historical Understanding*, ed. Brian Fay, Eugene O. Golob, and Richard T. Vann (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987), 57.

²⁸ Jakob Burckhardt, *Ju*²⁸ Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), 191.

dgments of History and Historians, trans. Harry Zohn (Boston: Beacon, 1958), 252.

²⁹ Quoted in Demandt, 269. My translation.

chronological, linear fashion, we as readers experience time as linear. Changing the temporal metaphor means changing the way events are narrated. The difference between Mink's metaphor and Burckhardt's is the difference between Emile Zola and James Joyce.

Another metaphor that has emerged in resistance to linear time is the metaphor of organic time. This particular dualism has occasionally been characterized as a difference in gender. What I call "organic time," Julia Kristeva refers to as "women's time," characterized by "cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrences of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature."³⁰ She contrasts this with "time as project, teleology, linear and prospective unfolding; time as departure, progression and arrival—in other words, the time of history." (192) Sara Death has effectively demonstrated the presence of contrasting views of women and men's time in Kerstin Ekman's four-volume series about a small Swedish railway town.³¹ The presence of the railroad, an icon of linear time, gives Ekman ample opportunity to contrast the women's perspective on time with the men's.

This type of organic time, however, need not always be so strongly gender-determined. Sweden possesses a convenient geographical location for organic time: the northern forests on the edge of western civilization. The inhabitants of Sara Lidman's Norrland, in her five-volume railway epic, live in a state of organic time, in tune with nature and the seasons, until linear, mechanical time is imposed upon them in the familiar shape of the railway. The main character of Kerstin Ekman's *Rövarna i Skule Skogen*

³⁰ Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), 191.

³¹ Sarah Death, "'They Can't Do This to Time': Women's and Men's Time in Kerstin Ekman's *Änglahuset*," *A Century of Swedish Narrative*, ed. Sarah Death & Helena Forsås-Scott (Norwich: Norvik Press, 1994), 267-80.

(Brigands of Skule Forest), a troll named Skord who lives for 500 years, comes from a “timeless” place in the northern forests. When a small town at the end of the world is decimated by the plague in Torgny Lindgren’s *Ljuset* (The Light), the population loses the capacity to divide time: “Actually, one could have probably borrowed a division of time from Umeå as one borrowed fire from a neighbor.”³² The men try, without success, to grasp what has happened to them: “And now they began to count and measure the time that had passed. They tried to organize the past into years and days and seasons. They helped each other to remember so that some kind of chain of events would emerge. They sought the difference between latest and earliest and beginning and end.” (155) In *Babylon, gudarnas sköka* (Babylon, Whore of the Gods), Artur Lundkvist locates organic time in the world view of the Babylonians and linear time within the Bible:

The goal to strive towards was ultimate salvation at the end of time...He [Jahve] was strict and demanding, forced his chosen people onto the path of progress which led to the unavoidable entrance into historical time.

In contrast, Babylon’s condition consisted of a will to remain happily ahistorical, lingering behind in ideal timelessness, in unchanging repetition, amidst the season’s and constellations’ eternal recurrences.³³

The challenge of narrating organic time, repetition and timelessness, has been met in the above novels by adopting a rather episodic narrative structure that strenuously avoids any

³² Torgny Lindgren, *Ljuset* (The Light) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1988), 222.

³³ Artur Lundkvist, *Babylon, gudarnas sköka* (Babylon, Whore of the Gods) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1981), 140-41.

references to dates or other historical frames of reference that might allow us to place the narrated events within our pre-existing linear image of history.

In each of the above-noted examples, a dualism has been created between organic time and linear time. Linear time is the dominant term in the hierarchy, but organic time gains our sympathy as the underdog. Organic time easily takes on associations with Eden and lays claim to being “natural.” Rhetorically, organic time can claim the power of “origin,” and by comparison, linear time becomes a violent, artificial construction that distorts the original organic time. One must be suspicious of dualistic hierarchies. Organic time is just as much a construction as linear time.

The next metaphor of time, I refer to as “time atoms,” an image borrowed from Torbjörn Säfve.³⁴ In response to linear time and linear narrative’s tendency to suggest movements of progress and cause and effect, time and events are broken apart to avoid any misleading connections. One is left with the countless *petits récits* of Jean François Lyotard.³⁵ The *Annales* school has been particularly concerned with avoiding metanarrative and has experimented with forms like “nonnarrative tableau.”³⁶ Michelet is the forerunner of this technique with this *Tableau de la France* (*Tableau of France*),³⁷ in which he describes the provinces of France, one by one, in small vignettes without suggesting any temporal movement in the process. A strategy connected to this is simply focusing on a piece of the picture—the margin, the mentality, the episteme—while avoiding any reference to development or cause and effect.

³⁴ “Time’s Atom” is referred to in both Säfve’s *Kuperad lek eller Skändaren från Skänninge* (*Cut Deck or The Despoiler from Skänninge*) (Stockholm: Prisma, 1990) and *Molza, älskaren*.

³⁵ J. F. Lyotard, *La Condition Postmodern* (*The Postmodern Condition*) (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979), 98.

³⁶ Kellner, *Language and Historical Representation*, 108.

³⁷ Jules Michelet, *Tablau de la France* (*Tableau of France*) (Paris: Pages-Club, 1967).

Along these lines, Ermarth writes: “Postmodern narrative can be instructively thought of as a temporal instance of collage, or rather collage in motion” (8). Time atoms can always be recombined in a variety of configurations. Perhaps that is why a deck of cards can be a popular variant of this sort of temporal metaphor. One can always shuffle the deck. In Ekman’s *Rövarna i Skuleskogen* (Brigands of Skule Forest), it is said of the character Xenia Linderskjöld: “For a long time, there had been for Xenia no sequence of order in all the events and episodes her life consisted of. Everything seemed haphazardly shuffled, but preserved, just like the cards in a deck.”³⁸ In *Kuperad lek eller Skändaren från Skänninge*, Säfve structures his narrative after a card game. There are illustrations of cards from a tarot deck that interact with the narrative, a smoking break, and the first chapter is dealt twice. Not surprisingly, the favorite book of the central (but not only) narrator, Clas Livijn, is *Tristram Shandy*, praised for “a resolute jumbling of all chronologies....Everything happens simultaneously as a matter of act” (30). The metaphor of shuffling the deck and redealing hands is not far from what Ermarth is trying to get at with her metaphor of “rhythmic time.” She identifies the repetition of identical motifs (cards?) and descriptions (hands?) in slight but disturbing variations (redeal?) with the musical improvisation of jazz.

The final temporal metaphor of this study (though certainly not the last one possible) is that of “frayed time.” Frayed time is to the best of my knowledge not a metaphor employed in “serious” historical writing, since it involves some of the professional historian’s cardinal sins: anachronism and writing the future. Fraying time involves torturing the single time line until it splits, loops, or breaks. Curiously, the scientific mind-set which has been made responsible for the dominance of linear time in

³⁸ Kerstin Ekman, *Rövarna i Skuleskogen* (Brigands of Skule Forest) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1988), 374.

western civilization has developed into its own critique. Frayed time is most commonly found in the traditionally “low brow” genre of science fiction; in fact, it may be one of its identifying characteristics. Fraying strands of time is very common in the popular media; the television variants of *Star Trek* and the movies *Terminator* and *Back to the Future* are only a few of many possible examples. Often the subtext of these popular tales, however, is that the timeline we are living in is the most important and it should be tended and perhaps improved if possible. Since postmodern fiction does not care much for the distinction between “high” and “low” genres, the temporal tricks of science fiction have been borrowed by even “respectable” authors.

Elisabeth Wesseling has noted the postmodern hybridization of science fiction and the historical novel in her book, *Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodern Innovations of the Historical Novel*. The tendency I describe here with the metaphor of frayed time includes the techniques Wesseling has dubbed “uchronian.” Wesseling explains what she means by this term as follows:

Postmodernist novelists, however, also depart from the traditional historical novel by inventing alternative versions of history, which focus on groups of people who have been relegated to insignificance by official history. In this way, unrealized possibilities that lie dormant in certain historical situations are brought to our attention (“What would have happened, if...?). These apocryphal histories inject the utopian potential of

science fiction into the generic model of the historical novel, which produces a form of narrative fiction one could call “uchronian.”³⁹

Wesseling, in fact, argues that this type of uchronian technique is the identifying characteristic of postmodern historical fiction. This study means to suggest that there are more metaphors on the postmodern palette than either Ermarth or Wesseling have suggested.

P.C. Jersild, who as a medical doctor boasts a considerable scientific background, has frayed time on a number of occasions. In *Calvinols resa genom världen*, the main character, Calvinol, ages along a different time line than the events in the novel. Calvinol is 70 in 1626, 28 in 1882, and 8 in 1212. Jersild uses anachronism to shake our confidence in linear time, as when a submarine appears outside of eighteenth-century Venice in *Den femtionde frälsaren* (The Fiftieth Savior).⁴⁰ Peter Nilson, a professional astronomer, uses all his scientific expertise and considerable imagination to fray time in his novels. Part of the fiction of *Äventyret* (The Tale) is that it is a book given to Charlemagne on his deathbed by an angel to take his mind off dying.⁴¹ The events appear to take place in the late middle ages (Sweden is still Catholic, but there are no dates to help us). As the story progresses, time becomes more and more frayed and two of the characters experience the Richthofen squadron’s annihilation of Dirschau without

³⁹ Elisabeth Wesseling, *Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1991), viii. It is important to bear in mind that Wesseling uses the term postmodernism to refer to a literary period that begins after World War II, rather than in the sense of the philosophical postmodern used in this paper.

⁴⁰ P. C. Jersild, *Den femtionde frälsaren* (The Fiftieth Savior) (Stockholm: Månocket, 1985).

⁴¹ Peter Nilson, *Äventyret* (The Tale) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1989).

somehow leaving their home time frame. Whatever it is that keeps events from happening all at once (narrative, a law of physics, an act of God) begins to break down.

Once a story leaves the coordinates of Earth for space, odd things happened to the beleaguered metaphor of the time line. The vertical and horizontal dimensions of the river and road metaphors are no longer relevant. One is simply a point in infinite space. Neither are organic metaphors like day, night, and seasons relevant. Any attempt to observe organic time in space becomes clearly artificial. In Peter Nilson's *Arken*, the character Benjamin survives Noah's flood and dreams of seeing the end of time. He almost succeeds because he is able to live until mankind has built a spaceship that, thanks to the theories of Albert Einstein and the Weber Field, should be able to reach the end of time and the universe. At a certain point, the crew of the spaceship ages on a slow Einsteinian curve while life on Earth speeds on by the millennia. At the very end of time, time loops back to form a circle, the narrative ends where it began with God discovering an unidentified object (the spaceship) and creating the universe for it.

Sven Delblanc's dystopian novel *Moria land* (The Land of Moria) is set sometime after the year 2000 when dictatorial communism has taken over Sweden. Delblanc's elderly narrator has some memory of the past, but reflects how the victors are able to change the past:

The young think they can learn from school books and historical novels how it was in olden times, when workers starved and died in the gutters or were forced into drug addiction in order to endure their misery, when the bourgeoisie had *jus primae noctis* and the kind and Olaf Palme held orgies

in the palace and made the daughters of the people dance naked before
their inebriated eyes.⁴²

In *Det sällsamma djuret från norr* (The Peculiar Beast from the North), Lars Gustafsson imagines porous space, space with bubbles like Swiss cheese where the physical laws of this universe do not apply.⁴³ Whoever gets to the bubbles first gets to create new physical laws. The temporary changes in the laws of physics result in changes in the time line we are familiar with. One such traveler emerges from porous space to a universe in which Huey Long was elected president in 1936 and the United States entered into an alliance with Hitler. Both examples from Delblanc's and Gustafsson's novels illustrate Wesseling's point that the postmodern use of uchronian history has strong political potential.

Although the host of metaphors about history as an object are legion, metaphors that describe the task of the historian are relatively rare. The dominant metaphors in this respect involve seeing: point of view, optical imagery, painting, sculpture, mirror. At the bottom of much of this optical imagery is the sense that the historian is able to see what is actually there in the past.

As Lionel Gossman has demonstrated, up until the nineteenth century when history began to take science as its model, historians were clear about the artistic nature of their craft. Thus, Voltaire could write: "A false date, a wrong name, are only material for a volume of *errata*. If the main body of the work is otherwise true, if the interests, the motives, the events have been faithfully unfolded, we have a well-made statue which can

⁴² Sven Delblanc, *Moria land* (The Land of Moria) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1987) 16.

⁴³ Lars Gustafsson, *Det sällsamma djuret från norr* (The Peculiar Beast from the North) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1989).

be faulted for some slight imperfection of a fold in the drapery.”⁴⁴ Alexander Demandt also shows that comparisons of history writing with painting and sculpture go back to antiquity. Demandt observes that with the painting metaphor, the important talent for the historian is the art of shadowing and nuance: with sculpture, it is the art of leaving things out (370). Not surprisingly, the more mechanical image of the mirror comes to dominate nineteenth-century history writing with its Rankean urge to depict history “as it really was.” A clear historical presentation will provide an undistorted reflection of the past. As a metaphor for his own critical readings of historical texts, Hans Kellner uses the unfocusing of opera glasses. His point is that in a convincing historical depiction, the reader’s attention is on the image the opera glasses focus on. Unfocusing the glasses makes the audience aware of the means by which the focused image is achieved: the glasses (4).

It is fair to say that there is presently no unity about a current metaphor for the historian’s work because the topic is hotly debated. C. Behan McCullagh has offered a metaphor in the context of a rebuttal of Hans Kellner’s views on the matter:

Historians create interpretations, on this [Kellner’s] account, by selecting and arranging facts to fit preconceived patterns. The pattern is not discovered in the past, rather it is created by the process of interpretation. It reminds me of the game you can play when given a line drawing of a complex scene, say of a wilderness, and a list of animal’s names, the game being to detect, if you can, each of the animals in the drawing. They cannot be seen at a casual glance, but can be picked out once they have

⁴⁴ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, Supplement, Part 1 (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 196), 2:320.

been suggested. Kellner's mistake is in supposing that this process of picking out patterns is not one of discovering truths about the past. If I succeed in finding portraits of the animals in the drawing, everyone would agree that the portraits are there. (42)

McCullagh's metaphor is interesting on a number of different levels. To begin with, the historian's task is still about seeing and the professional historian's task is to bring more than the "casual glance" to bear on the study of the historical picture. The metaphor insists that the animals in the line drawing are there to be found and rhetorically denies Kellner's assertion that the animals are not there in the first place. The very forcefulness of this metaphor seems to refute McCullagh's assertion elsewhere in the same article that metaphors merely reveal connections without making them.

McCullagh seems allied with a theoretical group that Andrew P. Norman has called "plot-reifiers."⁴⁵ This group includes David Carr, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Frederik Olafson, who argue that the past is already narratively structured; therefore, to narrate the past is not necessarily to falsify it. It is thus possible to aim at achieving truth in historical narrative. A further significant detail in the metaphor involves the appeal for consensus: "If I succeed in finding portraits of the animals in the drawing, everyone would agree that the portraits are there." Verification seems tied to creating a consensus as to what is true. McCullagh points at a can of worms without opening it. Because the animals of his metaphor actually exist, there can be nothing controversial about everyone agreeing they exist. McCullagh's metaphor is akin to metaphors in which history is a puzzle to be laid

⁴⁵ Andrew P. Norman, "Telling it Like it Was: Historical Narratives on their own Terms," *History and Theory* 30 (1991): 119-15.

and the historian looks for pieces of the puzzle. In both cases, there is a pattern in the past to be discovered, no created.

Another group of theorists described by Norman are the “impositionalists.”⁴⁶ Norman mentions Hayden White and Louis O. Mink in this context, though one might also add Hans Kellner. The gist of this point of view, as Norman summarizes it, is that telling a story inevitably imposes a falsifying narrative structure on the past. Perhaps a good metaphor for this line of thinking is one suggested in Delblanc’s *Prästskapen*. The main character Hermann refers to tales of the past as “constellations”: “These tales are given to us to be of help. They help us to create a meaning in our chaos. They are the warp where we can fasten our weft of pettiness and chaos, so that a pattern finally emerges” (73). In this metaphor, our interpretive starting point is the chaos of the stars in the heavens. We impose meaning on this chaos by imagining pictures, figures, constellations.

In the context of Delblanc’s novel, these constellations are associated with mythic structures, and if there is a resonance between Delblanc’s constellations and Hayden White’s tropes, it may be because of White’s inspiration by Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*, which in turn was inspired by James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. This notion of mythic structure as an ordering principle for chaos was also shared by T.S. Eliot: “It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.”⁴⁷ In his novel

⁴⁶ Norman also discusses a third group, “anti-referentialists,” among whom he counts Roland Barthes and J. F. Lyotard. I do not care to distinguish between the “anti-referentialists” and the “impositionalists,” something which Norman himself suggests when he writes of the “anti-referentialists”: “in challenging the very ideal of representational adequacy, [this group] tacitly admits narrative’s representational inadequacy, and thus falls out as a sort of radicalized impositionalism” (122).

⁴⁷ T. S. Eliot, “Ulysses, Order, and Myth,” *The Dial* 75 (November 1923): 483.

about Alexander the Great, Artur Lundkvist expresses a similar sense of the organizing force of mythic structure, this time from the perspective of Alexander the Great who observes how stories about him are already taking shape:

What remains of your life ultimately are some haphazardly chosen moments, petrified into pictures, already incomprehensible and inexplicable, outside of time and space, lifted out of their context. Myths, legends, history: What are they other than poems that grow out of the depths of humankind? What deed endures before them! How do they not transform everything beyond recognition, arbitrarily, accidentally.⁴⁸

Such interpretations of historical narrative easily emphasize the falsifying nature of historical narrative.

The feature of the constellation metaphor of history that upsets some readers and historians is that it denies a connection between historical discourse and its referent, history. The belief is still widespread that historical writing can teach us of the past, that it can be in some sense true. This connection between historical discourse and reality has been strongly denied by critics like Roland Barthes (“Historical discourse is presumably the only kind which aims at a referent ‘outside’ itself that can in fact never be

⁴⁸ Artur Lundkvist, *Krigarens dikt* (The Warrior’s Poem) (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1976), 225.

reached.”⁴⁹) and Paul de Man (“the bases for historical knowledge are not empirical facts but written texts, even if these texts masquerade in the guise of wars or revolutions.”⁵⁰)

One might hear the voices of professional historians objecting: “But I just can’t make any old thing up!” A metaphor for the historian’s task that places itself somewhere between the puzzles of the plot-reifiers and the constellations of the impositionists is that of the archeological dig. Archeology is, of course, a highly scientific and complex discipline and it is not archeology *per se* that constitutes the metaphor. It is the image of the dig site where the analyzing individual is confronted with fragments from the past and challenged to make them make sense.

In Sigrid Combüchen’s *Byron* (1988), Link the Dentist uses the archeological metaphor to make a point about writing biography: “To write papers about real people is archeology. One reconstructs by constructing. But at least one uses the splinters and stones that one finds, because they give an indication of proportions.”⁵¹ Link the Dentist is clear that he is constructing, not really reconstructing, a plausible picture of Byron. What separates him from the impositionists, however, is his respect for the splinters and stones of the dig. These fragments give a sense of proportion, so that one cannot just “make up any old thing.” The physical presence of the past in the form of artifacts sets some limits on what may be said. Link and his fellow Byron biographers actually disinter Byron’s remains because of an almost fetishistic respect for the physical traces of the past.

⁴⁹ Roland Barthes, “Historical Discourse,” *Structuralism: A Reader*, ed. Michael Lane (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), 153.

⁵⁰ Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983), 165.

⁵¹ Sigrid Combüchen, *Byron. En Roman* (Byron: A Novel) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1988), 126.

The fetishizing of history's physical remains is not limited in Combüchen's novel. Museums exist in order to house such things. Original manuscripts command a high price because they were physically present at the text's inception. Verner von Heidenstam attended the exhumation of Charles XII's remains just to be as close as possible to the physical presence of the subject of his novel *Karolinerna* (The Charles Men).⁵² Human experience is transient. Perhaps that is why we hold the humble fragment of pottery that has existed through millennia in such high regard. The older a thing is the more remarkable we perceive it to be.

It should be noted that Michel Foucault chooses the metaphor of archeology to describe his approach to history: "the intrinsic description of the moment."⁵³ For Foucault, the metaphor of archeology enables him to avoid the teleological search for origin and progress through time propelled by cause and effect. Archeology deals with strata, with a cross section of time whose traces can be described. This choice of metaphor, however, also indicates that Foucault takes seriously, though not in a naïve fashion, a connection between his discourse and the past. Foucault's emphasis on description, rather than interpretation, draws our attention away from Foucault's operations on the past and leads us to be convinced by the version of the past we are presented with.

But even if one admits that the physical fragments of the past may set some limits on what we say, those limits are few. The historian/archeologist, in making sense of the fragments, may still be subject to impositionism; constellations of meaning are still sought in the splinters. This becomes abundantly clear when one looks at prehistoric

⁵² Verner von Heidenstam, *Karolinerna* (The Charles Men) (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1969).

⁵³ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 7.

novels: novels set in a time before written records. Historical documents are a strange sort of artifact that insists on very specific limits. Both Jean Auel and Björn Kurtén use the same archeological bits and pieces as the foundation for their novels about the meeting of Cro-Magnon man with Neanderthals: *The Clan of the Cave Bear*⁵⁴ and *Den svarta tigern* (The Black Tiger).⁵⁵ Björn Kurtén's Neanderthals live in a peaceful matriarchy, whereas Auel's live in a patriarchy with sharply divided gender roles. Kurtén's Neanderthals speak an unimpeded modern tongue; Auel's use sign language. The archeological bits place both these stories in more or less the same place and time, but otherwise, Auel's and Kurtén's novels have virtually nothing in common.

The risks of interpreting the splinters and stones of the metaphorical archeological dig are made apparent in an epilogue to Dagmar Edqvist's *Mannen från havet* (The Man from the Sea).⁵⁶ After a romantic tale set in ninth-century Gotland, we are brought into the present where an archeological dig is taking place. The group of diggers tries to interpret the significance of a broken picture stone. We the readers are privileged to know the "truth" about how the stone came to be broken, so the irony of their efforts is apparent. A bitter, retired psychiatrist thinks the stone was broken by a rival who wanted to destroy the memorialized man's reputation. The feminist archeologist suggests that the stone was broken as a challenge to the woman who raised it. The professor of archeology thinks it might have been religious zeal. The leftist docent in history believes it was broken in a slave revolt.

A similar moment occurs in Jersild's *Geniernas återkomst*. After an episode in which the reader is given a glimpse at the "true" origin of the human species, the narrator

⁵⁴ Jean Auel, *The Clan of the Cave Bear* (New York: Bantam, 1991).

⁵⁵ Björn Kurtén, *Den svarta tigern* (The Black Tiger) (Stockholm: Alba, 1978).

⁵⁶ Dagmar Edqvist, *Mannen från havet* (The Man from the Sea) (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1970).

remarks: "The blackened, fossil bone chips were collected by the crate and flown to the capitals of the world where learned men still argue about how the puzzle should be laid" (25). Because of our superior insight as readers into the "real" situation, we know that the archeologists have not gotten it right and are not likely to.

Although the archeological metaphor admits some contact with the past in the form of physical traces and remains, the threat of impositionism still leaves us with the problem of historical truth. In what sense can historical narratives be considered true, if at all? There is a very pervasive sense in society at large that we can know something about the past. Why is this so?

If we extend the constellation metaphor a bit further, F. R. Ankersmit might claim that historical understanding arises when there are a plurality of accounts describing the features of a certain constellation:

Being aware of the possibility of other views of the past is an essential part of the meaning of "having knowledge of the past." For example, the more narratives we have on the French Revolution the deeper our insight into it will be, not primarily because each narration will mention facts not mentioned in others but because only the presence of other narrations enables us to draw the contours and to recognize the specificity of the view of the past presented in each narration. Historical insight is only achieved when the contours of our view of the past are as clear as possible (of course, this always is a matter of degree.)⁵⁷

⁵⁷ F. R. Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), 240.

Although this might be of some comfort to the professional historian, whose project is thus justified, and to critical readers of history, who are the most likely to possess a knowledge of the past, it still denies the possibility of a truth claim.

Michel Foucault may provide an explanation of the dynamics of truth claims in terms of “discursive formations,” described succinctly by Brenda K. Marshall: “To speak of a discursive formation is to speak of the logic of a specific place and time (in the sense of ideology, ‘common sense’ assumptions about the way things are). This discursive formations goes beyond the rationality of place and time; it is, rather, what enables that rationality to appear as rational.”⁵⁸ To apply this insight to our thinly-stretched metaphor of the constellation, at any given place and time a group of people is likely to find certain accounts of a constellation more convincing, more reasonable, more true than others. As one of the narrators in P. O. Enqvist’s *Magnetisörens femte vinter* (The Magnetist’s Fifth Winter) states: “No stories are true, just more or less effective.”⁵⁹ This is the can of worms that McCullagh points to when he invokes consensus as a measure of validity. As Foucault learned from Nietzsche, such a consensus also involves issues of power and suppression: “You can explain the past only by what is most powerful in the present.”⁶⁰ For such reasons, a significant activity of the postmodern has been the “interrogating of the notion of consensus.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Brenda K. Marshall, *Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 149-50. Marshall is discussing Michel Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972).

⁵⁹ P. O. Enqvist, *Magnetisörens femte vinter* (The Magnetist’s Fifth Winter) (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1988), 105.

⁶⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, trans. Adrian Collins (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 40.

⁶¹ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 7.

In other words, a historical narrative seems true if it appeals to the discursive formations of the present, to a consensus of what can be true. Since discursive formations are subject to change over time, there are no guarantees that a historical narrative will remain true. Thus, hopes of writing the definitive work on a historical topic are futile.

The metaphors described in this paper indicate that the traditional metaphors of history have been under assault. Has there been a Kuhnian paradigm shift? If so, then we would see a revolutionary break with the old paradigms, and a new victor would claim the field. The modern view of history is still alive and well. I would prefer to describe the scene as one in which the modern and the postmodern are dynamically engaged with each other and neither party remains unaffected by the struggle. Postmodernism thrives as a dissenting voice, a question mark rather than as statement. Rhetorically, post-modernism relies on the modern as the Other against which it can define itself. Postmodernism may not always know what it is, but it knows what it is not. Its critiques and word plays are marshaled in opposition to the modern. Despite postmodernism's adversarial posture there is still a strange codependency.

That the line between the texts of the modern and the postmodern is blurring is proof that the postmodern campaign is having an effect even in the modern camp. Vibeke Olsson's novel, *Krigarens sköld*, which provided the metaphor of time as an endless plain that becomes squeezed into a narrow alley could still be generally described as a traditional historical novel that would please both Walter Scott and Georg Lukács. Through her metaphors, Olsson expresses a moment of self-consciousness about her endeavor. Dagmar Edqvist's ironic epilogue to *Mannen från havet* demonstrates that she was also somewhat uncomfortable with the traditional historical romance she had just

written. It has become scarcely possible to practice traditional history writing without some anxiety. Sometimes this anxiety can be as subtle as punctuation; question marks, quotations marks, parentheses all denote a certain sense of hesitation about narrative.⁶² Perhaps the direction of this gradual hybridization process is pointed to in Torbjörn Säfve's parody of a well-known metahistorical formula: "THESES, ANTITHESES, SYNTHESSES, HYPOTHESES, AND PARENTHESSES!"⁶³

⁶² The notion of punctuation as a sign of anxiety may be found in Carrard, *Poetics of the New History*, 195.

⁶³ Torbjörn Säfve, *Kuperad lek*, 44.