FIGURING TORTURE:
THE REPRESENTATION OF TORTURE IN A SELECTION OF NOVELS

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the presentation of torture in a group of twentieth century novels—George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949), Manlio Argueta’s One Day of Life (1983), Wessel Ebersohn’s Store Up the Anger (1981), J.M. Coetzee’s Waiting for the Barbarians (1981) and Lawrence Thornton’s Imagining Argentina (1987). The novels share scenes of physical torture performed by an agent of the state and aimed ostensibly at information-gathering, intimidation and/or ideological conversion. The structures of the representation of torture in these novels—tropes, narrative structure, narrative voice and focalisation—set out to arouse sympathy or empathy in the reader, thus writing against the notion of a polity that allows torture. Yet the same methods the novels employ to construct this sympathy often serve to reinforce the hierarchical binary model, patriarchal domination, which is seen in the novels to drive torture. Rather than subverting torture, then, the novels risk reinscribing it. They also share something of a project of resistance to the notion that torture constructs truth, although the structures they construct participate in the binary relations they critique. Vegetarian ecofeminists have evolved theories which are useful in the analysis of the structures at work in the novels to demonstrate the binary nature of torture in the novels. Torturers are presented as tropologically male figures dominating and metaphorically consuming their victims who are troped as female and animal, dominated and consumed. The reader of these texts is constructed in either of two positions which further reinforce the binary model; the text might build a reader who adopts a symbolically male voyeuristic gaze at the suffering victim or who identifies with the symbolically female tortured character. At the same time that it allows a critique of the hierarchised structure of torture as it is presented in the novels, vegetarian feminist theory also offers the possibility of methods of representing torture that break the cycle of torture.
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Introduction

The Problem of Representing Torture in

A Group of Twentieth-Century Novels

--We can't get involved in someone else's pain. . .

--No sharing the pain.

--Share life . . . that's what we ought to do.

--So these things won't happen anymore.

--Manlio Argueta, One Day of Life, 108.

The central question of this dissertation is how a group of novels about torture are produced and consumed, how they are constructed.

The novels which are discussed are George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.
(1949), Manlio Argueta's *One Day of Life* (1983), Wessel Ebersohn's *Store Up the Anger* (1981), J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1981) and Lawrence Thornton's *Imagining Argentina* (1987). I also discuss Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965), Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and Arthur Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon* (1941), but in less detail either because torture is not central in them or because it is not the state-induced physical torture I am concerned with here.

Each of the eight novels presents at least one scene of torture. I follow

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1 *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an English dystopia set in 1984 during a totalitarian reign, is probably the best known of the five novels. *One Day of Life* is set in El Salvador in a period of military rule. Both *Store Up the Anger* and *Waiting for the Barbarians* are South African novels; Coetzee’s is set in an indeterminate time and place—an outpost during the rule by "Empire" over a land peopled by native fisherfolk, "barbarians" and settlers. Ebersohn’s is set mainly in the late 1970s in South Africa during a crackdown on anti-apartheid activism. *Imagining Argentina* is also set in the late 1970s but in Argentina during a time of military rule and mass disappearances of suspected communists or subversives.

2 One work which I include in my discussion of novels of torture, Jacobo Timmerman’s *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, is usually classed as nonfiction, as a prison memoir. However, Timmerman writes his book in two distinct styles, each for a distinct time period. One set of sections of the book is a fictionalising of moments during Timmerman’s incarceration in Argentina in the late 1970s. These are presented as vignettes written in the present tense; their movement is slow, their language poetic. Alternating with them are passages of critical commentary on the events in the outside world before, during and after Timmerman’s incarceration or passages of more general political commentary about Argentina. In discussing *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, I have tried to select for examination only the former passages.
a definition of "torture" based on that of the United Nations General Assembly. My working definition sees torture as severe physical pain or suffering perpetrated by an agent of the state on an individual, an aggravated and deliberate form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

The structures of the representation of torture in these novels--tropes, narrative structure, narrative voice and focalisation--set out to arouse sympathy or empathy in the reader, thus writing against the notion of a polity that allows torture. Yet the same methods the novels employ to construct this sympathy often serve to reinforce the hierarchical binary model, patriarchal domination, which is seen in the novels to drive torture. Rather than subverting torture, then, the novels risk reinscribing it. Through a close analysis of these structures of representation, what follows is an attempt to examine where these novels subvert and where they reinscribe torture.

Page du Bois (Torture and Truth) points out that in the Western philosophical tradition, torture constructs truth--that is, statements of a victim have been regarded as truthful only when exacted through torture (54). Michel Foucault, of course, discusses this view of torture at length in Discipline and Punish, treating the public spectacle of torture (supplice)
at more length than he treats judicial torture (la question). In Waiting for the Barbarians, Colonel Joll follows this philosophy: "First I get lies, you see... first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth" (5). The novels I discuss work to build a voice in opposition to this idea, attempting to construct a "testimony of the body" versus a "testimony of the word" (Gallagher, Story of South Africa, 119) by opposing the construction of the victim character's felt experience and the torturing character's justifications for, or cover-ups of, the torture.

I use ecofeminist theory--especially vegetarian ecofeminist theory--in my analysis of the structures at work in the novels to demonstrate the binary nature of torture in the novels. Torturers are presented as tropologically male figures dominating and metaphorically consuming their victims who are troped as female and animal, dominated and consumed. The reader of these texts is constructed in either of two positions which further reinforce the binary model; the text might build a reader who adopts a symbolically male voyeuristic gaze at the suffering victim or who identifies with the symbolically female tortured character. Parts of this theory owe something to film theory and visual arts theory, views which note the female looked at (passive) by a male viewer looking at her
(active). At the same time that it allows a critique of the hierarchised structure of torture as it is presented in the novels, vegetarian feminist theory also offers the possibility of methods of representing torture that break the cycle of torture.

The novels in this group also share some structural, thematic and rhetorical affinities. In their presentation of torture, they are all amnesic, coy. Few of them present the moment(s) of torture they are otherwise occupied with in dialogue and in characters' reflections. In these novels, much is anticipation and recollection, little is the presentation of torture. This absence is thematic in Waiting for the Barbarians. The native woman's experience is the elusive signified, never revealed, dis-covered, represented. We watch her being watched. Only in Nineteen Eighty-Four and Store Up the Anger is actual physical torture presented. In Imagining Argentina, acts of torture become fictions within the fiction, narratised as the material for Carlos' stories.

These novels of torture share features with the larger order of the discourse of torture. The broader discourse of torture includes autobiographical and biographical historically-based narratives, reportage, witnesses' and testimonial accounts. The discourse has been presented in film (in "The Official Story" from Argentina, for example, "The
Interrogation" from Poland or "Closet Land" from India). Public television has done documentaries. Georges Bataille's *Tears of Eros* presents a photograph essay of erotic images including photographs of suffering torture victims; Wendy Lesser's *Pictures at an Execution* examines in photographs and prose the popular fascination with capital punishment. Recently, Page du Bois has examined the relationship of torture and truth in ancient Greece, Elizabeth Hanson has analysed the same relationship in Renaissance England, and Ian Watson discusses what he considers to be a reappearance of torture in fiction in the later twentieth century. Kate Millet's *The Politics of Cruelty* is the first feminist book-length study of what the book's subtitle calls "the literature of political imprisonment," although by "literature" it becomes clear that Millet focuses on témoignage, the literature of witness. The novels which I examine and the wider discourse of torture are interdependent. The novels are a subset, in effect, of the discourse of torture; the site of their production differs from that of other elements in the discourse of torture. They are

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3 This study is not concerned, as Watson's is, with the wealth of science fiction, fantasy and horror fiction about or presenting torture.
fiction, although some are based on historical fact. I have further limited my study to a set of novels written in the same period, the second half of the twentieth century. All five main novels are set in the late 1970s/early 1980s, a time of increasing information about torture and organised global opposition to its practice. An exception is Chapter One’s analysis of Franz Kafka’s "In the Penal Colony" (1914) which is used to produce a model reading of the representation of torture in fiction. The period has been called the technological age, the post-modern period, and the Cold War-post-Cold War era, among other things. The period brought torture into public awareness and saw a resurgence in the representation of torture in fiction.

Because of the still-growing interest in the subject of torture in the late twentieth century, it is important to address the issues of readers’ responses to presenting torture before moving to adopt a theoretical paradigmatic reader constructed by the texts. The subject of torture itself presses on readers before they even begin reading. Page du Bois

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4 Most obviously, Store Up the Anger’s Bhengu is clearly a fictional version of Stephen Biko, leader of the Black People’s Convention in South Africa, who died in 1977 of brain damage while in the custody of the Security Police. As Susan Van Zanten Gallagher points out, Waiting for the Barbarians also echoes the Biko incident (Story of South Africa, 119).
goes so far as to argue that such a "terrible and formidable thing" should not be "trivialised" by a discussion of its literary topos (5). Readers of novels presenting torture might be uncomfortable about feeling complicitous with the torturing character or power in a novel, afraid of feeling empathy with a suffering victim character, guilty over their awareness of their own fortunate existence as untortured and unlikely to be tortured or about their contribution to a country which maintains economic and diplomatic ties with torturing powers. Such concerns might lead to an avoidance of the topic altogether. Readers might also be resistant to works which focus on unsavoury self-other oppositions which some argue are natural to humans⁵. Each of these sources of resistance recognises a reader’s personal connection to—in Teresa de Lauretis’ terms an identification with—the literary text and assumes that literary creations are not, to borrow Bili Melman’s words, "a sterile

⁵ Other factors which lead to torture and which Irvin Staub examines, in addition to the proclivity for dichotomisation, might also contribute to a resistance to the novel of torture. Some of these are: "just world thinking," the belief in a just world, that victims of torture must be deserving of it; an ideology which sees torture as useful for the general good; the belief that torture is a valid form of defense of the physical or psychological self; the need for personal control and power; obedience to authority; political control and the defense of self-interest and power; rewards; and the enjoyment of others’ suffering and submission (qtd. in Suedfeld 55-61). Any of these explanations for torture could also explain why a reader might hesitate to read a novel which clearly sets out to valorise the torture victim and condemn the torturer.
isolated perception of an intelligentsia" (561), but that they can reflect and recreate characteristics of the contemporary world. The novels of torture I discuss, with their themes of admonition and their raising of awareness, tend to encourage this personal connection, aiming to draw in rather than repel their readers.

In addition, fears of vicarious pain and/or vicarious pleasure might cause potential readers to hesitate to read novels of torture. Critics sharing T. W. Adorno’s view, that there should be no poetry after Auschwitz, would applaud that hesitation because it decreases the likelihood that the victim’s pain can be perverted into the reader’s pleasure. Adorno fears that "the so-called artistic representation of naked bodily pain . . . contains, however remote, the potentiality of wringing pleasure from it" (qtd. in Langer 71).

The general critical neglect of the novel of torture until recently might result from the ethical and artistic problems inherent in depicting such an extremely painful and emotionally charged act as torture. One of the challenges of the novel of torture is to overcome what Coetzee’s narrator calls "this moment of shrinking from the details of what went on in [the torture chamber]" (WB 80). Yet few of the novels of torture I have read overcome that moment of shrinking. As Coetzee writes, "[t]he
approaches to the torture chamber are thus riddled with pitfalls, and more than one writer has fallen into them" ("Into the Dark Chamber" 364). Among the pitfalls novelists risk are aestheticisation, eroticisation, oversimplification, didacticism and dichotomisation. While most novels skirt the pitfalls of aestheticising and eroticising, Jerzy Kosinski’s The Painted Bird is both oversimple and didactic, and all of the novels dichotomise while at the same time they set out to write against patterns of oppositional thinking.

The Painted Bird, a Sadean picaresque catalogue of starkly-presented horrors side by side, with the central character who endures them almost devoid of psychological depth, is one novel of torture that oversimplifies. The perception of events in the novel is from the point of view of the boy, but so many events are so briefly told of that the novel becomes a list. The characters in The Painted Bird fall clearly into two binary categories: the powerful and the helpless. Accordingly, the central motif of The Painted Bird is of the world as "a battle between the bird-catchers and the birds" (xxv). The novel does not reflect on the various torturers’ motivations; the torturer’s experience is presented as intoxicated pleasure in power. The cruelties are without pattern or explanation, cruel for cruelty’s sake. The boy witnesses eyes gouged
out, brutal rape-murders, a murder by rats, and all manner of physical tortures. He himself is beaten, whipped, buried in the ground with his head exposed to pecking ravens, chained outdoors during a storm, hung on hooks from a ceiling above a vicious dog and thrown into a manure pit. Eventually, the boy becomes brutal and self-destructive himself, deriving pleasure from his own and others’ pain, transformed from victim to torturer. The Painted Bird presents no alternative to victimisation except repeating the cycle by becoming a torturer. The novel, then, participates in the structures it sets out to condemn.

Barbara Foley, a critic who examines Holocaust narratives closely, suggests that the writers of Holocaust fiction have the opposite aim—to dismantle the structures of torture. She concludes from her survey of Holocaust prose narratives that most Holocaust writers "have no interest in epistemological relativism; they ask to be approached in a genuinely historical manner, without the Weltanschauung fashionable in a later time" (332). It appears from his own prefatory remarks to The Painted Bird that Kosinski does have an interest in the meaning of his narrator’s experience, but that concern is rarely evident in the novel itself.

Novels about torture might also aestheticise (by which I mean "make attractive") or eroticise ("make sexually appealing") the torture
experience they construct, thereby either constructing the tortured character as the object of the gaze of the reader or positioning the reader in identification with the suffering character’s experience of objectification. The space of confinement then becomes the victim character’s world, her or his range of possibilities (the reader, too, is confined): memory, imagination and the space itself hold all that the victim is able to experience of pleasure. Pleasure, whatever its extent, is part of the tortured character’s experience. The dilemma the novelist faces lies not in depicting this pleasure, but in making pleasurable for the reader that which is clearly painful for the victim character. Some critics of Holocaust fiction fear that making the representation of an event pleasurable can render such an event acceptable.⁶

Yet others remind us of the concept of aesthetic detachment. In The Delights of Terror, Terry Heller considers Edward Bullough’s concept of aesthetic distance, pointing out that disinterestedness "makes that which is ugly or frightening in life . . . beautiful in aesthetic experience" (7). Adding to this Wolfgang Iser’s idea of the implied reader, Heller

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⁶ Arnold Wesker wonders whether art can be created from experience as cruel as the Holocaust. He writes that "the horror is intransmutable [sic] into art, the anger untransmittable" (48).
constructs his own phenomenology of reading:

Beginning with the first word, I construct [the sort of reader a particular work needs], bit by bit, using whatever instructions I find in the text. The implied reader, then, is a central structure in the establishment of aesthetic distance. By taking on a role provided by the text, I create a separate or bracketed self that, in effect, stands between my "actual" self and the work. (8)

Heller seems to isolate and even advise the momentary psychological/emotional separation of frightening text and reader⁷. Yet Heller’s notion of the implied reader is individual; each reader will

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⁷ While Heller’s defense of aestheticisation is philosophical, others defend aestheticisation on psychosocial grounds. In an article on The White Hotel’s aestheticisation of the Holocaust, Mary Robertson cites one psychiatrist’s call for precisely such aestheticisation. She points to Robert Lifton’s argument in The Life of the Self that the awareness of twentieth-century atrocities has brought about a psychic numbness in our culture, a numbness which results in "desymbolisation"—an inability to cope with our world’s brutality. Lifton argues that it is necessary to do the vital symbolic work” enabling us to face threats to humanity (Robertson 458). Lifton, then, stresses the psychological usefulness of making art of historical reality despite that reality’s atrocity. Ian Watson would disagree with Lifton; Watson’s thesis in "The Author as Torturer" is that the reemergence of the subject of torture in fiction and the escalating graphic detail with which it is presented reflect and create a desensitised society. Others address the question according to historical context. Richard Rorty (in "Cruelty in Orwell") argues that at the time that Orwell was writing he was "sensitizing an audience to cases of cruelty and humiliation which they had not noticed" (173).
construct an implied reader that bridges the gap between that person and the text. Instead, I will follow Umberto Eco’s theory of the Model Reader in my discussion of novels of torture to consider how the texts themselves use cues and clues to construct a reader who is not a live reader or a role the live reader chooses to adopt but "a set of felicity conditions" (Role of the Reader, 7) established by the texts.

For the most part, the novels I discuss avoid aestheticising the torture they present. Nineteen Eighty-Four presents scenes of torture--specifically, Winston’s pain under torture\(^8\)--for the most part literally, making it neither ugly nor beautiful. The writing is detached and dispassionate as, in the following passage, Winston’s intellectual reflections change into coping mechanisms while he is beaten:

\begin{quote}
One question at any rate was answered. Never, for any reason on earth, could you wish for an increase of pain. Of pain you could wish only one thing: that it should stop.
Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain. In the
\end{quote}

\(^8\) Rorty argues that "the last third of 1984 is about O’Brien, not about Winston--about torturing, not about being tortured." Yet if this is true, why is the section focalised through Winston, a point of perception which notices far more about Winston’s experience than O’Brien’s, using the latter only as both the creator and a touchstone of Winston’s suffering?
face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes, he thought over
and over, as he writhed on the floor, clutching uselessly his
disabled left arm. (206)

Here Orwell simply and literally uses the scope of the world ("for any
reason on earth," Nothing in the world"), plain negative modifiers
("never," "bad"), repetition ("no heroes, no heroes," "over and over") and
anaphora ("pain... pain... pain... pain") to express Winston’s pain.
The eradication of heroism in Winston’s pain also, of course, figures
Winston as female.

Similarly, although all of the novels present the intimacy of the
torturer-tortured relationship and the tortured character’s attraction
towards the torturer—a combination of awe, envy, a craving for physical
closeness and hero-worship—none eroticise the relationship. Kosinski’s
narrator responds with fascination and "a twinge of envy" to one German
officer: "the instant I saw him I could not tear my gaze from him" (114,
113). Winston feels this awed attraction to O’Brien’s intellect and power
while O’Brien returns the fascinated respect: "In some sense that went
deeper than friendship," thinks Winston, "they were intimates" (217). In
Darkness at Noon, the intellectual political arguments Rubashov and his
interrogator Ivanov share bring them to moments of understanding and
brushes with physical tenderness: "[Ivanov] stood next to Rubashov at the window, with his arm round Rubashov’s shoulders; his voice was nearly tender" (132). *Store Up the Anger*, as well, develops the bond of understanding between torturer and tortured:

[Colonel Lategan’s] eyes had found Bhengu’s again and the two men looked straight at each other, each reading something of the other’s consciousness in that remote contact . . . . Bhengu’s and Lategan’s understanding of each other was absolute. (186)

In each of these torture "relationships," the attraction is intellectual rather than physically erotic. For his cynicism, stoicism, and tenacity in withstanding torture, the victim is "rewarded" by the esteem of a torturer who will nevertheless have him killed (or, in Winston’s case, "broken").

A work of fiction might also make the torture victim a sexual object as a result of her/his torture. *Waiting for the Barbarians* addresses the complexities of the sexualisation of torture victim characters, creating the Magistrate as a complicit representative of a torturing colonial power. The Magistrate considers himself to be unwillingly complicit, but he is weak. This human frailty, along with his introspection and his position as an observer of others’ suffering in the first half of the novel, allows the
reader a psychological connection with the Magistrate, allowing the reader to adopt a role of complicity in the torturing regime’s practices.

Part of the Magistrate’s complicity is his attraction to a tortured woman because of the bodily damage she has sustained and the forbidden experience it represents—an attraction expressed not as pity but as lust. He asks the frank questions anybody might want to ask of a torture victim: "Let me see," "Does it hurt?" "Did they do it to you?" and "What did they do?" (28-29). When the woman is unresponsive, he becomes frustrated and finds himself simultaneously envying the torturer who could make her respond emotionally and denying the envy:

‘Does no one move you?‘; and with a shift of horror I behold the answer that has been waiting all the time to offer itself to me in the image of a face masked by two black glassy insect eyes from which there comes no reciprocal gaze but only my doubled image cast back at me . . . .

There is nothing to link me with torturers, people who sit waiting like beetles in dark cellars. (44)

The Magistrate’s analysis of his motivations and responses might mirror a fascinated attraction-repulsion of a reader outside the torture experience.

"Is it the case . . . that it is the marks on her which drew me to her but
which, to my disappointment, I find, do not go deep enough? . . . Is it she I want or the traces of a history her body bears?" (64). The woman is clearly articulated as a semiotic puzzle, an "irreducible figure" over which the Magistrate casts "one net of meaning over another" (81). The challenge to reach the experience the woman has suffered through the woman, or the woman through the experience she has suffered, is expressed sexually. In Waiting for the Barbarians the "signified," the act of the torture itself, is elusive and therefore attractive. The fact that the woman's reticence about the torture she has undergone becomes titillating to the Magistrate opens the possibility for reading the torture itself as erotic.

Dichotomising involves presenting one "side" of the torturer-tortured "story" and excluding the other side. By presenting the narrative from the Magistrate’s point of view, the novel seems not to dichotomise. Susan Van Zanten Gallagher suggests that

Coetzee’s affirmation of the tentative qualities of language, his recognition of multiple interpretations, multiple voices, multiple languages, is an embrace of Others and a rejection of rigid authoritarianism. (SSA, 124)

Yet a feminist reading of Waiting for the Barbarians will show that the
novel has not, perhaps could never, "embrace Others."

Czeslaw Milosz suggests that "in the abundant literature of atrocity of the twentieth century one rarely finds an account written from the point of view of an accessory to the crime" (someone other than the victim) because "authors are usually ashamed of this role" (118-19).

Novels of torture present victim-centred experience. A number of the novels I discuss provide the torturer with dialogue; \textit{Waiting for the Barbarians} makes its torturer character compelling (in the literal sense of drawing one toward him in persuasion or interest), but only one (\textit{One Day of Life}) very briefly narrates from a torturer's point of view. Gallagher points out that in \textit{Waiting for the Barbarians}, the Magistrate's failure to understand how a torturer can commit the barbarous acts he does "represents the author's own failure, for by centering his novel in the narration of the magistrate, Coetzee avoids having to depict the zone of the torturer" (\textit{Story of South Africa}, 127). The novel's point, the same point made in Coetzee's essay "Into the Dark Chamber," might be that there can be no satisfying, adequate, conclusive portrayal of torture or torturers.

The us-them world view which can exist in the character-to-character relation can also exist in the reader-to-character relation and
might be strengthened there by the difficulty language has presenting extreme physical pain, pain which is constructed as going literally beyond words (to screams, to silence), as inexpressible. The assumption that writer, reader and character can share an understanding of pain is problematic and stands as still another risk in presenting the torture experience in fiction. As Elaine Scarry writes in *The Body in Pain*, "whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its resistance to language" (4). Jacobo Timmerman, in his account of his own torture, writes that "one might logically assume that I thought I knew . . . the things a tortured man felt. But I knew nothing. And it's impossible to convey what I know now" (32). This last difficulty for novels, that their tropological presentation of a torture victim's pain relies on a shared understanding of pain, is discussed in Chapter Two.

A model for understanding the representation of torture in narrative fiction is necessary. That model should avoid the poles of interpretation based on what Umberto Eco terms *intentio auctoris* and *intentio lectoris*, the intention of the author and the intention (desire) of the reader (10 25). Avoiding those extremes means two things: not relying too heavily on reader-oriented theory and not "‘beat[ing] the text into a shape which will serve for [my] purpose’" (Richard Rorty qtd. in 10 25). In the novels
I study, there is a pointing outside to the "world," an ameliorative or admonitory aspect, in Peircean terms, an indexical semiosis ("indexical" meaning "prior to") in the novels' construction of sympathy in the reader.

My analysis sees political meanings in the texts. According to John Barrell (Poetry, Language, and Politics), "all our utterances are . . . political utterances," subject/object structures, as he defines "political," in the widest sense of being attempts to claim for ourselves particular positions in language, which represent us as the subjects of knowledge, and represent the world as we, and as those whose interests we assume we share, claim to see it. And thus they represent other people and other groups as the objects of our knowledge, and as occupying positions that we define for them." (9)

Barrell's term "subject" and "object" (and also "we," "us," "ourselves") lack the gender associations I have applied to them yet I use the terms "subject" and "object" in the political sense he describes. Barrell attempts to understand works of literature as discourse, as "the embodiment of a partial view of the world in competition with other partial views; as political, and not as universal" (12). The aim of his readings, he writes, is to discover "political meanings." He might pose
the question of whose interests are being served by the text--cr, as Teresa de Lauretis would have it--whose story is being told.

My study looks at the ways in which political meanings are created in a selection of torture novels. In addition, it sees the novels I examine as presenting a hierarchically dualistic structure. I present a feminist reading, based on the theories of Donna Haraway, Teresa de Lauretis and the vegetarian subgroup of ecofeminists\(^9\), such as Carol Adams. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, Donna Haraway questions whether "feminist standards of knowledge" would truly end "the dilemma of the cleavage between subject and object" and whether "feminist authority and the power to name [would] give the world a new identity, a new story" (71). Instead, she sees feminists "contesting for a voice" (72). For Haraway, feminist critiques of hierarchical dualisms had and have a place in progressive feminist discourse, but feminism also has other roles, other cards, to play. Locating animals in nature allows feminists,

\(^9\) The subgroup is more specific than "ecofeminist" which links feminism broadly with the environment, but less specific than Carol Adams’ designation "feminist-vegetarian" which assumes and advocates a connection between feminism and vegetarianism or Kathryn Paxton George’s label, ethical vegetarian feminism. "Vegetarian ecofeminist" refers to the group of feminists which includes Carol Adams and Marti Kheel, who see animals and women as sharing an object position in traditional subject-object discourses and practices.
particularly ecofeminists, to position animals as objects (of experimentation, of consumption) in the traditional antithetical relation between "man" and "nature." Haraway points out that language, logocentrism, is one of man's tools in that objectification, a tool which "cuts us off from the garden of mute and dumb animals and leads us to name things, to force meanings, to create oppositions" (81).

The model Haraway offers is the union of the natural and the technological which she presents in the figure of the cyborg. She calls for a reconception of "machine and organism as coded texts through which we engage in the play of writing and reading the world" (152). The political struggle for feminists, as she sees it, is "to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point" (154).

In novels of torture, hierarchical dualism is clearly a thematic and structural element. In Haraway's terms, we can see the torturer character associated with the technological and the victim character with the natural. The torturer is a kind of pre-programmed tool for obtaining information, while the tortured character is all body and bodily fluids: blood, urine, sweat, excrement, tears. In Darkness at Noon, for example, the physicality of the tortured character is emphasised:
Gletkin never ate in his [Rubashov’s] presence, and Rubashov for some inexplicable reason found it humiliating to ask for food. Anything which touched on physical functions was humiliating to Rubashov in the presence of Gletkin, who never showed signs of fatigue, never smoked, seemed neither to eat nor to drink, and always sat behind his desk in the same correct position, in the same stiff uniform with creaking cuffs. The worst degradation for Rubashov was when he had to ask permission to relieve himself (171).

According to Haraway, the common strategy of technology is the translation of the world into a problem of coding, a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment and exchange (164).

Haraway’s post-Foucauldian theory that the structure of the world is now as much technological as natural sees in every intellectual field a translation from "organism" to "coded entity." Now possible, she writes, are "copies without originals" (164). The idea of reproduction without production applies easily to the world of George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, for example, where the torturer O’Brien tells his victim
Winston that there is no Big Brother, that the ideology Winston is ostensibly being converted to does not exist. Tortured characters are constructed as texts.

Haraway's theory can be transported into Adams' notion of the "absent referent." Adams points out that the "renaming" of butchered animals as "meat" is a metaphor which negates their presence as animals, absents them from discourse and their consumers' consciousnesses (42). Combining Haraway's and Adams' theories offers the reading of novels of torture as coded systems presenting a process of translation of the human self, its painful remaking, or, for Elaine Scarry in The Body in Pain, its unmaking.

In The Sexual Politics of Meat, Adams emphasises Kate Millet's analysis of D. H. Lawrence's "The Woman Who Rode Away," in which Millet reads the planned sacrifice of a woman by a group of men as "sexual cannibalism;" "substitute the knife for the penis and penetration, the cave for a womb, and for a bed, a place of execution--and you provide a murder whereby one acquires one's victim's power" (Millet qtd. in Sexual Politics of Meat 59). This reading of rape sees it as an attempt to both reach and destroy the womb, one of the sources of women's creative power, and to consume the victim ritually as a means
of acquiring her power. Torture, so frequently of the genitals, has a
similar function in the novelistic presentations of it I examine. At the
same time that it is a physical metaphor for the destruction of the most
private intellectual self, torture of men’s genitals is also both an actual
and a symbolic attempt to "emasculate" them, thereby making them
inferior. In The Politics of Cruelty, Millet asks, "If torture makes a man
into a woman, as men who have been tortured often say, what does it
make of a woman?" (165). She does not answer the question, but one
answer is that it makes of her an animal, the next step "down" in the
order of things in a patriarchal system. (This is an alternative de Lauretis
misses; she sees the two positions of sexual difference conceived in
oedipal narratives as "male - hero - human, on the side of the subject;
and female - obstacle - boundary - space, on the other.").) Torture of
women’s genitals might also function as Millet suggests rape does: it is
a symbolic attempt to both destroy and acquire the woman’s creative
power--to transfer it from her to the torturer.

Novels use a number of methods to steer readers towards
sympathy with the victimised characters and condemnation of the
torturers, and this construction of reader sympathy is a kind of moral
suasion, a literary readjusting of the power imbalances in the world. It
follows the course novels traditionally have taken where good and evil wear name-tags from the beginning. But is this binary paradigm working to eradicate or perpetuate the evil it seems to condemn? And what is its position in relation to evaluations of narrative structures as patriarchal?

In *Darkness at Noon*, Rubashov is troubled by a similar paradox: how can one change the world if one identifies oneself with everybody? How else can one change it? (25). In the novels I examine, torture is constructed as a patriarchal relationship—sometimes a game, sometimes a battle, sometimes a lover-like relationship. Two positions for a reader to adopt are held in tension: empathy with suffering victim characters tropes the reader as female and thus as a victim of the novel’s torture; less often, gazing voyeuristically at the tortured character tropes the reader as male and thus complicit with the novel’s torture. The dichotomisation inherent in the representation of torture challenges the texts in their projects of subverting the patriarchal structures that appear to motivate torture.

Breaking the cycle lies, then, not with readers but with texts; the Conclusion considers Lawrence Thornton’s *Imagining Argentina*, a novel which begins to approach the “cyborgian” presentation Haraway calls for, a presentation which fuses traditionally pure and disparate
categories. In *Imagining Argentina*, the central character Carlos says that the General, Guzman, considers "purity" a "necessity." Carlos considers Guzman to be devoted to "'that dream which he feels more than ever was defiled by the faint of heart, the woman in man's spirit'" (90). The narrator, too, points out "the generals' need to squeeze all opposition out of the country, to purify" (19). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, O'Brien tells Winston repeatedly that the Party's aim is to purify its enemies: to "cure" them (218), "change" them (218), wipe out the "stain" (219), "convert . . . reshape" them (219), "wash [them] clean" (220). In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, one torture is to write the word "enemy" on the prisoners' backs, then to whip them until the blood and sweat wash their backs clean.

Novels of torture present the competitive, adversarial nature of the patriarchal thinking behind torture by employing metaphors of game and battle to describe torture. We can see victim characters viewing their situations in the terms of the—as I will argue—masculinised oppressors. Carlos considers his struggle against General Guzman "a game that would last until either he or Guzman gave out, or was killed" (106). Cecilia's (the tortured victim focus of *Imagining Argentina*) guards call her rape "the game" (177). Bhengu, by the logic of patriarchy, considers his
own death to be a final victory over his torturers:

Bhengu . . . felt . . . a sense that matters were now in his control, not in the control of his adversary. Bhengu knew that there was nothing Lategan could do now. . . . His men had played all his cards and they had played them too fast. Whereas he still had his last card and he was busy playing it. His death would give him the game. (148)

Rubashov thinks to himself that he and Ivanov are equally-matched opponents:

He himself and Ivanov were twins in their development. . . . They had the same moral standard, the same philosophy, they thought in the same terms. Their positions might just as well have been the other way around. . . . The rules of the game were fixed. (90-1)

The competitive nature of patriarchy is also shown, in one novel, by the diet of torturers in training. Like hunters, would-be torturers are on a diet of meat in Argueta’s One Day of Life. Unusual for a novel of torture, this novel contains a section narrated by a member of the National Guard. He tells of their diet of meat, potatoes and dairy products, scoffing at the villagers’ diet of corn and beans.
As Adams argues, "[a]ccording to the mythology of patriarchal culture, meat promotes strength; the attributes of masculinity are achieved through eating these masculine foods" (33). "Dietary habits," she writes, "proclaim class distinctions, but they proclaim patriarchal distinctions as well. . . . [A] mythology permeates all classes that meat is a masculine food and meat eating a male activity" (26). For Adams, "meat eating measures individual and societal virility" (26). Because of the connection animals and women have in the "texts" of patriarchal society, Adams argues that feminism and vegetarianism ought to be informed by one another.

When I use the term ‘the rape of animals,’ the experience of women becomes a vehicle for explicating another being’s oppression. . . . Through the function of the absent referent, Western culture constantly renders the material reality of violence into controlled and controllable metaphors. (43) Adams holds that sexual violence and meat eating, "which appear to be discrete forms of violence, find a point of intersection in the absent referent" (43).

Other vegetarian ecofeminists support Adams’ theory. Ecofeminism itself is seen broadly by Karen Warren as the position that
"there are important connections--historical, experiential, symbolic, theoretical--between the domination of women and the domination of nature" (126). Marti Kheel, for instance, in "The Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair," argues against the notion that hierarchical dualism is a necessity in human relations with nature (137).

Still, the questions of whether feminism and animal rights theory or feminism and vegetarianism should necessarily be linked have been raised by other feminists. In "Toward an Ecological Ethic of Care," Deane Curtin questions Adams' claim in The Sexual Politics of Meat that ecofeminism is "conceptually linked" with animal rights theory (62). She lists six reasons why a conceptual link cannot be made, pointing out that feminist ethics should be pluralistic, contextual, non-adversarial, relational and experiential and should not contribute to marginalising ideas of women as bodies. Yet later in the article she points out that "[t]o be a person, as distinct from an 'animal,' is to be disembodied" (69), and also agrees that "[m]oral vegetarianism is a fruitful issue for ecofeminists to explore in developing an ecological ethics" (69), concluding that, for different reasons from Adams', ecofeminism and vegetarianism are

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compatible, if not necessarily conceptually linked (70). Most recently, Kathryn Paxton George ("Should Feminists Be Vegetarians?") argues that "ethical vegetarianism is at odds with feminism" (407). She discusses medical and nutritional writing (ignoring the fact that the mainstream medical model has been produced by and dominated by men) and objections to ethical vegetarianism, but does not explicitly address the conceptual link between vegetarianism and feminism. Nevertheless, all of these feminist theorists see important symbolic connections between women and animals.

In The Sexual Politics of Meat, Adams mentions only cultural images of sexual violence as relying on our knowledge of how animals are butchered and consumed. Yet her point can be made about other forms of violence as well. The violence of torture also attempts to "read" and "write" the sufferer as bestial and/or as feminine.

Timmerman refers to the "almost magical inevitability of hatred" (66), the need for the power-monger always to have an enemy; according to Timmerman, the oppressor believes the object of oppression

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10 In a post-Sexual Politics of Meat article, Adams addresses six reasons ecofeminists could give for not including animals explicitly in ecofeminist analyses, anticipating and answering Curtin on several points (see, for example, Adams, "EEA," 139).
to be the struggle itself. The notion of the need for the torturer always
to have a victim, of the subject always to have an object, describes, of
course, simple dualistic thinking. O’Brien suggests to Winston that in
the absence of an enemy, the Party creates one:

‘The more the Party is powerful, the less it will be tolerant:
the weaker the opposition, the tighter the despotism.
Goldstein and his heresies will live for ever. Every day, at
every moment, they will be defeated, discredited, ridiculed,
spat upon--and yet they will always survive.’ (231)

For O’Brien, power is by definition power-over: "power is power over
human beings. Over the body--but, above all, over the mind" (228).

Carlos in Imagining Argentina conjectures ironically that when the
generals look back on the period of their power, they will feel "swollen,
pregnant with death" (202). As Haraway notes, men have been
associated with the technological, with machinery and the manipulation
of objects, and women with the physical, with body and emotions.
These associations are shown in all of the novels. In Imagining
Argentina, the generals send cars to follow suspected subversives while
the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo walk in protest. Each of the novels
also focuses on the victim character’s bodily state. Darkness at Noon’s
Rubashov is embarrassed by his own bodily needs during interrogations. In *Store Up the Anger*, Bhengu is forced to drink his own urine in a grotesque reminder of his own status as only a body and bodily functions. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate realises that his torturers were interested in "demonstrating to [him] what it meant to live in a body, as a body, a body which . . . coughs and retches and flails and voids itself" when piafuls of salt water are forced down his throat (115). Torture is seen in these examples as a product or method of patriarchy as most feminists broadly define patriarchy— the impulse to power, control, domination, with the torturer as manipulator of objects and the tortured a manipulated body.

Under such an encompassing world view privileging disabling rather than enabling power, power-over rather than power-to, is an explicit, implicit or complicitous acceptance of the philosophy of sacrifice of the individual "for" the collective, a philosophy the torturers in the novels accept. Of the novels I am discussing, only *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers an explicit critique of this assumption. As René Girard points out in *Violence and the Sacred*, "when a phenomenon is used to explain other phenomena, it can generally be assumed that no explanation of the explanatory phenomenon will be forthcoming" (89). Yet in his
examination of the myth and ritual of sacrifice, he accepts violator-violence-victim as a given structure:

[T]he objective of ritual is the proper reenactment of the surrogate-victim mechanism; its function is to perpetuate or renew the effects of this mechanism; that is, to keep violence outside the community (92).

There are no individuals in this theory; in fact, there is a consistent undermining of individuality11. Some novels of torture set out to critique such a theory of the necessity of sacrifice, usually by presenting torturer characters who hold such a view. In Imagining Argentina, Carlos suggests that "'the dream of power, the narrowness of their [the generals'] souls, leaves no room for the person, the individual'" (92). O'Brien tells Winston that "'power is collective. The individual only has power in so far as he ceases to be an individual'" (227). The view of the torturing characters is constructed as representative while focalisation in the novels constructs the tortured characters as individuals for the reader to identify with.

Those who study the structure and content of myth seldom fail to

11 Yet I would agree with Girard's point that "there is no reason to differentiate between human and animal sacrifice" (10).
find a place for the "scapegoat", the other whose devaluation is sanctioned by a group transferring its own "dark" aspects onto that other by consensus. In Nineteen Eighty-Four this is "Emanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, . . . the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party’s purity" (Orwell, N, 15). When, towards the end of Darkness at Noon, Rubashov capitulates under interrogation, he believes that in his capitulation is the honour of the scapegoat:

Some were silenced by physical fear; . . . some hoped to save their heads; . . . others at least to save their wives or sons from the clutches of the Gletkins. The best of them kept silent in order to do a last service to the Party, by letting themselves be sacrificed as scapegoats (201).

But according to Gletkin, Rubashov’s capitulation was a result of cruel interrogation practices: the lamp, "’plus lack of sleep and physical exhaustion’" (192).

In Waiting for the Barbarians, as a crowd watches the Magistrate’s mock-death by hanging, the narrator ponders, "of what use is it to blame the crowd? A scapegoat is named, a festival is declared, the laws are suspended: who would not flock to see the entertainment?" (120). This practice of deriving pleasure or experiencing "diversion" at the expense of
another has, of course, a long history. Its entrenchment in our culture (see Girard) could explain why a reader might tend to shun novels which require that they examine the experience of that "other" whose pain is customarily so foreign.  

This art which attempts to expose and therefore eliminate torture exists within patriarchy and is bound up in patriarchal conventions. According to Foucauldian theory, structures of intellectual fields are also and always structures of power; domination, as seen in human discourse, is assumed to be an omnipresent feature of human relations.

Perhaps the ultimate aim of torture in the novels, like the ultimate aim of patriarchy in its love of power, is to control truth, to attempt to create a forced notion of reality, despite O'Brien's claim to Winston that "'the object of torture is torture. The object of power is power'" (227). The latter prospect is more frightening for Winston than individual suffering:

If the Party could thrust its hand into the past and say of

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12 I do not necessarily suggest that the torture victim character in a novel holds the same place as a bear being "baited" or a maiden being "sacrificed," although Adams would.
this or that event, it never happened—that, surely, was more terrifying then mere torture and death? . . . And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. (34)

The Party in Nineteen Eighty-Four wants to be viewed as Julia views it when Winston meets her, as inevitable:

She had never heard of the Brotherhood, and refused to believe in its existence. Any kind of organized revolt against the Party, which was bound to be a failure, struck her as stupid. The clever thing was to break the rules and stay alive all the same. He [Winston] wondered vaguely how many others like her there might be in the younger generation—people who had grown up . . . accepting the Party as something unalterable, like the sky, not rebelling against its authority but simply evading it, as a rabbit dodges a dog. (117)

The desire for or appearance of the status of ultimate creator of knowledge seems to be common among torturers in fiction. In Robert Harlow’s Felice, the central character, Felice, refuses to provide the
required answers to one of her torturer’s questions. He yells in response, "'I will know'" (276). One of Bhengu’s torturers (Store Up the Anger) tells Bhengu:

‘You can’t cover up from us, Sam. Sooner or later we learn everything about you. There’s nothing we don’t know about you. We know about every part of your body and every part of your life. And what we don’t know we are going to find out.’ (42)

The texts of torture I examine are both reflective of and aligned with the same "argument" as the patriarchal political, moral, legal, social, cultural systems (outside of the novels) which sanction torture; they can be seen as patriarchal constructs themselves. They do not exceed the power/knowledge regimes which shape them, do not reach Haraway’s ideal of cyborgian presentation.

Of what, then, does their construction consist? How are the elements of the communicative process--the sender-message-receiver paradigm (according to reader-response theory)--constructed in novels or scenes of torture? Readers’ responses of empathic pain or voyeuristic pleasure result from textual strategies: not only the narrative and tropes but the narrator, focaliser, focalised character and reader are constructed.
Chapter One will develop a model to examine those structures of representation and will test the model on a reading of Franz Kafka's "In the Penal Colony."
Chapter One

A Model for the Analysis

of the Presentation of Torture in Fiction:

"In the Penal Colony"

And it may be that the function of torture today, rather than
the production of truth, is still one of spectacle, of the
production of broken bodies and psyches, both for local and
international consumption.

--Page du Bois, Torture and Truth, 7.

First, or "in the beginning," is the story told. Central to my
consideration of the narrative structures of novels of torture are the
theories of Donna Haraway, Teresa de Lauretis and Carol Adams. All agree on the "male" structures of most narratives. At the same time, all argue--indeed, de Lauretis insists upon--the degendering of such concepts as patriarchy, spectator, reader, hero, subject/object. Haraway, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, associates totalisation and domination, especially domination based on differences "seen as natural, given inescapable, and therefore moral" (7-8) with patriarchal thinking, arguing against totalising feminisms in favour of "the permanent partiality of feminist points of view," writing in the hope that feminists can "learn from [their] fusions with animals and machines how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos" (173). She presents this permanent partiality in the figure of the cyborg--part natural, part technological--looking toward a kind of writing beyond the old categories:

Cyborg writing must not be about the Fall, the imagination of a once-upon-a-time wholeness before language, before writing, before Man. Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other. (175)

The novels of torture I examine are decidedly pre-cyborgian, structuring
and structured out of hierarchical dualisms. Haraway lists such binary pairs as mind/body, animal/human, organism/machine, public/private, men/women, primitive/civilised (163).

Using Laura Mulvey’s idea that "sadism demands a story" as a point of departure, De Lauretis in Alice Doesn’t argues that the hero of narrative, regardless of his/her gender, is constructed as male while the obstacles he encounters, the symbolic other he creates himself out of—is female (de Lauretis 119, 121). In the more recent Technologies of Gender, she reemphasises her idea that to continue to pose the question of gender in terms of sexual difference "keeps feminist thinking bound to the terms of Western patriarchy itself" (1), emphasising that feminism must retain "the ambiguity of gender" (11).

In The Sexual Politics of Meat, Adams sees the structure of narrative--the Aristotelian narrative model\(^1\) reduced to beginning-middle-end--as a (patriarchal) structure of the consumption of meaning. She sees it in "the story of meat"--the creation, butchering and consumption of animals. According to Adams, meaning is achieved in the ingestion of the final product: "Narrative . . . moves forward toward resolution," to

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\(^1\) Introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.
"meaning" which can (often) be apprehended only through closure (92).

She connects women and animals as the objects of narrative consumption.

It might be argued that the feminist theories I assemble are themselves at risk of reinscribing a dualistic cycle. Such an argument would suggest that de Lauretis' notion of gendered reader roles (set out in *Alice Doesn't* and *Technologies of Gender*) reinscribes essentialist gender difference, that Adams' call for texts which "bear the vegetarian word" (104) excludes texts which do not, that the hierarchical structures Haraway cites so plentifully in "A Cyborg Manifesto" are structures she encourages in her own call for an overthrowing of oedipal narratives. Yet these binaries--they are binaries--seek to describe the texts, the stories, we have, in the hopes not of silencing old voices but of awakening new ones. All three seek new representations which will open up new possibilities.

The existing model, according to de Lauretis, Adams and Haraway, among others, is a male oedipal narrative model, its structure is of a hero's journey to heroism. The role of the female in that story has been to test the hero, qualify him as a hero. "Having fulfilled her narrative function," de Lauretis writes, "her question is now subsumed in his; her
power, his; her fateful gift of knowledge, his" (AD 112). For Adams, that story is a closed story. Women become both the swallowers and the swallowed (187) in stories where the agency of appetite (for meaning, for resolution, for closure) drives the narrative.

Haraway attempts to get past the dominant Oedipal myth and related "origin stories" which she defines as myths of unity - Fall - division into genders - domination of woman/nature by man (151). She is manifestly uninterested in reproducing dualisms. The cyborg story she calls for has no original unity; the cyborg "is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust" (151). She does not go so far as to claim that by embracing the technological we will be beyond division, but calls for that embrace as part of an acceptance of others. The cyborg, she writes, "is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity" (150):

No longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polis based partly on a revolution of social relations in the oikos, the household. Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other (151).

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Her strategy is both ironic and deeply serious; its goal is not a world of continuing dualisms with a different element on top the next time. It is a call for rethinking, for "imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end" (150).

The model which I am constructing out of these three theories is a model for the analysis of narrative. It uses vegetarian ecofeminist theory to critique the structures of empathy constructed by the novels of torture I discuss. The model is particularly applicable to narratives of torture with an oedipal structure. I accept the Barthesian connections among language, narrative and the Oedipal story as appropriated by de Lauretis; I extend them via Adams and give them particularity via Haraway. De Lauretis points out that

Barthes’s discourse on the pleasure of the text, at once erotic and epistemological, also develops from his prior hunch that a connection exists between language, narrative, and the Oedipus. Pleasure and meaning move along the triple track he first outlined, and the tracking is from the point of view of Oedipus . . . its movement is that of masculine desire. (Alice Doesn’t, 107)
According to de Lauretis, "desire works along with narrativity, within the movement of its discourse" (105). For me, Adams adds to this notion the possibility of theorising the agency of narrative as the agency of appetite along with that of desire. That appetite is, again, "male" appetite "for" the animal, symbolically gendered female. In narratives of torture, I read the torturer/tortured pair as a symbolically male/female, consumer/consumed subject/object relation; we as readers are symbolically gendered as male and our "gaze" (the term originates with Laura Mulvey’s film theory) is directed towards the focus of the narratives, the female victim. As female readers (this is de Lauretis’ thesis in the "Desire in Narrative" chapter of Alice Doesn’t), we have two positions with which to identify: that of the female victim or that of the male spectator viewing the female victim. That which the hero (constructed as male) conquers, transcends, sub- or consumes is symbolically female. Thus the murder, dismemberment and symbolic ingestion of the "female" is driven by a twin urge to the male biological one described crudely by Robert Scholes (qtd. in de Lauretis 108). This

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2 Interestingly, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, Orwell’s narrator describes the Two Minutes Hate as also following the "biological" structure, rising progressively to a "climax" (Orwell, N, 18).
double movement translates itself as a desire for dominating power. I read the narrative structures, then, in the narratives of torture I examine, as structures of a male journey of sadism towards dominance. At the same time, a second reading offered by these texts is of the victim symbolically gendered as male (perhaps especially in ironic parodies of intercourse with machinery which is often troped as female, manipulated by the torturer) but viewed by the torturer as weak, as "feminine." There focaliser, narrator and tropes chart the victim’s conflict with the objectified torturer antagonist.

Second, stories need a perceiver(s) and a teller(s). Important to how we read and respond to narratives are the questions of who focalises and who vocalises. I move here in considering these questions to Gerard Genette’s theory, modified by Mieke Bal, of what traditionally are known as "point of view" and "type of narrator". In her essays on narratology in *On Story-telling*, Bal first summarises and then proposes a reformulation of the theories of focalisation and narration as set out by Genette in his 1980 *Narrative Discourse*. The aspects of Genette’s theory which are relevant to my discussion are internal vs. external focalisation and homo- or heterodiegesis (or primary and secondary narration). The narratives of torture, of pain, that I examine seem to seek
a response of sympathy from their readers as a component of the narrative. Central, then, because of their subject and their aim, are the questions of who sees and who tells.

For Genette, as he makes clear in the 1988 *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, a response to Bal's and others' criticisms of his earlier theories, "focalisation" is a term at once wider and more particular than "point of view" because it allows for perception by means other than the visual. For Bal, focalisation is the agency of perceiving and presenting a character. The "focaliser," the one who perceives,\(^3\) is a different agent (I retain Bal's notion of agency, a term rejected by Genette--see Genette 72) from the narrating agent, the one who relates. Represented as a series of concentric boxes in Bal, the levels of agency in narrative move inward from author → narrator → focaliser → actor → action and direct discourse → implied "spectator" → explicit or implied reader (88). While I would, with Genette (74), reject the rigidity of Bal's model, the paradigm allows a space for the reading of character (Bal's actor) as structured by the focaliser for the implied "spectator" who corresponds, in my view, to

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\(^3\) I prefer Genette's "perceive" over Bal's "see" for the reasons Genette explains in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (64): focalisation might be auditory, for example; to use "see" is not to move beyond the traditional term "point of view."
de Lauretis' symbolically gendered reader roles. While I would agree with
Genette that not all narratives are focalised (seen by a perceiver distinct
from the narrator) all the time, all of the narratives of torture I examine
are focalised--all perceive and present characters and action from a
position or focus close to either the tortured character or a character
either related to or in love with the tortured character. This is done, of
course, to construct our sympathy with the victim. An exception is the
Kafka model I use in this chapter where the focus of perception is kept
away from the condemned man, resting first with his torturer, the officer,
then the spectator, the traveller. Still, I have chosen "In the Penal
Colony" for its brevity, the centrality of torture as its subject, its clear
construction of its reader and what I see to be the clear structure of
consumption of its victim.

Genette and Bal do not consider the question of whether focalisers
are symbolically gendered. Modifying their theory in the light of de
Lauretis', then, I read the focalisers in the narratives of torture I study as
male. This is not the most effective construction of real sympathy for
the victim, but it is a feature of these "male" narratives. The text's
construction of both the one who perceives and the one who relates is as
male viewing the victim, focalised and troped as "feminine"--as weak,
controlled by body and emotion at the same time that his/her story is that of the symbolically male "hero." Moreover, in these narratives of torture focalisation is usually single in order to maintain sympathy. It might be internal (where focaliser and character are one and the same) or external, constructing the reader’s response as sympathy or empathy. In addition to constructing sympathy, texts, through narratological choices, construct credibility, an important response for narratives of torture since torture is probably an unexperienced and unfathomable process for most readers. The significant pair of terms I borrow from Genette via Bal, useful in describing the way(s) in which credibility is achieved, are homodiegesis and heterodiegesis. On this point Genette and Bal agree:

By definition, a ‘third-person’ narrator does not exist: any time there is narrating, there is a narrating subject, one that to all intents and purposes is always in the ‘first person.’

(Bal 79)

So for Bal and Genette the traditional (grammatical) first person narrator becomes homodiegetic--present in the story s/he ("it" in Bal’s terms) tells as a character of whom mention is made; third person narration becomes heterodiegetic--with narrator absent as such a character (Genette 97-98).
The centrality of the narrator-as-character role in the story is also relevant: s/he might tell his/her story or might act as a witness. Although I will examine some exceptions, in general my group of narratives of torture is homodiegetic--"diary" rather than "witness." Some construct credibility through a "confirmation" of the story, also positioning the reader "safely" as observer rather than participant in the painful experience. Most, however, focus on the construction of credibility and sympathy by means of primary narration, attempting to lead the reader towards imaginative participation in the torture.

Third, a story told needs a reader. To theorise the construction of the reader in/by narratives of torture, I return to Teresa de Lauretis by way of a brief stop at Umberto Eco. In The Role of the Reader, Eco reminds us that the "reader" (his "Model Reader," "a textually established set of felicity conditions" [7]) of a given text is both selected and created by the text, not a live reader but a role. Yet Eco's theory of textuality is deconstructed by de Lauretis to reveal Eco's reader as masculine (Alice Doesn't 177, 33-35, 51-56). The novels of torture I examine work to construct a reader who is both voyeur and sympathiser, in symbolic terms both "male" voyeur and "female" sympathiser.

The model I am constructing of the elements of the narratological
process as it bears on the novel of torture might seem to become complicated in terms of gender construction and positioning. Broadly, I am reading the narratives of torture I examine as symbolically male journeys, made of patriarchal structures. Readers, as women or men, are constructed as male and their gaze (in Bal’s sense of both attention and look--see Bal 91) is focalised through the victim character or her/his sympathisers in the narratives. That character, although his/her torturer or torturing system attempts to trope her/him as "female," is constructed as a male encountering torturing apparati and characters which are constructed as female. The texts reproduce the patriarchal constructs of the powerful as "male" and the powerless as "female" in implicit acceptance of such constructs, showing themselves to be patriarchal constructs.

The last aspect I will discuss of the process of presenting torture in narrative fiction is the tropological. Here, in addition to Max Black’s essay in Metaphor and Thought, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s Metaphors We Live By and David Lodge’s The Modes of Modern Writing, Eco is again useful. By applying his theory (in Interpretation and Overinterpretation 45) that "both a metaphysic and a physic of universal sympathy must stand upon a semiotics . . . of similarity" to the nature
and function of metaphor in narrative, we arrive at the connection, in metaphor, of similarity and sympathy. In short, the tropological presentation of two "things" as similar attempts to constitute construction of sympathy. Metaphor especially, but also simile, metonymy, analogy--extended simile--and allegory--an extended metaphoric/symbolic structure--serves to structure our interpretation of narratives. Metonymy, which represents the structured concept by something closely associated with it, and synecdoche, which represents the thing by means of one of its parts or aspects, also rely on the sympathy in similarity.

Lodge maps the semantic (and "realistic") effects of metaphor in a schematisation which is useful for my investigations of the relationship between two elements of the texts I examine: the distance between structuring and structured concept in a metaphor (what are also known as vehicle and tenor) and the level of reader understanding constructed.

Here is Lodge:

The greater the distance . . . between the tenor (which is

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4 I use "sympathy" here in both of the following meanings from the O.E.D.: "a (real or supposed) affinity between certain things" and "conformity of feelings . . . "community of feeling."
part of the context) and the vehicle of the metaphor, the
more powerful will be the semantic effect of the metaphor,
but the greater, also, will be the disturbance to the
relationships of contiguity between items in the discourse
and therefore to realistic illusion. (112)

The schematisation might be diagrammed as follows:

1. tenor -------------- vehicle  high semantic effect
   (high distance)  low realism

2. tenor --- vehicle  low semantic effect
   (low distance)  high realism

Lodge, of course, presupposes a notion of consensus reality. Novels
of torture rely on the "realism" achieved by a "closeness" of structured
and structuring concept as constituting an effect of sympathy. Chapter
Two’s examination of the tropes of torture in certain narratives shows
that those narratives rely primarily on metaphors of Lodge’s second kind.
It also examines what Lakoff and Johnson call "structural" metaphors.

Lakoff and Johnson divide metaphors broadly into three kinds:
orientational, giving a concept spatial organisation, ontological, presenting abstract things as boundaried things, and structural, using one structured concept to structure another concept (14, 25, 61). According to Metaphors We Live By, orientational and ontological metaphors all "induce" similarities, make them possible; these similarities "do not exist independently of the metaphor" (147). Structural metaphors, on the other hand, create similarities once a new metaphor is used (151). The creation or construction of similarity, then, in Lodge's terms, "lowers" the distance between structured and structuring concept and allows then the constructions of credibility and understanding, and—in combination with narrative structure, focalisation and vocalisation (discussed in Chapters Three and Four)—sympathy, where the structured concept is pain.

I turn now to the construction of a model for reading narratives of torture--Kafka's "In the Penal Colony." As mentioned, I have chosen this tale for its brevity, the centrality of torture as its subject, its methodical construction of its reader and its gradual consumption of its victim. In addition, the story clearly presents torture as writing/writing as

5 Translated by J. A. Underwood.
torture and reading as complicity/voyeurism. The tale is not a perfect model, however; it keeps the reader distanced from the victim character’s experience and thus sympathy for that character is constructed only partially and through the agency of the traveller.

By the end of the first sentence of Kafka’s story, the text’s manipulations and constructions are evident. The "etic" opening (opening with a pronoun—see Roland Herweg in Genette, 70), generic rather than specific subject/noun "device," the incipit which assumes a character to be known and refers to him (here) by a "familiarising" definite article (Genette 68n), the assumptive "of course," and the obvious external focalisation signalled by the focaliser’s interpretation of a character’s appearance all begin to construct the reader as already curious about and complicit in the story:

‘It’s a curious device,’ said the officer to the traveller, surveying with a look almost of admiration the device with which he was of course so familiar. (149)

This opening sentence is periodic, delaying the introduction of its subject, the speaker of the direct discourse. By beginning directly with a quotation, the text serves to position the reader without preamble or preparation directly in the speech of the officer; focalisation—and thus
sympathy this early in the tale--is with him. The four-word opening quotation is also periodic, the expletive "it" delaying its own subject/antecedent. The officer is in the subject position. The modifying verbal phrase which follows the initial independent clause (quotation) of the sentence skips back over the noun "traveller" to locate its reference in the officer, subject of all action in the first sentence just as he is subject of most action in the first half of the story, "the turning-point calculated to occur at the sixth hour" (152), to borrow the officer's terms. And why should I not borrow his terms? He is, after all, the figure of male authority, logos, law in the tale.

Almost automatically, the reader is put in the position of the traveller, who becomes a trope for the reader, as the officer is focused on. Yet the officer himself structures the "traveller"'s "look," directing him to the "device." The device is established in the first sentence as the "proper" object of reader attention by means of its double mention (once by the officer, again by the narrator) along with the other strategies of the first sentence. Its designation as a generic class of thing works to construct reader interest. Also, its use here in its primary meaning of a thing made for a certain purpose arouses curiosity regarding its purpose. The word "device," in fact, occurs sixteen times before the officer begins
to explain its function and operation.

The language, structure and semantics of the first sentence of "In the Penal Colony" serve to build the reader in a process of pulling in to the context, to complicity, eventually to sympathy. When a creeping discomfort is built in the reader, directed and constructed by the text, the reader is never let completely out of its grip--is not released "unscarred" to participate later in the text in a different role. When, finally, the traveller reveals his own judgment of the procedure, the reader has become at the mercy of the text, slowly experiencing the torture of the tale. Insofar as torture in Kafka’s tale is the (attempted) inscription on the victim of the torturer’s/state’s ideology (its "story," its "line," insofar as it is a "sentence") then torture can be read as a form of writing. And insofar as writing entraps a "real" reader in its world, releasing her/him only at its signal and never unmarked, so writing can be seen metaphorically as the "infliction" on another (a reader) of an ideology or a set of "points of view": it can be read as a form of torture. S/he might, in different ways and usually at different times, participate in the roles

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6 Michael Valdez Moses considers the rendering of writing as a form of torture in Waiting for the Barbarians "most distressing" (120), yet the trope recognises the relatedness of both as and in systems of domination.
offered by the tale. The model reader of "In the Penal Colony" takes the roles of officer, traveller and condemned woman, participating in a text firmly rooted in the separation between writing/technology and the body.

Kafka’s text is ruthless in its construction of an initially uninterested, then complicit, finally sympathetic traveller. The potentially inflammatory information that an execution is to occur and that the execution is punishment for "insubordination and insulting an officer" is revealed in a subordinate clause, minimising its potential unjustness. Interest in the execution is "not very great," according to the narrator; the traveller is "not greatly interested," his "uninvolvement" "little short of obvious" (149). The negatives, the traveller’s turning aside, open the space for the reader’s direct gaze at the device which is by now so interesting.

The process of the text’s offering unsatisfying interpretations via the traveller begins while the officer’s explanations remain the only source of information about the condemned man’s fate. This process is presented as both attractive and repulsive, a dual identity intensified in the story’s second paragraph when interpretation is not only deciphering meaning via appearances, negatives and speculations, but results from focalisation from a position closer to the officer’s consciousness. The
fascinated two-way role for the reader is underscored in the third paragraph when the traveller "gestured vaguely" in response to the officer's "question" (it is a statement) of whether the traveller requires an explanation of the device. The heterodiegetic narrator and the generally external focaliser retrench here to reveal knowledge of the internal thought processes of the officer: "as the officer had expected" (150). By this point the narrator and officer become close, too, through the shared use of the term "device" which the narrator has adopted. At the end of the second paragraph, the project of the text is explicit; the reader is constructed through the traveller: "'Won't you take a seat?' he [the officer] asked in conclusion, pulling a cane chair out of a pile of such chairs and offering it to the traveller, who could not refuse" (152).

And what of the condemned man? I seem to have taken my cue from Kafka and have written three pages on the story without considering him. His fate is being revealed slowly in such of the officer's afterthoughts as "'after all, the device is required to run for twelve hours without interruption'" (150). Although he has roles to play later in the story, his lack of importance as a character is evident in the first paragraph where, troped as an animal, he clearly becomes the absent referent in a tale whose movement is that of consumption. He is "broad-
mouthed" and "stolid," with "a look of neglect about his hair and face," chains fixed to his neck, ankles and wrists, and "an air of doglike subservience" suggesting that "one could have given him the run of the surrounding slopes and a mere whistle would have fetched him back" (149). Later, we see him as a cow or dog, pausing in the chewing of his food to look up at a loud noise (169). He is, in Adams' terminology, the object in narrative consumption. He is kept out of active interest in his own torture by means of his drowsiness and his inability to understand French. He is trebly then (let us not forget his chains) at the officer's mercy. Nevertheless, as a trope for a reader (he is said to "ape" the traveller's actions [152]), he

was doing his utmost to follow the officer's explanations.

With a kind of drowsy obstinacy he would direct his gaze wherever the officer happened to be pointing, and when the latter was interrupted by a question from the traveller he too, like the officer, turned to look in the traveller's direction. (151)

The complexity of looks here still interrupts the officer's project, the explanation and operation of the device. It also demonstrates that focalisation is minimised as the text approaches its turning-point.
So far the traveller does not comment on the "device"; he asks questions. Even following the triple-thrust of the repetition of "harrow" (without the substantial narrative interpolations, the direct discourse in paragraphs three and four reads: "... the harrow."
"The harrow?"
"The harrow..."
"The harrow..."
[151]), the traveller is silent; the officer assumes that he is interested. The traveller's failure to react teeters on the absurd when, following the officer's information that a stub of felt is inserted into the victim's mouth "to prevent screaming and biting of the tongue" (152), the traveller returns to an earlier step in the explanation and asks, "That's cotton wool?" (152). Now that he has not only seen and heard of the device but touches it, his complicity increases: "the device was beginning to capture the traveller's imagination" (152). It is evident that the officer's own narrative strategies--primarily diegesis interruptus--are working on the traveller. When the officer pauses "to give the traveller time to view the device at his ease" (152), he gives the traveller time to ponder remaining and a real reader space to consider continuing. When the traveller/reader remains/continues to read, a deeper level of complicity is reached, signalled, contracted verbally, by the officer's "All right, the man's lying there" in response to which the traveller, positioned as a spectator in an armchair, "leant back in his chair and
crossed his legs" (152). The affirmative "all right" coupled with the present-tense clause place the traveller/reader, in similar physical and psychological positions, directly, immediately and complicitly inside the action of the story the officer tells. The officer reemphasises his acknowledgement of the contract of complicity with a "'Yes'" and signals the beginning of the central story in the narrative: "'Now listen to this!'" (153) When the traveller, who is the only one among the tale's characters to indicate disapproval of the process, frowns, the reader's position is temporarily shifted closer in identification with him. Yet his disapproval is partial and unsatisfying; he focuses on the unjustness of the trial procedure rather than the barbarity of the punishment. Inevitably, the narration is reappropriated by the officer whose explanations are in primary narration.

At the story's "sixth hour," when the officer begins to prepare his own torture, focalisation, which has generally been with him, shifts to the traveller. The condemned man, constructed as little more than the ostensible raison d'être of the device, now disappears altogether as a focus and becomes an object of comic relief as he dances with the soldier. "From this point on . . . the officer took very little notice of him" (173).
What, then, is to be noticed, viewed--what is the object of the story? Surely we find meaning by reading "In the Penal Colony" allegorically. The object all along has been the focus on technology rather than on the condemned man ("the traveller was being very seriously distracted by the condemned man" [157]). The emphasis has been on the experience of the torture rather than the understanding of the punishment: on the sentence rather than the crime. Of paramount importance to the officer is that justice is being seen to be done, and for the victim to recognise the law--decipher it with his own body. Finally, when focalisation shifts to the traveller, reader sympathy is enabled, another kind of sixth-hour enlightenment, for the condemned man troped now as text. The experience of the law through torture is, for the officer, pure justice. And what else can law be associated with but logos, writing? The object of reading, following the allegorical model of the story, is the recognition of the power of the word; "keep the writing clear at all times" (157). The allegory of torture as writing/writing as torture comes together in the public spectacle of the inscribing at which readers as spectators/spectators as readers are invited to look:

‘Now, to enable everyone to study the execution of the sentence the harrow is made of glass . . . . And now
everyone can watch through the glass as the inscription is made on the body. Come over here, won’t you, and have a closer look at the needles.’ (156)

Acutely conscious of its own medium, the tale’s officer points out that "‘the actual lettering has to be accompanied by a great deal of embellishment’" (158).

Finally, "In the Penal Colony" is, and not only because of the lack of women in it, a highly "male" story. The only women mentioned are the commandant’s "ladies," given neither direct nor indirect discourse but told of, apparati of the commandant, apparati in the officer’s story. Yet the officer’s characterisation of them is precisely as, in de Lauretis’ terms, "obstacles man encounters on the path of life, on his way to manhood, wisdom and power; they must be . . . defeated so that he can go forward to fulfil his destiny--and his story" (AD, 110). They represent the only faint hint of sexual desire in "that deep sandy valley with its barren slopes all around" (Kafka 149): the officer is concerned they will play with the traveller’s fingers and distract him from speaking out in favour of the torture device and procedure. Of course, this is their role--sympathy is associated with the feminine: if the commandant halts the procedure, the halting will be a "feminine" act.
"In the Penal Colony" constructs a reader finally sympathetic to, but never in empathy with, the condemned man. The torture machinery is of far more interest than the body it is set to inscribe. The only fusion of the natural and the technological in the story occurs when the officer himself is being inscribed. Yet no sympathy for the officer has been built when he climbs abruptly into the machine. The movement of the narrative clearly shows the victim character and the women as secondary, animals as tertiary in the hierarchical structure of the tale.

The model which the theories of de Lauretis, Haraway and vegetarian ecofeminists together can constitute provides a linkage among the structures of text and reader in novels of torture which are concerned with power, gender and human relations. "In the Penal Colony" deemphasises the victim character's experience of the action in the tale, yet other novels of torture focus on it with an apparent project of bringing the reader into sympathy with the tortured character in order to write against torture. Chapter Two will discuss the structure of sympathy built by these novels.
Chapter Two

Tropes and Analogies: Points of Reference

‘Nothing is worse than what we can imagine.’


According to Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*, metaphors attempt to create understanding by presenting one thing in terms of another. In doing so, metaphors attempt to construct a similarity between the things, bringing the listener or reader of the metaphor close to the structured concept. This understanding intensifies the response to metaphors. Adapting Lodge’s spatial metaphor of the "distance" between structured and structuring concept to Eco’s theory of
the model reader, a view of metaphor emerges in which the "closer" a metaphor's structuring concept is to a zone constructed as familiar or normal by the text, the more intense is the reader response (sympathy, empathy, aversion, voyeuristic pleasure) constructed by the metaphor.

As Lakoff and Johnson point out, metaphors allow the conceptualisation of one thing "in terms of something that we understand more readily" (61). By and large the metaphors which present torture in the novels I examine rely on simple ontological metaphors. According to Lakoff and Johnson, ontological metaphors use physical objects and substances, bounded entities, as the bases for "understanding," which they see as the function of all metaphors. Presenting an experience in terms of an object or a substance singles out parts of the experience to be treated as distinct entities or uniform substances (25)\(^1\).

Yet in novels of torture, even in these simple metaphors the

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\(^1\) Lakoff and Johnson write that the process of conceptualisation is metaphorical (3), that the metaphorical concept is systematic (7), and that systematicity "allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another" (10). One concept structures another; orientational metaphors (which give an object spatial organisation-14) and ontological metaphors view things in terms of "basic" concepts, while structural metaphors use one structured concept to structure another concept (61). Following Lakoff and Johnson's notion of the structuring of one concept by means of another, I will be using the term "structured concept" to refer to what has been traditionally the "tenor" of a metaphor and "structuring concept" to denote what has been called the "vehicle."
construction of sympathy is inhibited by a lack of zones of familiarity. At times, rather than building reader sympathy, the novels risk falling into the trap of the patriarchal construction of torture. Their metaphors keep readers distant from victim characters' pain, especially when those characters are female or animal or are troped as female or animal. This is also the case when suffering characters are troped as vegetable, as they often are, which accords with Adams' view that femininity and the vegetable are linked in the sexual politics of meat.

Stephen Greenblatt, in his commentary on an early seventeenth-century account of torture, points out that the torturer, in an attempt to force communication with another, increases his tortures in the absence of a scream (14). By showing us the importance the torturer places on a verbal response to his actions, Greenblatt demonstrates that for the torturer in the account Greenblatt includes, torture is, among other things, an attempt at communication, at union. Its perpetrator describes it metaphorically, trying to connect his actions to a notion of the acceptable. Bhengu's torturers also do this: "'You're going to sing for me now'" (234). But because, for Bhengu at least, torture effects an unwilling union with his torturers, the metaphors used to describe it work against their utterers' intentions, emphasising Bhengu's essential
separation from his torturers while the torturers use the metaphors to attempt to force his integration with them. Because the novel is focalised from a position close to Bhengu, stressing his self-possession, when Bhengu’s interrogators tell him "'You’re ours, Sam’" (193), the disparity between the metaphor’s intention and its reception points up the contradictions inherent in the ideology of the torturing Security Police.

The euphemisms in torture novels constitute another kind of trope, usually metaphor, which underscores the slippage in the expression-referent pair which results in reader sympathy for the victim. These torturers euphemise to deny the reality of their actions. The torturer character attempts to affirm the connection between euphemism and fact, while the imagery of the scenes of torture (bare grey or dark cells or rooms as in *Store Up the Anger*, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Darkness at Noon* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) underscores the disparity between euphemism and situation. Held in tension are the two positions represented by the metaphoric and the literal: the former affirms, while the latter denies, connections between euphemism and event.

Carol Adams calls the structure of euphemism the structure of the "absent referent." She is speaking strictly of metaphors in which the
structured concept is itself a figure for a referent which is not acknowledged and is, thus, "absent" (she speaks of animals as absent referents when victims of violence figure themselves or are figured as pieces of "meat" [Sexual Politics of Meat 40-2]). Animals have become absent referents in academic discussions of torture in fiction also when the critic accepts that troping a victim character as an animal is reducing her/him. Gallagher, for example, writes that "[e]ven though his torture and imprisonment have physically reduced [the Magistrate] to the level of an animal, these experiences also have elevated his moral awareness" (Story of South Africa, 130). Gallagher’s comment also points out another dichotomy in the structure of torture: the suffering character becomes both morally superhuman and physically subhuman.

All euphemisms act to replace or to censor the unnamed referent. Obvious euphemisms such as those used by torturing characters construct sympathy for suffering characters by underlining the difference between figure of speech and situation, to call attention to the actuality of the missing referent, the unnamed situation which is often also left undescribed in torture novels. Such obvious metaphors also work as irony given that the point of the torture is to cause physical pain. Scarry points out that the use of euphemisms for torture, specifically domestic
euphemisms, assists—in fact, is—a process of decreation. She draws the example of Kafka’s "In the Penal Colony" where the torture apparatus is essentially a large sewing machine, noting that "the unmaking of civilisation inevitably requires a return to and mutilation of the domestic, the ground of all making" (45). In euphemistic metaphors we see the complex process of simultaneous affirmation and negation of the torture situation—a process not so much of naming as of denying. The torturing characters thus provide a reading of the novels’ torture situations which is presented as distorted. This presentation constructs our interest in the victim characters’ experiences of torture. The novels seem to set as their project the naming of torture, describing it, giving it dimensions and details.

In Jan Drabek’s Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier, crushed genitals in Czechoslovakian prisons are known as "the ketchup treatment" (173); in Ariel Dorfman’s "Consultation" (the title itself is euphemistic—the victim is a medical doctor), being tied to a pole and beaten is a ride on a "horse" (118); in Waiting for the Barbarians torture by hanging is called "flying" (121); Store Up the Anger mentions "the head-shrinker" and "the boat rides" (178); in Manlio Argueta’s One Day of Life a drink of malathion, a poison used against insects and animals, is
"Quaker Oats’ refreshment" (70). Scarry’s reading also applies to the rest of Argueta’s scene of torture: the torturers focus on household objects and names, emphasising their decréative power and function by doing so. Their wounded victims are submerged in a tub of chili peppers; a toothbrush is inserted into their anus and their teeth are then "brushed" (70). Food and hygiene, among the most basic "necessities" or items of comfort, are here converted into implements of torture. Timmerman, too, cites euphemisms that use structuring concepts suggesting creativity--of communication and technology: "chatting with Susan" (a session with the electricity machine), "looking for oil" (rotating round and round with one finger on the ground) and the "choo-choo shock" (being crushed by five policemen in a line [6-7, 82]).

In the action of the novels, torturers’ euphemisms serve the torturers’ denial of reality; this helps torturer characters and hurts their victims. In using the euphemisms they do, the torturing characters blur the distinction between the euphemism and its referent so that the euphemism comes to signify in itself. This process might halt a reader’s search for meaning beyond the euphemism. Or, a euphemism might, by virtue of its crudity, serve to reinforce the missing referent. Certainly the novels present such euphemisms to construct a duplicitous and
desensitised torturer.

To construct a sympathetic reader who does grasp the victim character’s pain, most novels of torture include some "literal" presentations of pain. Although all fiction is metaphorical in the sense that its objects, ideas and actions exist only in the interface between text and reader (in Wolfgang Iser’s terms), we can distinguish in fiction between unstructured concepts and structured concepts. Unstructured concepts are, in Lakoff and Johnson’s terms, "readily understood," not requiring presentation in terms of or by means of other concepts, and structured concepts are structured by means of other concepts. Within the text, then, are "metaphorical" and "literal" terms. Carlos in Imagining Argentina, for example, tells his audience that one torture victim [Professor Hirsch] "felt two sharp objects applied to his testicles and then extraordinary pain, searing, leaping pain such as he had never known" (158). "Leaping" is metaphorical, but the rest of the sentence is literal. Similarly, Store Up the Anger describes Bhengu’s pain as "a jarring numbing sensation that travelled the length of his nervous system;" the blows "vibrated through the length of his body, carried on a stunned and tingling nervous system" (235). These texts rely on adjectives and precise detail to convey their victim characters’ experiences. Ebersohn’s,
in fact, tends to avoid metaphor by presenting Bhengu’s thoughts in homodiegetic narration:

I can handle anything you can dish out, Bhengu thought.

Whatever you do there’ll be some way I can handle it . . . .

Would it be better to relax Bhengu wondered. Or to have your muscles tensed? No. There was no good way. You just have to take it, he told himself. (234)

Whether literal or metaphorical, language bears a crucial role in the expression of pain, just as it holds a crucial role in the eradication of pain. For before pain can be diminished it must be apprehended, shared; before it can be shared it must be transmitted. This is Scarry’s theory in The Body in Pain which, while it treats fiction only peripherally, nevertheless underscores how few fictional presentations of physical pain exist. Scarry points out that bodily pain not only resists language but destroys it,

bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned. (4)

She suggests that inventing language that can reach and accommodate pain will provide pain with the object it lacks. This assumption, that the
verbalsign of pain is a necessary prerequisite to the collective diminishing of it, Scarry sees acted upon in five arenas, one of which is art.²

At the same time, presented pain might not be met invariably with sympathy or empathy (indeed, such responses might not be the novel’s consistent aim). In Waiting for the Barbarians, the Magistrate desperately wants the "barbarian" woman’s experience demystified, but why? At times he believes that until he understands her pain he will not be able to help her: "'Tell me,' I want to say, 'don’t make a mystery of it, pain is only pain’; but words elude me" (32). At other moments he acknowledges his voyeurism. He describes himself as both a protecting albatross and a preying crow in relation to the woman (81). Descriptions of pain, then, will not necessarily create sympathy; the effect the depiction has will depend on individual readers. Empathy is constructed usually by visual, tactile and intellectual comparisons to kinds of common human pain³. Tropes, especially metaphors, are a crucial part of the depiction of torture in these novels. Tropes of the torturing character aim

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² The others are individual testimonials of great pain, medicine, human rights activism and law.

³ Elaine Scarry points out the relative rarity of literary presentations of physical pain compared with the frequency of literary presentations of other forms of pain, especially psychological. She puts this down to the aversiveness of physical pain.

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to present torture from his perspective, and tropes of the victim character describe torture in the victim’s view. Torturers’ tropes are of a limited number and seem to have a uniform structure in novels, revealing contradictions inherent in the torturer’s thinking. A range of victims’ tropes are set against these. The victims’ tropes vary in kind, but common among them seems to be the construction of conditions creating sympathy for or empathy with the victim characters.

As Scarry points out, our present lexicon has few methods for presenting such a formidable assault as torture literally. Metaphor, then, fundamental in all discourse, becomes perhaps more central in depicting this agony. Tropes which contribute to the construction of a sympathetic or empathetic reader are victims’ tropes. They present the nature of pain, the intensity of pain, the physical damage of torture, the psycho-emotional effects of torture and the presentness of pain. In combination with a narrative told by and/or focalised through the victim or one close to him/her, the tropes set out to construct a shocked and scarring empathy. The task is huge, and at times it causes the novels to partake in the same structures which encourage torture.

The nature of pain is often presented by direct comparisons which rely on one or more of the primary physical senses, especially the tactile
but at times the visual or, more rarely, the auditory, gustatory or olfactory. *Imagining Argentina* offers both auditory and visual descriptions to present one character’s pain: "he felt the pain in his skull and heard sounds like a brass band. His vision was like a kaleidoscope in which there were a dozen men [there are two beating him]" (44). These particular similes work as irony; their effectiveness is in the incongruity of their structuring and structured concepts. Brass bands and kaleidoscopes are normally pleasurable; the coupling enhances the pain in the experience. Consider another example: "The pain in his testicles, the darkness he moved in, made fear blossom like flowers in a garden" (140). Exactly what is similar in the fear and in blossoming flowers is not included in the simile, but surely the contrast between darkness and blossoming flowers is the tool to emphasise the pain. Another flower trope in *Waiting for the Barbarians* uses contrast and change to stress the pain: "something blooms across my face, starting as a rosy warmth, turning to fiery agony" (107). The metaphor progresses from a gentle beginning to a violent end, from the red of a rose to the red of fire, moving the reader, too, from comfort to cringing.

Metaphors of torture frequently employ light and heat as vehicles, working with two dominant senses. *Imagining Argentina* presents pain in
this manner:

the pain comes like lightning from rubber hoses and the light
explodes like fireworks when the current is turned on,
and,

when live wires were applied to his testicles, he felt as if a
hot vise had been clamped to the tenderest part of his body.

(63, 59)

The emasculation in the second example is obvious, and the torturing
characters’ troping of the victim as female here is clear as they taunt him
that he will never have another erection. Yet while readers must
temporarily see the character here as feminised, the trope which presents
his pain does not necessarily reach an area of familiarity in readers. The
tropes of suffering in both examples above rely on the unfamiliar
structuring concept of extreme light and heat in a body. Also relying on
the fact that all bodies possess a temperature gauge, Robert Harlow’s
Felice employs tropes which present torture as an extended period of
pain: "like a steady draft of cold air over a tooth’s exposed nerve" (276).
The persistence of pain is expressed in Imagining Argentina as "clamped"
and in Felice as "steady."

Another of torture pain’s defining features in the novels is its
intensity. This intensity is frequently presented by means of colour.

*Imagining Argentina* usually uses white:

Carlos struggled to get up and felt another blow and then
the room was red and white and Teresa’s voice faded into
darkness,

and,

The pain exploded in little white pinwheels as the man
brought his knee up into Silvio’s groin . . . . The pain could
only be compared to having his testicles squeezed in a
white-hot vise. (124, 139)

Here, brightness of colour describes pain while darkness is pain’s
absence. Colour is probably not, of itself, objectively associated with
either pain or pleasure. It seems to work here as an intensifier to pain
when it is combined with another adjective, "hot", one which is
physiologically associated with pain. "White-hot" draws its intensity
from its specific meaning in chemistry; it describes the highest degree of
heat radiating white light.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* uses a more literal approach in the numerical
indices of "the dial." As I have said, it meticulously avoids tropological
presentation, in fact, the narrator stating only that "a wave of pain
flooded [Winston's] body" and "the wave of pain receded" (211).

Although both "wave" and "flooded" appear in their secondary meanings (in its primary meaning, a wave is made of water and flooding also requires a liquid), they are literal.

After Winston receives the initial round of electricity, another comes that is presented in numbers and physical effects:

‘And if the Party says that it is not four but five--then how many?
‘Four.’

The word ended in a gasp of pain. The needle of the dial had shot up to fifty-five. The sweat had sprung out all over Winston’s body. The air tore into his lungs and issued again in deep groans which even by clenching his teeth he could not stop. O’Brien . . . drew back the lever. This time the pain was only slightly eased.

The needle went up to sixty . . .

The needle must have risen again, but he did not look at it. (215)

Winston, his thoughts expressed here in the narrator’s voice, quickly
accepts and adopts the numerical measurements, employing them himself.

The pain flowed into Winston's body. The needle must be at seventy, seventy-five . . . .

Perhaps the needle was eighty--ninety. (216)

The description of what physical responses "fifty-five" can achieve, construct in the reader the dread of the highest point, one hundred. O’Brien’s indicator transmits intensification by means of pain levels, as Imagining Argentina does more figuratively, yet the simple designation "pain" lacks the strength to construct empathy on its own.

Another method to help build reader empathy with victim characters is the presentation of the bodily effects of torture, the physical damage, by means of relations--before/after oppositionings or tolerable/intolerable pain comparisons. These might be, but are not always, metaphorical. Carlos in Imagining Argentina presents a blunt before/after continuum: "They did this [torture by electric shocks] every day until he [Octavio] did not even know his name" (59). The pain elicits part of its intensity for a reader when it is compared with the routine interrogation structure which begins with the question, "What is your name?"
Another common form of relativising is the presentation of what constitutes pleasure in the victim character's experience compared with the much richer comforts outside that experience. Bhengu in a shallow, lukewarm bath in a prison hospital considers his situation "perfect:"

"Bhengu could not remember ever enjoying anything this much. The prison was quiet. There was no pain. . . . The only thing that was important was to be sitting here in the bath" (173). Here the poverty of Bhengu’s situation is emphasised when it is set beside the minimal importance Bhengu has attached to a bath on any other given day in the novel before his imprisonment.

The natural-world tropes in The Painted Bird are more direct and simpler; the novel’s narrator undergoes "terror that shakes one until it squeezes the stomach empty of vomit, like a punctured poppy pod blown open by the wind" (136). "Punctured" and "blown open" are the structuring concepts which create a sense of violence, randomness and the violation of something beautiful, while "shakes" and "squeezes" bring the impression to the present tense for a sense of immediacy and urgency.

The Handmaid's Tale attempts to convey the bodily damage wrought by torture by presenting the damaged body part as antithetic to
its original appearance:

I am still praying but what I am seeing is Moira’s feet, the way they’d locked after they’d brought her back. Her feet did not look like feet at all. They looked like drowned feet, swollen and boneless, except for the colour. They looked like lungs,

and,

His face is cut and bruised, deep reddish-brown bruises; the flesh is swollen and knobby, stubbled with unshaven beard. This doesn’t look like a face but like an unknown vegetable, a mangled bulb or tuber, something that’s grown wrong.

(87, 261)

The effect of the first metaphor comes from the initial metonymy which creates and enhances the image. "Lungs" particularly constructs an image of pink- or redness, rubberiness and the fragility particularly of internal organs. In both quotations, the adjectives used, along with the negations of the body’s normal appearance, communicate the shocking nature of what must have happened, freezing the experience short of immediacy, but do not speak for the victim whose experience remains uncommunicated at the same time that its results are presented. Both
similes assert simply that the feet/face do not look the way feet/a face should.

Metonymies occur again in Coetzee where the Magistrate dreams of the "girl"’s feet as "disembodied, monstrous, two stranded fish, two huge potatoes" (87). While "monstrous" both indicates the Magistrate’s perception of the size of the woman’s feet and suggests the "monstrosity" which must have been done to the feet to make them appear so big, "disembodied" creates the comparison of the undamaged body to the bifurcated ‘feet + the rest of the body’ impression the Magistrate has of the woman. The vegetable comparisons then capture a sense of lifelessness and uselessness.

Store Up the Anger contains a more immediate form of relativising:

He [Bhengu] could feel the skin of one of his ankles tear, the tissue rumpling like paper. Compared to the pain in his head and now flooding his body, it was only an annoyance, a minor irritation. (237)

By first presenting the tearing skin of an ankle (brought about here by tight shackles), the comparison creates a glimpse of Bhengu’s other pain in the realisation that it is so strong as to reduce the ankle pain to "an annoyance." Imagining Argentina’s Carlos uses a similar technique of
relativising when he invents a story of torture for the hearing of a spy from the regime. While he aims to arouse horror in the listening spy, the text itself is constructing that horror in its reader:

‘There was intense pain as her nipples were crushed. When she did not change her story wires were hooked to her and then she was jolted from her chair by the charge of electricity. The shock made her forget the pain in her nipples. The shock was regularly administered until she went into convulsions and lost consciousness.’ (94)

Here Bhengu’s ankle pain and the woman’s nipple pain are in the arena which, in the sphere of the text, is mild pain. It is juxtaposed with the stronger and more all-encompassing whole-body pain. The mild pain overlaps most readers’ situations of reading without physical pain with the characters’ experiences of intense pain to facilitate and intensify the possibility for reader empathy.

Texts are made of language, of course, while people are made of flesh. In their construction of a reader sympathetic to or empathetic with tortured characters, the torture novels I have been discussing build their tropes on points of reference between the pain of torture and a sphere outside of that pain. Where points of reference are elusive, Timmerman
attempts a literal transmission of the bodily effects of torture, alternating among first, second and third person narration, but is, he says, unsuccessful.

The amount of electricity transmitted by the electrodes . . . is regulated so that it merely hurts, or burns, or destroys. It's impossible to shout--you howl . . . .

What does a man feel? The only thing that comes to mind is: They're ripping apart my flesh. But they didn't even leave marks. But I felt as if they were tearing my flesh. And what else? Nothing that I can think of. No other sensation? Not at that moment. But did they beat you?

Yes, but it didn't hurt. (33)

At one point, Prisoner Without a Name does tropologically present the body's response to being tied up and periodically hearing a loud metallic crash: "My body trembled in agitation; sharp points, dazzling in their dizziness, settled in my brain" (92). The trope creates ideas of sharpness, brightness and motion simultaneously, constructing a dense combination of tactile and visual effects. It is followed by a metaphor which, to express a response to electricity, resembles one of The Handmaid's Tale's metaphors. The Prisoner Without a Name metaphor
tries to underscore the destruction of humanness that torture aims to achieve: "I felt I was becoming a vegetable" (34). Ultimately, however, Timmerman concludes that he "cannot transmit the magnitude of that pain" (34), so he moves on to the practical task of advising those who will suffer torture.

Reader empathy in these novels is as much for the tortured character’s psychological experience as it is for her/his physical one. Perhaps the aspects of torture which work most to create the psychological aspect of empathy are not the physical pain’s nature or intensity or the bodily damage sustained by it but its psycho-emotional effects. Psychological suffering has a fuller history in the novel than does physical suffering, perhaps in part because accounts of physical pain tend to produce aversion. To avoid aversive responses, responses of turning away or estrangement, texts present a character’s pain via his/her psychological and emotional responses to it and thereby elicit empathy with a character’s experience of physical pain. The particular empathy constructed is galvanising, a term and a response appropriate to empathy for suffering characters who, in Imagining Argentina, for example, are subjected to the application of galvanism as torture. Timmerman seems to rely on the psychological component of empathy
when he writes that the torture victim's "chief enemy is not the electric shocks, but penetration from the outside world, with all its memories" (85), expressing in homodiegetic internally focalised (autobiographical) narration that the psychological component of torture is worse than the physical.

To render torture's psycho-emotional results in the individual, writers use tropes which denote disbelief, registering the character's mind's shock at the paradoxes of torture pain--shock that what seemed a complete invasion of the body still left the body intact, that what seemed like eternal present ended. Metaphors present the psychological impact of torture by describing the uncentred, unfamiliar nature of the experience. They also describe the process of the character's mind, in response to that experience, disassociating itself from the body. In addition, the very conventional symbol of freedom, the bird, is used as a textual strategy to construct suffering characters as objects of pity.

One particular kind of figure occurs frequently to convey the psychological and emotional effects of torture, the figure using or implying the linking verb "seem." "Like" and "as" need a complement, and so does "seem." It achieves the comparison of two things, denoting the paradox of their simultaneous sameness/difference, recognising the
illusory but compelling nature of their unification. The depiction of torture from the victim’s point of view often conveys this paradoxical effect figurally, constructing the concept of what, from inside the victim’s body, the torture felt like, at times trying to erase the sense that the trope is a trope at all. Imagining Argentina’s narrator claims that Always in Borges you are conscious of the ‘as if,’ the playful relationship between the world of his stories and the one we live in. Well, it struck me that Carlos simply leaped beyond anything Borges gave us, for the ‘as if’ was erased whenever he went into his garden, replaced by what all of us who listened to him had come to believe was the literal truth of Carlos’ imagination. (110)

Imagining Argentina appeals to layers of audiences--Carlos’ audience in the garden, the constructed notions of a sympathetic listener/reader, and a "real" reader. The figure which presents the student Octavio’s experience of having live wires applied to his tongue is spoken by another character, Carlos, in a psychic trance, telling Octavio’s story to the relatives and friends of the Argentinean "disappeared" in the novel. Carlos addresses that audience while the "as if" structure works to produce an understanding of Octavio’s response to the torture.
'The men forced his mouth open and applied the wires to his tongue . . . . This part of the torture was worse than what they did to his genitals because it seemed as if they had reached inside him.' (59)

Here again the description compares one pain to another in order to construct understanding (although it might not be easy for a reader to differentiate between the pain of torture of the tongue and that of torture of the genitals). The simplicity of "forced" and the bluntness and fast pace of the first sentence in the description mean that the words are read, the concept is understood, quickly, before aversion can occur. The figure attempts to present the nature of one physical act--the opening of Octavio's mouth and the application of electricity to his tongue--by comparing it to another physical act--the men reaching inside Octavio's body. Yet unless the latter action is in the audience's experience (and probably it is not), they likely will not imagine with any depth the structured concept in the figure. The figure does not convey what feeling accompanies the thought that the men had "reached inside" Octavio. Again, the effects but not the experience are described.

Octavio's belief that his physical centre had been reached does provide a sense of the completeness of the student's violation. This
misperception of or disbelief about the body’s physical condition almost standardises the nature of most characters’ psychological response to physical torture in these novels. Figurative language, then, modes of comparison, describe the discord between mind and body. We see this in Ariel Dorfman’s torture story "Consultation" which is set during the moments following a torture session. As the immediate physical pain recedes and the tortured character’s mind registers impressions, his mind and body become aware of each other as separate; during this process, the story’s language changes progressively from the literal to the figural at the same time that the sentences build toward cumulative phrases:

When they’ve undone the last knot, you collapse on the floor in a bundle. You try to stand up, but you have no control over your arms and legs. You remain in that position, in a heap, still unable to enjoy the relief of muscles that no longer have to contract before the next blow, unable to believe that they’ve finally removed you from the bars of the horse. You can feel your own breathing against your face and the beating of your heart, bigger than your whole body, as it echoes within you, saturating you, running over.

(118)
The inability of the mind to grasp the body's condition is central to this passage from Dorfman. The translation of an intransitive verb ("breathe") into a transitive verb plus gerund ("feel . . . breathing") splits one subject ("you [breathe]") into two ("you feel your own breathing").

The addition of "against your face" doubles the objects ("breathing" plus "face"), emphasising the dislocations in the one character. The difference between "your heart beats" and the second half of the last sentence above has a similar effect. The heart becomes subject and the body ("you") object. A literal separation between "mind" and body is eclipsed by the assertion of the body's aliveness, yet while the mind is processing the torture and the narrator is conveying a psychological reaction, the essence of the victim character's psychological response is the inability to accept. The passage's intensity can describe only the after-effects of the torture, the disassociation.

One dominant feature of the torture pain described in novels, and also the feature presented tropologically the least, is the pain's presentness, its undeniability, inescapability. *Store Up the Anger*'s narrator writes of Bhengu's experience that "there was only the pain" (236). The idea of absolute presentness is by definition both immediate and extreme and so is most often presented literally.
Harlow’s *Felice* does, in one instance, employ what is strictly speaking a trope to create pain’s presentness, but other devices are more common. In *Felice*: "What was happening now was all that could happen" (267). While this is not literal, the act of torture is not, in fact, the only act that could possibly occur, the sentence describes the victim’s sense that the torture eclipses all other possibilities. *Store Up the Anger* creates presentness differently: nearly all facets of the novel emphasise presentness although the writing is literal. The main aspect conveying immediacy is narrative voice, second-by-second homodiegetic narration during the recounting of the torture.

In fact, texts often present extreme pain as beyond trope, outside a realm of comparison, without a suitable counterpart: Orwell’s Winston thinks simply that "Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain" (206). And *Store Up the Anger* presents it as unnameable, as "this thing" (101) as does *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ("the thing," 211).

It is not surprising that tropes are not prevalent in the presentation of victim characters’ senses of disorientation, of uncentredness. Tropes depend on their structuring concepts for the stable point of reference I mentioned earlier, and the psychological state which is the partial focus of the torture novel lacks this base. *Prisoner Without a Name* faces the
challenge by using an adjective to modify a structuring idea which is a noun, to focus and construct the suffering character’s experience. One particular metaphor which presents the psychological effects of torture could also serve as a trope for the, as Eco has it, "textual strategy" itself. The trope compares the torture victim in his isolation cell to a "blind architect" who constructs the outside world piece by piece from sounds (83). The challenge of crossing sensory media and using auditory impressions to envision an environment can be met since the victim, as the "architect," has had experience outside his cell. At the same time, the textual strategy itself, the metaphor, is architect of its reader.

Some tropes in torture novels focus not only on the presentation of the pain but also on the presentation of a partial transcendence of pain. In addition to constructing a victim character’s physical or psychological damage, certain tropes imbue suffering characters with moral superiority. Examples are in the number of bird metaphors found in novels of torture, usually presenting the victim as beautiful and naturally deserving of freedom.

The Painted Bird extends bird metaphors into an allegory of the Holocaust:

We would take the terrified, thrashing birds from the traps
we had set the day before. Lekh removed them carefully, either speaking soothingly to them or threatening them with death. Then he would put them into a large bag slung over his shoulder, in which they would struggle and stir until their strength waned and they calmed down. Every new prisoner pushed down into the bag brought new life, causing the bag to quiver and swing against Lekh's back. Above our heads the friends and family of the prisoner would circle, twittering curses. Lekh would then . . . hurl insults at them. When the birds persisted, Lekh put the bag down, took out a sling, placed a sharp stone in it, and, aiming it carefully, shot it at the flock. He never missed; suddenly a motionless bird would hurtle from the sky. Lekh would not bother to look for the corpse. (48)

Eventually, in a rage of unsatisfied lust, Lekh takes to painting a "prisoner" bird and loosing it. The bird soars "happy and free", only to be killed by its kin. It may be that Kosinski's allegory works only at an implied "as if" level: 'Holocaust victims were branded and murdered as frequently and easily (although not by their own people) as if they were birds.' Or we can read Holocaust victims imbued here, metaphorically,
with the qualities of naturalness and freedom. Sympathy for their physical plight is achieved by means of the dramatic adjectives, arbitrary actions of Lekh, and slow pace of the narration. Sympathy for the birds’ kin is constructed in the second half of the passage by means of the contrasting verbs used: "circled" shows impatient worry while "hurl," "shot" and "hurtle" are sudden and violent.

Bird figures also punctuate Argueta’s One Day of Life. Speaking apparently unselfconsciously, the narrator Lupe equates her family with birds:

Look what happened to Helio. They won’t give the poor man up, they won’t even say a word about him; at least we could see Justino’s body, we know he is dead. It’s worse, the anguish for a disappeared person; at least consolation comes with death. With a disappeared person they kill two birds with one stone: all of the living who revolve around the disappeared are chained to anguish. And anguish is a slow form of death. (178)

The metaphor in the fourth sentence, although it has become a cliche, is simple and direct in its main parts: birds, killing and stone. Its matter-of-fact tone is integral to the construction of an awed sympathy.
Earlier, a conceit about two battling birds, in which the smaller, weaker bird is a match for a scavenger, also serves the building of an admiring sympathy. It is the only brave bird--it even fights hawks. It gets on top of them and rides their backs, and no matter how the hawk flips and turns the kiskadee sticks to it. Fights between kiskadees and hawks are beautiful, because the hawk tries to flee and the kiskadee pursues it; they circle in the sky until the kiskadee catches up with the hawk and perches itself on the other’s back. The hawk then says ‘cuerk-cuerk’ and the kiskadee sings ‘Cristo fué,’ without dismounting its horse. (78)

Here the narrating Lupe interprets the scene, finding not only hope but beauty in the spectacle of the weaker bird’s tenacity. Towards the close of the novel, bird figures become a direct trope: "And they leave, like hawks clutching between their claws the little children of the hens. With their claws they haul us, sure of themselves" (199). Sympathy for Lupe is turned here into sympathy for all Salvadorean victims in the novel.

**Imagining Argentina** similarly employs birds to evoke victims. In it, the Argentine military’s secret police and spies drive green Ford Falcons.
They follow, for instance, the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, female relatives of the "disappeared." The presentation of the officials—as always male and troped here as carnivorous—directs our sympathy to their female victims who, by the phrase "meat eaters," are seen as consumed animals: "the Falcons followed close behind . . . like pale green vultures, peregrine hawks, meat eaters" (84).

Eventually the Falcons become a stock element in the novel’s scheme of symbolism. White remains symbolic of good while green symbolises evil as Carlos drives into the Pampas, the rural region containing Argentina’s torture centres.

He found himself driving on the belt road to the Parana River where every car verged on becoming a green falcon, every flower, garden, or green space, or tree, capable of blossoming into a white carnation. (33)

Indeed, white seems by consensus to remain a symbol of the morally positive in our "reality" as well, as we see from the past decade’s images of human rights activists as transmitted through television: the white kerchiefed women who have marched in Buenos Aires’ Plaza de Mayo carrying posters of their "disappeared" loved ones, the women who have offered white flowers to uniformed riot police in Seoul, and the
white-shirted man who stood before a moving tank in the 1989 conflict in Tiananmen Square. Evoking such images, as Amnesty International, for example, does in its publications, posters and videos, is part of an attempt to reach the popular imagination through metaphor and historical event simultaneously. The images are records of actual events at the same time that they are understood to be representations in archetypal form of a struggle. The government buildings in Argentina are named "Casa Rosada," and Imagining Argentina names them frequently to underscore the metaphoric blood on the generals' hands.

Another strategy to create reader sympathy for victim characters is the presentation of the grief of their loved ones. Their pain is not primarily physical, but is compared metaphorically to the physical to construct reader sympathy with the pain of the victim character. In Imagining Argentina, the narrator Martín Benn tells of a waiting couple who live "as if afflicted by a wasting illness; their home is full of objects bringing memories, "objects as dangerous as broken glass;" memory "tore scabs off their wounds" (14). Their grief becomes physical, "wasting," the juxtaposition of "dangerous" and "tore" with "home" creating a sharp contradiction.

Much of the effectiveness of a metaphor depends upon the extent
to which it reaches some common body of knowledge/experience supposed to exist in its reader. Another approach novels use to aid empathy is analogy. Appealing again to zones of familiarity, torture novels describe pain coping mechanisms, usually some form of psychological removal from the physical scene of pain, analogous to a mind/body separation.

Some works of fiction describe this process bluntly, as Thornton’s, Eli Wiesel’s and Tadeusz Borowski’s do. *Imagining Argentina* does so in a metaphor: "He [Ruben] will vanish into the pain" (63); Wiesel’s *Night* by means of synecdoche and metonymy: "Bread, soup--these were my whole life. I was a body. Perhaps less than that even: a starved stomach" (50). And Borowski’s "This Way for the Gas" literally: "One of the ugliest sights to a man is that of another man sleeping on his tiny portion of the bunk, of the space which he must occupy, because he has a body" (110).

Some novels develop the idea gradually, as *Felice* does, emphasising the reduction of Felice to her physical self as her physical pain dominates her and she becomes "only a body" (267). Eventually, as she is led out of the place where she has been imprisoned and tortured, she is completely dissociated from her body; metaphorically, "in the dark,
walking easily between these silent men, her body disappeared” (279). Only when she has been deposited in a parking lot by the men, free, does she begin to reknit herself: "she leaned her cheek on the car’s rooftop and gradually became a body again" (280). Carlos conveys the victim’s sense of being reduced to a body literally--"‘His [Silvio’s] eyes will be swollen shut for a day or two, his mind clotted with pain’” (141)--and metaphorically:

‘They want him to live in fear, to reduce him to nothing more than wild eyes and a pulse that rages whenever he hears footsteps in the corridor . . . . his life has been reduced to pain and half-light.’ (141)

_Nineteen Eighty-Four_’s Winston, too, suffers this reduction to body and is conscious of it as it occurs:

It struck him that in moments of crisis one is never fighting against an external enemy, but always against one’s own body. . . . And it is the same, he perceived, in all seemingly heroic or tragic situations. On the battlefield, in the torture chamber, on a sinking ship, the issues that you are fighting for are always forgotten, because the body swells up until it fills the universe, and even when you are not paralysed by
fright or screaming with pain, life is a moment-to-moment struggle against hunger or cold or sleeplessness, against a sour stomach or a screaming tooth. (91)

And *Waiting for the Barbarians* expresses the reduction in a simile:

I realize how tiny I have allowed them to make my world, how I daily become more like a beast or a simple machine, a child’s spinning wheel. (84)

 Felice, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Imagining Argentina and *Waiting for the Barbarians* use the phenomenon of mind-body dissociation to present the victim’s experience; Coetzee’s narrator indicates also what purpose the process serves the torturing characters:

They were not interested in degrees of pain. They were interested only in demonstrating to me what it meant to live in a body, as a body, a body which can entertain notions of justice only as long as it is whole and well, which very soon forgets them when its head is gripped and a pipe is pushed down its gullet and pints of salt water are poured into it till it coughs and retches and flails and voids itself. (115)

The distinction the Magistrate describes, between a person’s capacities in pain and his/her abilities in comfort, is a common element in the mind-
body separation analogies of torture.

Ebersohn’s Bhengu seems to realise this; his tension and focus are to protect his body and maintain his silence. He copes through psychological withdrawal:

that he was naked and they were clothed now only emphasised the distance between them. He knew that in their terms Brown was close to him, no more than two or three paces away, and yet he had the sensation of a whole empty space separating them, making it impossible for them to reach him, or touch him in any way. (11)

Later Bhengu has an out-of-body experience, observing his own body as separate from himself and not recognising it (111).

Although such an extreme division of the psychological self from one’s physical reality is not readily accessible to many “real” readers in terms of their own experience, the momentary primacy of the physical during physical pain is probably a universal sensation relied on by the texts in their constructions of reader sympathy for an extended experience of physical pain. The similarity between plot-time and reading time in the passage below also create the “psychological realism” of the mind’s “escape” to focus on trivial details during moments of crisis:

105
In the corner of his field of vision Bhengu could see the policeman’s head bobbing with each blow, an occasional spray of sweat gleaming brightly in the white light in the room. Bhengu was fascinated by the spray of sweat and he found himself watching for it. He was retreating from the pain into a private place where he could do nothing but wait for the flash of sweat as it detached itself from the policeman’s face. Was it with every sixth blow that it happened? Or was it every seventh? He would count them. It was important to know. (237)

Novels employ other analogies to describe torture--for example, Felice experiences it "as she'd imagined drowning" (266)--but the likening to a split self is the most common. There develops in the victim a hatred of her/his body and the private will it seems to possess. Wiesel writes, "I could feel myself as two entities--my body and me. I hated it" (81). And Store Up the Anger describes Bhengu battling his own body, his own fear:

Bhengu hated his fear. The muscles of his stomach were a ball of sinew, bunched hard together, and there was no way that he could ease them. He hated even more that they
might see the fear on his face. (135-6)

Descriptions of this bifurcation are almost universally present in fictional scenes of torture. It becomes both the victim character’s instinctive coping strategy and the torturer’s goal, part of the process of torture, as Scarry points out:

Torture inflicts pain that is itself language-destroying, but torture also mimes . . . this language-destroying capacity in its interrogation, the purpose of which is not to elicit needed information but visibly to deconstruct the prisoner’s voice.

(19)

A feminist reading recognises a structure of domination present also in interrogations. Jessie Bernard, among others, has suggested that women’s discourse tends to confirm the other’s statements while men’s tends to challenge them (381). We can read the torturer’s speech as "male" and the victim’s as "female": in the interrogation which usually accompanies physical torture, the torturer expects--in fact, forces--the victim to validate his (the torturer’s) statements while at the same time he challenges the statements of the victim. An important part of the dominance he asserts is verbal. To Scarry, ultimate domination requires that "the prisoner’s ground become increasingly physical and the
torturer's increasingly verbal, that "the prisoner become a colossal body with no voice and the torturer a colossal voice . . . with no body" (57).

Metaphor and analogy are central to the construction of sympathy for victim characters because of the unfamiliar nature of the experience, and, as Scarry notes, "because the existing vocabulary for pain contains only a small handful of adjectives" (15). However, the method of building sympathy which is most potentially useful is also the most potentially problematic because for the most part tropes require stable points of reference, areas of familiar knowledge or experience for any reader to connect with. The gap between structured and structuring concept, between character and reader, mirrors the separation between binary oppositions in the texts: tortured/torturer, pain/comfort, powerlessness/power-over, technology/nature, consumer/consumed. There is no fusion, only constant underscoring of the tremendous complexities of approaching and shrinking from the dark chamber.
In each of the novels I examine, torture is structured in terms of conversion. The torturer, as a representative of a system or state holding

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power, is in the superior position in the torturer-tortured relationship. His aim is to convert the torture victim, actually or nominally, to the code of behaviour he represents. His project is obvious and stands as the novel’s main antagonistic force. Less obvious, partly because of the sympathy with victim characters which the texts construct, is the victim’s own pattern of oppositional thinking. This chapter begins with an analysis of the structure of conversion presented in the novels, and it concludes with an attempt to draw out some of the implications of "protagonist" and "antagonist" each sharing, at some point, dichotomous thinking. Ironically, this thinking, which I will be defining as patriarchal, shows the protagonists and antagonists of novels of torture to be not so much different from but similar to each other, albeit in different positions.

The structure of conversion I discern shares similarities with the cycle of objectification, fragmentation and consumption which ecofeminists like Carol Adams suggest links the common oppression of women and animals in our culture:

Objectification permits an oppressor to view another being as an object. The oppressor then violates this being by object-like treatment. . . . This process allows fragmentation, or brutal dismemberment, and finally
consumption [in the cases of women, the consumption of visual images]... Consumption is the fulfillment of oppression, the annihilation of will, of separate identity. So too with language: a subject first is viewed, or objectified, through metaphor. Through fragmentation the object is severed from its ontological meaning. Finally, consumed, it exists only through what it represents. The consumption of the referent reiterates its annihilation as a subject of importance in itself. (47)

I am linking animals, women and torture victim characters as suffering under the cycle of objectification, fragmentation and consumption. (Although I reject women’s acceptance of and even association with a model of passivity implied by the victim label, there is a difference between accepting and enacting victimhood, and recognising what has been and is a dominant model.) The similarities among cycles of oppression (of women, of animals, of torture victims and torture victim characters) are striking.

The cycle of conversion has a uniform structure in five of the novels I discuss. An outward loss of the tortured character’s individuality combines with his/her desire for survival to satisfy the torturing
character’s first aim of objectification. Once the victim is reduced to a body, the torturer begins rebuilding what he has destroyed, inserting himself as protector in the space left vacant by the initial lack of humane communication between torturer and tortured. The Painted Bird, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Darkness at Noon, Store Up the Anger and Waiting for the Barbarians follow this structure of conversion. Imagining Argentina does not, positing imagination as a way out of the cycle of torture.

The structure is intact, also, in Timmerman’s Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number, strictly speaking a factual, "non-fictional" account. It is not surprising that factual and fictional accounts of torture present the same structure; the cycle is part of the discourse of torture which has virtually become an absolute, so common that any number of television movies, films and popular novels treating the interrogation of "criminals" feature either a split version of the torturer--the "good cop/bad cop" or, as Bili Melman calls the terrorist with two personalities in fiction, "Homo Duplex" (561)--or a single interrogator who spins from cruel attacks to paternal protection. The torturer creates a situation in which he represents for the victim the limits of both benevolence and malevolence.

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The torture novel makes insistent connections between itself and the world by using extraliterary forms and devices. The diary, the journal, the internal monologue and historically factual settings are common forms the novels use to present the torture experience. These forms are used partly because, as Foley says of the writers of Holocaust literature, in their effort to convey an experience "to which, they know, their readers’ lives possess no congruent configuration, these testimonial narrators press against the conventions of the genres in which they write" (334). Such forms are also highly personal, individual and self-asserting. Set against one of the torturer’s goals in torture novels--the obliteration of a sense of individuality--are the re-creation and rehumanisation of the self through "personal" forms. If, as Foley points out, the pattern in the bulk of Holocaust memoirs is innocence, initiation, endurance, escape, "a kind of negative mirror of the traditional autobiographical journey toward self-fulfillment" (339), then it might be in a kind of retrieval of autobiographical forms that victims of atrocities are presented.

They are also presented in the larger framework of the pseudohistorical or political novel; as a result, "documentary evidence" such as in footnotes or attached documents is also a feature of some
torture novels, for example, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Diaries or journals are common devices used to distinguish the victim as individual from the oppressor as representative. Offred, Rubashov and Winston all keep diaries; the Magistrate keeps a journal, while Lupe and Bhengu narrate in places in internally focalised homodiegetic narration. The Gileadean regime’s documents, Ivanov’s notes, O’Brien’s plans, Colonel Joll’s log, the "Authorities" directives and the Security Police files, which are mentioned in passing in the novels, are not revealed to the reader.

Working against the victim characters’ attempts to retain individuality is the structure of conversion the torturer character imposes. The torture experience in the novels is structured as a "postlapsarian" narrative, the patriarchal pyramidal narrative structure de Lauretis critiques as "male," Adams critiques as consuming and Haraway critiques as dualistic.

In the beginning is the act(s) (real or invented by the torturer) or "sin" the victim commits. Conflict between torturing and tortured character follows. The torturer’s aim is to achieve resolution, closure—if not information, then the confirmation of his power. Adams suggests that this structure of beginning-middle-end is the structure of the
consumption of meaning. She sees it as also present in "the story of meat"--the creation, butchering and consumption of animals. According to Adams, meaning is achieved in the ingestion of a final product:

Narrative, by definition, moves forward toward resolution. By the time the story is concluded, we have achieved some resolution, . . . and we are given access to the meaning of the story as a whole. Often meaning can only be apprehended once the story is complete. . . . Closure accomplishes the revelation of meaning and reinscribes the idea that meaning is achieved through closure. (92)

In the novels, torture, another method of patriarchal oppression, attempts to achieve its meaning through conversion, thereby justifying the torture process². A new being is seen (by the torturer character) to emerge from the torture experience (where the being emerges at all), made over in the image of the torturer, having re-iterated her/his ideas.

The first step in the structure of conversion as it is presented in the novels is the physical conversion of the tortured character from person to body--the stripping away of all of the victim's outward signs of

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² See Adams (94) for a parallel argument regarding meat eating.
identity. A state of nakedness achieves this and stresses the separation between torturer and victim; the victim character’s nakedness is almost universal in the victim characters’ experiences of torture and is frequently noted in novels of torture, as, for example, in *Store Up the Anger*: “That he was naked and they were clothed now only emphasised the distance between them” (11). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the Thought Police choose to attack while Winston and Julia are making love: “The feeling of nakedness, with one’s hands behind one’s head and one’s face and body all exposed, was almost unbearable," Winston thinks (190).

The novels present a subsuming of the tortured character into the torturing character’s ideology while at the same time, as Chapter Four will show, focusing on each central victim character’s individuality. Following the structure of conversion, the victim character’s signs of individual identity are removed. S/he retains individual ideas, ideology and idiom, but the signs of these, too, are physically removed:

Towards the end, most people behaved in the same way, however different they were in temperament and voice: the screams became weaker, changed over into whining and choking. Usually the door would slam soon after. (20)

The tone of habitualness is clear in the above passage, especially in "the
end" but also in the use of the habitual "would." Although the passage is heterodiegetic, focalisation is with Rubashov, indicating here his awareness of the inevitability of the cycle. In addition, the state of nakedness during torture, with its attendant discomfort, vulnerability and humiliation has, of course, a psychological function. It deprives the victim character of self-determination and invests control over her/him in the torturing character when the victim's body acts, as it were, of its own volition. Waiting for the Barbarians' Magistrate says, "I bellow again and again, there is nothing I can do to stop it, the noise comes out of a body that knows itself damaged perhaps beyond repair and roars its fright" (121). The powerlessness the Magistrate describes, his objectification of his own body and its bestial roars all are manifestations of his torturers' power over him, stages in the process of his transformation.

To the torturing character at this point in the structure, the victim character seems outwardly to be a blank page craving communication. In different ways for each victim, non-communication is the worst part of torture. In Darkness at Noon what is "really bad" is ignorance of what will happen to one (47); in Store Up the Anger "there was nothing worse than having them working on you but asking no questions" (236); and in
Thornton "silence was almost as bad as torture to Cecilia" (178). Each character begins to need her/his torturer to fill needs the torturer has produced in him/her.

Presented as more elemental than the psychological desire for communication, however, is the desire for physical survival. In The Painted Bird's picaresque catalogue of analogies to the Holocaust, rats in a railcar murder one another for a position at the top. Nineteen Eighty-Four's narrator more directly presents Winston's desperation in the narrator's comment that suicide was less "natural" to Winston than "to exist from moment to moment, accepting another ten minutes' life even with the certainty that there was torture at the end of it" (198).

Once the body can be affected despite the will of the victim, the torturer can inscribe his "truth" on the character. One sees the aptness of the notion of inscription in Kafka's "In the Penal Colony" with its literalisation of the legal "sentence," the inscription on the body of the condemned man of the law he has broken. The zealous officer notes that the sentence is not explained to the prisoner: "'There would be no sense in telling him. He experiences it on his own body'" (154).

At this juncture, with the torturing character beginning his task of "programming" the victim, each novel except Imagining Argentina
develops a bond of adversarial understanding between the torturer and the tortured. The connection is part of the torturer's method of operation, and it is difficult for the victim to resist, left, as s/he is, with the torturer as his/her only human contact. The bond also suggests the binary nature of their relationship. They become not opposites but opposite sides of a process the parameters of which are understood by both characters. The bond not only suggests the attraction I describe in the Introduction, it points up the essential similarity of oppressed and oppressor in the novels. It makes clear that victim could be violator, torturer could be tortured. Borowski, in fact, suggests, in "The People Walked On," that victims can read revenge as justice, wishing that those who inflict suffering will suffer also: "'for those who have suffered unjustly, justice alone is not enough. They want the guilty to suffer unjustly too'" (70). In political novels that treat torture, the intellectual bond between torturer and tortured seems to be a stock element. Winston and O'Brien, Rubashov and Ivanov, Offred and her Commander, Bhengu and Colonel Lategan--each relationship is one of intellectual equality, challenge and mutual attraction.

In addition to the bond evident in the relationship of the torturer and his victim is a uniformity in the language and imagery employed by
victims and violators who each objectify the other. Atwood emphasises this phenomenon while disrupting it briefly; as long as their relationship conforms only to the rituals of Gileadean Commander and Handmaid and develops no further, Offred is able to objectify her Commander. However, once real human connectedness enters the relationship, it is changed: "He was no longer a thing to me," Offred writes. "That was the problem . . . . It complicates" (151). Yet in general The Handmaid’s Tale still retains the parallel separate worlds of oppressors and oppressed: "‘Us?’ I say. There is an us then, there’s a we. I knew it" (158) when she learns of the Mayday underground formed to resist the regime’s control.

Harlow’s protagonist victim objectifies one of her tormentors, designating him the "Ostrich" in her mind because of certain details of his appearance. At the same time, she seems aware philosophically of the problematic nature of such oppositional differentiations before she is taken by the security police in Poland. She thinks,

The kind of revolution Walesa was trying to make must necessarily forgive. That was the glory of it. And if it failed to forgive it would not be so much because there was Evil in the world, but because Evil had been fractured and reduced
to fear of pain, fear of suffering, calamity, tragedy, ruin.

Revolutions always believed they were forced to kill, rub out, eliminate, neutralize, waste their enemies and even their friends, to preserve their newly-built engines of a victory that had become a stand-in for Good. (258-9)

Aware as she is of the "reductions" of oppositional thought patterns, she nevertheless, during her own violation, and in the absence of a proper name for her torturer, terms him "the Ostrich," a bird usually associated with ugliness, stupidity and power.

One Day of Life’s narrator Lupe also objectifies, presenting the security forces as non-human, as animals, dogs. A stronger indication of the oppressed characters’ yearning for revenge comes in One Day of Life’s two closing and parallel images. The last visual image of the action proper is that of Lupe’s husband José’s mutilated body. However, the final image of the novel is not his figure but a vision his granddaughter Adolfina has of one of the National Guardsmen lying dead. Although this vision of hope for revenge is the novel’s last "word," the novel does offer an alternative to revenge. In one scene Lupe offers water to the Guardsmen, who, unknown to her, have just brutalised her husband. She does this while thinking that "one shouldn’t refuse water to anyone"
Yet we hear earlier of the same authorities giving Lupe’s son-in-law acid to drink rather than the water he begs for while he is tortured. The novel leaves a wide space for interpretation of these scenes; questions arise as to whether Lupe’s gesture is stupid, passive resistance, capitulation or, possibly magnanimity, a way of breaking the cycle of inhumanity. The rest of the novel supports the last view, constantly juxtaposing Lupe’s family’s and community’s sharing of the little they have with the security forces’ protection of landowner’s possessions.

Store Up the Anger’s Bhengu expresses his hatred of his oppressors directly. At one point, he wishes only to take the torturing policemen with him into death. "I see you all so damned clearly" he thinks, "and I hate you more than ever before" (79).

We find in The Painted Bird a kind of enactment of the boy’s desire for revenge. The attitude of Kosinski’s narrator towards his oppressors is not hatred, and consequently objectification, but reverence in the end when he turns into an oppressor himself. After witnessing his lover Ewka copulating with a goat, the boy feels he has the key to the balance of power in the universe:

Only those with a sufficiently powerful passion for hatred, greed, revenge, or torture to obtain some objective seemed
to make a good bargain with the powers of Evil. Others . . .
struggled through life alone, without help from either God or
the Devil. (153)

He also begins to envy the "success" of the Germans: "I could barely
imagine the prize earned by the person who managed to inculcate in all
blond, blue-eyed people a long-lasting hatred of dark ones" (153).

How routine the poetically "just" transformation of oppressed into
oppressor has become is apparent, as I have pointed out, in films and
novels. A case in point is V. B. Armamento's *Four Days in Hell*, in which
a man framed for murder and tortured into confession escapes to torture
the true murderer into confession. This novel, however, seems not to
satisfy a sense of revenge but to write against itself: it repeatedly takes
the position that truth elicited under torture is not truth, that torture is
immoral and unjustifiable, yet closes with the suggestion that torture is
acceptable when the torturer is correct in his suspicion that the tortured
man is lying.

Of all the novels treating torture that I am discussing, perhaps the
most consciously aware of the circular structure of torture and the binary
nature of the torturer-tortured pair is *Waiting for the Barbarians*. This
novel offers no moment of reciprocated torture; we do not see the
"barbarians" with power, so we cannot easily conclude that they would use it as their oppressors do. In fact, the novel ends with the town "waiting for the barbarians," drawing attention to the very question of how the victims would use the power to hurt (Of course, this is a literal reading of the novel's title and puts aside the obvious irony in the question of who the "barbarians" are). The novel focuses, rather, on one individual who is at once complicit with torturers and sympathetic to victims, a plausible stand-in for almost any liberal democratic society.

The cycle of conversion in Waiting for the Barbarians works in reverse to the cyclical structures of other novels I have been discussing. Instead of a receiver of pain becoming an inflicter of pain, his Magistrate is, by virtue of his complicity with the regime, part of the oppressing force become, because of his consort ing with the "barbarians," part of the oppressed. The novel can be divided into halves; the woman's imprisonment and torture and the Magistrate's imprisonment and torture are the key features of each. The novel uses its two-part structure to present two perspectives on one relationship. The Magistrate concludes:

For I was not, as I liked to think, the indulgent pleasure-loving opposite of the cold rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he the truth that
Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less. (135)

The sanitary distance at which the Magistrate has held himself from torture, at least in his mind, is therefore presented as a human construct in the novel’s final pages, rather than a "real" boundary. Earlier he views himself in the world of the "pure," pointing a fascinated finger at "them" who torture:

Looking at him [Colonel Joll] I wonder how he felt the very first time: did he, invited as an apprentice to twist the pincers or turn the screw or whatever it is they do, shudder even a little to know that at that instant he was trespassing into the forbidden? I find myself wondering too whether he has a private ritual of purification, carried out behind closed doors, to enable him to return and break bread with other men. Does he wash his hands very carefully, perhaps, or change all his clothes; or has the Bureau created new men who can pass without disquiet between the unclean and the clean? (12)

Although the Magistrate demonstrates his sense of the "ritual" nature of the torture cycle, at this point early in the novel he separates himself
completely from the Colonel. Yet by the novel’s close he sees himself and the Colonel as two sides of the same order.

The Magistrate seems to learn, in the end, that Empire is more the enemy than the "enemy" is and that he is as much the enemy as Empire. He resolves to use this wisdom for change, but his project is undefined when the novel closes, and his power (personal and political) is doubtful. Power for the Magistrate has always been associated with sex. His sexual "drive" is high during his thirty-year tenure as Magistrate, but it plummets whenever he is with the "barbarian" woman because he has no power over her, no power to reach her and make her respond as her torturers have done. When the Civil Guard withdraws and the Magistrate once again "leads" the town, he notes that "now at this most inappropriate of times my sex begins to reassert itself" (149). The Magistrate points out himself that "it has nothing to do with desire" (149). He tries anti-aphrodisiacal remedies but admits, "I do all this half-heartedly, aware that I am misinterpreting the signs" (149). The signs, of course, point to the connections among power, dominance, torture and the "male."

*Prisoner Without a Name* offers a partial method of breaking the torture cycle or, at the least, not engaging in the reciprocal relationship.
have been describing it. In it, Timmerman uses the mechanism of psychological withdrawal "to avoid lapsing into that other mechanism of tortured solitary prisoners which leads them to establish a bond with their jailer or torturer" (37). Still, he is aware of the attraction in the relationship:

Both parties seem to feel some need of the other: for the torturer, it is a sense of omnipotence, without which he’d find it hard perhaps to exercise his profession—the torturer needs to be needed by the tortured; whereas the man who’s tortured finds in his torturer a human voice, a dialogue for his situation, some partial exercise of his human condition. (37-38)

His advice to those who will suffer torture in the future is to cultivate an attitude of complete passivity; such passivity, he believes, saved his energy and left him with all his strength to withstand torture sessions.

Yet apart from offering *Prisoner Without a Name* as "testimony" (viii), Timmerman provides no wide look at the structure of torture; indeed, he records surprise at others’ preoccupation with it. "Torture," he writes, "occupies a very limited place in the life of the tortured person, and when he’s newly freed and able to speak openly . . . he’s
astonished at the importance mankind attaches to the subject" (39). Yet Timmerman, Coetzee, Orwell, Atwood, Koestler, Ebersohn, Armamento and Argueta have agreed that torture is repugnant, and their novels seem to write against it. But how do these works treat the paradox Koestler’s Rubashov expresses:

How can one change the world if one identifies oneself with everybody?

How else can one change it? (25)

To read the tortures in these novels as a system is not difficult. In fact, an analysis of the structures of novelistic presentations of torture demonstrates how fixed the structure is across novels. In each novel there are direct or indirect signs pointing to torture as a hermetic, closed system like that of Procrustes. Timmerman points out how true this is of torture in the "real" world also. "Any totalitarian interrogator . . . has a definite conception of the world he inhabits and of reality" writes Timmerman, "[a]nd any fact that fails to conform to this conception is suitably distorted in order to fit into the scheme" (72). Novels of torture conform, in fact, to the requirements of the classical tragic genre (which itself might be considered hermetic): exposition, complication, crisis, climax, catastrophe.
Comments on the structure of torture as a system contribute to our understanding of torture in the world (see Melamed et al 49), but it seems to me that a more encompassing theory, one which considers art, is needed in order to understand the role of the text as perpetuator of the system's meaning. Scarry approaches this task when she notes that a prisoner’s pain is "read as power" (45), that the physical pain "is so incontestably real that it seems to confer its quality of 'incontestable reality' on that power that has brought it into being" (27). "Read as" and "seems to confer" are important expressions here. In order to understand how readers read torture in fiction, I will next consider the plot structures of the five novels under discussion and, in Chapter Four, narrative voice and focalisation.

In Nineteen Eighty-Four, Winston is the character whose fortunes we follow, his the viewpoint from which we survey events. From the moment we meet him in the novel’s second sentence, he is vulnerable, oppressed, a victim: "Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions" (7). "Nuzzled" is, of course, both an affectionate and an animal action. He is also endowed with a wound, "a varicose ulcer above his right ankle" (7). The reader’s sympathy for Winston is
already being constructed. The commonplace "Smith" denotes not only Winston’s class but his status as "every(English)man;" if the tender connotations of "nuzzled" and "breast" fail to arouse sympathy for the hero, the narrator’s bias at least is clear as he introduces the symbolic antagonist, the "vile" wind. When we meet Winston’s tangible antagonist, physical features once again act simply as signs of moral worth; O’Brien is "a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face" (14).

Even in Koestler, where Rubashov and Ivanov share more similarities than they have differences, Gletkin is introduced as Rubashov’s "antagonist." This creates meaning in a more polar, oppositional, form than might have been the case if Rubashov and Ivanov had remained the novel’s principal protagonist-antagonist pair. The presentation of Gletkin as an automaton, without a connection to readers, constructs in the reader a rejection of Gletkin’s frank love of power and his consequent belief in the imposition of order. After a long night’s work, Gletkin retains faultless posture and flawless uniform. He

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3 I use the male pronoun to designate the narrator not because both the author and the central character of the novel are male, but because focalisation is frequently close to Winston in the novel.
is the subject of a hero-myth that during the Civil War he withstood the burning of his shaven head rather than provide information to the enemy. This presentation of him as superhuman further constructs alienation in a reader, especially since the passage is placed after sympathy with his prisoner Rubashov is built.

Readers might choose between Ivanov's belief in the logical basis for the imposition of order, the greatest good for the greatest number, and Rubashov's questioning of whether an individual should ever be sacrificed for the good of the majority—the individual or the collective. They might if it were not that we do not meet Ivanov until a third of the way into the novel. By that point, sympathy for Rubashov has been established. The pages preceding Rubashov's first interrogation by Ivanov focus on his toothache. At one point he is "tired" and "dizzy." A few pages later he is "even worse," "shivering," his tooth aches, his throat itches, he has "desperate thirst" for a cigarette, memories "hurt" him. Further on he feels "frozen;" later still, night-time, he is "even worse." His tooth "throbs;" "he had the sensation that all the association centres of his brain were sore and inflamed." He is brought to the doctor after a temporary recovery.

'There it is!' said the doctor. 'The rest of the right eye-
tooth is broken off and has remained in the jaw.‘

Rubashov breathed deeply several times. The pain was throbbing from his jaw to his eye and right to the back of his head. He felt each pulsation of the blood singly, at regular intervals. The doctor had sat down again and spread out his newspaper. ‘If you like I can extract the root for you,’ he said and took a mouthful of bread and dripping. ‘We have, of course, no anaesthetics here. The operation takes anything from half an hour to an hour.’ (67)

The contrasts between the slow beating of Rubashov’s pain and the doctor’s nonchalance, sopping up fat as he delivers excruciating news, serve very clearly to direct sympathy to the suffering Rubashov.

The next pages describe Rubashov’s and Ivanov’s first hearing. Despite Ivanov’s "agreeably masculine voice" (68), "benevolence" (70), politeness, "amiable" (76) "nearly tender" (77) smile, even his "tormented look" (79), the text keeps the reader aware that Ivanov’s seeming patience and comfort come from physical security while Rubashov suffers tooth pain during the interview. Enough details have been provided regarding Rubashov’s discomfort that Ivanov’s comfort in the face of it appears unsavoury.
The Handmaid’s Tale also provides traditional signs to denote "evil." Offred regularly refers to the Party as "they," underscoring a lack of individuality in her oppressors. When she does discuss an individual of the "enemy," physical and verbal signs denote his moral worth. Her first clear indication of the revolution in Gilead occurs one day at a corner store. Instead of the usual woman, a young man carbuncular is behind the counter. His first word she considers "aggressive," his manner insolent, his complexion bad:

She sick? I said as I handed him my card.

Who? he said, aggressively I thought.

The woman who’s usually here, I said.

How would I know, he said . . . . I drummed my fingers on the counter, impatient for a cigarette, wondering if anyone had ever told him something could be done about those pimples on his neck. (164)

Here Atwood’s narrator shows herself to be as quickly judgmental as are her oppressors. The text presents a clear victim-oppressor model by focusing so meticulously on the man’s physical ugliness.

Waiting for the Barbarians, too, clearly indicates the perniciousness of the torturer, Colonel Joll, compared with the innocence of the woman
he has tortured. The Magistrate is, of course, a limited and unreliable narrator, but his way of seeing trains the reader to a large degree. Since the novel’s action focuses on him almost exclusively, readers have few opportunities to read Joll and the woman other than as the Magistrate reads them. The Colonel wears the dark opaque glasses associated with anonymous institutional power; he is faceless, non-human, non-acknowledging, another kind of puzzle for the Magistrate, until his men flee in withdrawal from the frontier border town they have occupied. At this point the Magistrate sees him without his glasses, individual, weak and vulnerable. The nameless woman, on the other hand, is almost blind but wears no sign; in contrast to the Colonel, able to see but hiding his eyes, she is unable to see but displays hers. The contrasts of covering/uncovering are signs the texts offer to train the reader’s perception of the moral worth of its characters.

Dichotomous presentations are not, of course, the only strategies novelists use to construct sympathy in their readers. In addition to language, imagery and characterisation which present a dichotomous world view, *Store Up the Anger* is structured to stress the moment (about an hour) of physical torture, to emphasise the victim’s deepest violation and most immediate pain. The novel begins minutes after
Bhengu has been given "the sandbag" treatment (methodical, prolonged beating on his head) by officer van Rooyen. The novel ends, after following a structure of temporal flashbacks and flashforwards, by taking the reader up to and through the torture. Rather than censor the torture, the narrative's delayed revelation of it stresses the process, building and heightening both expectation and dread.

Of course, the systems and their henchmen described in Coetzee, Atwood, Koestler and Orwell have been presented as nasty. The narratives I have been considering do not present this quality in the characters' dialogue and action alone. They point it up in a number of other ways, intensifying both negative and positive and separating them from one another. Imagining Argentina's narrator, for example, calls the government's cars "green beetles," "preying things" (20). Like the tropes which structure empathy, narrative structure not only mirrors the structure of torture but accepts it as a paradigm, fixed in the tension between revealing and condemning the practice of torture.
Chapter Four
Narrative Voice and Focalisation

In other words, the torturer’s violent intervention on the body of the victim could disclose the torturer as the origin of a "truth" whose authenticity, the rhetorical structure of interrogation would insist, lies in its independence from and initial inaccessibility to him.

--Elizabeth Hanson, "Torture and Truth in Renaissance England," 55.

The final strategies I will discuss that contribute to the building of reader sympathy are the construction of narrator, the one who relates, and the construction of focaliser, the one who perceives. As I pointed
out in the Introduction, the narrating agent constructs credibility and sympathy, important responses to novels which attempt to present an experience which, to most readers, is almost unbelievable, inexpressible. Following Bal’s model, narration might be homodiegetic, primary—in which the narrator is also a character in or mentioned in the story—or heterodiegetic, secondary—where the narrator is absent as a character in the story. Only two of the narratives of torture I examine are heterodiegetic; their narrators act as witnesses, confirmers of the victim character’s experience. They present their construction of the victim character as "objective" in that they, the narrators, do not participate in the painful physical experience at the centre of the text. Nineteen Eighty-Four and Store Up the Anger are heterodiegetic, and both construct focalisation to build reader sympathy.

Generally, however, fictional narratives of torture are presented in primary, homodiegetic, narration. The narrating voice belongs either to the tortured character (in the second half of Waiting For the Barbarians and in occasional sections of Store Up the Anger), or to a character who is emotionally attached to the tortured character (in One Day of Life, Imagining Argentina, and the first half of Waiting for the Barbarians). Sustained homodiegetic narration by the victim character him/herself is
rare in narratives of torture. Homodiegesis, in the novels I discuss, attempts to achieve a more direct transmission from the narrative level of characters and action to the reader. It therefore works more immediately to construct reader sympathy with certain characters. All of the novels I discuss employ it at least occasionally, in some cases in excerpts from the tortured character’s diary or in internally focalised homodiegetic narration.

Focalisation shifts more often than narrative voice does in the novels, structuring the victim character for the reader, presenting that character from the points of view of different perceiving consciousnesses but consistently associating her or him with body and emotion. While not all narratives are focalised (narrating and perceiving consciousness might be one and the same), all of the narratives I examine are. Whether focalisation is internal or external (giving us distinctions between sympathy and empathy), it is brought close to the victim character to construct reader sympathy for her/him. Focalisation is usually single in the narratives to maintain that sympathy. Along with tropes especially, focalisation contributes to the construction of symbolically gendered roles at the various levels of agency in the narratives. Focalisers are usually "male" while the victim is presented as "female" in terms of de Lauretis’s
reader roles; this presentation structures the narratives as symbolic stories of desire and consumption. The reader, as I have said, regardless of his/her gender, has available the choices to read as spectator, as powerful, "male," consumer, voyeur; or to read in sympathy with the victim as powerless, "female," consumed, animal.

This structuring of character can be seen, for example, in Nineteen Eighty-Four. Just six paragraphs into the novel, heterodiegetic externally focalised narration shifts from "he" to "you" to include Winston's internal impressions with the phrases "as he well knew" and "he thought with a sort of vague distaste" (8). In the second chapter, while the narration remains heterodiegetic, focalisation moves from external to internal, dropping the narrator's "he thought" comments, constructing the impression that the reader is inside Winston's consciousness: "He was alone. The past was dead, the future was unimaginable. What certainty had he that a single human creature now living was on his side?" (27). A translation into first-person dialogue--"I am alone. The past is dead, the future is unimaginable. What certainty have I that a single creature now living is on my side?"--changes only the verb tense and pronoun person in the passage.

At the moment of Winston's arrest at the close of Part Two of the
novel, focalisation becomes fully internal, nudging the reader to follow Winston in sympathy as he faces the truncheon-bearing men in black:

Winston was not trembling any longer. Even his eyes he barely moved. One thing alone mattered; to keep still, to keep still and not give them an excuse to hit you! . . . The feeling of nakedness, with one’s hands behind one’s head and one’s face and body all exposed, was almost unbearable. (190)

Primary narration uses "first-person" pronouns, but secondary narration cannot, unless a narrator speaks as narrator. The above passage moves from "his" to "you" to "one," ranging among the pronoun choices available to the narrator, to bring the reader as close to Winston’s experience as possible. Part Three of the novel can then open etically, with the pronoun "he," assuming our familiarity and sympathy, continuing with internal focalisation: "[h]e did not know where he was. Presumably he was in the Ministry of Love, but there was no way of making certain" (195).

The first three chapters of Part Three present Winston’s imprisonment and torture in the Ministry of Love. There the novel constructs the reader’s sympathy for Winston by using narrative and
tropical strategies to structure Winston as animal. Early on, descriptive details build our sympathy. Winston is completely trapped in a cell with no comfort, no possibility of escape and no privacy. His stomach is "aching" with a "gnawing" hunger; he is "yelled at" by the telescreen; the place is "noisy, evil-smelling" (195). He is moved to another cell, "filthily dirty," "crowded" with "dirty bodies" (196). The pain in his stomach continues. Finally a huge woman lands on him and vomits. He has time to anticipate the tortures he will undergo, "the smash of truncheons on his elbows and iron-shod boots on his shins," while he screams through broken teeth (197-98).

Throughout the first chapter of Part Three, horror is built in the reader as "Room 101" is mentioned nine times before Winston is taken there. Each mention is designed to build reader curiosity, constructing both sympathy and dread as the text reveals prisoners’ responses to the words. All of the reader’s senses are appealed to as Winston hears the whispered words and the begging, sees prisoners’ skin change colour, smells the stench and experiences the "evil taste" in his mouth (205). Caged and helpless, Winston is now presented as an animal, with "entrails" that contract at the sound of boots (200). Another prisoner is troped as a large "rodent" (202), later howling "like an animal" (205) as
he is dragged away. Winston, during his interrogation, writhes on the floor "as shameless as an animal" (207). Eventually he is reduced synecdochically to "a mouth that uttered, a hand that signed" (209), stinking, as O'Brien tells him, "like a goat" (234), seeing himself finally in a mirror as a "thing," a "creature" (233).

The interrogation parodies a stay in the hospital, the torturer O'Brien's goal clearly to purify the tortured character, Winston, to make him "sane" (214). O'Brien tells Winston "we do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them" (218), calling Winston "a flaw in the pattern. . . a stain that must be wiped out" (219). Focalisation remains with him or close to him, training the reader's gaze on him as a helpless victim, building reader sympathy for him as he is seen as, and sees himself as, a dirty animal, a metaphor all the more powerful for its contrast with the humanist Winston of Parts One and Two of the novel.

In One Day of Life, narration is homodiegetic, but the principal narrating character herself is not tortured. Rather, the diegesis constructs "confirmation" of, curiosity about and sympathy for the victim's experience by presenting the minute-to-minute pain of the narrator who is a relative of the many victims in the novel. The first section heading, "5:30 A.M.," functions as an etic heading with the
assumption of the reader’s knowledge of context, constructing the reader’s participation in and closeness to the action. The colloquial expressions, the contraction and the etic "I" of the first sentence of the novel set an informal tone, build the reader’s closeness to the narrating character: "Not a God-given day goes by when I’m not up by five" (3). Focalisation is consistently single and internal in Lupe’s (readers know her by her familiar name, rarely reading the more formal "Guadalupe") narrative sections, causing the reader’s sympathy with her and, through her, with the tortured characters she herself is sympathetic to: her son, son-in-law, and husband.

Very early in One Day of Life, the narrator’s simple pleasures are presented; her intense focus on time, on individual seconds, raises reader curiosity regarding why she is so concerned with present moments. The first mention of her husband names the man, "José," not the relationship, again assuming the reader’s closeness with her consciousness, the reader’s understanding. Lupe mentions "the dead" and "cemeteries" matter-of-factly: "The clarinero glows. They say it behaves like the dead because it spends so much time near cemeteries" (4). Her acceptance reinforces the reader’s curiosity about the prominence of cemeteries. When she mentions the torture and killing of
her son—"After what happened to my son Justino"—the relative pronoun "what" has no antecedent, leaving the verb "happened" without a subject. The fact that the antecedent is assumed keeps focalisation close to Lupe, at the same time increasing readers' sympathy. As the reader is drawn into sympathy and concern for Lupe, the text focuses on her gender, trains the reader to view her as a woman: "from behind the cupboard I looked at my breasts, which stuck out like the beaks of clarineros" (5). Our gaze is trained on and our sympathy is with Lupe as we watch the narrator watching herself as both female and associated with death; she compares her breasts to the beaks of the bird which, she has said, spends its time near cemeteries.

Lupe's diet is primarily vegetarian, partly because of her poverty; corn and beans are mentioned frequently as she proceeds with domestic duties. In fact, her priest advises her not to give her children milk or meat (21). She is not, then, constructed as a consumer of others, while the "Authorities" are. At almost its exact centre, the novel approaches, if not the dark chamber, at least the minds of the torturers in One Day of Life. This middle section of narration, the first of two to break the matricentric line of narrators—Guadalupe-Maria Pia-Adolfina—is striking in its focus on meat. (Later, Lupe tropes the authorities versus the people in
consumer-consumed terms: "The hawk that eats chicken comes back for more" [179]). Not surprisingly, the narrating guard also focuses on male potency and power. The torturers-in-training "eat meat every day" (91). They are treated like "kings" and "gods" (91). In terms showing the symbolic roles of torturer and victim, the guard calls torture being "fucked over" (93). Earlier a priest is sodomised with a stick, the language used by the guards again emphasising his feminisation as he is "fucked." The phrase "sons of bitches" is "one of the norms of discipline" (97) used by a trainer who is "here to make men out of [the torturers-in-training]" (98).

We read the Special Forces narrator’s section while, in plot time, members of the Special Forces wait at Lupe’s house. In separate sections of the novel, both Lupe’s and the guards’ stories are told, but narrative strategies cause reader sympathy to go to Lupe. While her narration is internally focalised homodiegetic narration, the guard’s is dialogue--externally focalised, half of a conversation. It is, in effect, a monologue, but he is speaking to another man. Focalisation keeps readers outside his mind while in all of the narratives by women, focalisation shifts to mix a character’s internal thoughts with the character-narrator’s relating of a scene. In addition, the guard’s section
of narration is enclosed by Lupe’s; she has fore- and afterword, effectively placing his discourse in brackets by framing it. This undercutting can be seen in a diagram of the narrative structure of the novel. The sections of the novel are as follows (italics are mine):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Character(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Lupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:45</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Maria Romelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Maria Pia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Adolfina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Authorities</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>Lupe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Romelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolfina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Them</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 a.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolfina Convereses in the Cathedral</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 NOON</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:10 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>[Lupe]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

146
Ten sections of narrative precede the authorities’ first section of primary narration and twelve sections follow their second, framing the authorities’ perspective by the narration of the narrating female relatives of tortured characters.

Although only men in the novel are tortured physically, the novel is focused by and through women. The psychological torture of their waiting and grief is a route to and a structuring concept for the physical torture of the men. At the same time, it has its own significance. "We women are going to get sick from so much anxiety. That’s the worst part of it," Lupe says, "the torture they put us through" (153-54). Of course the men are targeted because they have potential power, yet One Day of Life presents torture only as it is seen by the women in the novel.

Store Up the Anger brings the reader much closer to the tortured character himself than One Day of Life does. I will focus again on the opening of the novel because the text must first draw readers in before it can manipulate sympathy. The narration is heterodiegetic, constructing credibility and confirmation. Also, narration by a narrator who is not a character participating in the action in the novel holds the reader at such a distance from the tortured character Bhengu that he can be objectified. Sustained homodiegesis by a victim character seems to be particularly
The opening paragraph of Store Up the Anger reads,

Sam Bhengu knew that he was dying. Ever since the pain had stopped he had known it. But the reality was not upon him. They had killed him and now it was only a matter of waiting, but in his mind it was no more than a vague almost theoretical realisation. (7)

Consider that paragraph presented homodiegetically (in present tense):

I know that I am dying. Ever since the pain stopped I have known it. But the reality is not upon me. They have killed me and it is now only a matter of waiting, but in my mind it is no more than a vague theoretical realisation.

The obvious difference in the second version is that the hypothetical homodiegetic narrator would not be able to comment on the disparity between "reality" and "vague" realisations. Why the heterodiegetic narrator needs this separation becomes clear as the novel continues, revealing unexplained references to "the night's struggle," "the way he had seen [the policeman's] face a few hours before," and "what had happened" (7). These references might be frustratingly coy from a homodiegetic narrator, but in secondary narration they position the reader as voyeur, the narrative circling around an unreproducible experience.
Only at the novel's close are there brief homodiegetic passages during the torture itself, taking the reader as close as possible to the tortured character's experience.

We also see in this opening, of course, the construction of the reader's sympathy for Bhengu. Internal focalisation is established with the first verb of the novel.\(^1\) The reader is positioned almost completely inside Bhengu's mind. The fact of the character's knowledge that he is dying serves to construct sympathy in the reader from the first sentence, and the information that he has been in pain intensifies the reader's response to his suffering. The knowledge that he has been murdered is designed to increase reader sympathy, of course, the etic "they" assuming the opposition role. Three short paragraphs later, that response is reinforced as the information that he is shackled is given. Soon a growing list of questions (who has killed Bhengu, why is Officer Fourie not able to concentrate, what struggle has taken place, where is Bhengu), setting the reader up as voyeur, is added to and emphasised by Bhengu's own questions ("How long had it been, he wondered" [7]),

\(^1\) There are brief moments of focalisation with the most sympathetic junior security policeman and one instance of double internal focalisation (p. 216) stressing the bond between the torturer and the tortured character.
Indeed, focalisation is kept strictly with Bhengu as his sensory impressions, rather than the narrator's description, convey action: "Bhengu felt a playful slap against his naked thigh" (10), rather than "Brown playfully slapped . . . ." Yet gradually Bhengu fades as a subject as he "hear[s] his own voice" (35). Verbs conventionally nonreflexive are used reflexively as Bhengu is removed as the agent of his own actions: "He found himself looking" (36); "Bhengu felt his legs moving. He was walking" (38). Finally his fear attains agency:

Sam Bhengu watched the policemen coming . . . towards him. Bhengu's bladder contracted violently and . . . he felt the warm flood of urine between his thighs and over his testicles. . . . it was fear that squeezed the pee out of him. (61)

In general, actions are expressed actively before the torture is done to Bhengu while after the torture he is grammatically and physically passive; actions are received by him. The reader's sympathy increases progressively as Bhengu's victimisation is constructed.

Combined with narrative strategies in this passage are simile, metonymy and description, that underline Bhengu's pain, fear and
confusion. The sand bag looks like a child’s toy; the policeman “was the bag and the bag was the policeman” (8); Bhengu’s penis “retain[s] no interest in life” (8). The time of the narrative also indicates its intense focus on the scenes it portrays; in Genette’s terms, the time of reading equals three to six hours, the time of the plot in the diegesis is about three days, while the diegesis itself spans approximately thirty years. Using the slower reading time of six hours to produce a ratio, the relation between reading time and plot-in-diegesis time is 1:12; it takes a reader approximately half a minute to read of what the character in the plot-in-diegesis experiences in five "minutes." The focus on Bhengu’s experience is slow and painstaking.

*Store Up the Anger* also presents Bhengu as symbolically female, with nipples "like those of a woman" (11) and feeling himself emasculated with "not the slightest stirring in his genitals" in response to erotic fantasy (12). Eventually "his penis, limp and redundant, had disappeared between his legs so that only the little bush of pubic hair was visible beyond his sagging belly" (81). The novel also includes details about the officers’ interest in pornography to underscore their positions as voyeurs, consumers of images of powerlessness, developing over several paragraphs one particular image of a girl on "all fours" and
the torturing policeman’s fascination with it.

Of course the girl in the image is a trope, a way of reading the policemen who are so inscrutable. Focalisation in the novel not only structures and maintains the reader’s sympathy with Bhengu, it also precludes any understanding of the officers. Coetzee writes

How is the writer to represent the torturer? If he intends to avoid the cliches of spy fiction, to make the torturer neither a figure of satanic evil, nor an actor in a black comedy, nor a faceless functionary, nor a tragically divided man doing a job he does not believe in, what openings are left? ("Into the Dark Chamber" 364).

His response in Waiting for the Barbarians, and Ebersohn’s in Store Up the Anger, is to focus on the difficulty of representing torturers by focusing on the dark glasses the policemen wear. In Store Up the Anger, Engelbrecht’s glasses "hid[e] his eyes and everything behind them" (15).

Waiting for the Barbarians begins with the glasses as its opening image, introducing the problem of the representation of the torturer from the start of the novel.

I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind?
I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. (1)

Of course Coetzee's Magistrate, a trope here for the writer, has never seen anything like this torturer; the Magistrate is, like the novelist Coetzee writes of in "Into the Dark Chamber," standing "before a closed door," so he "creates, in place of the scene he is forbidden to see, a representation of that scene, and a story of the actors in it" (364). The problem of representing torture is the subject of Waiting for the Barbarians. Because of his shifting roles in the novel, the Magistrate, in his role as a tortured character, stands in for the writer. At the same time, as he tries to understand the tortured woman's experience, he, like Kafka's "traveller," is a trope for the reader. The novel painstakingly constructs our sympathy for him, holds us in his view of the victim characters.

To do so, this novel is homodiegetic, with consistently internal focalisation. The first-person present-tense etic opening of the novel draws reader sympathy to the narrator immediately. The reader is held within his consciousness from the first, while Colonel Joll speaks impersonally of "one," "everyone at home," and always in collective
terms, setting himself up as spokesperson of a group (1). Their first conversation is of braggery and hunting prowess. Joll stresses the size and number of animals he has killed, "mountains of carcases ... left to rot" (1). The Magistrate hunts also, yet he follows the more ecologically sound methods of the natives. The narrator brackets Joll's conventional expression of regret for the wasted animal lives "('Which was a pity')" (1), underscoring how incidental and unhurtful his regret is. The first subsection of the novel, under seven hundred words long, sets up the central opposition of the novel: the mysterious, boastful, impersonal and callous Joll contrasted with the seemingly more open, modest, personal and gentle Magistrate.

Yet the next subsection presents the first tortures in the novel and presents the Magistrate's complicity with the torturing regime and its representative, Joll. The Magistrate is irritated, he says, but he tries to repress the response (4), aware that torture is taking place: "At every moment ... as I go about my business I am aware of what might be happening" (5). As the Magistrate proceeds to justify his "blind eye," the novel's presentation of him offers the reading of him as frankly self-aware and honest as he examines his own moral struggle and declares his dislike of Joll. This can cause the reader to tend to excuse him, to
join in the complicity. After Joll's explanation of the formulaic structure of torture, the Magistrate reemphasises his complicity--"I drink with him, I eat with him" (5). By means of primary narration, single, internal focalisation and a seemingly honest and reliable narrator who is angry at the Colonel's actions but bound by law to serve him, the reader is set in sympathy with him. His is both the perceiving and the narrating consciousness in the novel.

To further lull the reader into sympathy, to help excuse what might be reader fascination with torture, the narrator of Waiting for the Barbarians makes verbs reflexive, distancing himself from the agency of his own actions. "I find myself wondering," he writes (13), suggesting that he is fascinated by the torture against his will. This grammatical strategy allows the reader to join in the fascination, excused because s/he is reassured by the use of the reflexive verb that the Magistrate, and the reader, is not truly interested in the torture. The Magistrate's frequent parenthetical observations on and judgments of his own behaviour serve also to both create reader trust in his self-awareness and inhibit the reader's judgments of his actions. Waiting for the Barbarians' skilful construction of the Magistrate as deserving of sympathy allows the "burden" (14) of torture in the novel to become not the suffering of
the victim characters but the Magistrate's problem of conscience. Even after the novel presents the Magistrate's assistance (the provision of "excellent maps"--12) in the campaign against the natives, the reader must be lulled by his apparent resistance, righteousness and indignation; he protests abundantly, strongly and frequently, but always in internally focalised homodiegetic narration.

Once a cautious sympathy is built by the text, the Magistrate is troped as female in relation to Joll, existing in a symbolic marriage: "I cannot pretend to be any better than a mother comforting a child between his father's spells of wrath" (7). The Magistrate continues to position himself in the female position in the trope of the family abuse triangle, maintaining his role as peacekeeper, identifying neither with the torturer nor with the tortured: "One should never disparage officers in front of men, fathers in front of children" (17). Joll here, and throughout the novel, is associated with all that is destructively powerful. As the soldiers set off on their campaign, Joll fills them with meat, the symbolic ingestion of "male" potency and power.

If hunting is, according to vegetarian ecofeminist theory, associated with colonialism, both are cycles of consumption. Once the Magistrate has decided to ignore the tortures Joll is committing ("I spend
my time in my old recreations" [38], his interest in hunting revives. Briefly we see him at one with Empire as he trains the sight of his gun on a waterbuck; "evidently it is not important to [the Magistrate] that the ram die" (39). Yet the man of conscience cannot continue the ritual, as we see in the novel’s second half. The Magistrate himself notes the allegorical reading of the waterbuck scene, that "events are not themselves but stand for other things" (40). Later he uses the metaphor again to describe his inability to discover ("penetrate") the woman’s secret: "I hunt back and forth seeking entry. Is this how her torturers felt hunting their secret?" (43). He sees the woman at times as a deformed clawless cat, a body (56). While the metaphor of the Magistrate as hunter might not in itself change the reader’s established sympathy with him, the image of the woman as a cat both injured ("deformed") and defenceless ("clawless") certainly constructs sympathy for her. The passage clearly presents the two possible roles the reader can adopt: to read as powerful hunter-spectator or to read in sympathy with the powerless victim who is the story’s focus.

The closest the reader is able to come to the woman’s experience is always through the Magistrate’s reading of her, speaking for her: "When she looks at me I am a blur, a voice, a smell, a centre of energy
that one day falls asleep washing her feet and the next feeds her bean stew and the next day--she doesn’t know" (29). Her female body represents for him the question of approaching torture. In his own ritual of purification he washes and massages her but feels "no desire to enter this stocky little body" (30), the dark chamber. Like her vision, the centre is a blur; only the periphery is visible. He cannot enter her experience, viewing her with his hunter’s eye as a victim, a "wild animal" (34).

At this point in the novel, the Magistrate is, as he says, alienated from his own desires (45, 56). But as he recognises his complicity, preparing to rebel, he reconnects with his desire and is, in the visit to the natives, able to make love with the native woman. As he seeks his freedom from the code of the Third Bureau, as he temporarily disrupts the system of metaphors he has lived by, metaphors linking desire, power and hunting, sex with the woman is no longer a trope for torture. Rather, sex is troped as writing here, presented as following a similar structure: "It seems appropriate that a man who does not know what to do with a woman in his bed should not know what to write" (58). Sex in Waiting for the Barbarians, always a structured metaphor, here exchanges its structured concept of torture for the structured concept of
writing as the Magistrate changes roles from a voyeur complicit with the
torturing regime to a victim of its torture².

Exactly halfway through the novel, page 78 of 156 pages in the
Ravan edition, the Magistrate is arrested and imprisoned: "my alliance
with Empire is over, I have set myself in opposition, the bond is broken, I
am a free man" (78). One of his freedoms as narrator and focaliser is to
structure himself now as tortured character, no longer camped outside
but now locked behind, the door of the dark chamber. The character he
structures is troped as both animal and female³; he turns into a "beast"
(80, 84) himself, seeing victims as animals and animals as victims:
"animals that are quick enough--antelope, hare, cat--escape; . . .
everything else is consumed" (82). He becomes reduced not only to a
beast but to meat for his torturer's consumption: "I am now no more
than a pile of blood, bone and meat" (85). He presents his victimisers as
"hunter[s]", hoping he is not "smelled by them" (95) or smoked out of
hiding (96). He escapes briefly, "scuttling from hole to hole like a

² Gallagher suggests that the recurring images of impotence (of pen and penis)
and of spaces, blankness and indecipherable text all "suggest the authorial impotence
of the novelist who attempts to write about torture" (Story of South Africa, 122).

³ Gallagher points out that "the magistrate’s narrative voice is . . . ‘feminine’ in
its focus on the language of the body and its inclusion of uncertainty and blankness.
mouse" (101), seeing the native victims "‘meek as lambs’" while they are viewed by the townspeople with their "ravening appetite" (105). The townspeople are presented as beasts while the Magistrate, beaten, whines, seeing himself as a dog in a corner (117).

Still, his deepest humiliation, it seems, occurs when he is troped as female as he suffers mock execution "in a woman’s clothes" (120). Here he becomes the object of the reader’s fascinated gaze. As he was drawn by the native woman’s scar, so the townspeople are drawn by his ordeal, "surreptitiously fascinated" (128). When, in the final chapter of the novel, the Magistrate is reinstated to power, having come full circle from complicitous victimising to suffering victimhood in one year, his sexual appetite for women returns. What has changed for him is his own power. With power, he hunts and indulges his sexual appetite; powerless, he identifies with the female and the animal and cannot "consume" either. Women and animals, then, are positioned in Waiting for the Barbarians as the objects of violent appetites, the novel’s focalisation, narration and narrative structure constructing the two possibilities of reading: in sympathy either with consuming torturers or with consumed victim characters.

In each of the novels of torture, victims’ experiences are narrated
in terms of patriarchal agonistic structures as the struggle between a valorised protagonist versus a stigmatised antagonist comes to a tragic end under a hated but omnipotent system. The victim cultivates an interior language of hate to defend against his/her violation. Each of the novels concludes in collapse with the tortured person subsumed (at least nominally) into the torturer's world view. Each employs metaphor, analogy, imagery, symbolism, diction, euphemism and varying narrative techniques to signify the state of oppression, to articulate a problem. In the tradition of the allegorical fable, these novels seek to alert readers to the politics informing torture; this alertedness might motivate readers in individual ways to work towards "solutions" to the problem of torture in the world. However, only one novel I have found both points to the folly of its own dichotomous thinking and attempts a "solution" within its own parameters. I discuss Imagining Argentina in the Conclusion as a route to the fusion Haraway calls for, not a way out of the structures which encourage torture but a small movement in that direction.
Conclusion

Another Story: Imagining Argentina

"'The disappeared are very insistent in my imagination, very clear, while the soldiers, the guards, the secret police all have one face, the same eyes, move to the beat of the same heart. I think that is because the dream of power, the narrowness of their souls, leaves no room for the person, the individual.'"

--Lawrence Thornton, Imagining Argentina, 92.

In Simians, Cyborgs, and Women Donna Haraway writes that in order to move beyond the trilogy of writing, power and technology, "old
partners in Western stories" (153), the feminist imagination should turn itself to "cyborg imagery" (181), to writing that embraces the junctions and disjunctions between two worlds hitherto constructed and seen as irretrievably separate: the natural and the technological. In Imagining Argentina, one of the central symbolic oppositions is that between machinery (the machines which administer electric shocks, the Ford Falcons\(^1\) which transport the regime’s victims, Carlos’ father’s Mannlicher) and the natural beauty of Argentina (jasmine, cyclamen, roses, carnations, bougainvillea, poplars, parakeets, parrots, goldfinches, people). Although it is pre-cyborgian rather than cyborgian writing--it follows the triple track of language, desire and the Oedipus that de Lauretis writes of in Alice Doesn’t--Imagining Argentina sets itself apart in a small way from the other novels of torture under discussion in its recognition (through its narrators Martín Benn and Carlos Rueda), sometimes grudging, of the fundamental humanness of all of the novel’s characters and in its movement towards the dissolution of binary categories: us/them, self/other, subject/object. It does, then, suggest a partial way out of the "maze of dualisms" Haraway writes against (181).

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\(^1\) Falcons, of course, are used as "sport" birds trained to hunt and kill other birds.
The cyclical aspect of the cycle of torture, as the novels I have examined present that cycle, is the self-perpetuating or possibly mutually-generating nature of the dynamic between the torturing character (as representative of a powerful state) and the tortured character (usually an individual belonging to the ruled body of people in the state). The novels have shown that the aspect of the relationship which makes it self-perpetuating is its consuming, power-glorying hate. The torturer views his victim as essentially different from himself; he views her/him as an animal and, according to his world view of domination, as fully deserving of suffering. The victim character eventually comes to accept the torture, possibly even feel deserving of it; often s/he returns the hate and comes to forget the torturer’s humanity, viewing him as animal-like. The "conflict" becomes a question of victory, of who will "win."

Novels of torture also present the attractiveness of power to the powerless. The Handmaid’s Tale and Nineteen Eighty-Four describe the psychological appeal of uninhibited hate; each major episode of ritual hate in these novels is, in fact, given a formal name, suggesting its nature as a ritualised human impulse and therefore accepting it, as Girard does, as a given fact of human and community relations. In The Handmaid’s Tale the ritual is the Particicution, offspring of the ritual
stoning. At the Particicution of a man convicted of rape, Offred feels herself caught up in the mob hatred:

A sigh goes up from us; despite myself I feel my hands clench. It is too much, this violation. . . . It's true, there is a bloodlust; I want to tear, gouge, rend.

We jostle forward, our heads turn from side to side, our nostrils flare, sniffing death, we look at one another, seeing the hatred. Shooting was too good. (262)

Offred says she feels hate rising "despite [her]self," pointing out the power of the mob to activate a universal revenge impulse stronger than individual will. Ebersohn's Bhengu feels this, too, hearing "his own voice join the wild shouting of the mob as if he had no control over it" (9).

_Nineteen Eighty-Four's_ name for the structured indulgence in this impulse is the Two Minutes Hate. Like Offred, Winston participates despite himself:

In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within
thirty seconds any pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one’s will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. (17)

Participation in the Two Minutes Hate is for Winston "horrible" and "hideous," yet "impossible to avoid," a presentation of hatred which offers the reading that it is an inevitable evil. In these novels the appeal of power-over is accepted as if it always exists beneath a veneer of civility. Offred says (although not in connection with the Participation ritual), "I now had power over her [Serena Joy] of a kind, although she didn’t know it. And I enjoyed that. Why pretend? I enjoyed it a lot" (151-52).

Another way in which novels of torture might participate in the continuation of torture is to keep focalisation always with the victim and never with the torturer. This singleness of perspective is a feature of all of the novels of torture I examine. Two brief examples from Store Up the Anger and Waiting for the Barbarians follow. The actions of Bhengu’s captors, generally as seen by Bhengu, Bhengu’s judgments of
his captors and the judgments of a narrator close to Bhengu’s consciousness are the only lenses through which the security police in the novel can be viewed; none of the novel is narrated from their points of view. The character judgments offered of officers Strydom and Fourie are, in effect, closed to interpretation. Strydom is presented as Bhengu sees him, "a victim of his life, covering the pain of consciousness with the unmitigating drive to destroy those he saw as enemies of himself and his people" (200). There is no textual evidence to mitigate the extreme adjective "unmitigating." Fourie, too, is described as forever unable to analyse his own emotions:

He had his own way to handle the difficulties of human awareness. He had learnt to remove himself from them . . . Whatever else he did all his life never again would he be able to examine his own thoughts and feelings (200).

Fourie is presented here through Bhengu’s perception of him, another straightforward extreme assessment which might recognise the power of torture to obliterate the torturer’s self-knowledge and emotional awareness and which at the same time sees no hope for his recovery, nothing to temper "all his life" and "never again."

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, too, the torturer’s thoughts generally
are presented through the Magistrate's filter of moral judgment:

My torturers were not interested in degrees of pain. They were interested only in demonstrating to me what it meant to live in a body . . . . They did not come to force the story out of me of what I had said to the barbarians and what the barbarians had said to me . . . . They came to my cell to show me the meaning of humanity, and in the space of an hour they showed me a great deal. (115)

The Magistrate, not his torturers, speaks here of their motivations and intentions. They are all but silent in the novel, speaking only when interrogating or torturing.

Each of the novels, through its allegorical construction, sets up reader expectations of the punishment of "evil" and the vindication of "good." Imagining Argentina follows a similar structure of vulture-like circling around the inexpressible experience of its tortured characters. The narrative is homodiegetic, but again the narrator is not himself tortured. The title of the novel sets up the problem of representation and suggests a theory of imagination. Thornton, an American writer, is himself imagining a country not his own, as Carlos imagines an experience not his own.
Although the delayed subject of the first sentence of the novel is "Carlos[’]... gift," the opening clause of the sentence begins to construct both reader sympathy for the "disappeareds" and the male/female consumer/consumed oppositions in the novel:

Even now, six years after the generals loosened their hold on Argentina, after their manicured hands were pried away from the delicate white throats of the disappeareds and the doors of certain buildings were closed and locked, even now, Carlos Rueda’s gift retains its mystery. (13)

The victims are presented here as vulnerable, "delicate white throats" suggesting femininity and animalness; the generals are troped as huge strangling forces; the country itself is seen later as female, as a "sophisticated dowager" (13). In this sentence, the generals are presented as subjects, the disappeareds as objects. The anaphora in the opening sentence focuses our attention on time, inviting curiosity about the nature of Carlos’ gift.

Focalisation shifts frequently in Imagining Argentina; events and characters are presented from the perspectives of a variety of narrators and are focalised internally by a number of characters. Narrative voice ranges from that of Martín Benn in limited narration to a more omniscient...
narrator to Carlos to various of the victim characters in dialogue, especially Cecilia. Focalisation shifts and is occasionally internal, but is always from a perspective emotionally close to the tortured characters. Throughout the opening chapter, the narrator works to build our sympathy for his "side," setting himself up as witness. Claiming veracity in order to convince the reader of his honesty, he presents himself as a common, fallible, everyday person, a journalist who "lacked the courage to openly confront the regime" (17). Knowledge of his occupation, of course, constructs his credibility for the reader; this in turn creates the reader’s reliance on him for the facts: "I was a man who respected facts enough to make them his business" (17), he claims, while he underscores his truthfulness by suggesting that he is an unwilling witness, "forced to think about the way ‘reality’ is parsed and construed" (17). He is cynical, he says, setting himself up as unlikely to accept romance and idealism (which Imagining Argentina offers).

The central victim of the novel, of course, is Cecilia, representative victim in "Argentina, the spiritual home of machismo, [where] the only substantial resistance came from women" (20). The third chapter of the novel details Cecilia’s disappearance--or rather, presents eye-witness accounts of it, all of which keep the reader distanced from her experience.
at first, to heighten curiosity and apprehension. Focalisation is kept both close to and away from her and the other victims in the novel. As a psychic, Carlos is said to feel with the victims. Yet his vantage point is as other, observer. In one scene, the first time "it" happens, "Carlos saw pure terror as Raimundo listened to the footsteps approaching his cell" (28). Carlos, too, is kept out of the experience; he is physically safe, physically elsewhere. The connection he has to the victim whose story he relates is possible only by the agency of one who loves the victim. Then, occasionally, his focalisation becomes internal: "Victor knew . . . he was frightened, his thoughts arched back to . . . he . . . could not imagine" (44). During a central scene in the novel, the rape of Cecilia, focalisation is again internal to construct reader sympathy for Cecilia (48). Again, Cecilia is presented as animal, viewed as "subhuman" by the soldiers who rape her: "'You are not even an animal'" (156). In another scene of symbolic emasculation a male victim is told "he would never be with a woman again"--59). Yet what have the novels constructed in constructing reader empathy with victims, in following the same narrative structure of the story of torture?

*Imagining Argentina* offers an allegory of the power of language to affect reality. Carlos' power in the novel is the power of the visionary-
magician. The premise of the novel is that he not only sees what is happening to the disappeareds but can, by telling a story, alter it. The political stance against the utter destructiveness of torture is clear in Imagining Argentina, its vision of hope embodied in a Christian paradigm. Silvio is tortured and killed, but Carlos tells those who gather in his garden that before Silvio dies he comes to "‘a realization I [Carlos] would never have thought possible, seeing me and Cecilia and Teresa and Esme as people he loves, and through us he will see all of you.’" Carlos says that Silvio’s body "‘will float far out to sea, but his spirit will be at rest in ways none of us who knew him would have supposed’" (142). The idea that a victim’s death is not a complete loss builds reader trust in a vision of hope.

Imagining Argentina finds in imagination a bridge between the worlds kept separate in the other novels. Through imagination, Carlos enters the dark chamber and the torturer’s mind. The first sentence of the novel shows the story’s (and the sentence’s) real subject to be not torture but imagination, Carlos’ "gift":

Even now, six years after the generals loosened their hold on Argentina, after their manicured hands were pried away from the delicate white throats of the disappeareds and the
doors of certain buildings were closed and locked, even now

Carlos Rueda’s gift retains its mystery. (13)

Although the first three clauses of the sentence certainly build reader interest in the terror they suggest, the anaphoric "afters" and "even nows" lead towards the final and independent clause of the sentence, "Carlos Rueda’s gift retains its mystery." As the novel begins, the torture is over, but imagination remains. Early in the novel, the narrator focuses on the generals’ boundaried thinking: "In 1976 the generals drew a line around Kilometro Cero. ‘Step over it and we will kill you,’ they said" (20) while he indicates his own awe at Carlos’ "ability to think beyond boundaries" (18). The first time that Carlos imagines the fate of the disappeared father of one of his students, he is said to feel that he has "crossed a border" (30). One boundary, then, that the novel crosses in its magic realism is the division between "reality" and "story," "fact" and "imagination." In its glimpses of hope, it is an attempt to rewrite the story of torture, reclaim language and narrative structures and point to the possibility that metaphor can merge binary opposites to surmount metaphor’s occasional impotence at constructing reader understanding of the pain of the structure and story of torture.

One pair of opposites the novel temporarily disrupts is the fixed
protagonist/antagonist pair. After Thornton's hero Carlos visits the "villain" General Guzman, the narrator describes Guzman's face as "harsh, practiced, unforgiving, but in the end a human face, flawed by singleness of mind, zealotry, conviction" (108, my emphasis). Later, in his rage at the disappearance of his daughter, Carlos will set out to murder the general, but he is unable to sustain the temporary complete separation he imagines between himself and Guzman.

Yet the novel's botanical and technological symbols are not fused. According to the novel's scheme of symbolism, once the white carnation survives and reigns, the story is over. As long as Carlos' imagination is filled with "the green Falcon emerging from the carnation" (34), the natural and the technological collide and there is a story. The process (disappearances, torture, murders) is presented as painful and the outcome (peace, stability, freedom) is presented as desirable, yet once the white carnation fills the sky, the novel ends, with "a white carnation floating like a benediction in the clear Argentinian sky" (214). Cecilia's last words, "Nunca más!" ("Never more!"), end the conflict which has sustained the novel.

The movement from conflict to resolution within the dualisms in the novel is also evident in its use of tropes. Imagining Argentina

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presents several scenes of torture, initially expressed by means of tropes that widen the gap between protagonist and antagonist. However, the tropes evolve by the close of the novel into ones which tend to merge the gap by stressing the likeness and not the difference between the "good" and "evil" characters. Early synecdochic presentations (a spy as "a floating eyeball, a disembodied ear"[98]) give way to holistic presentation (a general as a father), opening up a space of possibility, an exit from the cycle of torture in the novel, not "cyborg imagery" but bridges between the members of dualistic pairs.

The opening sentence of Imagining Argentina makes a very clear judgment about who is "good" in the novel, who "evil" in its opening clauses ("Even now, six years after the generals loosened their hold on Argentina, after their manicured hands were pried away from the delicate white throats of the disappeareds...`). The generals are presented as an unnaturally large force in comparison with the vulnerable disappeareds. We see the generals metaphorically as equal in size to the country Argentina in the second phrase of the sentence. Another opposition the narrator suggests, in the second sentence, is that between machismo and spiritualism, or to use other terms, the patriarchal "old" way and the feminist "new" way. The novel refers frequently to
Argentina’s historical patriarchs at the same time that it describes the country’s rebirth as feminine, not just as symbolically female object. The process of imagining Argentina becomes a process of revealing spirituality under domination. After the introductory paragraph, the first word is the imperative "Imagine." The sentence it begins describes flowers, language and imagination, the central symbolic tools in the people’s struggle with the regime.

Having set up the disappeareds/generals opposition, the narrator uses conventional strategies to proclaim his truthful and unbiased nature. He presents himself as a Boswell, wanting to confront the regime by telling "Carlos’ story . . . before it is distorted by opportunists from all over" (17). He writes that "Carlos confided in me from the very first," and underlines the reasonableness of this trust: he calls himself "a man who respected facts enough to make them his profession" (he is a retired journalist [17]). These pronouncements of the narrator’s status as a reasonable, ordinary man, a plausible stand-in for the reader, construct a reader’s acceptance of the pronouncements Martín Benn makes about the generals:

I was simply imaginatively unprepared to accept our generals’ need to squeeze all opposition out of the country,
to purify, to wring themselves dry in an orgasmic rush of violence they hoped would leave them sated and lying beside a prostrate Argentina they had fucked to death: the soldier’s dream. (19)

The vehemence of Martín’s evaluation of the generals seems sensible in the context of our having already accepted the narrator’s truthful nature. At the same time, his violent sexual imagery makes obvious the gendering of the violent dominators/violently dominated relation. Both the city of Buenos Aires and the country of Argentina are troped as female (13, 17), of course, while the generals, soldiers, spies and guards are male.

These pronouncements of the narrator’s trustworthiness gain the reader’s trust in Martín and promote mistrust of the generals, allowing Martín to proceed with clear-cut boundaries between moral poles in the novel; Carlos is the "hero," General Guzman the "villain." Carlos is presented in heroic terms as different from "us" when he has a vision and sets out to search for Cecilia: "Carlos was not like us . . . . the condition of his mind was necessarily different from ours" (71). Those in power, on the other hand, are amalgamated into one man "with a killer’s eyes" (102).
The tropes of the novel’s first half also present dichotomies. The antagonist is "like the evil figure in a puppet show" (69), his cars "like pale green vultures, peregrine hawks, meat eaters" (84). The Falcons move "as deliberately as green beetles . . . on hot summer nights in Mexico;" they are "preying things" (20). Carlos calls the spy who infiltrates the mothers an "animal" (101), and Guzman tropes the disappeareds as animals also: "‘Even animals have mothers, Rueda’" (107).

Dualism and domination are reinforced page by page in the first part of *Imagining Argentina*. Those in sympathy with the disappeareds and the disappeareds themselves are given the authority of being "real" while the generals and their hirelings are presented as a kind of a mirage which Carlos claims must be recognised as such before it will disappear. The regime, on the other hand, attempts to "‘eliminate reality’" (64). The characters, then, are engaged in a battle for reality status. They are, in Haraway’s terms, "contesting for a voice" (70). While Martín describes his amazement at the dissolution of "empirical reality," he at the same time foresees a change in the totalising logos that has held Argentinians in the novel: "sacred facts . . . crumble . . . into dust" (17). In the novel, of course, the generals’ trappings of power are physically
tangible while the disappeareds and their loved ones have only a dream.

Yet Carlos and his people use language to change his listeners’ and influence the text’s reader’s perceptions of where power lies, what is powerful. Carlos says that "‘there are two Argentinas, . . . the regime’s travesty of it, and the one we have in our hearts’" (65). He advises a man marching in the Plaza de Mayo (who turns out to be a spy) that "‘the mind of the Casa Rosada [the government buildings] is no more alive, no more real, than you allow it to be. We are what is real, you and I, the mothers’” (83). Both "sides" euphemise: the generals call their actions under military rule the "proceso," the process. Some of the people call it "la guerra sucia," the dirty war (20). Emphasising the people’s focus on language, the novel presents Hirsch, the literature professor, as seeming to take comfort from assessing the fabricated nature of his torturers’ accusations, producing under torture the names of only such "co-conspirators" as Dostoevsky, Koestler and Camus: "‘Each had said, in one way or another, that the electricity and needle and cigarette are the most pathetic fragments of incoherent fantasy’” (160). Hirsch sustains this blending of fiction and reality even under vicious and prolonged torture, a symbol of Carlos’ and the novel’s theory of the creative power of imagination versus the destructive power of
torture.

In *Imagining Argentina*'s battle for legitimacy, the protagonist(s) and antagonist(s) use "weapons." For the generals, these are the instruments of their power (their cars, their offices, their guards' torture implements, for examples). The disappeareds' and their loved ones' weapons are their words. Ill with flu and under the influence of a Borges story, Martín envisions

Carlos going through a door, his only weapon language that welled up from deep within, and then outside, in a dark, murky terrain, the sound of a confrontation, of an unseen knife clashing against Carlos' words. (111)

After Cecilia has been tortured, her ultimate aim is to write her story as intensely as the regime inscribes its: "She wanted one day to present it all with a passion equaling that of the men who imprisoned her. Only that would be sufficient" (178).

It is the non-material nature of language which makes it powerful in this struggle. Perhaps to emphasise this, the story Cecilia "writes" of her own torture is prepared in her imagination since she has no access to paper and pencil. Cecilia writes an editorial demanding release of a group of disappeared students; the same afternoon she disappears. "I like to
think that when it happened her words were heavy on the air," Martín writes, "her words were sounding in the minds of thousands of Argentines, . . . they could not also abduct her words, smash what she had said" (21). Carlos, also, realises "my stories are more dangerous to him [Guzman] than the Mannlicher, my words more explosive than bombs planted in the Casa Rosada’’ (136). Here Carlos is bringing the testimony of the body into the field of language so that the battlefield will be level: words against words.

The tropes Imagining Argentina uses to express the power of language are similar, in fact, to those it uses to express the pain of torture: when he talks of ideas for children’s plays, Carlos’

whole body became animated and his language took off,

reminding [Martín] of those novelty lamps whose clear plastic rods carry light from the base to the tips where it explodes like a shower of stars. (18)

Earlier in Imagining Argentina a victim’s pain is presented as exploding in a shower of light. In its imagery here, the novel gives equal weight to the novel’s opposing forces: physical force/verbal acumen; destruction/creation; power-over/power-to.

When Carlos realises the power of language, the power of
imagination, the novel begins a shift from dichotomising to recognising likeness, from "patriarchal" to "feminist" presentation. Language, rather than bodies, takes on primary importance. An infiltrator is discovered at one of Carlos’ meetings, causing the people to become tense, but Carlos directs that the man be allowed to leave, for "harming him will change nothing. It is what he thinks, what the men he believes in think, that we must deal with here’" (97). Carlos has recognised by this point, roughly the centre of the novel, that us-them thinking only perpetuates us-them thinking. Carlos’ play, The Names, features a bird figure meant to represent the simple dichotomous thinking of the generals; it is "a winged apparition, half-black, half-white" (122). Around it are children in a variety of colours.

Carlos’ theory of imagination evolves through the novel, eventually abandoning its adversarial quality. At the beginning, he envisions his people’s struggle against the Generals to be a battle of imaginations: "'The real war is between our imagination and theirs, what we can see and what they are blinded to'" (98). "'We have to believe in the power of imagination,'" he says, "'because it is all we have, and ours is stronger than theirs'" (65). He characterises the imagination of the regime as distorted, "'where everything exists in black and white,'" considering this
to be the flaw which will bring it down.

For a time it appears that Carlos will follow the cycle of conversion and become like his enemies. After his daughter is abducted, he looks in a mirror to see his face "distorted by rage" (131). He at first welcomes the distortion, feeds on the image of rage, "for he knew it was necessary to look like that, that the memory of this face later in the day would help him act before he could become reasonable again, civilized" (131). He intends, at this point, to kill Guzman. In this "distorted" frame of mind, he berates himself for having believed in the generals' "essential humanity" (131). He falls, according to the narrator, under the shadow of the darkness of the generals' power. He sees the generals as "insane," "with no reason," with "only the desire to annihilate" (131).

However, at the "turning point" of the novel, Carlos cannot return the violence and objectification which have been inflicted on him:

Just as Guzman got out [of his car], the front door of his house opened and a girl of about fifteen appeared and started across the lawn toward her father, who was framed in the sights of Carlos’ Mannlicher. Guzman blurred, the gun seemed to waver an instant in Carlos’ hands, then Guzman was in focus again and Carlos had to look up from
the sight. Without the magnification Guzman was any father tired at the end of the day and happy to listen to what his daughter had to say. Carlos felt disgusted, appalled by his sentimentality. He bent to the sight again just as the girl approached her father, whose skull was now centered in the crosshairs. Guzman could not have been a better target, but Carlos knew he would not stand still for long, that in an instant he was going to move toward the girl. And at that critical moment Carlos could do no more than look. (132-33)

The reader’s gaze is structured here; Guzman is presented through Carlos’ eyes. The mention of the gun’s "sights," of blurring, of focus and magnification all remind one of cinema, remind us that we are viewers. We can, like Carlos, do no more than look. (To sustain this reminder, the narrator refers more than once to movies--see, for example, pages 19, 28, 141.) In the passage above, Carlos fuses Guzman and himself metaphorically into one in his imagination and this act of metaphorical identification prevents him from acting as Guzman does, thinking only literally, only in terms of an I-other separation. Carlos steps out of the cycle of "magnification" of the other’s separation from oneself.
Afterwards, once his path has turned, he feels ashamed of his "weakness" in going as far as he does towards revenge, "as if he had betrayed some deep mystery that was sanctified by his feeling for his wife and daughter" (133). While that mystery certainly seems to recall Biblical injunctions, it might also represent a wider philosophy, a feminist worldview, a philosophy based on cooperation rather than competition, on trying to identify oneself with, rather than in opposition to, others. Imagining Argentina, distinct from other novels of torture, sets out to teach that only by learning the other's language can one hope to win against the oppressor--or by teaching him one's own language. Paradoxically, only by metaphor, thought of as a step removed from literalism here, can two subjects in opposition understand one another. Only by imaginative identification the one with the other does this understanding occur. The novel does not advocate a resigned passive resistance but valorises the role language and metaphor can play in recovery.

Carlos tells of an episode which occurred while he was boar hunting: "he imagined his eye and the boar's meeting in the steel chamber, two eyes feeding images into brains totally alien to each other" (136). The scene is strikingly similar to that of the Magistrate
waterbuck-hunting in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The same paralysis as
overtook the Magistrate when he saw the image of the waterbuck
through the crosshairs of his gun overcame Carlos when he aimed to
shoot the boar. Because of his imagined identification with the boar,
Carlos chose not to kill it. The same realisation and paralysis overcame
him as he views Guzman in the gun’s sight. He sees Guzman as a
father, like himself, about to embrace his teenaged daughter, as Carlos
has embraced his own adolescent daughter. Martín, in fact, comments
on the power of Carlos’ imagination early in the novel as the power of
metaphoricity: "Carlos’ intellectual life is wholly metaphorical . . . [he
has the] ability to think beyond boundaries, which, of course, led to
things that ought not to have happened" (18).

This power stands opposite the dominating power which defines
patriarchy. Carlos points out that under the General’s world view the self
is sacrificed for the larger institution, remarking that

‘General Guzman comes from a long line of soldiers who
have served Argentina, and in that legacy he sees something
hallowed and more important than his life. Asked where his
identity lies, he would tell us that it is in his sacred duty.’

(90)
Carlos goes on to point out that Guzman likely views as feminine those who oppose his kind of power. Carlos considers Guzman to be devoted to "that dream which he feels more than ever was defiled by the faint of heart, the women in man’s spirit" (91). At the close of the novel, also, he expresses the theory that the male will to power becomes destructive, the power of Thanatos, out of envy of the female power to birth:

"When they think about it [the period of their power] they feel swollen, pregnant with death’" (202).

The novels of torture I considered in earlier chapters do possess some aspects that work to dissolve patterns of oppositions although in general the novels serve to preserve dualisms. Imagining Argentina begins with oppressors as bird-catchers or preying birds (falcons, vultures) and victims as tropical or song birds, with the regime’s men blended into one huge and ugly force attacking victims who are given individuality in their names and stories. But the novel does not wholly sustain these metaphors². Its action and tropes evolve to merge the "good" and "evil" characters, not for one to subsume the other, but for a partial breakdown of the negative force.

² The Painted Bird proceeds with such dualistic tropes to the end.
Some other novels of torture possess aspects which also offer "solutions", but these moments are almost always undercut. Nineteen Eighty-Four’s Winston seems to have a mind which tends not to dichotomise. We see this in his first meeting with Julia:

A curious emotion stirred in Winston’s heart. In front of him was an enemy who was trying to kill him--in front of him, also, was a human creature, in pain and perhaps with a broken bone. Already he had instinctively started forward to help her. In the moment he had seen her fall on the bandaged arm, it had been as though he felt the pain in his own body. (95)

However, O’Brien achieves the reversal of this selflessness at the "‘Do it to Julia!’" moment of the novel, when Winston begs that his lover’s head rather than his own be submitted to rats.

Darkness at Noon presents a similar kind of connective thinking in Rubashov although it undermines it by having Rubashov consider it "fatal:"

He tried to hold on to the hatred he had for a few minutes felt for the officer with the scar; he thought it might stiffen him for the coming struggle. Instead, he fell once more 188
under the familiar and fatal constraint to put himself in the position of his opponent, and to see the scene through the other's eyes. (24)

Waiting for the Barbarians also has moments of connective thinking. The Magistrate says of his torturer that "I find it hard to hate him in return" (Coetzee 84). By the end of Waiting for the Barbarians, the Magistrate is ready to turn a blind eye to the cruelties of imperial rule, but he decides against doing so:

I toyed more than once with the idea of resigning my post, retiring from public life, buying a small market garden. But then, I thought, someone else will be appointed to bear the shame of office, and nothing will have changed. (139)

However one reads the Magistrate, his choice for change does seem to imply some hope for a way out of the Bureau's system.

Store Up the Anger, on the other hand, concludes with the message that the cycle of political violence it has described will continue. Lategan is not the last interrogator; Bhengu conjectures that Colonel Lategan's "heir" will be Captain Strydom. And Bhengu is not the last prisoner; Lategan lets him know that Bhengu's friend Jele has been brought in and is "next." Embedded in the novel's narrative structure,
too, is the sign of a neverending cycle: the narrative is circular, following a series of flashbacks and ending with the moment just before that with which the novel began.

The subject of torture is frightening and painful for the novelists whose works have been discussed here. Almost all literature attempts to represent human experience. However, for a variety of reasons, some areas of human experience are more easily presentable than others. The representation of pain, especially of extreme pain, challenges writers particularly. They are not taking photographs (the process of which can be manipulated, but the product shows us some piece of the "true" event); they are themselves creating images and events. They face a multitude of risks in attempting to present the extremities involved in the torture relationship: oversimplification, didacticism, exploitation and dichotomisation are some of the challenges I have explored.

A reader, the "traveller," also has, as I pointed out in the Introduction, ethical issues to consider when approaching novels of torture. Some of these may in fact be keeping potential readers from this group of novels. Fears of vicarious complicity, pleasure or pain are some of these areas.

But perhaps it is our culture’s structures we should look to in order
to explain the rarity of academic discussions of "the novel of torture" while dozens of such novels have been written and received prizes. Much postcolonial critical discourse has to do with the problem of the "other." Patriarchal thinking and patriarchal systems might be at the root of our views of the "other," whether we read the victim or the torturer as that "other."

I have been arguing that novels of torture set out to participate in the creation of a "language of pain", the giving of both voice and hearing to silenced victims of torture. There are dangers, of course, in presuming to speak for others, to speak in their places and imbue with our own views a discourse we call "theirs". Yet how might the sufferers of torture speak themselves when they are so often and so effectively, it seems, suppressed? This is another difficulty faced by the novel of torture: it risks becoming, and in many cases it has become, another instrument for the systems which find a need for torture in the world.

In order not to participate in and perpetuate the thinking which allows torture, novels of torture are working, in the first instance, to acknowledge and to alter their own dichotomous assumptions. Imagining Argentina, as I have argued, takes a step towards achieving this. The novels have not by and large unlocked the shackles of hierarchical
dualistic structures. They have, however, peeked through the keyhole of the door to the dark chamber.
Works Cited and Consulted


