

**Contrastive Literature:**  
**A Study of *Multiliteralism* in Historical English and Japanese**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is conceptually positioned at the intersection of Comparative Literature Studies, Semiotics, and Narratology. It examines the emblematic values of script choice in narrative writing that simultaneously employs multiple sets of discursive linguistic symbols. As specific case studies, the thesis contrasts text corpora from the radically distinct transhistorical contexts of Old English narrative poetry transcribed in the Latin alphabet and runic characters, and of Modern Japanese fiction which makes concurrent use of four scripts. It argues that in writing situations which exhibit this kind of heightened *multiliteral* awareness, the graphic choice of script in and of itself can operate as an auxiliary semiotic vehicle for associative meaning creation and emotive expression.

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## Introduction

In various linguistic communities past and present, writers have distinguished between writing systems and occasionally made simultaneous use of two or more sets of linguistic symbols. That is to say, writers employ multiple script systems cooperatively as joint medial tools which overlap to some degree in terms of discursive functionality. The primary aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that in writing contexts which exhibit this kind of heightened *multiliteral* awareness, the choice of script in and of itself can operate as a semiotic vehicle for associative meaning creation and emotive expression. Secondly, I will draw up an approach to ‘narrative multiliteralism’ and lay out an elementary theoretical model that can stimulate and guide future discourse on the topic of multiple script usage and its potential semiotic utility as a narratological feature.

I will position my argument at the intersection of Comparative Literature Studies, Semiotics, and Narratology by presenting contrasted case studies of multiliteral context and example in two radically different cultural environments – Old English narrative poetry transcribed in the Latin alphabet which also utilizes runic characters, and Modern Japanese fiction which makes concurrent use of four scripts (*kanji, hiragana, katakana, rōmaji*).<sup>1</sup> Parallel analysis of these two divergent, *polygraphic* writing situations and intercrossed observation that links the literary and contextual with semiotic and narratological realms of critical discourse allow me to address a gap in scholarship and offer an identification and nuanced interpretation of what I will term ‘multiliteralism.’

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a list of recurring Japanese Language terminology.

## 0.1 Research Context

At present, direct comparative studies of multiple script usage are in short supply, and contrastive investigations of multiliteral semiosis are effectively absent. Scholarly efforts which pertain to these subjects and which would be complementary are typically segregated from one another by disciplinary dividing lines and by boundaries of language, textual genre, cultural environment, and historical periodization. As the most comprehensive volume to date on the topic recognizes:

Most of the time, students of such situations believe their cases to be so special that they do not even expect to find literature about similar cases. Yet if all the instances mentioned in the extant literature were collated, it would become obvious that this is not a marginal phenomenon at all.<sup>2</sup>

To challenge these disconnects and distinguish the phenomenon of narrative multiliteralism itself, I adopt in this study a pragmatically reflexive critical position that in some respects resembles Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann's "*histoire croisée*" approach.<sup>3</sup> Werner and Zimmermann write that in opposition to relational approaches which,

mainly take the perspective of 're-establishment/rehabilitation' of buried reality, the stress laid by *histoire croisée* on a multiplicity of possible viewpoints and the divergences resulting from languages, terminologies, categorizations and conceptualizations, traditions, and disciplinary usages, adds another dimension to the inquiry. In contrast to the mere restitution of an 'already there,' *histoire croisée* places emphasis on what, in a self-reflexive process, can be generative of meaning.<sup>4</sup>

My framework is built on paralleled and meaningfully juxtaposed historical and linguistic contextualization, and on interpretive literary analysis of individual stylistic choices. Interdisciplinary discussion of this variety first necessitates that I clarify the meaning of key vocabulary before proceeding to a foundational elaboration in semiotic terms.

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Bunčić, Sandra L. Lippert, and Achim Rabus, eds., *Biscriptality: A Sociolinguistic Typology* (Heidelberg, Germany: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 30-50.

<sup>4</sup> Werner and Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison," 32.

For lack of an established set of terms across the secondary literature, individual commentators employ such descriptors as: ‘*digraphia*,’ ‘*biliteracy*,’ ‘*orthographic diglossia*,’ ‘*multiscriptality*,’ ‘*multialphabetism*,’ ‘*multigraphic situation*,’ and ‘*multiliteral(ism)*’ in discordant ways to refer to a range of closely associated, but by no means interchangeable functions that relate to multiple script usage. Indeed, Daniel Bunčić writes that: “The current state of terminology could hardly be worse. While with scientific terms there ought to be a one-to-one relationship between the term and its definition, the expressions used [...] exhibit both synonymy and polysemy.”<sup>5</sup> Throughout this study, I will rely chiefly on terms that Bunčić et al. lay out in their collective monograph’s heuristic model, but I shall make one central addition.<sup>6</sup>

I will reserve any use of ‘*biliteracy*’ for the altogether separate description of a linguistic ability to read and understand two or more languages (bilingualism + corresponding literacy = biliteracy). Conversely, I accept the overarching cover term of ‘*biscriptality*’ for the broader situation of multiple script usage that is not intrinsically tied to multilingualism but elect to use the alternative term ‘*multiscriptality*’ which is also put forward.<sup>7</sup> I follow Bunčić et al. in distinguishing between:

- 1) different orthographies (spellings, writing conventions, etc.);
- 2) different versions of the same basic script (e.g. *font variations*); and
- 3) different scripts (e.g. Latin alphabet vs. Chinese characters).

I also uphold their precedent by using ‘*glyph*’ and ‘*glyphic variant*’ for different versions of a single script, and I will employ the term ‘*polygraphy*’ as a generic term to refer to writing that simultaneously features multiple scripts. Finally, I will pick up

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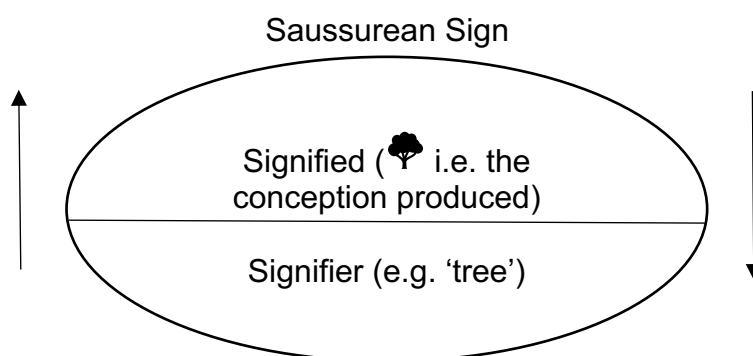
<sup>5</sup> Bunčić, *Biscriptality*, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Bunčić, *Biscriptality*, 51-71.

<sup>7</sup> See Bunčić, *Biscriptality*, 52, where the potential merits of both terms are considered.

where their typology leaves off and introduce the term ‘*multiliteralism*’ as shorthand to refer specifically to the auxiliary signification that is perceptible in polygraphic writing.<sup>8</sup>

Intrinsically linked to the transcription of linguistic signs, at its core the issue of ‘multiliteral signification’ embodies a composite process of semiosis.<sup>9</sup> It is a sign-based process of meaning production and ascription, and one which is not readily explicated by Ferdinand de Saussure’s familiar dyadic sign model comprised of a conjoined ‘signifier’ and ‘signified.’<sup>10</sup>



Saussure’s conception of signs is relational and does not insist on some inherent quality of the signified. Linguistic signs are arbitrary and variable, and it is their position within a relational system that makes them semiotically operative.

<sup>8</sup> N.b. Bunčić et al. do mention script variants’ graphematic and semiotic functionality in passing and acknowledge the existence and relevancy of so-called “graphic code-switching” and “transplantation” of scripts that are external to a given writing system. Ultimately, however, they deem these issues to fall outwith the scope of their volume’s proposed sociolinguistic definition of multiscriptality, which is conceptually tied to power dynamics and more concerned with usages at the societal level. Bunčić, *Biscriptality*, 70-1, 128.

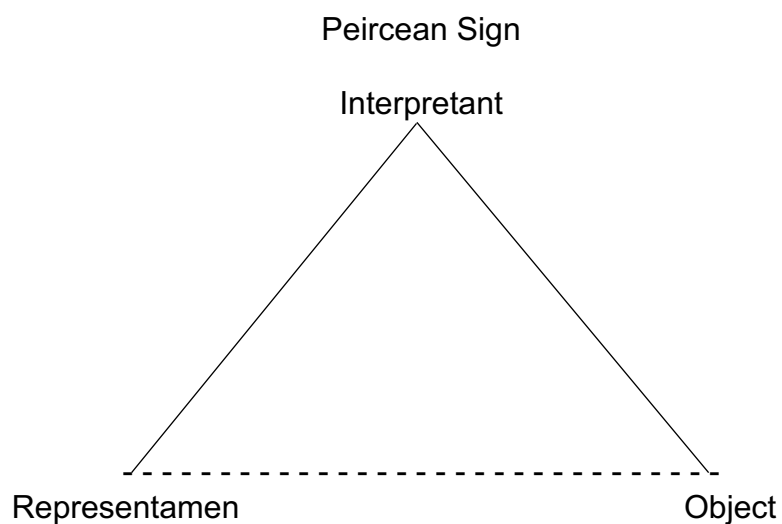
<sup>9</sup> Both here and subsequently in this study I accept the definition of ‘signification’ provided by Umberto Eco: “When – on the basis of an underlying rule – something actually presented to the perception of the addressee *stands* for something else, there is *signification*.” Accordingly, as Eco also outlines, it is possible to discuss meaning production and to consider semiotics of signification independently from semiotics of communication, but not *vice versa*. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 9-10 (p. 9).

<sup>10</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London, England: Duckworth, 1983), 65-78.



These principles are helpful as a baseline starting point, but the Saussurean sign is insufficient for my purposes as a conceptual model in two crucial and related respects. First, it does not allow for efficient evaluation of layered signification, such as that which is caused by coinciding sign systems. Second, a deemphasis of linguistic signs' materiality impedes the analysis of signification which results from subtle differences between ostensibly similar sign vehicles, including graphic and media variation.

Charles Peirce's triadic formulation of the sign can partly resolve the first of these shortcomings. Peirce presents the sign as composed of the '*object*' for which a sign stands, the '*representamen*' or form of the sign, and the '*interpretant*' or sense that is created.<sup>11</sup>





Saussure's model does not address Peirce's '*object*' explicitly, but one can see that the '*representamen*' fulfills roughly the same role as the 'signifier,' and the '*interpretant*' has been called "virtually synonymous with the signified."<sup>12</sup> Thus, in a

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce: Volume I Principles of Philosophy and Volume II Elements of Logic*, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), vol. 2: 135, 2.228. N.b. 'Interpretant' does not denote a human 'interpreter.'

<sup>12</sup> Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York, NY and Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 19.

similar vein to the example above (  / 'tree'), if the *object* of the sign is 'No Smoking Permitted,' the visual *representamen* '  ' could prompt the sense 'I can't smoke here' (*interpretant*).

Yet, unlike the 'signified,' Peirce's 'interpretant' is usefully identifiable as itself a sign that features a new interpretant. The sense created is in turn a sign, "and so on *ad infinitum*."<sup>13</sup> Although I will stop short of plumbing the depths of this "unlimited semiosis,"<sup>14</sup> the concept of layered signification is crucial to an understanding of multilateral semiosis. If, as I shall argue, script choice is to be recognized as a supplementary system of signification, it is one which depends on the interaction between and mediating roles played by successive interpretants in the mind of an interpreter.

The second limitation of the Saussurean sign model relates to the materiality of signs, and stems from distinctions between sign vehicles as 'types' and 'tokens.'<sup>15</sup> John Lyons offers this definition: "*Tokens* are unique physical entities, located at a particular place in space or time. They are identified as *token* of the same *type* by virtue of their similarity with other unique physical entities and by virtue of their conformity to the *type* they instantiate."<sup>16</sup> For example, both capital 'A' and lower-case 'a' may be understood as alternative instantiating orthographic tokens of the same letter type. This is by no means universal, however. The same letters might well be grasped as distinct types in different semiotic contexts.

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<sup>13</sup> Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vol. 2: 169, 2.303.

<sup>14</sup> Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 69.

<sup>15</sup> John Lyons, *Semantics*, 2 volumes (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977), vol. 1: 15.

<sup>16</sup> Lyons, *Semantics*, vol. 1: 14. Emphasis added.

Though subtle ambiguities in this regard are not frequently disruptive in everyday life, Lyons poses a series of rhetorical questions that shed light on the question of script multiplicity.

Does a capital letter instantiate the same type as the corresponding lower-case letter? Does a word printed in italics instantiate the same type as a word printed in Roman? Is a word handwritten by X ever the same as a word handwritten by Y? The answer to these questions does not depend upon some notion of absolute identity. The relationship of instantiation involves the recognition of identity relative to some purpose or function.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, visible differentiation between tokens of the same type (e.g. *different fonts*, *varied colors*) is semiotically significant only insofar as it is deemed to be so by sign users within a given context.

As a foundational premise of multiliteralism then, I would first assert that alternatively transcribed representations of the same spoken utterance can embody meaningfully differentiated visible tokens of the same linguistic type. Just as one might perceive the same word type with token-differentiation in font (e.g. ‘tree’ vs. ‘tree’), one can perceive the same word type with token-differentiation in script selection (e.g. in Japanese ‘木 *ki*’ as compared to ‘き *ki*,’ both pronounced and capable of indicating the same meaning: ‘tree’). Yet, I am not satisfied with having made the suggestion that unique semiotic expressivity is observable in certain instances, nor with the limiting notion that multiliteral signification merely corresponds to the type of sign vehicle Eco labels as: “signs whose tokens, even though produced according to a type possess a certain quality of material uniqueness [...]”<sup>18</sup> Rather, I wish to propose that script selection has the potential to operate as a mode of signification in its own right.

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<sup>17</sup> Lyons, *Semantics*, vol. 1: 15.

<sup>18</sup> Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 179. In contrast, Eco also lists “signs whose tokens can be indefinitely reproduced according to their type,” and “signs whose token is their type, or signs in which type and token are identical.”

With that end in mind, it is beneficial to consider the productive labor of writing as an act of sign creation. Eco identifies that in addition to “the labor of *producing* the signal,” there also exists “the labor of *choosing*, among the set of signals that I have at my disposal, those that must be articulated in order to compose an expression, as well as the labor of isolating an expression-unit in order to compose an expression-string, a message, a text.”<sup>19</sup> Eco exemplifies this by noting the difference between uttering words and drawing a corresponding image in terms of the work required.

Moreover, it might be pointed out that, in order to say /dog/, I had only to choose among a repertoire of established types, and to produce a single occurrence of that type, while in order to draw the image of a dog I have to *invent* a new type. Thus there are different sorts of signs, some of them entailing a more laborious mode of production than others.<sup>20</sup>

The distinction is between processes of creation that are more ‘open-ended’ and those that are on comparatively more ‘closed’ or conventionalized systems. In a written text that employs multiple scripts which overlap in denotative viability, choice between them is not an open-ended invention from whole cloth like Eco’s image of a dog. It is closer by far to the other example of linguistic production, because it represents a choice from among a repertoire of established types.

The acknowledged possibility for variation foregrounds a ‘labor of choosing’ on the part of the sign *sender* (writer).<sup>21</sup> This deliberation between scripts is then open to perception and semiotic interpretation by a text’s *recipient* (reader). Changing the visual representamen of a linguistic sign without altering the underlying linguistic object can have the effect of modifying the accompanying sense or impression that is produced (interpretant). Whether or not this feature is actively

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<sup>19</sup> Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 151.

<sup>20</sup> Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 152.

<sup>21</sup> I deliberately say ‘foregrounds’ rather than ‘creates,’ because even in a single-script textual environment a script is still hypothetically *chosen* even if it is unquestioningly perceived as the only available script.

recognized in the practice of writing, it is nevertheless viable as a system of signification that can impact readers' perceptions. Although I as a writer may not consciously perceive visible differentiations to be particularly meaningful, the same can hardly be said in a universal way for my readers. Consequently, motivated differentiation between scripts allows auxiliary significance(s) to be encoded to and decoded from transcribed linguistic utterances, meaning that a script choice can be understood as a mode of signification that is inherently tied to but distinct from linguistic transcription. The question is then, what manner of signification?

It is impossible to classify multiliteral signification under Peirce's most fundamental division of signs as either of the two less conventional 'indexical' or 'iconic' modes.<sup>22</sup> Multiliteral signification cannot be an 'index,' because it is not physically or causally linked to the sense produced; nor can it be an 'icon' as signification is not achieved through any sort resemblance or imitation.<sup>23</sup> Instead, like both spoken language and punctuation, signification through script selection is primarily 'symbolic' in mode as it "would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant."<sup>24</sup>

If the sense (interpretant) is not perceivable, it does not function as a sign.<sup>25</sup> This accounts for the varying degrees of semiotic significance attached to script selection in different textual environments. While highly multiscriptal environments may attach a great deal of significance, more routinely *monoscriptal* texts may attach very little or none. Yet in whatever capacity it is acknowledged, multiliteralism is a conventionalizable and essentially arbitrary symbolic system. If I am to answer the

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<sup>22</sup> Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 170-3, 2.304-8.

<sup>23</sup> Peirce gives the examples of a bullet-hole as the sign of a shot (index) and a lead-pencil streak representing a geometrical line (icon). Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vol. 2, p. 170, 2.304.

<sup>24</sup> Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vol. 2, p. 170, 2.304.

<sup>25</sup> N.b. This is not to suggest that writing must be linguistically processed for transcribed language to have visual semiotic function.

question – What can script selection in a polygraphic textual environment be a symbol of? – I also need to examine how script and orthographic conventions have arisen, how they are experientially learned, and how they might impact a text's reception.

Naturally, the answers to these three interrelated questions must vary considerably and depend heavily upon the specific contexts in which a text is written and read. One cannot overlook the *system of expectations* developed and maintained by communities of sign users who individually possess appropriate emblematic *semiotic competence*. For that reason, my comparative study will first assess the broader historical, linguistic, and literary contexts relevant to case study texts drawn from utterly distinct cultural settings of production/reception.<sup>26</sup> Before I can proceed to a more detailed elaboration of methodology and scope, however, three pertinent semiotic factors merit added consideration.

The first is a fundamental discrepancy between 'digital' and 'analogical' sign codes. So far, I have made a case for multiliteralism's functioning as a symbolic mode of signification. Now, I would further qualify this by presenting it as a 'digital code' involving discrete units, rather than a more unrestricted 'analogical' one. Daniel Chandler summarizes the difference as follows.

Distinctions and oppositions are digital. Digital codes involve discrete units such as words and 'whole numbers', and depend on the categorization of what is signified. Of course, the to-and-fro of discourse allows for 'shades of meaning', but there can be no communication without such shared categories. Analogical signs (such as visual images, gestures, textures, tastes, and smells) involve graded relationships on a continuum. They can signify infinite subtleties which seem 'beyond words'. Emotions and feelings are analogical.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See Methodology and Scope Section 0.2.1 below.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2017), 184.

Chandler further highlights a “deep attachment” we often seem to have to dynamic analogical modes, and a tendency to “regard digital representations as less real or less authentic – at least initially (as in the case of the audio CD compared to the vinyl LP).”<sup>28</sup> The analog-digital distinction is “frequently represented as natural versus artificial,”<sup>29</sup> and these aspects tie in with what I would propose as a secondary hypothesis built on that of multiliteralism’s semiotic potential. Through alteration of the visual aspect(s) of transcribed language, multiliteral variation exhibits the capacity to signify in ways that are analogically suggestive or emotively *faux* analogical. That is to say, while the choice between scripts is itself a digital choice between discrete units, it is one which can give impressions of more open-ended analogical dynamism. As a consequence of its attachment to and mediation of the visible aspect of a written text, multiliteralism can thereby gesture at nonlinguistic aspects of interpersonal communicative discourse.<sup>30</sup>

This hypothesis points the way toward two final semiotic factors with direct bearing on my investigation, namely the conjoined issues of ‘medium’ and ‘metafunction.’ The medium through which a sign is conveyed can hardly be semiotically neutral. Regarding medium, Umberto Eco makes the general suggestion that materials like “gold and jewels were *significant stuff* before the craftsman began to work on them”; “*that material was already charged with cultural signification.*”<sup>31</sup> This assertion remains valid if applied to forms of communicative linguistic representation. For, as Thomas Birkett suggests specifically in reference to historical

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<sup>28</sup> Chandler, *Semiotics*, 184.

<sup>29</sup> Chandler, *Semiotics*, 184.

<sup>30</sup> This hypothesis is borne out in the specific literary analyses of Chapters 2 and 4. See further Methodology and Scope Section 0.2.2 below.

<sup>31</sup> Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 267. Emphasis in the original.

writing systems, “scripts represent cultural signifiers as well as practical technologies [...]”<sup>32</sup>

Chandler identifies that, “the material form of a sign does sometimes make a difference. Contemporary theorists of ‘social semiotics’ generally argue that the material form of the sign may generate meanings of its own.”<sup>33</sup> The same words handwritten on paper are likely to be perceived differently than when digitally rendered on a screen. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen offer further detail and assert that,

the material expression of signs, and therefore of the text, is always significant; it is what constitutes ‘signifier material’ at one level, and it is therefore a crucial semiotic feature. So is the process of sign- (and therefore text-) production. Texts are material objects which result from a variety of representational and production practices that make use of a variety of signifier resources organized as signifying systems (we have called these ‘modes’), *and* a variety of ‘media,’ or ‘signifier materials’ [...].<sup>34</sup>

Like with any variety in material expression, script variation can be semiotically impactful. But is it possible to define multiliteral signification as more than variation in media or signifier materials? Can multiliteralism be a signifying system, and “is it a semiotic mode in its own right, along with speech, image, writing, music?”<sup>35</sup> If yes, it would need to be able to fulfill three essential, social semiotic *metafunctions* borrowed from the work of linguist Michael Halliday: the ‘*ideational* metafunction,’ the ‘*interpersonal* metafunction,’ and the ‘*textual* metafunction.’<sup>36</sup>

The ideational metafunction of a semiotic mode refers to the ability “to represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Birkett, *Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry* (New York, NY and Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2017), 13.

<sup>33</sup> Chandler, *Semiotics*, 60.

<sup>34</sup> Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, rev. ed. (London, England and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 216.

<sup>35</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 231.

<sup>36</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 41-4. Cf. Michael Halliday, *Halliday’s Introduction to Functional Grammar*, rev. ed., rev. Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen (London, England and New York, NY: Routledge, 2004) 30-1.



system.”<sup>37</sup> Color, for example, denotes specific things and more general ideas outside of the system – a green light signifies ‘go’ to the driver of a car, the colors of flags can indicate nation-states, etc. Though perhaps in a more limited capacity, script selection can achieve this same metafunction and signify in ways that are symbolic and nontrivial. In particular, associative emblematic values that are attached to uses of a particular script will be repeatedly demonstrated in the case study contexts I explore.

The interpersonal metafunction refers to a semiotic system’s ability “to project the relations between the producer of a (complex) sign, and the receiver/reproducer of that sign. That is any mode has to be able to represent a particular social relation between the producer, the viewer and the object represented.”<sup>38</sup> Returning to the example of color as a sign system, Kress and van Leeuwen note how it can convey interpersonal meaning, how it is used to “impress or intimidate through ‘power-dressing,’ to warn against obstructions and other hazards by painting them orange,” etc.<sup>39</sup> Script selection can also realize interpersonal meanings, and indeed, features such as emotive depiction of perspective, comprehension, and tone are one aspect of multiliteralism that has been recognized by previous commentators.<sup>40</sup>

The textual metafunction refers to a semiotic mode’s “capacity to form *texts*, complexes of signs which cohere both internally with each other and externally with the context in and for which they were produced.”<sup>41</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen contend that, “Color also functions, maybe even most obviously, at [this] level,” and they offer

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<sup>37</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 42.

<sup>38</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 42.

<sup>39</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 229.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Mutsuko Hudson and Yoshimi Sakakibara, “Emotivity of Nontraditional *Katakana* and *Hiragana* Usage in Japanese,” in *Applying Theory and Research to Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language*, ed. Masahiko Minami (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 180-95.

<sup>41</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 43.

building color schemes and textbook color-coding as examples.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to the conspicuousness of color, it is at the textual level that multiliteralism appears to falter as an autonomous system of signification. However, my subsequent case studies illustrate that script choice can function in this capacity both in a broader sense and in specific example. I shall observe, for instance, the promotion of textual cohesion with respect to linguistic function, as well as intratextual ‘color-coding’ via script differentiation.

To return and answer my previous question – Can multiliteralism be a signifying system? – I will once again trace Kress and van Leeuwen’s example of color. They suggest that for color, the answer to this question of modality is “Maybe”; it is both ‘Yes’ and ‘No’, since color can seemingly operate independently, but also “combine freely with many other modes [...]”<sup>43</sup> Color can be a sign system and/or an auxiliary sign system. I propose that for multiliteralism, in contrast, the answer to this central question must be something of a restricted or conditional ‘Yes,’ perhaps with an asterisk: ‘Yes\*.’ For, it is a semiotic mode of expression that fulfills the three social metafunctions, but it is one that indelibly requires qualification, because it cannot logically possess the same unrestricted autonomy as other signification systems. Multiliteral signification is a sign system that *must* be an auxiliary sign system, since it *must occur with* transcribed language *as part of* its semiotically contributory visual medium.

As a conclusion to this section, I will reiterate Kress and van Leeuwen’s reminder that,

Every culture has systems of meanings coded in these materials and means of production. Here, as in all areas of semiosis, signs in their materiality are fully motivated, though as always *the motivations are those of a particular culture in a*

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<sup>42</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 230.

<sup>43</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 230.

*particular period, and those of the maker of the sign; they are not global, nor are they a-historical.*<sup>44</sup>

Directly in keeping with that double warning, the methodology employed in this study endeavors to appreciate the underlying historical and cultural motivations at work in a given setting of textual production/reception, while also grappling with the individual stylistic motivations at work in specific multiliteral occurrences.

## **0.2 Methodology and Scope**

My overarching aim in this study is to illustrate multiliteralism's functionality as an auxiliary sign system, and then secondarily from Chapter 5, to lay out an elementary theoretical approach to its narrative utility by undertaking a contrastive analysis. I will, therefore, branch out from a conceptual foundation in semiotics and perform a critical investigation of contrasting and corresponding multiliteral features in texts from two unique multiscriptal textual environments. First, I will offer survey evaluations of the divergent historical, linguistic, and cultural factors in these two case study contexts which influenced conventions of writing and contributed to a foregrounding of multiliteralism's semiotic potential. From there, I will present an interpretive analysis of specific literary possibilities of textual multiliteralism as seen in the stylistic hands of a 'single writer' from either context.<sup>45</sup> Finally, following on from these case study contextualizations and close readings, I will offer a practical comparison and theoretical elaboration of polygraphy's semiotic capabilities in narratological terms as relate to perspective, presence, and voice.

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<sup>44</sup> Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 216-17. Emphasis added.

<sup>45</sup> My use of inverted commas and 'writer' rather than 'author' here are both in recognition of a subject that is central to my discussion in subsequent chapters, namely, the many problems and complexities that accompany differing conceptions of authorship in distinct cultural environments.

### 0.2.1 Historical, Linguistic, and Literary Contextualization and Contrast

As identified above in Section 0.1, it is virtually impossible to consider the semiosis of multiliteralism in a vacuum. Motivated signification is contextually dependent, both in the narrow sense of the individual setting where a signifying act takes place and also in broader terms of surrounding cultural contexts. Accordingly, to analyze and assess specific examples of narrative multiliteralism with the goal of evaluating narratological potential, I will begin with an evaluation of the surrounding historical, linguistic, and literary contexts from which my examples are drawn. This is a crucial first step because it allows for the recognition of relevant associations, connotations, and conventions which can impact implementation. It also beneficially prompts a consideration of possible rationale for heightened and sustained multiliteral awareness, and for deliberately mediated implementation in divergent cultural situations.

As my first example polygraphic textual environment, I examine Old English narrative poetry that is primarily transcribed using the Latin alphabet but which also makes use of runic characters. For my second case study, I look at Modern Japanese prose fiction that employs the four typical scripts encountered in present-day writings. My purpose in this is to identify multiliteralism itself as an underlying stylistic element, and the cross-cultural and transhistorical selection of these two textual environments for parallel examination reflects a deliberate decision and conscious effort on my part to progress beyond simplistic period, linguistic, or genre-based grounds for literary comparison.

Michael Palencia-Roth has cautioned that,

As a discipline, Comparative Literature, founded in western universities, inspired by western techniques of literary analysis, and nurtured by western theorizing, has had a westernizing effect on literary study. In analyzing non-Western literatures, some comparatists view them *only in relation* to Western literatures and literary values. In

thus looking for likenesses, these comparatists [...] tend to homogenize the literary text and the literary experience, seeing them in Western terms.<sup>46</sup>

Palencia-Roth is concerned with Colonialism, Orientalism, and important biases in the study of modern literatures, and I would suggest that his injunctions can also be productively leveled at many unchecked contemporary analyses of historical artworks and literatures. He proposes that cross-cultural contrastive awareness may provide “an antidote to certain homogenizing, westernizing, monistic tendencies of Comparative Literature as an academic discipline,”<sup>47</sup> and in the same way, cross-chronological contrast can help to expose other implicit preconceptions that are similarly limiting and essentializing, and which may derive from ‘seeing in Presentist terms.’<sup>48</sup>

The circumspect reader can hardly presume to comment from a detached position of unaffected objectivity. Critical apposition, therefore, offers a method of recognizing and accounting for aspects of perspectival conditioning – cultural, linguistic, temporal, ideological, and disciplinary. Where exclusive focus on a single context may offer a restricted or distorted view, the perception of phenomenological correspondences in what are otherwise overwhelmingly discordant textual circumstances presents a unique opportunity for contrasting observation and extrapolative interpretation of multilateralism as a phenomenon unto itself. Moreover, intercrossed apposition helpfully accentuates fundamental discrepancies between this study’s Japanese and Old English textual environments which, from the outset, inhibit hasty overgeneralization about multilateralism as a semiotically contributory element of written storytelling.

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Palencia-Roth, “Contrastive Literature,” *Journal for the Comparative Study of Civilizations* 2 (1997): 21-30 (p. 28). Emphasis in the original.

<sup>47</sup> Palencia-Roth, “Contrastive Literature,” 28.

<sup>48</sup> Such as, for example, the reductive association of pre-modern literary cultures with ‘partial’ rather ‘authentic’ or ‘advanced’ literacy.

First, there are basic disparities in linguistic and script functionality. I will identify occurrences of narrative multiliteralism across written languages that are distant from one another not only lexically and syntactically, but also divergent in that Old English employs alphabetic writing systems while Modern Japanese concurrently uses phonemic syllabaries and so-called 'logographic' writing.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, the cultural distance and differences in historical period, textual format, and genre preclude me from glossing over vital questions of literacy, conceptions of literature, audience type, and performativity. The imbalanced juxtaposition destabilizes presumptions in a way that proves valuable and generative, if the approach to multiliteralism I put forward is to have any degree of wider applicability in a range of linguistic and cultural writing contexts.

The appositional framework of this theoretical research is not without its shortcomings and potential pitfalls, however. From the outset, therefore, it is constructive to acknowledge and transparently specify these perceived limitations as part of my parameters. My parallel consideration of narrative multiliteralism in Old English and Modern Japanese writing is not meant to imply that this phenomenon is uniquely confined to these two textual settings. Quite to the contrary, I would even go so far as to argue that the script-based signification which I identify and address in these case study contexts is hypothetically present in any act of writing where emblematic value is attached to the visual aspect of transcribed language. It can be understood as belonging somewhere on a continuum of overlapping and semiotically contributory elements that include glyphic/orthographic variations like font, color,

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<sup>49</sup> Although the term 'logographic' is frequently used in reference to Chinese character usage in Japanese, I object to this potentially obfuscating blanket categorization. See Chapter 3, Section 3.1 for elaboration and arguments in favor of John DeFrancis's less well-known, but more precise term "mor(pho)phonic." John DeFrancis, *Visible Speech: The Diverse Oneness of Writing Systems* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 58.

shape, aspect, orientation, etc., and also less conventionalized visual components of a text.<sup>50</sup> Thus, beyond even polygraphic texts and multiscriptal contexts, consideration of multiliteral semiosis brushes up against and is relevant more broadly to studies of printing, literacy, and ‘the book.’

It would be impossible to perform a comprehensive practical survey that encompasses in a meaningful way the vast spectrum of diverse written languages and text/media types. Given this restriction and the need for skepticism toward “any theory claiming universality on the evidence of texts from one or two cultural traditions,”<sup>51</sup> a high degree of restraint is called for in the phenomenological observations I will draw. Yet as Eco affirms, “[o]ne cannot do theoretical research without having the courage to put forward a theory,”<sup>52</sup> and I do not see myself as preemptively thwarted in my attempt to lay out an elementary conceptual model for narrative multiliteralism. I would be unjustified in making an unchecked pronouncement on the nature of all script-dependent semiosis, but I am hardly prevented from appraising its utility in discrete cultural writing situations. Appreciation for context and convention opens the door for more nuanced understandings and exegetical interpretations of individual polygraphic texts. Even prior to reevaluation under a comparative lens, there is much of independent value to be gained from an assessment of production circumstances. On that rationale, Chapters 1 and 3 pave the way for the critical literary case studies of Chapters 2 and 4 respectively by presenting contextual overviews of Old English and Modern Japanese writing practices as are relevant to multiliteralism.

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<sup>50</sup> One can perceive a connection even to ostensibly more indexical and iconic signification encountered in visually ergodic literature (e.g. Mark Z. Danielewski’s novel *House of Leaves* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2000)) and in wider varieties of graphical storytelling like comics or video games.

<sup>51</sup> Palencia-Roth, “Contrastive Literature,” 29.

<sup>52</sup> Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 7.

Chapter 1, “Old English Multiliteralism in Context,” outlines the historical and linguistic factors which impacted Old English writing and poetic manuscript use of “textual runes” amidst Latin letters.<sup>53</sup> Specifically, I review the history of runic writing, reflect on the influences of Christianity and Latin following conversion, and consider mixed-script and mixed-glyph usage from earlier in the period. I then turn to an examination of the influential aspects of literacy and orality, manuscript handwriting, and writing developments during the pivotal era when the four major surviving vernacular poetic codices are thought to have been produced. Finally, I set the stage for the focused literary case study that follows in Chapter 2 by tying together deductions about script and associative emblematic value.

Likewise, in Chapter 3 “Japanese Multiliteralism in Context,” I present a contextual overview of the circumstances and frameworks of Modern Japanese writing. First, I briefly summarize the history and development of the Japanese writing system as a means of characterizing the four scripts that are utilized in contemporary practice. Next, I consider the possibilities of associative value ascription to each of the scripts, en route to a pertinent clarification of English and English-derived vocabulary’s role within Japanese. I then conclude this chapter by offering an introduction to the linguistic and literary backdrops of the works scrutinized in Chapter 4.

Both individually and in juxtaposition, these examinations form a key component in my overarching presentation of multiliteralism as a contextually dependent semiotic phenomenon and exploitable stylistic device. By the same token, the consideration of context in both cases also sheds fresh light on the second key

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<sup>53</sup> The designation “textual runes” is used here in the same sense as defined by Victoria Symons, i.e. “those letters that form a necessary element of the composition in which they occur.” Victoria Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Berlin, Germany and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2016), 27. See also pp. 11-16.



component of my investigation – the exposition and critical analysis of specific multiliteral occurrences recognized in case study literary corpora.

### **0.2.2 Critical Literary Case Study**

Motivated multiliteral signification is not merely the symptomatic result of coalescing influences from linguistic and cultural circumstances, developments, and conventions. It is context-specific in a more immediate sense and can reflect visual mediation of linguistic content that is meaningful to a text's creator and/or audience. To discern narratological utility, therefore, it is unworkable to wrestle with polygraphy in the abstract, by considering its relation to external contexts but artificially extricating it from internal frameworks of potential meaning.

On these grounds, I follow my parallel contextual surveys with close-reading, interpretative literary case studies that are deliberately narrow in scope so as to ensure that the particularities and complexities of unique multiliteral instances are not undervalued. Perspective is enhanced by taking into account not only intratextual narrative circumstances, but also impactful creative concerns such as agenda, emotive affect, and individual style. Keeping the study grounded in specific pragmatic example, moreover, helps to suppress reductivism and unfounded theoretical conjecture.

There are limitations that accompany this manner of investigative case study, and it is necessary to offer something of justification for the choice of two specific literary corpora for special review. As was the case with context, the selection of Cynewulf and Haruki Murakami for stylistic case study is not meant to imply that the writings attributed to these two figures are exceptional in a way that detaches them

from their respective creative milieux. Other multiliteral instances and polygraphic texts exist in both contexts which could have been preferred, and indeed, I shall reference additional relevant examples in passing during my parallel exposition in Chapters 1–4. The writings of Cynewulf and Murakami should be understood as representative case specimens that were chosen based on distinct rationale.

In the context of Old English writing and manuscript transcription, the designation ‘Author’ and all of its modern associations and connotations is less than satisfactory. Medieval conceptions of authorship differed from modern ones, and with the active borrowing, reworking, and compilation witnessed in the manuscript record, it can be difficult – if not logically problematic – to discuss individual authorial style in relation to given texts. Purely in terms of multiliteral style, however, we do have access to something of a stylistic ‘single-writer’ Old English poetic corpus, even if the same individual did not place quill to parchment for each.

Chapter 2, “Case Study: Cynewulf,” addresses in succession the Old English poems known by their modern designations as *Christ II*, *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene*. These four surviving works each contain a runic ‘signature’ that provides the proper name Cyn(e)wulf, and in each case the runes of the name are not merely appended as a colophon. Instead, they form an integral part of their respective texts by being interlarded visually into the lines of Latin characters, metrically into the verse, and lexically into the unfolding narratives. Through assessment of the distinctive polygraphic implementations of the four signed poems and engagement with relevant cross-cultural and linguistic elements, this chapter calls into question overly simplistic, binary notions of visual comprehensibility and performativity. Simultaneously, I also put forward an argument for Cynewulf’s important narratological role as an *intratextual* poet persona.

In contrast to the paucity of options on the Old English side, the highly literate context of Modern Japanese presents any number of viable examples of individual multiliteral writing style. Japanese routinely employs four scripts for different purposes, and emblematic signification by means of script choice is observable not simply in works of literature but throughout a wide range of different realms of writing (e.g. advertising copy, manga, television captions (‘テロップ *teroppu*’), and subtitling).<sup>54</sup> There are thus countless literary options that would be worthy of detailed evaluation, and the selection of any single writer’s output has an air of arbitrariness about it. For example, a study of celebrated writers from previous generations like Sōseki Natsume (1867-1916) and Yukio Mishima (1925-70) or Nobel laureates Yasunari Kawabata (1899-1972) and Kenzaburō Ōe (1935-) might shed light not only on a writer’s individual stylistic inclinations, but also on fascinating aspects of periodization and canonization. No less, a study of an exophonic or ‘border-crossing’ (越境 *ekkyō*) writer the likes of Ian Hideo Levy (1950-) or Yoko Tawada (1960-) would likely further illuminate aspects of multilingualism, transculturality, and audience perception which are pertinent to multiliteral signification.<sup>55</sup> Undoubtedly, future exploration of these and other avenues will add both depth and nuance to the elementary approach I propose here.

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<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 3 for an evaluation of writing conventions, script choice, and associative ascriptions. Cf. Ory Barta, “Text as Image in Japanese Advertising Typography Design,” *Design Issues Massachusetts Institute of Technology* 29.1 (2013): 51-66; Nicolas Tranter, “Nonconventional Script Choice in Japan,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 192 (2008): 133-51.

<sup>55</sup> Levy, for example, reflects explicitly on cultural and scriptal multiplicity in *Nihongo o kaku heya* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), 34-5, where he writes “I began to see a characteristic of the language of ‘here’ that is absent from the languages of the continents and that I didn’t notice while I reflected upon Japanese from afar. Simply put, it is the discovery that the written languages of the continents that declare themselves to be ‘multi-ethnic’ – English that is written all in alphabets and Chinese that is written all in simplified Chinese-characters – look ‘mono,’ and on the contrary the language of this island country that has been believed by the natives and the foreigners alike to be only understandable by the members of the ‘mono-ethnic’ group inherently has a very complex richness far from any ‘monotony.’” This English translation is borrowed from Keijirō Suga, “Translation, Exophony, Omniphony” in *Yōko*

The reasoning that prompted my selection of Haruki Murakami is twofold. First, Murakami's writing demonstrates a level of thematic, tonal, and stylistic consistency. Comparisons and contrasts can be easily drawn between his texts that otherwise differ quite radically in terms of structure and narrative. Second, I am motivated by Murakami's unprecedented international market penetration and the accompanying accessibility this grants to my research, even for readers unable to work with Japanese texts in the original. Murakami is widely read in Japan as a writer and translator of fiction, and his works are also published internationally in best-selling translation.

Chapter 4, "Case Study: Haruki Murakami," examines three of his representative works: ノルウェイの森 (*Noruei no mori* 1987; *Norwegian Wood*, 2000), 海辺のカフカ (*Umibe no kafuka* 2002; *Kafka on the Shore*, 2005), and 1Q84 (2009-10, published in English translation under the same title in 2011).<sup>56</sup> Through concentration on various multiliteral implementations discovered in these works, this chapter highlights correspondences and discrepancies between polygraphic play and aspects of theme, character, and dialogue. In conjunction, I also perform related analyses of the use of code-switching and intralinguistic *faux* multilingualism, and I advance an argument for Murakami's carefully manipulated depictions of irony and sincerity in connection to these diverse areas of narrative production.

My aim is not to forcibly impose any kind of aesthetic, political, or ideological conformity onto either of these case study corpora or their surrounding contexts. Instead, it is to assess two unique sets of polygraphic texts on their own terms with

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*Tawada: Voices from Everywhere*, ed. Doug Slaymaker (Plymouth, England: Lexington Books, 2007), 21-33 (p. 32).

<sup>56</sup> Henceforward, Roman character transliterations will be used to refer to the Japanese text, and English language titles will be used when referencing a published translation.

an eye to their distinctive literary and sociolinguistic circumstances. Only through the combination of this contextual underpinning and mindfulness of textual particularities does it become possible in Chapter 5 to elicit intercrossed structural comparisons and contrasts that are both enlightening and theoretically valid.

### 0.2.3 Contrasting and Comparative Narratological Evaluation

Finally in Chapter 5, “Contributive Literature: Transcribing Perceptions of Voice,” I develop my parallel considerations and sketch out multiliteralism’s narratological potential by unpacking the central issues of authority, audience, and textual agenda in relation to my case studies. This reveals connections between multiliteral signification and narratorial perspective/voice, reader expectation/reception, and text content. Through joint reevaluation of specific instances, I lay out intertwined conceptual matrices for a critical literary approach to multiliteralism. The theoretical elaboration which I offer ties in with multilingualism and multiculturalism, and it is in terms of perceived (un-)conventionality and expectational (non-)conformity.

Finally, and by way of conclusion, I make the argument that in polygraphic narrative contexts, script selection and the scripts themselves have amplified potential to function as *semi-diegetic* elements. That is to say, they are not merely the operative media or stylistic *tools by which* a story is conveyed; they function from within and signify *as part of* a narrative story. Coupled with this demonstration, I simultaneously present the case for the possible achievement of *literal mimesis*, whereby emblematic values attributed to scripts are further shown to trigger associative and/or emotive signification. By being bound to the independent

signification of transcribed language, the auxiliary semiosis of multiliteralism has the capacity to reflect *paralinguistic* aspects of discourse relating to both 'speaker' and 'speech act.

## Chapter 1

### Old English Multiliteralism in Context

Script plurality and multiliteral signification are acutely evident in certain texts from Early Medieval England (c. fifth century – eleventh century). In this chapter, I will review the historical developments that gave rise to the simultaneous use of multiple script systems in this cultural writing context, and I will examine the sociolinguistic factors of interaction and convergence that foregrounded the potential for emblematic usage of different scripts in specific textual environments. First in Section 1.1, I will provide a brief introduction to runic writing and its usage in the earliest surviving transcriptions of English. Next, I will consider the broad influences which Latin and Christianity had on literacy and literate production in Section 1.2.

An adapted Latin alphabet came to be widely used for vernacular writing following conversion at the end of the sixth century, but knowledge and application of runes did not immediately vanish. I will assess several representative mixed-script instances from the seventh and eighth centuries and then proceed in Section 1.3 to an examination of writing practices and manuscript handwriting during the ninth and tenth centuries. This latter era saw momentous historical developments such as Viking attacks and settlement, programs of educational reform under King Alfred in the late ninth century, and a revitalization of monasticism in the late tenth century through the Benedictine Reform. It is also during this pivotal era that the major surviving Old English poetic codices were produced. Finally, in Section 1.4 I will contextually unpack the poet figure of Cynewulf to whom four distinct polygraphic narrative poems are attributed: *Christ II*, *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene*.

## 1.1 Runes and the Earliest English Writing ( ~ c. 600 CE)

The oldest Germanic writing survives in the runic alphabet or ‘*futhark*,’ a name which is derived from the first six characters of the earliest rune rows. While it is hard to speak with certainty on this writing system’s origins and earliest history, Michael Barnes highlights four fundamental facts that can be legitimately determined or reasonably inferred:

- 1) Runic writing goes back to at least the second century CE
- 2) South Scandinavia was likely the cradle of runic writing
- 3) Runes are a part of the Mediterranean alphabet tradition and based on the same principles that gave rise to Greek, Etruscan, and Roman alphabets, etc. but with rather a lot of independence
- 4) Runes almost certainly developed in an area that was in contact with but not a part of the Roman Empire<sup>1</sup>

Runes are typically composed of straight lines, and a conventional understanding has been that they were carved or inscribed symbols whose initial usage was somewhat restricted, since unlike Roman letters, the available evidence does not indicate their widespread use in administration, public discourse, or for the recording of events.<sup>2</sup> The runic character system was devised to represent the sounds of Germanic languages, and it was used in parts of Central and Northern Europe until generally being superseded by use of the Latin alphabet following processes of Christianization that took place at different times in different areas during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. While in some respects a fairly conservative writing system, variations did take place across this broad geographical area and prolonged chronological period of active use. These variations included major shifts in terms of rune form, number of characters, and application methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Barnes, *Runes: A Handbook* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2012), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 1, 34.



The forms of the oldest surviving inscriptions are designated the Elder Futhark, and these date from the second century onwards. One example appears on “perhaps the earliest runic inscription yet recognized in England,” the Caistor-by-Norwich deer astralagus (ankle-bone) which was discovered in a fifth-century cremation urn together with uninscribed pieces apparently to some manner of game.<sup>3</sup> It is “unsurprising” that runic inscriptions should appear in England from the fifth century, given that knowledge and application of this Germanic form of writing must have accompanied the arrival of Germanic tribes in Britain.<sup>4</sup> The inscription reads “𐀓𐀚𐀛𐀞𐀚𐀞𐀚 *raihan*,” which can be interpreted as defining the material on which it is carved, i.e. “an early genitive or dative form of later OE *raha*, *ra* ‘roe deer’ [...]”.<sup>5</sup>

In England and Frisia, the futhark was expanded and entirely new runic characters appeared.<sup>6</sup> Largely similar to Elder Futhark forms, the ‘futhorc’ of Anglo-Frisian inscriptions introduced new vocalic forms. In accompaniment to changes in the vowel systems, the additional letters ‘ƿ’ and ‘ʀ’ were used for /o/ and /a/ respectively, while ‘ʀ’ came to be used alternatively (at least in Old English) for the /æ/ sound.<sup>7</sup> Specific examples that survive include the ‘ƿ’ that is witnessable on the Undley bracteate which was discovered in Suffolk and dated to the latter half of the

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<sup>3</sup> Raymond Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, rev. ed. (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1999), 18.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 37. Predating a number changes and developments in runic forms that were to come, this inscription displays a single-barred form of ‘H (*h*)’ rather than the double-barred version observable in later Anglo-Frisian inscriptions, and Barnes does note that certain early examples of runic writing found in Britain may be imports.

<sup>5</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 42-3; John Hines, “The Runic Inscriptions of Early Anglo-Saxon England,” in *Britain 400-600: Language and History*, eds. Alfred Bammesberger and Alfred Wollmann (Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter, 1990), 437-56 (pp. 441-2); Page, *An Introduction*, 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> N.b. This is in stark contrast to what happens later in Scandinavia during the sixth and seventh centuries, where the rune-row abandons the use of eight of the twenty-four characters of the Elder Futhark. This Younger Futhark persisted in use in Scandinavia and saw further changes and development during the Middle Ages. Such runic forms could also have been familiar to some portion of the Scandinavian population that came to inhabit the Danelaw region.

<sup>7</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 37-9. The designation ‘futhorc’ as compared to ‘futhark’ reflects this difference.

fifth century,<sup>8</sup> and the ‘F’ that occurs in the personal name “𐌹𐌺𐌿𐌱𐌰 *Iuda*” on the likely seventh-century Harford Farm brooch from a grave excavation in Norfolk.<sup>9</sup>

Later runic practice exhibits continued developments and additions to the rune-row, but my juxtaposition of fifth-century and seventh-century material straddles a fundamental division in both the English runic corpus and English writing more generally. Whereas the earliest inscriptions (roughly fifth and sixth century) might legitimately be viewed as examples of pagan literate production, I would be remiss if I failed to account for the process of conversion to Christianity that officially began from the end of the sixth century. In addition to ideological shifts, religious conversion also placed the use of runes and the transcription of English into a new context that was directly influenced by and adjacent to the use the Latin language and of Roman script. As expressed by David Parsons, “from the seventh century onwards, any attempt to understand the linguistic significance of runic writing must take into account the context of a much more extensive literate culture in England.”<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2 Christianization: English Alphabets and Latin Runes (c. 600 – c. 800)

At the turn of the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great sent a missionary effort led by Augustine to administer the gospel to those under the rule of King Æthelberht in Kent. This set into motion processes of conversion that would face setbacks but ultimately come to fuller fruition as the kingdoms of early medieval England gradually embraced the new religion.<sup>11</sup> Religious conversion dramatically

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<sup>8</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 37-9; Page, *An Introduction*, 183-5. ‘F’ appears as a ligatured bind-rune with ‘X.’

<sup>9</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 61; Page, *An Introduction*, 166.

<sup>10</sup> David Parsons, *Recasting the Runes: The Reform of the Anglo-Saxon Futhorc* (Uppsala, Sweden: Institutionen för nordiska språk, Uppsala universitet, 1999), 41.

<sup>11</sup> Greatly abbreviated here, the intricacies and developments of this conversion process are outlined in more detail in Peter Hunter Blair, “Chapter III: The Church” in *An Introduction to Anglo-*

impacted the nature of writing in English. Christianity came packaged with the Latin language, and institutionalized literacy was an intrinsically important element of scriptural practice.<sup>12</sup>

Augustine's mission brought with it practitioners of Roman scripts (most significantly Roman Uncial), and in addition to converting the Kentish court, one of Augustine's earliest labors was "to commit its Germanic law-code to the 'safe-keeping' of writing by phonetically transliterating Old English using Roman characters [...]."<sup>13</sup> The Augustinian mission was not the only evangelical work to be taking place in Britain, however. The Gospel and the Roman alphabet were also spread through Irish missionary activity to Northumbria that occurred in the early seventh century.

For most of the fifth and sixth centuries, Celtic Christian religious and writing practices had been relatively separated from those of the continent, and the Irish missionaries brought with them a script-system described by Helen McKee as "distinctive and highly flexible [...] It consisted of a hierarchy of scripts [=glyphic variants of Roman script], of various degrees of formality, allowing scribes to adapt their handwriting to suit the status of their texts or the space available."<sup>14</sup> When the divergent Insular and Continental approaches to use of the Latin alphabet converged in seventh-century England, scribes across the country adopted the "highly practical

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*Saxon England*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 116-93, especially at pp. 116-41.

<sup>12</sup> C. Patrick Wormald, "The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and its Neighbours," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (1977): 95-114.

<sup>13</sup> Michelle B. Brown, "Writing in the Insular World," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume I c. 400-1100*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press), 121-66 (p. 122). Æthelberht's law-code survives in twelfth-century copy in the *Textus Roffensis*.

<sup>14</sup> Helen McKee, "Scripts," in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, rev. ed., eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg (Chichester, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 423-4 (p. 423). Specifically and in order of descending formality, scripts that were employed are: Insular Half-Uncial, Hybrid Minuscule, Set Minuscule, Cursive Minuscule, Current Minuscule.

Insular script-system,” although “Uncial was retained as the most formal script in the repertoire of English scribes” and “access to the formal majuscule scripts of Rome impelled a neatening and regularization of Insular script in England.”<sup>15</sup> From the outset, early English writing practice appears characterized by deliberate, hierarchical distinguishing between letterforms and ductus.<sup>16</sup>

The narrative of English conversion is perhaps most widely familiar through the accounts of Bede in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*), and a mid-eighth-century copy of this Latin text reinforces the theme of meaningful differentiation and is directly relevant to the consideration of vernacular verse. The ‘Moore Bede’ (Cambridge University Library, Kk 5.16, owned by Bishop of Ely from 1707-14, John Moore) displays Insular minuscule script which “facilitated rapid writing and made more economical use of the page than the higher-grade uncial script used for elite, biblical manuscripts,” and which “was a direct response to contemporary demand for copies of Bede’s works, at home and abroad.”<sup>17</sup> It also contains, on the final page of the manuscript, one of two early recordings of the Old English alliterative poem discussed by Bede as part of the main Latin text and now commonly known as *Caedmon’s Hymn*. In contrast, the other recording comes as a gloss within the roughly contemporaneous ‘St. Petersburg Bede’ (St. Petersburg Public Library Q.v.I.18) which is a manuscript that contains noticeably more lavish decoration and display letters.<sup>18</sup> From even this early

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<sup>15</sup> Helen McKee, “Scripts.”

<sup>16</sup> Michelle Brown identifies this feature and suggests that it makes writing in the Insular region “truly heir to the multi-tiered script of the Roman world, in which form, function and intent could be balanced and signaled.” Brown, “Writing in the Insular World,” 126.

<sup>17</sup> “The Moore Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (‘The Ecclesiastical History of the English People’), in *Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War*, eds. Claire Breay and Joanna Story (London, England: The British Library, 2018), 78-9.

<sup>18</sup> On *Cædmon’s Hymn* as a ‘text’ see Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 23-46.

stage, there is a clear applicative awareness of how different letterforms – even those of ostensibly the same alphabet – can convey different semiotic values.

During roughly this same period, the surviving runic record bears witness to an equally radical transformation in writing practice. Parsons presents the case that a fairly widespread, conscientious runic reform took place around the late seventh century. His argument hinges on two facts. First, the runic alphabet is streamlined in a sense. Certain letterforms which were introduced earlier in the expansion of the futhorc disappear from the later tradition, and consistent use is made of either single forms or a limited range of variants (namely, “H for h, k for c” and “l and P for s”).<sup>19</sup> This suggests that a runic “standard” developed which restricted the number and variety of available rune-forms.<sup>20</sup> Second, inscriptions do not contain archaic forms alongside those which subsequently became standard, and this absence runs counter to expectation if there had been a more gradual process of influence and acceptance.<sup>21</sup>

Parsons further contends that Christian monastic foundations seem to be the most likely source for the spread of later runes, even if they were not strictly the “seat of the reform itself [...]”<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting this connection between runes and the Christian church as part of the developing literate culture of early England. The probable involvement of the Church in such reforms and the evidence of runes used in explicitly Christian writings directly oppose many modern misperceptions and pop culture appropriations of the runic alphabet. In the Old English context, runes did not maintain intrinsic mystical qualities linked to pre-Christian Germanic religion. Instead,

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<sup>19</sup> Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 85-6 (p. 86).

<sup>20</sup> Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 85-6.

<sup>21</sup> Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 93.

the epigraphical record illustrates that “at least as early as about A.D. 700, the two scripts are in the same hands and will be used side by side,” and that, “there can be no doubt that ‘bialphabetism’ [=biscryptality] was present in the background all through the Anglo-Saxon period [...]”<sup>23</sup>

Multiscryptality and coexistence are clearly visible in the numismatic corpus. However, the example of writing on coins also illustrates that ‘writing’ does not need to be legitimately discursive in a linguistic sense for it to achieve visible semiotic function. Barnes cites the example of early gold coins where “we find only problematic [i.e. hard to process] sequences of runes” that “are in imitation of the lettering on Roman prototypes. Such legends may in fact never have had a [linguistic] meaning, but simply been placed on the coin to make it look authentic.”<sup>24</sup> The example of a peculiar coin minted under the Mercian King Offa (r. 757-96 C.E.) reinforces the need for interpretative restraint.

The coin does not employ runes but is multilingual and multiscryptal. It imitates the form of a *dinar* of Offa’s contemporary Caliph Al-Mansur and bears the commonplace Latin formula “OFFA REX (King Offa)” along with an erroneous Arabic inscription that is upside-down with relation to the Latin inscription and includes part of the Islamic *Shahadah* creed.<sup>25</sup> To all appearances, the coin’s craftsperson could not read the Arabic, and this is, therefore, not strictly polygraphic as per my focus here. The transcribed language is not included to be linguistically processed.

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<sup>23</sup> René Derolez, “*Runica Manuscripta Revisited*,” in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. Alfred Bammesberger (Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter, 1991), 85-106 (pp. 99-100).

<sup>24</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 45.

<sup>25</sup> C. E. Blunt, “The Coinage of Offa,” in *Anglo-Saxon Coins: Studies Presented to F. M. Stenton on the Occasion of His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday 18 May 1960*, ed. R.H.M. Dolley (London, England: Methuen, 1961), 39-62 (pp. 50-1, Plate IV, 5); “Gold Dinar of King Offa,” *The British Library*, accessed September 2019, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/gold-dinar-of-king-offa>.

Nevertheless, it is clear that language and script transplantation can produce semiotic value for a viewer even through such ornamental, iconographic function.

Notwithstanding such exceptional anomalies, Barnes typifies a more general trend for coins containing runes and Roman characters that is tantalizing in terms of the possible associative values ascribed to both scripts. The names of rulers are predominantly in Latin letters, while those of moneyers tend to be runes, although this “is by no means an absolute rule.”<sup>26</sup> Outside of the sector of numismatics, determining overarching patterns in mixed-script examples is even murkier work. Barnes continues, “Coin legends apart, tendencies of any kind in the choice of script are hard to discern.”<sup>27</sup> Ray Page observes that,

A casual mixture of the two scripts is not all that uncommon in Anglo-Saxon England: witness the legends on the rings from Manchester (Lancashire) and Llysfæen: æDRED MEC AH EAnRED MEC agROf, ‘Ædred owns me, Eanred engraved me’, and +ALHSTAn, a personal name.

[...]

Yet there is also, in the east of Northumbria, an extended tradition of the use of the two scripts side by side but distinct.<sup>28</sup>

Page highlights examples found at Lindisfarne, Monkwearmouth, and Falstone, and he suggests that, “It seems there was a north country practice – and one which the Christian church approved – of using runic script in the company of Roman, either mixed in with it or side by side with it [...].”<sup>29</sup>

While far from an exhaustive survey, it is worthwhile to assess the choices witnessed on three representative examples of mixed-script epigraphy which all appear to be of Northumbrian provenance. The examples of St. Cuthbert’s Coffin,

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<sup>26</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 50.

<sup>28</sup> Raymond Page, “Roman and Runic on St Cuthbert’s Coffin,” in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, eds. Gerald Bonner, David Rollason, and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1989), 257-65 (p. 265). N.b. In Page’s transliteration which I have duplicated here, capitals denote the Latin alphabet and lower-case letters represent runes.

<sup>29</sup> Page, “Roman and Runic,” 265.

the Ruthwell Cross, and the Franks Casket each have something unique to contribute to a perception of polygraphic potential and multiliteral signification.

Created in 698 CE in Lindisfarne to house the remains of St. Cuthbert, the oak coffin fragments that can now be found in Durham Cathedral are adorned with iconographic religious imagery that includes the Madonna and Child, the four evangelists, the apostles, and archangels. There are also inscriptions that are in a mixture of runes and the Latin alphabet – the names of the apostles and of Luke the Evangelist are all in Roman characters, whereas the other three Gospel writers' names are given in runes.<sup>30</sup> Yet, what is most compelling in multiliteral terms is the partly Latinized Christogram that appears with the Christ child on the coffin. The abbreviation '(i)h(s) xps' has been rendered in runes.

This shows a carver thoroughly at home in roman script for he is in fact transliterating from roman to runic: *ihs xps* (giving *Jesus Christus*) incorporates the Greek letters *H eta* (for *le:l*), *X chi* (for *lxl*), and *P rho* (for *lr/l*) in romanised form, and these are faithfully reproduced in runes as though they were the roman letters 'h', 'x', 'p'.<sup>31</sup>

This is intriguing in many respects for modern commentators, and it is not my intention here to offer a definitive interpretation of the coffin.<sup>32</sup> Instead, I wish to make two key semiotic observations about script selection by viewing the example of the Christogram through a multiliteral lens.

First, the artwork and elaborate iconographic program of the coffin would seem to place it in a different category of production than inscriptions “where an

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<sup>30</sup> Bruce Dickins, “The Inscriptions Upon the Coffin,” in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert: Studies by Various Authors Collected and Edited with an Historical Introduction by C. F. Battiscombe*, C. F. Battiscombe, ed. (Oxford, England: University of Oxford Press, 1956), 305-7 and Plates iv-xi; Page, *An Introduction*, 171-2; Page, “Roman and Runic”; Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 90-1.

<sup>31</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 46. Context allows for the inference of the first and third runes which are not wholly discernible. See also Page, *An Introduction*, 171-2.

<sup>32</sup> A foundational description of the coffin's reconstruction, technique, history, iconography, and style can be found in E. Kitzinger, “The Coffin-Reliquary,” in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert: Studies by Various Authors Collected and Edited with an Historical Introduction by C. F. Battiscombe*, C. F. Battiscombe, ed. (Oxford, England: University of Oxford Press, 1956), 202-304.



occasional rune invades otherwise roman text,” and one might feasibly argue that “A straight line may be easier to cut than a curve. A die-cutter, as for a coin, may not have suitable tools to carve elaborate shapes and so may prefer easy ones.”<sup>33</sup> I would submit that even without fully grasping the creative intentions, the coffin’s script variation can be perceived as a deliberate aesthetic choice, rather than simply a practical measure. If a reader perceives deliberation between scripts and ascribes emblematic value to the visual mediation, multiliteral signification can occur.

Second, the coffin’s runic Christogram recalls traditions of iconography and offers a reminder that “Christianity developed its own mythology of writing, underpinned by the authority of the revealed word of God and the reliance on scripture to promulgate the faith.”<sup>34</sup> The coffin’s ‘Υ (x)’ and ‘Ϝ (p)’ are a transliteration in runes of *chi* and *rho*, two Greek letters which took on immense symbolic value. Both superimposed (Ϟ) and separately, the *Chi-Rho* sign was widely used as an abbreviation for Christ and artistic motif outside of Greek language writing contexts in the Middle Ages. In the Old English context, for example, two major initial pages of Matthew’s Gospel in the Lindisfarne Gospels (early eighth century) can be seen to display a beautifully illuminated *Chi-Rho* that is at once text and display image (f. 29), as well as an admittedly less splendid, non-runic rendering of precisely the same formula encountered on St. Cuthbert’s coffin (f. 27).<sup>35</sup>

The transliterated abbreviation on the coffin would be indecipherable in a discursive sense to an individual who is only literate in runes and unfamiliar with this combination of Greco-Roman letters and their significance. The same is also true in

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<sup>33</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 219-20. In addition to coins, Page points to the examples of the previously mentioned Manchester and Llysfaen rings, as well as the Alnmouth stone.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Birkett, *Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry* (London, England: Routledge, 2017), 13.

<sup>35</sup> Janet Backhouse, *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (London, England: Phaidon Press Limited, 1981), 43-5.

reverse. Page suggests that in this context, runes “had become an esoteric script, regarded perhaps with antiquarian affection by the learned and religious,”<sup>36</sup> and there is insufficient evidence for me to pass conclusive judgment on what specific emblematic values might have been attached to their usage here. Yet even with that caveat, I would suggest that this is a clear example of multiliteral signification, because it depends on a perception of visual mediation. A viewer can only extract meaning by possessing sufficient dual literacy and perceiving the expected formula across scripts.

The mixed inscriptions found on the Ruthwell Cross are markedly distinct in character. The six-meter stone cross was toppled by Protestant reformers in 1642 and is now badly damaged, but this originally eighth-century monument displays Latin and Old English language text in Roman character and runic inscriptions, as well as iconographic depictions of scenes from Christ’s life and ministry.<sup>37</sup> Borders surround the sculptured panels and include fairly lengthy Latin language–Roman letter inscriptions (Anglo-Saxon capitals and Insular minuscules), such as the following relatively complete legend:

[+]IHS X[PS] IVD[E]X:[A]EQV[IT]A[TI]S: BESTIAE: ET: DRACON[ES]:  
COGNOUERVNT: INDE:SERTO: SALVA[TO]RE: MVNDI

Jesus Christ, judge of righteousness: in the desert beasts and dragons  
acknowledged the saviour of the world<sup>38</sup>

The texts on the narrow sides of the monument’s top stone are “poorly preserved and only partly decipherable,” but they do interestingly include a runic transcription of

<sup>36</sup> Page, “Roman and Runic,” 265.

<sup>37</sup> For a more comprehensive assessment of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle monuments and their inscriptions, see first Fred Orton, Ian Wood, and Clare A. Lees, *Fragments of History: Rethinking the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Monuments* (Manchester, England and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 145-8 (p. 146). The transcriptions and translations given here and below follow Page, but note that Page has silently expanded the “IHS X[PS]” formula in the English translation.

the Latin word *dominae* (ladies).<sup>39</sup> The lower stone bears runes with an orientation that differs from the other inscriptions. They are “upright to a viewer on the ground” and record Old English poetic verse that greatly resembles lines from the poem the *Dream of the Rood* in the Vercelli Book manuscript, which has typically been dated on paleographical grounds to a later period (c. 950-1000).<sup>40</sup> The monument is thus both a bilingual and polygraphic object.

In the manuscript and on the Ruthwell Cross, the verse is spoken from the perspective of the cross at Calvary, and Éamonn Ó Carragáin views the poem as working with the monument’s iconography to “provide a coherent synthesis of what they considered central to communal life [...]”.<sup>41</sup> The Cross’s design seems to reflect a hierarchy of languages and scripts, and Ó Carragáin argues that the integration “recall[s] Rome, where linguistic diversity was valued as an image of the catholicity of the Church.”<sup>42</sup> Patrick Conner offers a conflicting perspective and proposes that the poetic runes may not have been an original feature of the Cross’s eighth-century design.<sup>43</sup> Conner draws in Elisabeth Okasha’s skepticism regarding anyone in eighth-century England’s ability to read all of the Ruthwell Cross’s texts and understand them, and he pushes for a possible understanding of the runic poem as a later addition, one that is roughly contemporaneous with a revived interest in runic

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<sup>39</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 146.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Bredehoft, “Multiliteralism in Anglo-Saxon Verse Inscriptions,” in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England*, ed. Elizabeth Tyler (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 15-32 (p. 22); Page, *An Introduction*, 147-8.

<sup>41</sup> Éamonn Ó Carragáin, “Ruthwell Cross” in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, rev. ed., eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg (Chichester, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 415-16 (p. 416).

<sup>42</sup> Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London, England: The British Library and the University of Toronto Press, 2005), 229-30.

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Conner, “The Ruthwell Monument Runic Poem in a Tenth-Century Context,” *The Review of English Studies* 56.238 (2008): 25-51.

writing documented by surviving manuscripts of the tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>44</sup>

Thomas Bredehoft further advances Conner's line of reasoning and presents a consideration of the Cross's polygraphy at two different moments: an earlier moment when it "may reflect a desire to have some of the cross's text readable to those literate in the runic script, as well as more extensive Latin texts readable only by an audience also literate in Latin characters," and a later moment which "would seem to attest to a continuing audience of readers literate in the runic script."<sup>45</sup> In my view, absence of proof does not constitute adequate proof to the contrary, and I remain only partly convinced by the arguments for later addition. Moreover, it seems disingenuous to consider the linguistic inscriptions in isolation from the images on the Cross as object. The words are semiotically contributory visual elements, and 'reading' the iconography offers still another interwoven means of textual access.

Despite these reservations, I am persuaded by two more general observations Bredehoft makes as part of his argument. He warns modern commentators not to overlook the heightened register of "poetic language that brings the charged issues of linguistic identity and difference to the forefront," and submits that, "the Anglo-Saxons seem to have more or less habitually associated different scripts with different languages, and it is in some ways, not so surprising to see multilateral [=polygraphic] texts so closely engaged with issues of multilingualism in the period."<sup>46</sup> These associative notions correspond to a degree with what coin

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<sup>44</sup> Conner, "The Ruthwell Monument," 27-9. Cf. Elizabeth Okasha, "Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence from Inscriptions," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 8 (1995): 69-74.

<sup>45</sup> Bredehoft, "Multilateralism," 23-4. This provides a rationale for the runic transcription of Latin on the top stone, and Bredehoft further highlights the "phonetic precision" of the poetic runes which suggest a rune-literate carver or designer rather than transliteration from a Latin alphabet text.

<sup>46</sup> Bredehoft, "Multilateralism," 32.

examples elusively suggested, and they will be seen to resonate even more strongly with what is observed in the later manuscript record.

Linguistic associations can produce corresponding script expectations for a bilingual/biliterate reader, and polygraphic writing which visibly conforms to or deviates from convention can downplay or draw attention to such associative values in ways that create auxiliary signification. I would submit that the Ruthwell Cross's linguistic and iconographic components ought to be understood as comprising a single cohesive multilingual and multimodal 'text' that in turn seems to feature multilateral deliberation. Yet, given the discord over its dating, it is hard to say conclusively that it is not merely a type of polygraphy which is visually juxtaposed but discursively kept discrete and in parallel.

By contrast, the Franks Casket is an example which obliges viewers to recognize the visual, linguistic, and scriptal mediation on display. This relatively small and intricately carved whalebone box is a captivating surviving object that has typically been located and dated to around early eighth-century Northumbria.<sup>47</sup> The Casket depicts stories from multiple cultural traditions, and it features extensive writing that is mostly in runes and predominantly in Old English. The runes can be seen to run retrograde or inverted in places, and the Latin alphabet and language make a striking appearance on the rear panel of the Casket where Emperor Titus's destruction of the temple at Jerusalem is depicted.

The words "ƿƿƿ (*dom* 'judgment') and "Xlĥt (*gisl* 'hostage') appear respectively at the bottom left and right corners of the rear panel, and the following inscription runs up the left side, across the top, and down the right: "HMRƿMX†FD [ / ]

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<sup>47</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 174-82; Leslie Webster, *The Franks Casket* (London, England: The British Museum Press, 2012).

ᚠᚢᚱᚦᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ [ / ] ᚠᚢᚱᚦᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ [ / ] ᚠᚢᚱᚦᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ (*her fegtab titus end giubeasu HIC FUGIANT HIERUSALIM afitatores*).<sup>48</sup> It begins in runic Old English (*her fegtab* ‘here [they] fight’), continues in Roman character Latin (*hic fugiant* [= *fugiunt?*] ‘here [they] flee’), and concludes with apparently runic Latin (*afitatores* [= *habitatores?*] ‘inhabitants’). Page translates the entire inscription as “Here Titus and a Jew fight : here its inhabitants flee from Jerusalem,” and he proposes that the carver could have been working with a Latin original in some form of Roman script – translating and transliterating while carving – and halfway through mistakenly forgot to do either, before they returned to runes (but not English) for the final word.<sup>49</sup>

This line of reasoning may account for the three Roman script Latin words, and it is further endorsed by Okasha. It offers possible explanations for the spelling “*end* (Modern English ‘and,’ cf. Latin ‘*et*’)” where one might expect “*and*” or “*ond*,” and for the troubling “*giubeasu*,” which Page elects to read as a confused Latin form “*Giubaesus* (= *Iudaeus*, ‘Jew’).”<sup>50</sup> This interpretation also provides an acceptable rationale for the alternative spelling conventions apparently seen in the Latin, since the Roman letter words are more or less Classical in form, whereas the runic “*afitatores* (= *habitatores*, ‘inhabitants’) suggests a non-Classical pronunciation.

Page’s suggested reading does require a minor alteration of “*fugiant*,” however. He takes it as the third-person plural indicative (*fugiunt*) and introduces a somewhat troubling argumentative contradiction by refuting a number of alternative views on the grounds that these “assume that the carver was careless, which in

<sup>48</sup> This transliteration and spacing is borrowed Page, *An Introduction*, 176-7. Lower-case letters represent the runes, and capitals the Latin alphabet.

<sup>49</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 176-7.

<sup>50</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 176-7; Elisabeth Okasha, “Script-Mixing in Anglo-Saxon Inscriptions” in *Writing and Texts in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Alexander Rumble (Woodbridge, England: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 62-70 (p. 65).

general he was not [...].”<sup>51</sup> I find it equally hard to assume that carelessness and accident were responsible for the shifts in script and language. The material context of such a detailed and labor-intensive object hint that if the shifts are indeed errors, they cannot be the mistake of a single instant. Unlike the slip of a pen, physically carving whalebone would have demanded a large investment of both time and effort. Even if one disregards the forethought and deliberation that evidently went into the Casket’s design, accident does not suitably account for its additional peculiarities.

In contrast to the more conventional vowel runes of the other panels, the right panel includes five unusual symbols that are apparently deliberate variants. Commentators propose alternative interpretations of this panel and its imagery, but the unusual symbols are typically decoded as a cryptic cipher that requires the viewer to substitute the appropriate vowel to understand the words.<sup>52</sup> An intriguing theory is that the cryptic vowel runes could perhaps be seen as archaic or adapted rune-forms which indicate the final consonant of the ‘correct’ vowel rune’s name.<sup>53</sup>

Each rune historically possessed a name that began with the same phonemic sound the character represented. For example, the *Old English Rune Poem* suggests that the name of the ‘i’ (*i*) rune was “*is* (ice).”<sup>54</sup> Thus, Ball reasons that archaic versions of the ‘s’ rune could have been made to replace the ‘i’ rune, etc. While this explanation is far from wholly satisfying,<sup>55</sup> there is nevertheless a

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<sup>51</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 177.

<sup>52</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 178-9. Thomas Bredehoft, for example, offers a reading that does not follow Page in “Three New Cryptic Runes on the Franks Casket,” *Notes and Queries* 58.2 (2011): 181-3.

<sup>53</sup> C. J. E. Ball, “Franks Casket: Right Side – Again,” *English Studies* 55 (1974): 512.

<sup>54</sup> Maureen Halsall ed., *The Old English Rune Poem: A Critical Edition* (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 88-9. This feature is also important to note, because individual runes sometimes represent a runic name in its entirety rather than an isolated phonemic value.

<sup>55</sup> It does not account for all of the cryptic forms nor for single examples of seemingly non-cryptic vowels, etc. Page, *An Introduction*, 178-9; Helena Sobol, “Diversity between Panels of the Franks Casket – Spelling and Runic Paleography,” *Anglica* 26.2 (2017): 25-36 (pp. 26-9). Caution is likely further merited as it is difficult to be certain that names were a traditional

meaningful thematic connection to make between the scriptal peculiarities and the Franks Casket as a whole. Parsons highlights that,

The cryptography of the right-hand side of the Franks casket appears to show the survival of old forms into the later period, and an interaction between old and new, that suit admirably the object's usual dating to c. 700 and its artistic concerns, combining themes from Germanic past and Christian present.<sup>56</sup>

This thematic reading is broadly in keeping with the trends I have sketched out in this chapter, and it echoes the interpretations of numerous other commentators.

Thomas Klein scrutinizes the Roman character portion of the rear panel and observes that these letterforms not only differ in aspect from the runes and “float in the relatively narrow rectangular space dedicated to them,” but they “are also what paleographers call a ‘mixed script,’ being comprised both of what we would identify as Roman capitals and Insular letters.”<sup>57</sup> It is impossible to infer the creator's breadth of knowledge or ability, but “the variation in form and style within the letters does suggest that he had several options available to him, and chose deliberately from among them.”<sup>58</sup> Ultimately, Klein offers an interpretation that strongly hints at underlying imaginative and associative ties between scripts, languages, and cultural heritages.

The letters [...] permanently record the moment of encounter between several competing systems of writing, and the carver's conscious strategies for dealing with that encounter. Most fundamentally, the carved relief of the runes and letters of the Franks Casket reflects both the primal heritage of inscription, perhaps the most ancient means of writing, and the relatively recent introduction to England of ink and vellum, the appearance of which the carver labored to recreate in whalebone. Here we find the angularity of letter forms originally designed to be scratched into hard surfaces meeting the curves, flow, and overlap which ink makes possible.<sup>59</sup>

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feature of runes from the script's origins and ascertaining names at precise historical points presents further challenges since direct evidence is limited to surviving records of three runic poems (Icelandic, Norwegian, and Old English), none of which is older than the late eighth or early ninth century. Moreover, there is a lack of perfect consistency between these three rune poems and names do not align in every case for what are ostensibly the same characters. See further Barnes, *Runes*, 21; Page, *An Introduction*, 60-79.

<sup>56</sup> Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 99.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Klein, “Anglo-Saxon Literacy and the Roman Letters on the Franks Casket,” *Studia Neophilologica* 81.1 (2009): 17-23 (p. 17).

<sup>58</sup> Thomas Klein, “Anglo-Saxon Literacy,” 18.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Klein, “Anglo-Saxon Literacy,” 18.



This critical destination is strikingly similar to that of Thomas Birkett, Bredehoft, Catherine Karkov, and Leslie Webster, all of whom argue that the use of runes and Roman letters, in this case, is anything but redundant.<sup>60</sup>

In the same vein, Birkett suggests that the artificer(s) of the casket were “pointedly using the script as a bearer of symbolic as well as linguistic meaning,” and that the blending of scripts and languages appropriately represents an amalgamation and unification of diverse traditions – a rather “obvious parallel to the meeting of Germanic and Christian narrative on the casket as a whole.”<sup>61</sup> Much like how the front panel’s riddle reveals the material of construction, Webster argues for a view of the Franks Casket as a didactic object that requires the beholder to unravel and interpret the symbolically aligned stories, text, and imagery.<sup>62</sup> She presents the sudden script and linguistic switches as gesturing at the new world order of Latinate Christianity; the Casket is a multilayered text “about Christian authority and salvation, which at the same time, like *Beowulf*, acknowledges a Germanic ancestry.”<sup>63</sup> Karkov interprets the transformative inscription along with the visual iconography as drawing particular attention to the casket’s metamorphic aspects and aesthetic gestalt:

the move from Old English to Latin and back again also serves to embed the Latin within the Old English and the Roman within the runic. [...] the language and alphabets suggest a complex layering of time, voice, geographies and peoples. [...]

Here *affitatores* [sic] is a corrupt form of the Latin *habitatores*, but written in runes, transforming the inhabitants of Jerusalem into a people that is both Roman (language) and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or ‘Germanic’ (alphabet), yet not quite either. The inscription draws attention to transformation and metamorphosis [...] and furthers the Anglo-Saxons’ self-identification with the Israelites.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 15-20; Thomas Bredehoft, “Multilateralism,” 20-1; Catherine Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2011), 150; Leslie Webster, “The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket,” in *Northumbria’s Golden Age*, eds. Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud, England: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 227-46.

<sup>61</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 17-18.

<sup>62</sup> Webster, “The Iconographic Programme.”

<sup>63</sup> Webster, “The Iconographic Programme,” 245.

<sup>64</sup> Catherine Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 150.

Karkov's suggestion of self-identification with the Old Testament People of God is enticing, and it is intriguing that this could be artistically expressed through script and linguistic transformation. The expression is in keeping with ideological stances of Latinate Christianity which relate to scriptural authority, and while the multilingual and multiscriptal context visually foregrounds distinctions, it simultaneously blends them into a composite artistic and spiritual whole. It also tellingly looks forward to conceptualizations of runes, heritage, and scriptural history which will be seen to impact polygraphic runic occurrences in manuscript narrative contexts.

Before I proceed to an examination of manuscript practices and continued writing developments, I want to reiterate fundamental features that will continue to be more generally relevant to multiliteral signification. The period does not seem to have maintained a hard and fast conceptual distinction between text and image. Numismatic evidence and the example of the Offa coin in particular demonstrate how written language can serve semiotic purposes even without conveying linguistic meaning for a particular reader. However, sufficient dual literacy is required in the contrasted scripts to produce emblematic signification through polygraphic variation. Semiotic value ascription to the choice of script is stimulated by a reader's perception of creative mediation, as witnessed on St. Cuthbert's Coffin. Finally, I proposed that it is *intratextual* juxtaposition which foregrounds a semiotic multiplicity that encourages the ascription of semiotic values, and, that in the Old English context these appear to draw on historical awarenesses and layered notions of language, religion, heritage, and additional aspects of cultural identity.

### 1.3 Manuscripts and Writing Orality (c. 800 – c. 1100)

There is considerable debate as to the historical connections (and lack thereof) between divergent productive spheres of runic inscription and manuscript writing, and my aim in this section is not to oversimplify paleographical studies, manuscript runology, nor the complex historical questions of origin, continuity, revival, and influence.<sup>65</sup> Instead, I wish to contextualize subsequent English writing developments and later-period practice in a broader sense as relevant to script usage and the writing of runes. I will focus on enduring patterns and transforming perceptions of script distinction, so as ultimately to gauge auxiliary semiotic value that is ascribed to examples of intratextual script variation.

The alphabet used to record the Old English in manuscripts demonstrates that it is not fair simply to relegate runes in scribal settings to a secondary role that is purely imitative. Parsons observes that,

A perception that runes were a separate system, of particular value in representing the vernacular, could still be appreciated in learned Christian contexts; it presumably explains the adoption of **ƿ** and **w** in order to supplement the roman alphabet used for writing Old English. A feeling that runic was a more flexible tool for the vernacular could explain in part why the Church was happy to preserve it at all alongside roman [...].<sup>66</sup>

The vernacular bookhand adapted the runic characters ‘ƿ (*w*) *wynn*’ and ‘þ (*th*) *thorn*’ for use in representing phonemic values not adequately provided for by the traditional Latin alphabet. The ‘æ’ ash ligature also took its name (though not its form) from that of a runic character ‘F (æ).’ In addition, other common supplementary characters included the insular ‘ȝ (*g*)’ (which eventually gave rise to yogh ‘ȝ (*y*)’), the Irish-inherited eth, ‘ð (*th*)’, and the ‘& (&)’ Tironian *et* symbol.

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<sup>65</sup> See first René Derolez, “Epigraphic Versus Manuscript Runes: One or Two Worlds?” *Academiae Analecta* 45.1 (1983): 69-93.

<sup>66</sup> Parsons, *Recasting the Runes*, 113.

Orthographic convention and features such as punctuation fluctuated to varying degrees depending on the scriptorium, an individual scribe's practice, and other factors involved with the production of a text. Even a single text produced by a single scribe can display seemingly arbitrary or inconsistent orthographic techniques. For example, shifts between the usage of eth and thorn in consecutive renderings of the same word can appear entirely unsystematic to the eye of a modern reader.<sup>67</sup> All of this may contribute to an impression of irregularity, but lest the situation be misconceptualized, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe stresses that in point of fact, "Modern English has a much higher orthographic redundancy than Old English";<sup>68</sup> this reality is perhaps simply disguised by modern standardized word spellings.

Far from being characterized by arbitrariness and orthographic unpredictability, what the manuscript record actually illustrates is a continued functional hierarchization and purposeful differentiation. On this subject, McKee writes that, "By the ninth century, Uncial and Half-uncial had been abandoned, leaving Hybrid minuscule at the top of the hierarchy,"<sup>69</sup> and Michelle Brown further identifies that especially south of the Humber, there appears increasingly to be an "emphasis on effect, rather than a purist approach to a hierarchy closely related to function."<sup>70</sup> The example of the Book of Cerne reinforces these ideas by presenting an analogous, if slightly more liberally applied, pattern of differentiation.

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<sup>67</sup> Christine Fell offers a plausible hypothesis for the 'redundant' introduction of eth and thorn and suggests that originally, they might have represented two separate scriptoria's differing methods of solving the same problem of representing a phonemic value unaccounted for by the Latin alphabet. Christine Fell, "Anglo-Saxon England: A Three-Script Community?" in *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions: Grindaheim, Norway, 8-12 August 1990*, ed. James Knirk (Uppsala, Sweden: Institutionen för nordiska språk, Uppsala universitet, 1994), 119-39 (p. 131).

<sup>68</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 17.

<sup>69</sup> McKee, "Scripts," 423.

<sup>70</sup> Michelle P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage and Power in Ninth-Century England* (London, England and Toronto, Canada: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1996), 62.

The Book of Cerne is a ninth-century Anglo-Latin prayerbook of Mercian provenance which contains the earliest Old English prose writing to survive in its original manuscript context. It contains a prefatory exhortation to prayer in Old English and its overall “range of scripts [...] and the manner in which they are employed reveal a highly developed awareness of an established hierarchy and gradation of scripts as well as a willingness to reinterpret and manipulate them.”<sup>71</sup> Usage and glyphic variation does not correspond solely to function. Aesthetic concerns also contribute to script selection and the overall *mise-en-page*.

Much of the Old English writing that survives does not come from as early as the Book of Cerne, which is at the tail end of the first of what Richard Gameson calls two “‘golden ages’ of scribal achievement.”<sup>72</sup> The majority, including the major poetic codices, was produced during the second such ‘golden age’ around the turn of the millennium. In between these peaks of production, literacy was neglected and possibly suffered due to Viking attack and expansion into Britain. Following conflict and the eventual establishment of peace terms, King Alfred of Wessex (d. 899) addressed this decline directly in his Preface to the translation of Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Care*. Lamenting diminished literacy and proficiency in Latin, Alfred set in motion programs of ecclesiastical and intellectual reform that included education in English and the translation of such significant theological works into the vernacular.

These societal developments produced diverse effects that heavily impacted subsequent writings and writing practice. Political and cultural dominance by Wessex rationalizes why most of the surviving literature tends toward the West Saxon dialect of Old English. Even more relevant for my purposes of script contextualization, this

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<sup>71</sup> Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 63.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Gameson, “Anglo-Saxon Scribes and Scriptoria,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume I c. 400-1100*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press), 94-120 (p. 115).

'Alfredian Renaissance' toward the end of the ninth century sparked the eventual development of a new Latin alphabet handwriting style, referred to by paleographers as Anglo-Saxon Square minuscule.<sup>73</sup>

Alfred's earlier reform programs may even have something of a causal connection with the Benedictine Reform of the mid to late tenth century, as David Dumville suggests.<sup>74</sup> The Benedictine Reform was a major intellectual movement during the reign of King Edgar (d. 975), and the revitalization of monasticism facilitated literary production. The surviving text copies of Old English poetry come to us from during and after this period, and the spread of monastic reforms was additionally significant in paleographic terms. A separate innovation made its way into English scriptoria following closely on the heels of Square minuscule. As Mildred Budny writes,

Continental influence in the tenth-century Benedictine reform movement introduced Caroline minuscule script to England, where it evolved into a distinctive Anglo-Saxon version: English Caroline minuscule, characterized by some special letter-forms (notably of *a*, *f*, *g* and *s*).<sup>75</sup>

Yet, Caroline minuscule did not immediately signal the death knell for Square minuscule. Instead, the processes of deliberate differentiation between scripts and glyphs evident in earlier writing extended and adapted once again to the use of these two distinct versions of the Roman alphabet. Different centers of writing exhibited alternative preferences, but gradually and especially by around the year 1000, "Anglo-Saxon scribes came increasingly to reserve different text-scripts for different

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<sup>73</sup> David N. Dumville, "English Square Minuscule Script: The Background and Earliest Phases," *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987): 147-79; David N. Dumville, "English Square Minuscule Script: The Mid-Century Phases," *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994): 133-64.

<sup>74</sup> David N. Dumville, "King Alfred and the Tenth-Century Reform of the English Church," in *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 1992), 185-205.

<sup>75</sup> Mildred Budny, "Old English Poetry in its Material Context," in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, eds. Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: VU University Press, 1994), 19-44 (p. 38).

languages, employing English Caroline minuscule for Latin but Anglo-Saxon minuscule for Old English.”<sup>76</sup>

Neil Ker characterizes the forms of Anglo-Saxon minuscule in Old English texts as comparatively “less neat” and featuring more frequent and prominent use of ascenders and descenders, and he highlights the bilingual manuscript of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, Corpus Christi College, Oxford 353 as a prime case study demonstration of the care and training that apparently went in to ensuring scribes observed the conventions of letter form, since it “was written at a time when Anglo-Saxon minuscule was still a living script.”<sup>77</sup> Glyphic alternatives of fundamentally the same script system were evidently perceived with distinct semiotic values that drew on associative connotations tied to usage convention and identification of linguistic distinction. In short, different letterforms could be associated with different languages.

Divergences which further substantiate this observation also appear in visual manuscript conventions seen in Old English verse. Budny notes with regard to the poem *Aldhelm* of Cambridge Corpus Christi College Manuscript 326: “The main scribe of the Corpus Aldhelm distinguished thus [i.e. glyphically] between the poem Ealdhelm and the Latin text. Moreover, even within the poem he mostly distinguished between its Old English portions and its Latin or transliterated Greek portions.”<sup>78</sup> Visual differentiation reinforces the linguistic code-shifting of this alliterative, macaronic poem and its situation in the manuscript.

In a broader sense, there is also reason to believe that the reading of Old English poetry took place in a manner different from that of Anglo-Latin. The

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<sup>76</sup> Budny, “Old English Poetry,” 38. See also McKee, “Scripts.”

<sup>77</sup> Neil Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1957), xxv-xxvii.

<sup>78</sup> Budny, “Old English Poetry,” 38.

vernacular verse is conventionally understood as deriving from pre-literate oral traditions and being “fundamentally formulaic, relying on stock and repeated phrases [...]”<sup>79</sup> Such reliance is held to be an intrinsic element of various traditional, non-written methods of composition. Features such as repetition and flexible modularity allow for easier transmission by memory and more rapid, semi-spontaneous acts of composition, presumably before an audience in an oral context.<sup>80</sup>

Francis Magoun conjectured that the visual presentation of Old English poetry as a transcribed composition with typically “prose” lineation stemmed from neither singers nor scribes possessing a formal understanding of the metrics of the verse.<sup>81</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe pushes this line of thinking still further in her work with the *Beowulf* manuscript (Cotton Manuscript Vitellius A. XV) and calls attention to the “inconsistent word division, variable spacing, inconsistent abbreviation,” “highly individual and sporadic capitalization and punctuation, and copying of verse without regard to length of line [...]”<sup>82</sup> She argues that a reader of Old English poetry must of necessity have

brought a great deal of predictive knowledge to the text to be read [...] knowledge [which] came from a deep understanding of the conventions of Old English verse, marked as it is by formula, generic composition and repetition, in short, by those features generally considered necessary for the successful transmission of oral poetry in non-literate cultures.<sup>83</sup>

On the whole, therefore, manuscript convention seems to reemphasize an implicit awareness of the ‘oral’ quality of Old English verse, as well as of functional

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<sup>79</sup> Andy Orchard, “Oral Tradition,” in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 101-23 (p. 103).

<sup>80</sup> Initially championed by Milman Parry and Albert Lord with regard to Homeric verse, the seminal work which applies oral-formulaic theory to Old English poetry is Francis Magoun, “Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry,” *Speculum* 28.3 (1953): 446-67. For an overview survey of the subsequent development of oral-formulaic research in Old English studies and relevant bibliographies, see two articles by Alexandra Olsen, “Oral-Formulaic Research in Old English Studies: I,” *Oral Tradition* 1.3 (1986): 548-606, and “Oral-Formulaic Research in Old English Studies: II,” *Oral Tradition* 3.1-2 (1988): 138-90.

<sup>81</sup> Francis Magoun, “Oral-Formulaic Character,” 462-3.

<sup>82</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 20-2.

<sup>83</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 21.



and linguistic distinctions. If, as Andy Orchard expresses, “the Latin text requires to be read, the English to be heard,”<sup>84</sup> what is to be made of intratextual runes that appear as linguistically contributory elements in poetic manuscript contexts?

A. N. Doane argues that “It would be truer to the status of these texts [i.e. most Old English poetic texts] to present them as something *scored for the voice*.”<sup>85</sup> Yet, this characterization is deeply problematized by visually playful examples such as the runic riddles, *The Husband’s Message*, and the Cynewulf ‘signature’ runes.<sup>86</sup> I observed that scribal use of varieties of the Latin alphabet reflected a consciousness of glyphic differentiation and accompanying semiotic meanings, much as changes in font can impact a text’s reception for Modern English readers. Surely, this feature would only be enhanced in the case of intratextual runes that are included as part of a text’s discourse but which stand in contrast to the alphabet letterforms of the Old English bookhand.

Unlike with Insular Roman hand varieties, there does not appear to be a clearly established mode of implementation, hierarchical or otherwise. There is not an overriding rationale which accounts for every intratextual rune occurrence, and scholars vary considerably in their interpretative approaches. Page judges that “such manuscripts are the work not of rune-carvers but of runic antiquaries, of men fascinated by this declining script, of scholars who were more at home with the roman alphabet, of the immature who delighted in strange and cryptic alphabets.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Orchard, “Oral Tradition,” 120.

<sup>85</sup> A. N. Doane, “Oral Texts, Intertexts and Intratexts: Editing Old English,” in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, eds. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 75-113 (p. 89).

<sup>86</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 7; Victoria Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Berlin, Germany and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2016), 35.

<sup>87</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 42.

Seth Lerer supports this view and suggests that runes were included as “one more system of scriptorial cryptography [...]”<sup>88</sup>

Runes encountered in the Exeter Book – one of the major surviving poetic codices – seem to justify these perspectives. Exeter Cathedral Library Manuscript 3501 is an “undecorated” volume that “is large in scale and written in a bold clear hand [...]”<sup>89</sup> It contains both religious and secular Old English verse, and it is viewed as having been produced c. 975, although this does not resolve debates and questions surrounding the dating of individual works contained therein, especially as “Linguistically there are signs that it was copied continuously from an earlier book.”<sup>90</sup> Runes do appear there in connection to cryptic writing like the riddles, and there is inconsistency witnessed throughout the manuscript in terms of their size and implementation.<sup>91</sup> However, it is an oversimplification to see the Exeter Book’s and even the riddles’ use of runes as nothing more than a means of encryption to disguise answers.

*Riddle 24*, for example, includes runes that must be rearranged to form ‘HIXFRF *higoræ* (woodpecker, jay, magpie),’ an apparent solution to the riddle’s description of a “*wunderlicu wiht* (strange creature).”<sup>92</sup> It produces an unsatisfying reading to simply take this as concealing/revealing the answer to the riddle’s

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<sup>88</sup> Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 11.

<sup>89</sup> Donald Scragg, “Old English Homiliaries and Poetic Manuscripts,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume I c. 400-1100*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press), 553-65 (p. 553).

<sup>90</sup> Scragg, “Old English Homiliaries,” 554.

<sup>91</sup> René Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta: the English Tradition* (Bruges, Belgium: De Tempel, 1954), 394-6; Ralph Elliott “Cynwulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” *English Studies* 34 (1953): 193-204 (p. 199); Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 20-2.

<sup>92</sup> Bernard J. Muir ed. *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501*, 2 vols. (Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press, 1994), vol. 1: 305. This and the following Modern English translated excerpt from the riddle are borrowed from Kevin Crossley-Holland, trans., *The Exeter Book Riddles* (Middlesex, England and New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1979), 45.

question, both because the runes' names work as words within the poem's meter and because the visible aspect of the letters is referenced explicitly in the text itself – “*Nu ic haten eom swa þa siex stafas sweotule becnap* (I'm called what these six characters clearly spell out).”<sup>93</sup> Two of the poem's critics urge that it prompts specific further reflection. Dieter Bitterli emphasizes the contrasted presentation of animal and human forms of communication, whereas Symons highlights the deliberate juxtaposition of aural and written communication.<sup>94</sup> *Riddle 24* is as much a meditation on language as it is a puzzle to be solved, and this is thematically in keeping with Lerer's perception of the entire Exeter Book as a compilation that is preoccupied with notions of learning.<sup>95</sup>

Through case study inspection of the Exeter book, Symons ultimately makes the broader argument that “textual runes are used in manuscripts as visual signifiers of written language [...]”<sup>96</sup> While this is appealing, it does not offer a sufficiently complete depiction of intratextual runes' semiotic potential, because it does not adequately account for scripts' ideological roles as cultural signifiers. I have observed that scripts maintained associative values which affected their usage in examples from early and later in the period, and I am not convinced by Bredehoft's assessment that manuscript polygraphy is less intrinsically tied to multilingualism than epigraphic polygraphy.<sup>97</sup> The emblematic values ascribed to different scripts must have changed and developed in addition to varying from instance to instance, but as Birkett identifies,

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<sup>93</sup> Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, vol. 1: 305; Crossley-Holland, *The Exeter Book Riddles*, 45.

<sup>94</sup> Dieter Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition* (Toronto, Canada and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 97; Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 47-52.

<sup>95</sup> Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, 158-94.

<sup>96</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 15. Symons further considers: *Riddles 19, 42, 58, and 64; The Husband's Message*; and Cynewulf's *Christ II* and *Juliana*.

<sup>97</sup> Bredehoft, “Multiliteralism,” 18.

although the epigraphical tradition had all but died out in late Anglo-Saxon England, it is clear that the cultural memory of the script had not. Runes continued to be recorded in manuscripts and, at least in some quarters, to be closely associated with Anglo-Saxon heritage: as late as the eleventh century an innocuous reference to ‘*ure stafas*’ (‘our letters’) in a manuscript of the OE *Bede* seems to have inspired a scribe to pen a runic **abcd** directly beneath it.<sup>98</sup>

Indeed, not only English runic heritage, but also a distinct variety of cultural memories of runic writing is attested to by the survival in Britain of later-period objects which display Scandinavian runic forms.

For example, the Bridekirk Font in modern Cumbria is a twelfth-century stone artifact with an English language inscription in Scandinavian runes.<sup>99</sup> In the Danelaw and northern areas of Britain which experienced intense Scandinavian settlement and linguistic influence, it would hardly be surprising for cultural memories of runes to endure, if with an understandably different aspect. In addition to not uncommon later period manuscript inclusions of Old English/Old Norse rune-rows, alphabets, or lists,<sup>100</sup> there is an exceptional example of manuscript runic writing that is both chronologically earlier and further afield geographically, known as the Canterbury Charm.

The Canterbury Runic Charm is an Old Norse language, Scandinavian runic charm against blood poison that makes reference to the Germanic pagan deity Thor and is transcribed in the second part of Cotton Manuscript Caligula A. XV. The runes are below the margins on ff. 123v.-124r. under tables of computistical material used for the calendrical calculation of the date of Easter. Despite their placement, they do not give the impression of being a casual later addition by a runic-literate, Norse

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<sup>98</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 13. The instance to which Birkett refers can be found in Cambridge Corpus Christi College Manuscript 41, p. 436, an eleventh-century manuscript with other meaningful runic marginalia I shall revisit later in this chapter.

<sup>99</sup> Erik Moltke, *Runes and their Origin: Denmark and Elsewhere*, trans. Peter Foote. (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1985), 360-1; Page, *An Introduction*, 207-8.

<sup>100</sup> On these and other *extratextual* appearances of runes, see first: Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta*; Aya van Renterghem, “The Written Rune: Alphabets and Rune-rows in Medieval Manuscripts from the Continent and the British Isles” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nottingham, 2018).

speaker visiting Canterbury. Instead, John Frankis highlights the seemingly identical pen and ink of the runes and the preceding material, and he points out that the runes have serifs – “a common feature of late Anglo-Saxon writing, though, for what it is worth, they are not used in the admittedly later Danish runic manuscripts.”<sup>101</sup> Frankis summarizes that,

The general context of the Runic charm is fairly clear; it is one of a number of charms among computistic texts [...] and there is nothing in the appearance of the inscription to suggest that it was copied by anyone other than the scribe of this part of the manuscript. [...] Caligula is apparently unique among post-conquest English manuscripts for preserving an actual [i.e. continuous] runic text, as opposed to a list of runic characters. The Caligula runes are copied without explanation, perhaps on the assumption that any power lay either in the spoken words or, more probably, in the written runic text, independently of any meaning that the original might have had; a reader or user was not necessarily expected to understand their content, or even to be able to read the words, and there is no guidance for their use.<sup>102</sup>

Visually, the runes almost appear as a ‘footer’ in such a way that they balance out the beautiful line drawing which precedes the tables on the previous two pages of the manuscript (ff. 122v.-123r.). Frankis argues for the likelihood that the Canterbury Charm was copied from somewhere by an individual who perceived its function as a charm, but who presumably was not fully cognizant of its pagan nature.<sup>103</sup> The runes of the charm are not multiliteral as per my definition, and even if not purely ornamentation, they function as their own isolated text in a sense. Nevertheless, the Canterbury Charm is a helpful example from late in the period that reemphasizes different scripts’ continued value as cultural and associative signifiers, even where linguistic discursivity is absent or perhaps diminished.

Within the realm of Old English manuscript texts that use or make reference to runes, Lerer takes these cultural heritage notions into consideration and offers the perspective that “Old English writers [...] invest in this vocabulary and in the

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<sup>101</sup> John Frankis, “Sidelights on Post-Conquest Canterbury: Towards A Context for an Old Norse Runic Charm (*DR 419*),” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 44 (2000): 1-27 (pp. 5-6).

<sup>102</sup> Frankis, “Sidelights on Post-Conquest Canterbury,” 20.

<sup>103</sup> Frankis, “Sidelights on Post-Conquest Canterbury,” 13.

conventions of runology to call to mind the past they share with Scandinavian and Continental Germanic peoples and to juxtapose that past against a Christian Latin present.”<sup>104</sup> However, I would argue that evocation of the past does not need to be understood as representing a departure. Quite the opposite, Birkett identifies an overarching leitmotif through reference to the same texts.

But it also suggests a fundamental re-conceptualisation of scriptural history, inculcating the idea that the runes were not simply an epigraphical script imported to England by pagan ancestors, but that they represent a scriptural antecedent to the gospels and to the revelations of the New Testament. That runes, in other words, were divinely sanctioned as a precursor to the copying of scripture.<sup>105</sup>

[...]

In short, both the ancestors and the script they used have been inserted into Old Testament history, the runes represented as an antediluvian script bearing knowledge from before the flood that anticipates the salvation of the Germanic tribes and that demands to be read correctly.<sup>106</sup>

By “remediating the rune and representing the tradition to itself,”<sup>107</sup> later period Old English literary culture was able to sew associative notions of cultural identity and heritage into the fabric of literate Latinate Christianity and its mythology of writing tied to the authority of the revealed word of God.

A representation of such interlacing is visually and thematically achieved in the poem *Solomon and Saturn I* as contained in Cambridge Corpus Christi College Manuscript 422. Lines 84-145 discuss the ‘*Pater Noster*’ and contain runic and Roman letters to spell out this formula, e.g. a paired runic and Roman “ꝛ P” are seen on the penultimate line of the text on page 3 in the manuscript.<sup>108</sup> Marie Nelson relates this presentation to the voicing of a charm performance and argues that the letters imbue the text with a word power of sorts.<sup>109</sup> This recalls possible

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<sup>104</sup> Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, 11.

<sup>105</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 28.

<sup>106</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 36.

<sup>107</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 181.

<sup>108</sup> Daniel Anlezark, *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2009), 28.

<sup>109</sup> Marie Nelson, “King Solomon’s Magic: The Power of the Written Text,” *Oral Tradition* 5.1 (1990): 20-36.

associations elicited above, but Edward Christie poignantly stresses that “Although a literate Anglo-Saxon view of signs was undoubtedly affected by forces in folk culture like runic literacy and charms, a mystical view of alphabetic writing was also a part of Latin literacy.”<sup>110</sup> It is also impossible to ignore that the poem’s alliteration dictates the letters be read for Roman values rather than runic names.<sup>111</sup> Based on this fact and the occasional textual allusion to letter shape, Symons suggests that the runes were likely incorporated into this version subsequent to the poem’s composition.<sup>112</sup> This view is further upheld by the fact that the other fragmentary version of *Solomon and Saturn I* – a marginal entry on pages 196-8 of the *Old English Bede* contained in Cambridge Corpus Christi College Manuscript 41 – does not contain a ‘ƿ (*p*)’ rune at the same juncture.

Yet fascinatingly, MS 41’s version does contain runes. The name ‘Solomon’ can be seen transcribed in mixed script as ‘*Salom*’, where the final component of the Hebrew name is represented with an ‘*M* (*m*)’ rune that is used for its name value, i.e. ‘*man*(*n*) (human, man).’ This is a multiliteral occurrence and one which forms an interesting counterpoint to the techniques of the MS 422’s *Solomon and Saturn I*. The MS 422 runes function ornamentally and visually play into the recurring themes I have glossed of linguistic and cultural identity coupled with scriptural authority. The MS 41 runes, on the other hand, also retain discursiveness in a linguistic sense and must not simply be ‘viewed’ but also ‘read.’ Despite a dwindling applicative currency

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<sup>110</sup> Edward Christie, “By Means of a Secret Alphabet: Dangerous Letters and the Semantics of *Gebregdstafas* (*Solomon and Saturn I*, Line 2b),” *Modern Philology* 109.2 (2011): 145-70 (p. 146). This view is also theoretically in keeping with O’Brien O’Keeffe’s presentation of the poem’s central tensions being between power/knowledge and speaking/writing. O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 51.

<sup>111</sup> Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta*, 420.

<sup>112</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 150.

more broadly, these runes do not augment the text simply as images. They are operative and contributory as linguistic signs.

There does not appear to have been a fully conventionalized method of employing intratextual runes in Old English manuscript contexts. Nonetheless, when multiple, discrete scripts that are linguistically denotative are used concurrently, readers are able to perceive a juxtaposition and overlap. This perception establishes a textual situation wherein multiliteral semiotic potential becomes foregrounded, because the choice of one script over another can itself convey something to a reader.

In some ways, the aesthetic effects produced are akin to those of a code-switch in a multilingual text, but a graphic shift does not necessitate a linguistic shift. Although it obliges one to understand the ‘language’ of the sign, multiliteralism does not even require any linguistic variation whatsoever in the precise utterance in order to be operative. Processable linguistic legibility and perceived mediation are key components of multiliteralism’s functionality as a semiotic device in narrative settings, and these constituent aspects are what recommend the four Old English poems *Christ II*, *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene* as a prime case study corpus.

#### **1.4 Perceptions of Culture, Script, and Cynewulf**

I have identified four works of poetry from the surviving corpus of Old English verse for close-reading analysis as the first of this project’s two major case studies into individual multiliteral technique. The reasoning that prompted my selection of *Christ II*, *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene* is twofold.



First, although they are encountered in two separate manuscript contexts, the poems can legitimately be regarded as making up the ‘signed’ Cynewulf canon.<sup>113</sup> This is because each displays a runic signature of sorts which provides the proper name ‘Cynewulf’ or ‘Cynwulf.’ The so-called signature is not *paratextually* appended to the end of its corresponding text but is instead woven into the Roman alphabet lines of the poems themselves. Though Cyn(e)wulf is certainly not to be understood as an Author with all the implications that accompany that term in a contemporary sense, these four texts are categorically linked to one another by their analogous inclusion of the name. As such, they form a foundational set of works meriting greater individual and collective assessment in terms of narrative multiliteralism.<sup>114</sup>

The second major virtue of this set of texts as an exemplary case study stems from their different techniques of application. The four poems’ polygraphic implementations are not uniform, and the distinctness of each provides a practical contrast for correlation and comparison across the corpus. Toward that end, my final objectives in this chapter are to review the manuscript contexts in which the Cynewulf poems survive and to contextualize the poet figure of Cynewulf.

The first two signed poems I shall consider— *Christ II* and *Juliana* — survive in unique copy in the same manuscript from above which contains the riddles, the Exeter Book. *Christ II* comes toward the beginning (ff. 14r.-20v.) between poems known as *Christ I* and *Christ III*, and *Juliana* slightly later in the collection (ff. 65v.-

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<sup>113</sup> One of the primary modern editions cited throughout this study, Robert Bjork ed. and trans., *The Old English Poems of Cynewulf* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013), also includes *Guthlac B: The Death of St. Guthlac of Crowland* as potentially another work produced by the Cynewulf figure, noting that the poem’s conclusion is missing and therefore also possibly its accompanying runic signature. Regardless of what the poem’s lost conclusion may have contained, *Guthlac B* has been excluded from my analysis as part of the subsequent case study since in its present state it lacks the pivotal polygraphic signature found within the four poems of the signed canon.

<sup>114</sup> For the sake of expediency, the name “Cynewulf” will henceforward be used in a general way to refer to the individual(s) responsible for the creative production of the four signed poems.

76r.), preceding *The Wanderer*, *The Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene*, meanwhile, are part of the so-called Vercelli Book, Vercelli Biblioteca capitolare CXVII. The Vercelli Book is also an anthology, and it is thought to have been produced “in the middle of the second half of the tenth century.”<sup>115</sup> It contains prose and poetry that treat exclusively with religious subject material. Donald Scragg compares the Exeter and Vercelli anthologies and offers the following description:

Again, the [Vercelli] book is large-scale; the written area is larger and there are more lines in the last five quires than in the first fourteen. The writing, although almost certainly that of one man, varies slightly in appearance because of the change in size. It is likely that the manuscript was written over an extended period of time; certainly, in contrast to the Exeter Book, it was not copied continuously from an existing volume but was compiled from a variety of sources, as occasional spaces between items indicates.<sup>116</sup>

The runic name ‘Cyn(e)wulf’ that is found in four poems spread across these two distinctive volumes has fascinated scholars since its discovery.

Captivated perhaps by the rarity of a named ‘author’ in what is by and large an anonymous vernacular poetic tradition, previous generations of scholars formerly ascribed any number of other Old English works to this figure despite the elusiveness of his identity.<sup>117</sup> Many of these claims have since been viewed with a greater skepticism and hesitation, and modern scholarly considerations of the four poems can be seen to differ greatly in their acceptance of Cynewulf as an authentic historical person who served as the principal creative force behind each text as an undivided unit. If one specific individual – presumably with the corresponding proper name – did exist and was primarily responsible for the production of the poems, it

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<sup>115</sup> Donald Scragg, “Vercelli Book,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, rev. ed., eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg (Chichester, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 478-9 (p. 478).

<sup>116</sup> Scragg, “Old English Homilies,” 554.

<sup>117</sup> E.g. See Albert Cook ed., *The Christ of Cynewulf: A Poem in Three Parts* (Boston, MA: Ginn and Company Publishers, 1909) which attributes all three *Christ* poems of the Exeter Book to Cynewulf.

has proven exceedingly difficult for modern scholars to determine much that is concrete about his identity or exact dates of creative production.

On one extreme, critics such as Jacqueline Stodnick have adopted an understandably skeptical approach to the works. She argues that, "There is no proof that Cynewulf actually wrote the poetry which bears his name, there is no record of his existence outside the literary works; the entire phenomenon of Cynewulf as a named Old English poet is based on an assumption that this is the true explanation for the runes."<sup>118</sup> However, this interpretation seems overly hesitant given the poems' internal hints and requests for prayers. Daniel Donoghue offers a more moderate verdict in his evaluation of Old English auxiliary verb behavior. He highlights undeniable stylistic ties between *Elene* and *Juliana* though not to the two shorter poems, and he proposes that Cynewulf was likely "a poetic reviser of the two texts, which he found somewhere, admired, and copied out with changes, one of which was his runic petition at the end."<sup>119</sup> Finally, and at the opposite end, Robert Fulk and Andy Orchard have respectively conducted analyses of meter and of shared poetic formulae, both of which indicate larger linguistic and stylistic connections between all four of the signed poems.<sup>120</sup>

Historical evidence and rational deductions from textual and linguistic clues allow for further inferences to be made about the poet's possible location and era. Fulk builds on the formative work of Kenneth Sisam and considers the pronunciations

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<sup>118</sup> Jacqueline Stodnick, "Cynewulf as Author: Medieval Reality or Modern Myth," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 79.3 (1997): 25-39 (p. 31).

<sup>119</sup> Daniel Donoghue, *Style in Old English Poetry: The Test of the Auxiliary* (New Haven, CT and London, England: Yale University Press, 1987), 116. Donoghue's conclusions are also intriguing in that they apparently detach the two poems with the "Cynewulf" signature from those with "Cynwulf."

<sup>120</sup> Robert Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); Andy Orchard, "Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf," in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine Karkov and George Brown (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 271-305.

suggested by the variant spellings of the name as a means of establishing a reasonable range of dates for the poems' composition.<sup>121</sup> Fulk notes that the two pronunciations suggested by the divergent spellings 'Cynewulf' and 'Cynwulf' would have existed side by side from the earliest times, and what is striking is that none of the poems offer '\*Cyniwulf,' an older form of the name that faded out of usage.<sup>122</sup> This implies that if Cynewulf had been active in Mercia, or even the South, he could not have been working much earlier than 750 C.E., and if in Northumbria not prior to c. 850 C.E.<sup>123</sup>

Linguistic and dialectical factors of the texts can also somewhat clarify the question of Cynewulf's possible location, but these also should be approached with a degree of skepticism. In the introduction to her edition of *Juliana*, Woolf cautiously acknowledges that previous commentators tended to view the poem as originally an Anglian text, since certain of the poem's imperfect rhymes would become true if the West Saxon forms were replaced with Anglian ones.<sup>124</sup> Conner, however, warns against unguarded acceptance of such inclinations toward viewing medieval rhyming practice through the possibly anachronistic lens of modern poetic interpretation.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, as Fulk emphasizes, "most surviving verse seems to be recorded in a linguistic koine, the Anglian features of which are the result of Anglian political dominance of the South before the ninth century."<sup>126</sup> Despite this caveat and an

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<sup>121</sup> Robert Fulk, "Cynewulf: Canon, Dialect, and Date," in *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed., ed. Robert Bjork (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 3-21. See also Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1953).

<sup>122</sup> Fulk, "Cynewulf," 15-16.

<sup>123</sup> Fulk, "Cynewulf," 15-16.

<sup>124</sup> Rosemary Woolf ed., *Juliana* (London, England: Methuen, 1955), 4.

<sup>125</sup> Patrick Conner, "On Dating Cynewulf," in *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed., ed. Robert Bjork (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 23-56 (pp. 25-6).

<sup>126</sup> Fulk, "Cynewulf," 10; Kenneth Sisam, "Dialect Origins of the Earlier Old English Verse," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1953), 119-39.

acknowledgment that “complete assurance is hardly possible” because of the gaps in knowledge about Old English dialect variation, Fulk ultimately still suggests that,

the number of linguistic features that appear to point to Anglian originals for Cynewulf’s works is obviously large, so that if Cynewulf’s verse were not Anglian in origin it would be an extraordinary coincidence that so many independent linguistic variables distinguish it from poetry of Southern origin.<sup>127</sup>

This sums up modern scholarly consensus which tends to place Cynewulf as writing with an Anglian dialect (likely in Mercia) relatively later in the period of Old English.<sup>128</sup> Fulk tentatively dates the Cynewulf poems to around the early ninth century, and I have already noted the continued relevance of runes alongside prominent writing developments and associative features during this pre-Benedictine Reform period. This dating does not go entirely unquestioned, however. Conner argues that “the “*Cynewulf/Cyniwulf* distinction [...] locates the poet in the tenth century as easily as it dates him to any earlier period.”<sup>129</sup> Though I remain hesitant about accepting this later dating, Conner’s valid proposition is particularly worth noting as it places Cynewulf chronologically closer to a “very strong interest in runic writing in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries” which Conner remarks on elsewhere.<sup>130</sup> A later date of composition would not nullify the polygraphic runes’ associative values, and it may have even strengthened them.

Though it is impossible to discern the precise identity of Cynewulf from existing evidence, it can be rationally inferred that the creator(s) and preserver(s) of the poems were participants in some religious institution multiple generations after conversion, at a time when Christianity was a well-established cultural norm.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Fulk, “Cynewulf,” 13.

<sup>128</sup> Jane Roberts, “Cynewulf,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, rev. ed., eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg (Chichester, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 136-7.

<sup>129</sup> Conner, “On Dating,” 25-6.

<sup>130</sup> Conner, “The Ruthwell Monument,” 25.

<sup>131</sup> Wormald, “The Uses of Literacy.” Wormald remains hesitant about widespread lay literacy, and he highlights also that the ability to appreciate a written work aurally or even to recognize or read

Manuscript production was a function of the ecclesiastical sphere, and the language of the four poems reveal that their deviser(s) must have been competent in Latin.

The texts are all unambiguously Christian narratives which stem from and correspond to established continental religious literary models.<sup>132</sup>

At the same time, while the Cynewulf poems do take up ostensibly 'imported' characters and themes as their subjects, the language and rhetoric of the poems is unequivocally Old English. The poems are not only composed in the vernacular, but they also make use of the same vocabulary, motifs, thematic elements, and tone that is encountered in other surviving works, including the epic *Beowulf*. They are part of 'native' alliterative verse traditions that are inextricably intertwined with the notions of formulaic production and oral culture addressed above. That being the case, I am obliged to ask two related questions of contextualization if I am to approach and appreciate the specific multiliteral techniques of the poems: should the poems be viewed first and foremost as oral compositions, and are they to be understood as primarily intended for an oral performance and reception?

As part of a test of repeated formulae and poetic diction, Robert Diamond points out what he deems an all but inescapable truth.

On the basis of internal evidence (there is no external evidence), it is impossible to determine whether the Cynewulf poems were composed orally and written down by a scribe, were composed with pen in hand in the ordinary modern way, or were

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written characters in a basic way does not necessarily go hand in hand with the ability to write. For a somewhat contrasting perspective on the issues surrounding lay literacy, see also Susan Kelly, "Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 36-62. Kelly suggests that secular literature like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and vernacular poetry seem to imply the existence of a secular audience.

<sup>132</sup> On a related note, Sisam addresses apparent chronological inconsistencies contained within the poems that suggest while Cynewulf may have been competent enough in Latin, he was "quite uncritical in matters of history." Sisam also interestingly highlights that the subjects and themes of the poems do appear to belong to a "later stage" of early English Christianity when demand was greater for works of devotional interest such as saints' lives and special expositions rather than more straightforward Biblical stories, the likes of which "first claimed the attention of Christian poets in the vernacular." Sisam, *Studies*, 13-14.

composed by a learned poet who was making use of the traditional poetic formulas handed down to him from an age when all poems were oral.<sup>133</sup>

Despite the lack of absolute certainty, the phrasing of Diamond's assessment here and the remainder of his presentation make clear his view of the last suggestion as not only the most likely scenario but also as the one which requires the least amount of imaginative stretching. It can thereby reasonably be argued that Cynewulf most likely produced his poems by borrowing strategies and techniques from older traditions of oral and formulaic verse but did not necessarily compose them in a strictly oral setting or manner.

Orchard has suggested that the Cynewulf poems display a "deep sensitivity to the inherited poetic tradition,"<sup>134</sup> and he has noted the "intensely visual aspect of the four runic signatures [... which] seems to suggest they at least were meant to be privately read."<sup>135</sup> Therefore, it seems best to approach the Cynewulf poems from a perspective which appreciates their defying of simplistic categorization and their straddling of modern critical lines drawn between oral and literate poetry. Indeed, Orchard attributes much of the ongoing scholarly fascination with Cynewulf's work to

the way in which it seems to blend so many areas of Anglo-Saxon culture that are often seen as mutually exclusive, combining as it does imported, Christian, Latinate, and literary themes, images, diction, and techniques of composition with those drawn from the native, secular, vernacular, and ultimately oral tradition.<sup>136</sup>

The fact that the poems span and combine all these areas is more than merely a point of interest for the modern reader. I would submit it as the most expedient point of entry as well. An understanding of the poems as simultaneous participants in

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<sup>133</sup> Robert Diamond, "The Diction of the Signed Poems of Cynewulf," *Philological Quarterly* 38 (1959): 228-41 (p. 229).

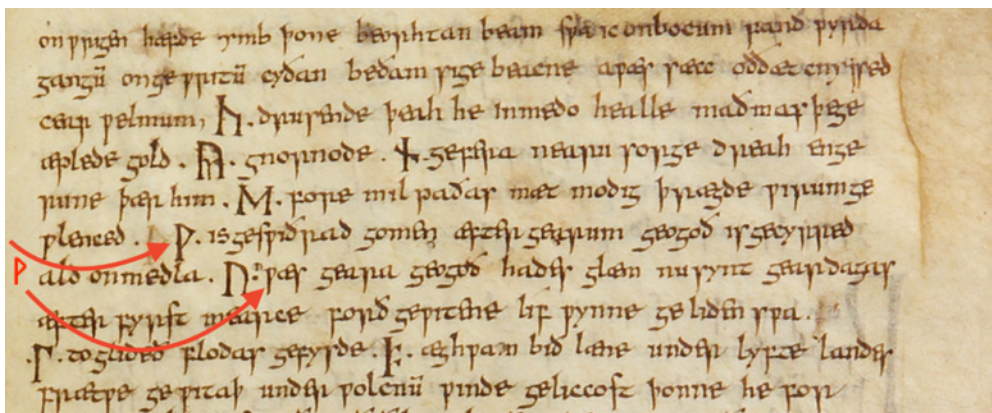
<sup>134</sup> Orchard, "The Word Made Flesh," 302.

<sup>135</sup> Orchard, "Both Style and Substance," 271.

<sup>136</sup> Orchard, "Both Style and Substance," 271.

‘separate’ conceptual spheres and traditions sheds light on centrally important aspects of the poems, including the multiliteral play of the runic signatures.

In answer to the question about the poems’ reception by readers or listeners, it can be effectively deduced that the audience was Christian, perhaps learned, and had presumably “absorbed a good deal of traditional runic lore [...]”<sup>137</sup> Both the size and angularity of the Cynewulf signature runes’ shape in the manuscript visibly set them apart from the remainder of the Roman characters, and this means that the *wynn* rune of the signature is deliberately made distinct from the more rounded *wynns* employed throughout as ‘unmarked’ phonemic characters of the English bookhand alphabet.



The Cynewulf ‘Signature’ as found in *Elene*. Annotations highlight the ‘marked’ runic signature *wynn* in comparison with one of the many ‘unmarked’ *wynns* employed throughout in the bookhand alphabet.<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, an accurate reading and/or recitation of each text depends not only on a visual recognition of the letters as transcribed on the manuscript page, but also on a linguistic understanding of rune names. The exact permutations vary between the individual poems and will be analyzed in Chapter 2, but it is crucial to note that the

<sup>137</sup> Ralph Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 203.

<sup>138</sup> Image Credit: Roberto Rosselli del Turco, *The Digital Vercelli Book*, f. 133r, accessed September 2019, [http://vbd.humnet.unipi.it/beta2/#doc=&page=VB\\_fol\\_132v+VB\\_fol\\_133r](http://vbd.humnet.unipi.it/beta2/#doc=&page=VB_fol_132v+VB_fol_133r).



Cynewulf runes are not simply visual adornments. They also operate internally within the frameworks of the text itself, contributing to alliteration, meter, etc.

The runes' emphasized distinctiveness and relevance as cultural symbols tantalizingly suggest ties to complex notions of linguistic and sociocultural heritage, origins, and identity. Furthermore, these are topics which modern commentators would do well to engage with carefully and self-reflectively, given the potential for reductivism and incendiary misappropriation.<sup>139</sup> In Robert DiNapoli's estimation,

By using runic characters, Cynewulf also affirms the esoteric lore of his native Germanic heritage even as he *bids it farewell*. He uses the cultural associations of the runic alphabet here to locate himself with a poignant exactitude on the mental watershed that divides the Anglo-Saxon poet's pagan past from his Christian present and future.<sup>140</sup>

I wish to argue precisely the opposite, however. Cynewulf again defies one-dimensional categorical expectations and blurs conventional boundary lines between cultures, traditions, and languages, as even the runic signatures appear to have a blended literary pedigree. Just as they have been linked to 'native' Germanic maker inscriptions and riddling traditions, they have simultaneously been related to acrostic techniques from within the sphere of medieval Latin poetry.<sup>141</sup>

Moreover, all of the multiscriptal trends and associative patterns I have highlighted over the course of this chapter run counter to DiNapoli's binary in terms of aesthetic aims. Far from bidding such cultural conventions farewell or establishing

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<sup>139</sup> To highlight but one example in this vein, Damian Fleming has acknowledged problematic reappropriation and ideological projection by racist groups in a critique of his own previous scholarship: Damian Fleming, "Ethel sweet Ethel-weard: The First Scribe of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," *MedievalFleming*, November 14, 2017, accessed September 2019. <https://medievalfleming.wordpress.com/2017/11/14/ethel-sweet-ethel-weard-the-first-scribe-of-the-beowulf-manuscript/>. Cf. Damian Fleming, "Epel-weard: The First Scribe of the *Beowulf* Manuscript," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 105 (2004): 177-86.

<sup>140</sup> Robert DiNapoli, "Odd Characters: Runes in Old English Poetry," in *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, eds. Antonina Harbus and Russell Poole (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 145-61 (pp. 160-1). Emphasis mine.

<sup>141</sup> Edward Christie, "The Image of the Letter: From the Anglo-Saxons to the Electronic *Beowulf*." *Culture, Theory and Critique* 44.2 (2003): 129-50 (p. 132). See also Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 70-7.

an irreconcilable separation between them and those of Latinate Christianity, the contextual topography explored in this chapter points instead toward a visible and thematic weaving of the poems' Old English-speaking audience into the ideological contexts of Judeo-Christian history and Western European Christendom. Through polygraphic combination of the runes' associative values with Latin and Christian notions of scriptural power and authority, what is achieved is not a division, but rather both a literal and conceptual integration.

Building on the historical and cultural foundations laid out here, I will turn my focus in Chapter 2 to specific literary example. I will examine each of the Cynewulf poem's unique polygraphic instances with respect to narrative content and theme, and I will observe how the contextual aspects of Old English polygraphic writing that I identified in this chapter both inform and underpin the texts' multiliteral signification.

## Chapter 2

### Case Study: Cynewulf

In this chapter, I take the four Old English narrative poems attributed to Cynewulf as a literary case study of narrative multiliteralism. I examine the distinct polygraphic ‘signature’ which each work contains alongside relevant aspects of narrative content. I begin in Section 2.1 with a baseline assessment of *Christ II*, because it offers what is comparatively the most straightforward multiliteral implementation of the signed Cynewulf canon. I also introduce a case that this emblematically reinforces the poems’ themes and lexis. I then advance these premises in Section 2.2 through an analysis of the less intuitive runic insertions of *Juliana*. In Section 2.3, I analyze *The Fates of the Apostles* and identify associative signification at work across its *riddle-like* runes and Latin alphabet characters. Finally, in Section 2.4 I examine *Elene* and advance an argument that the auxiliary semiosis of multiliteralism bolsters the Cynewulf poems’ aesthetic agenda of reflective engagement and ideological integration.

#### 2.1 *Christ II: The Ascension*

Three Old English poetic works at the beginning of the Exeter Book (Exeter Cathedral Library Manuscript 3501) address in succession the Advent, the Ascension, and the Second Coming of Christ. At present, these poems are typically known by the titles *Christ I*, *Christ II*, and *Christ III*, although previous generations have viewed them as a single, larger work.<sup>1</sup> While recent scholarship highlights

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<sup>1</sup> This perspective can still be seen to influence line numbering in various modern editions. In this section, I adopt the lineation and numbering used in Robert Bjork ed. and trans., *The Old English Poems of Cynewulf* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013), where *Christ II* runs on pp. 2-31, ll. 440-886. Subsequent quotations are drawn from this same edition.

stylistic and lexical differences that distinguish the *Christ* poems,<sup>2</sup> there is a thematic unity to them. Colin Chase and Dolores Frese have even proposed that Cynewulf may have had access to *I* and *III* and deliberately composed a poetic segment to bridge them.<sup>3</sup> In this section, my focus will be restrained to the middle poem, *Christ II*, which displays a multiliteral runic ‘signature’ as part of its conclusion.

*Christ II* draws on the conclusion of Gregory the Great’s twenty-ninth homily on the gospels as its primary source material,<sup>4</sup> and it tells the story of the ascension to heaven after Christ’s resurrection and time spent with his disciples on Earth. The Ascension takes place at the beginning of the poem, after which angels appear exulting. They exhort the disciples not to lament, but to go forth and spread the word that Christ is victorious and now returns home to the kingdom of heaven. The poem extends this encouragement to its own audience and urges celebratory gratitude for the various spiritual gifts bestowed by God, the most important of which is the gift of salvation achieved at the Ascension, which is described as the final “*hlyp* (leap)” in a series of six that began with the leap into human form through the virgin Mary at the Incarnation.<sup>5</sup> In addition to showing gratitude, the reader is told to be wary of evildoers, to strive to live righteously, and to praise God while on Earth before the day of reckoning. At this point in the narrative, the poem shifts to first-person address

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Fulk, “Cynewulf: Canon, Dialect, and Date,” in *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed., ed. Robert Bjork (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 3-21 (pp. 8-9).

<sup>3</sup> Colin Chase, “God’s Presence Through Grace as the Theme of Cynewulf’s *Christ II* and the relationship of this theme to *Christ I* and *Christ III*,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974): 87-101; Dolores Frese, “The Art of Cynewulf’s Runic Signatures,” in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation*, eds. Lewis Nicholson and Dolores Frese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 312-34 (pp. 327-9).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Allen and Daniel Calder eds. and trans. *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in Translation* (Cambridge, England: D.S. Brewer, 1976), 78-83.

<sup>5</sup> In the introduction to his edition, Bjork neatly labels these six leaps as the Incarnation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Burial, the Descent into Hell, and the Ascension. Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, xii.

and expresses fear of the approaching judgment and punishment. It is also within this first-person epilogue that the text becomes polygraphic.

From line 797 until 807a, runes that comprise the proper name “𐌺𐌽𐌰𐌶𐌹𐌸 (CYNWULF)” are woven individually into the lines of the poem.

þonne 𐌺 cwacað, gehyreð cyning mæðlan,  
 rodera ryhtend, sprecaþ reþe word  
 þam þe him ær in worulde wace hyrdon  
 þendan 𐌺 ond 𐌰 ypast meahtan  
 frofre findan. Þær sceal forht monig  
 on þam wong-stede werig bidan  
 hwæt him æfter dædum deman wille  
 wrapra wita. Biþ se 𐌿 scæcen  
 eorþan frætwa. 𐌺 wæs longe  
 𐌲-flodum bilocen, lif-wynna dæl,  
 𐌿 on foldan.

Then 𐌺 will quake, will hear the king speak,  
 the ruler of the heavens utter stern words  
 to those who feebly obeyed him in the world,  
 while 𐌺 and 𐌰 could most easily  
 find comfort. Many, afraid and accursed,  
 must wait there in that place to hear what horrible  
 punishments he will assign them according to their deeds.  
 The 𐌿 of the treasures of earth  
 will have fled. 𐌺 share of life-joys was long  
 shut in by the 𐌲-streams,  
 our 𐌿 on earth.<sup>6</sup>

From a visual perspective, the noticeably more angular runes are made to stand out from the surrounding Roman letter text of the poem. They are even pointedly distinguished from the rune-derived letters ‘þ (thorn)’ and ‘ƿ (wynn)’ which appear consistently throughout in more rounded forms as supplementary characters of the Old English bookhand. The runes are not merely decorative embellishments, however. They function intratextually and contribute words to the narrative and alliterative meter of the lines in which they appear.

<sup>6</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 26-7, ll. 797-807a. Except where otherwise noted, the Modern English translations provided are from Bjork.

As discussed in Chapter 1, runes historically possessed names that corresponded to the phonemic value they represented. The name of ‘ƿ (f)’ suggested by the *Old English Rune Poem*, for example, is ‘feoh (wealth, livestock, etc.).’<sup>7</sup> In certain contexts, runes exploit this feature and function as logograms rather than phonemic characters. Thus, ‘ƿ’ may stand for the entirety of its runic name (= ‘feoh’) and not simply ‘/f/’ as an isolated phonemic element. This functional capacity diverges from Latin alphabet practices, and it is central to a reading of *Christ II*’s multiliteral conclusion. Specifically, I will argue that Cynewulf’s manipulation of runes’ names and emblematic values as a script contrastively draws attention to the surrounding Roman characters and influences a reader’s possible perceptions of the epilogue as a whole. To do so, however, I must first address baseline features shared by all the Cynewulf signatures along with questions of interpretation that relate to the logographic use of runes for their name values.

It is difficult to determine whether the names were a traditional feature from the earliest origins of the runic script, and the discrepancies between the three surviving rune poems (Icelandic, Norwegian, and Old English) indicate that knowledge of rune names changed across time and geographical area. Interpreting an individual occurrence requires a bit of cautious skepticism. Yet even with that caveat, Kenneth Sisam’s foundational assertion remains highly relevant – the runic names which are attested in the *Old English Rune Poem* and other early English sources must serve as the starting point and standard against which any critical interpretation of the Cynewulf runes is judged.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Maureen Halsall ed., *The Old English Rune Poem: A Critical Edition* (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 86-7, ll. 1-3.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1953), 18-20. In addition to the *Old English Rune Poem*, Sisam highlights the evidence of the description of the English runic alphabet and rune names in the continental Codex

Ralph Elliott takes precisely that hardline stance in his readings of both *Christ II* and *Elene*. Elliott denounces Sisam's potential solution of substituting the proper name 'Cynewulf,' as well as other commentators' suggestions of alternative words that begin with the same sound as the traditional names. He argues,

In the first place, there must be some evidence justifying the substitution of any other word for the rune-name and its accepted meaning; the mere fact that some other word beginning with the same letter makes acceptable sense does not appear to constitute a sufficient criterion. In the second place, there must be consistency [...].<sup>9</sup>

A more hesitant view is likely more constructive than Elliott's unwavering acceptance of the traditional names in every instance, but his points about justification and consistency should not be disregarded. It seems reasonable to infer that there would have been some degree of internal semantic consistency to the poems and also perhaps to the Cynewulf canon as a whole.

Moreover, if a listening audience was to distinguish the runic letters in an oral context with no visual indication, then a familiarity with rune names would have been required. Sisam submits that being deliberately abstruse would have run counter to Cynewulf's primary purpose in including his name, as the rationale for doing so was to request the prayers of those that read or heard the poem.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation finds its basis within the words of the poems themselves. Cynewulf reveals himself on lines 96-8 of *The Fates of the Apostles*:

Her mæg findan fore-þances gleaw,  
se ðe hine lysteð leoð-giddunga,  
hwa þas fitte fegde

Here one wise of forethought,  
one who delights in poetic songs, can discover  
who composed this song<sup>11</sup>

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Vindobonensis 795 (Salzburg 140), and the later evidence of three early twelfth-century lists in: Cotton Manuscripts Domitian A IX, Galba A II (now destroyed), and St. John's College Oxford Manuscript 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ralph Elliott, "Cynewulf's Runes in *Christ II* and *Elene*," *English Studies* 34 (1953): 49-57 (p. 50).

<sup>10</sup> Sisam, *Studies*, 25-6.

<sup>11</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 136-7, ll. 96-8.

Similarly, in *Juliana* he entreats the reader:

Bidde ic monna gehwone  
 gumena cynnes, þe þis gied wræce,  
 þæt he mec neodful bi noman minum  
 gemyne modig ond Meotud bidde  
 þæt me heofona helm helpe gefremme  
 mehtan waldend, on þam miclan dæge

I pray everyone  
 of the human race, earnest and noble-minded,  
 who recites this poem will remember  
 me by name and pray the Lord  
 that he, protector of the heavens,  
 the wielder of powers, will help me in that great day<sup>12</sup>

There are no similarly direct injunctions in *Elene* and *Christ II*, but the runes are visually more easily distinguished as the proper name. As one reads, they appear in the correct sequential order to spell out ‘Cyn(e)wulf.’ Nonetheless, intratextual interpretation of the comparatively less ambiguous *Christ II* runes still presents a challenge that is revealing in terms of multiliteral signification.

The first two runes to appear –  $\text{ƿ}$  (*c*) and  $\text{ƿ}$  (*y*) – have names values which are slightly thornier to unpack than the third –  $\text{ƿ}$  (*n*). It is easier to have assurance in ‘*nyd* (need, affliction, etc.)’ as the name of ‘ $\text{ƿ}$  (*n*),’ because this is both a reasonably common Old English word and a matching cognate with the name provided by the later Old Norse rune poems.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the Old English name for ‘ $\text{ƿ}$  (*c*)’ is ‘*cen* (torch),’ a word that is exceedingly rare and difficult to be certain is even of Germanic origin.<sup>14</sup> The name offered for ‘ $\text{ƿ}$  (*y*)’ is ‘*yr*,’ and the description is elusive enough to have prompted a number of different possible meanings for this word. These include ‘saddle,’ ‘horn,’ and ‘bow’ – the option Ray Page calls the “most tempting” for the

<sup>12</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 126-7, ll. 718-23.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, rev. ed. (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1999), 76. Page proposes that where the later Old Norse versions confirm the earlier Old English, it is reasonable to assume that the name is probably of earlier Germanic origin.

<sup>14</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 69. Cf. The Old Norse poems give this rune’s name as ‘*kaun* (sore, ulcer).’



links it may confirm to the Scandinavian rune glossed “ýr (yew, bow, bent bow, etc.).”<sup>15</sup> Michael Barnes suggests that the shape of the ‘𐌺 (y)’ rune seems to reflect the creators’ realization of the sound’s relationship to ‘ŋ (u)’ and ‘i (i)’ and that the name given to the character (‘yr’) is “most readily explained as an adaption of *ur* [...] *yr* is of uncertain meaning in Old English, if indeed it has any meaning at all.”<sup>16</sup>

If all of these possibilities are taken into account, the following simplistic translation of lines 797-801a is possible:

Then **torch** quakes, hears king declaim,  
 ruler of the heavens speak stern words  
 to those who earlier in the world served him feebly,  
 while **bow/horn/saddle** and **necessity/hardship** most easily might  
 find solace.<sup>17</sup>

The names ‘*cēn* (torch)’ and especially ‘*yr* (bow/horn/saddle)’ produce a reading that is slightly jarring, and which might explain early commentators’ drive to search for replacement ‘c-’ and ‘y-’ words. Indeed, at least one contemporary commentator has made a reasonable case for Cynewulf’s usage of such initialisms.<sup>18</sup> The justifications for substitution, however, leave something to be desired. Sisam points out that far from lamenting the infrequency of ‘*cēn*’ and ‘*yr*,’ Cynewulf may actually have benefited in his attempt to be remembered and prayed for.

An Anglo-Saxon hearing *cēn*, *yr*, would know at once that he was dealing with runes; his attention would be directed at once to the task of solution because runes sometimes played a part in Old English riddles; and he would listen closely for the succession.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 76.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Barnes, *Runes: A Handbook* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2012), 39.

<sup>17</sup> N.B. This and the following translation are my own and are offered as aids to comprehension. **Boldface** indicates runic characters. They also differs in several respects from Elliott’s translation which employs alternate punctuation. See Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Christ II* and *Elene*,” 56.

<sup>18</sup> John Niles, “Chapter 8: Cynewulf’s Use of Initialisms in His Runic Signatures,” in *Old English Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 285-306. Perhaps particularly worth considering, is Niles’s reading of ‘*yfel* (evil)’ in place of the troublesome ‘*yr*.’

<sup>19</sup> Sisam, *Studies*, 25.

Sisam compares the practice to Latin acrostics which similarly reveal an authorial name, but which he claims are more dependent upon visual reading than the Cynewulf poems.<sup>20</sup>

Sisam's general points merit consideration, but modern scholarly approaches to these medieval poems can occasionally be needlessly convoluted. Extrapolation should be grounded in the realities and limitations of spoken language usage.

Whether *Christ II*'s 'k' and 'l' stood for 'cen' and 'yr' or for other unconfirmed names, I deem it a large stretch of the imagination to presume that an audience – even an utterly rapt, native Old English-speaking one that possessed sufficient runic literacy – would easily be able to pick up on, isolate, and remember these individual words as distinct, purely from listening without multiple readings or additional cues, such as a lector's pace, tone, or physical gesture. Logically, the identification of the common word 'nyd' as a rune at this particular point would also add further complication.<sup>21</sup>

The difficulty of aurally extracting the runic names is even more evident at lines 804b-7a:

The **joy/delight** will have departed  
from earthly adornments. **Aurochs(/Our?)** was for long  
by **sea/water**-floods enclosed, portion of life's joys,  
**wealth** on earth.

Here, the orthodox rune names do not produce a particularly disjointed reading, but the task of distinguishing the runes as a listener becomes tortuously complex.

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<sup>20</sup> Sisam, *Studies*, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Jacqueline Stodnick arrives at a similar conclusion in "Cynewulf as Author: Medieval Reality or Modern Myth," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 79.3 (1997): 25-39 (p. 38), where she writes, "While the Anglo-Saxons were no doubt finely attuned to the aural reception of literature, the identification and decipherment of rune names which are embedded within an Old English text seems improbable, especially when the majority of the runes signify as perfectly acceptable Old English words and are therefore indistinguishable from their context when read aloud."

‘þ (*nyd*)’ from the previous lines is joined by three more runes with names that are commonplace Old English words: ‘ƿ (*wynn*),’ ‘l̥ (*lagu*),’ and ‘ƿ (*feoh*).’ These words appear frequently throughout the surviving poetic corpus, and they are employed in Roman character form elsewhere in *Christ II* and the other Cynewulf poems. For example, the compound word suggested by the mixed-script ‘l̥-*flodum*’ is also on line 850 which reads: “*Nu is þon gelicost swa we on lagu-flode [...]*.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, ‘*wynn*’ emerges twice in the signature passage alone, first as the rune and then again as part of the genitive compound ‘*lif-wynna*’ mere words later.

Various readings of *Christ II*’s ‘ŋ (*u*)’ rune have been offered, challenged, and debated. Yet, nearly all of the widely accepted modern interpretations strain credibility in terms of a first-time listener’s ability to distinguish the rune in a strictly auditory context. Construal of ‘ŋ’ with its name from the rune poem, ‘aurochs, ox, bison, etc.,’ produces an undeniably cryptic reading.<sup>23</sup> Elliott’s resolution to this interpretation draws on the likelihood that, “with [the older meaning of aurochs] there also remains the earlier symbolic significance of ‘male strength’ [...].”<sup>24</sup> The concept of masculine strength would afford a reasonable interpretation of the line, but Elliott’s rationalization for metaphorical extension has met with a large degree of justified skepticism.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 30. Emphasis added.

<sup>23</sup> Note also that there is a discrepancy in the *u*-rune’s name given by the Old English, Norwegian, and Icelandic rune poems. Inmaculada Senra Silva proposes that this is due to understandably growing ignorance of the aurochs, an animal which survived only in continental forests. Inmaculada Senra Silva, “The Names of the *u*-Rune,” *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* 1 (2010): 109-22 (p. 110).

<sup>24</sup> Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Christ II* and *Elene*,” 52. See also Ralph Elliott “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” *English Studies* 34 (1953): 193-204 (pp. 193-4).

<sup>25</sup> For Elliott’s defense of his views against the challenges made by Page and others, see Ralph Elliott, “Coming Back to Cynewulf,” in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. Alfred Bammesberger (Heidelberg, Germany: C. Winter, 1991), 231-47.

The more common interpretation of the rune is that it represents the homonymous pronoun which correlates to Modern English 'our.' This reading is attractive, because it allows for the translation, 'our portion of life's joys.' The sense offered is certainly acceptable, but it is no less problematic in terms of audible detectability. Even if made appropriately aware of the presence of runic names, an unguided listener faces a taxing multilayered challenge. They must link a common pronoun with a homonym that is associated with a rune, all while maintaining an overall awareness of the poem's narrative, a mental list of common and uncommon rune names already successfully extracted from the text, and an alert ear listening closely for runes still to come. Beyond the high degree of literacy and textual awareness this necessitates, the implications of a substitution render a daunting auditory task a nearly impossible one.

If '*ure*' is the correct interpretation, then surely deviation from conventional names would further hinder one's capacity to detect the runes in an oral setting. Even if a listener could make the necessary leaps to arrive at its being a runic letter in the name 'Cynwulf,' this homonymous substitution disrupts the stability of a listener's interpretative framework in the same way an entirely arbitrary substitution would. The audience must suddenly question whether similar substitutive process will continue to take place *or* have already been taking place without their recognition. Doubt is cast on the previous rune words which a listener had theoretically been able to extract successfully. Either interpretation demonstrates the difficulty – if not impossibility – of untangling the signature from the polygraphic epilogue without some form of non-verbal indication or visual confirmation. They both also reveal that the aesthetic result of the signatures is more than simply a request for remembrance and prayers.

Had preservation of Cynewulf's name been the sole purpose, then an alternative method could have easily been taken to convey his name efficiently to both listener and reader, such as perhaps the use of an acrostic. Even if the name was not thus appended directly as a colophon or unbroken alliterative component of the text, Victoria Symons points out that if the goal truly had been only to elicit prayers, then at least electing to employ a uniform epilogue would seem better suited to that purpose.<sup>26</sup> Symons instead presents the case that,

Rather the Cynewulf poet uses these embedded runes in order to explore the material nature of the written word and its ability to function as a visual symbol, and to remind readers of the necessity of correctly interpreting what is read. These epilogues are designed primarily for the benefit of the reader's reflection rather than the poet's posterity.<sup>27</sup>

I concur that this reflective aspect is essential for understanding the Cynewulf poems' intratextual use of runes, and it is beneficial to extend this consideration.

Elsewhere, Symons argues that "Readers of these passages are relied upon to bring to the verse a shared understanding of conventional rune names which is then subverted, through substitutions and metaphors, in ways that test the flexibility of runic letters as written signifiers."<sup>28</sup> This is persuasive, and yet a reduction of the *Christ II* runes to little more than embellishing visual symbols with linguistic associations is unhelpfully limiting and seems to be overly informed by modern monoscriptal writing perspectives. The signature runes possess a different status and function than the Roman alphabet letters of the text, but this is not in and of itself bizarre for the Old English context. Nor is it atypical for polygraphic writing more generally. For clarification, the most revealing place to turn is to the poem itself.

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<sup>26</sup> Victoria Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Berlin, Germany and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2016), 90.

<sup>27</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 85.

<sup>28</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 98.

The polygraphic epilogue should be viewed as an element that contributes to the overarching aesthetic aims of the larger text. While the insertion of runes does create a visual disruption, it is not a sudden break with what has come before. The signification attained through polygraphic variation echoes and plays into the major themes of *Christ II*. As suggested above, the visual blending of runes and Roman script prompts a reader toward reflection and symbolic interpretation, but the multiliteral play is all the more effective, because it has been thematically foregrounded by the text's emphasis on the spiritual importance and transcendent power of words.

Oliver Grosz highlights that, "four out of the six gifts that Gregory [the apparent source for *Christ II*] treats concern language and the power of using words," and "Cynewulf in his 'Gifts of Men' section is also preoccupied with literary and verbal activities [...]," especially foregrounding the poetic craft.<sup>29</sup> Grosz is thereby doubly inclined to agree that the runes are primarily intended for visual perception, and he argues that by breaking with "accustomed" reading practices, the runes operate on multiple levels and "force the reader to recognize the symbolic aspect of writing."<sup>30</sup> They indicate the literal meaning of the words they represent, and when taken together they "symbolize the spirit of the poet himself and suggest the concern for the salvation of the spirit which all men should share."<sup>31</sup> These deductions are compelling in a larger sense, because they illustrate that multiliteral signification can underscore and (re-)emphasize emblematic features that are relevant to a text as a whole. The conclusions of Grosz and Symons are also

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<sup>29</sup> Oliver Grosz, "Man's Imitation of the Ascension: The Unity of *Christ II*," *Neophilologus* 54 (1970): 398-408. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 95-108 (p. 104).

<sup>30</sup> Grosz, "Man's Imitation," 107.

<sup>31</sup> Grosz, "Man's Imitation," 107.

valuable for the specific analysis of *Christ II*, because they indirectly reveal the important role which Cynewulf plays as the poem's 'author' – not as a figure in a strictly biographical sense, but as an intratextual and participatory poetic conceit.

There is an abrupt shift into first-person address on line 789 of *Christ II*, and Thomas Birkett notes that this transition can easily mislead the modern reader into an “autobiographical fallacy” where they wonder about the Cynewulf figure despite the fact that the “autobiographical conceit actually tells us nothing about the poet as a persona; it simply illustrates the correct way to approach the following revelatory passages.”<sup>32</sup> Peter Orton reminds modern readers to be cognizant of their own preconceptions and to take stock of significant ideological differences between modern and medieval literacies and literary practice. He calls specifically for greater awareness of perspectival deixis in relation to perceived writer or anticipated reader presence/absence as both are seen to play out in reader analysis and the writing process.<sup>33</sup> Though little can be deduced about the historical personage of Cynewulf, his revealed presence performs an important stand-in function in *Christ II* and all of the signed poems.

The poet persona becomes someone with whom readers may identify. They can map onto the first-person modes of address while they engage in the symbolic, meditative reflection that the text and epilogue prompt. Birkett proposes that, “[The signature passages] signal the moment where the story told becomes directly applicable to the reader engaged in unlocking the meaning of the passage, and thus represent a progression to an anagogical understanding of how the passage, and

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Birkett, “Runes and *Revelatio*: Cynewulf’s Signatures Reconsidered,” *The Review of English Studies* 65 (2014): 771-89 (pp. 784-5).

<sup>33</sup> Peter Orton, *Writing in a Speaking World: The Pragmatics of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon Inscriptions and Old English Poetry* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), 37-57.

the poem, may relate to the fate of the individual soul.”<sup>34</sup> The polygraphic, first-person segment is not merely where the poem “becomes directly applicable to the reader” as an individual, it is also here that the applicability of the poem’s content is recapitulated for an Old English readership. The message is ‘brought home,’ as it were.

An endemic shortcoming of much Cynewulf scholarship is that while many commentators explore the multivalent functionality of the runes, none to my knowledge critically engage with the visual aspect of the surrounding Roman characters as anything more than a sort of ‘control group’ or default orthographic setting. I believe that this is an oversight that deserves acknowledgment. The intratextual inclusion of runes as a linguistically discursive script alternative thrusts the text into multiliteral context where both scripts are compelled to take on emblematic value(s) in contrast to one another.

In Chapter 1, I introduced the argument that lacing Germanic runes into Roman alphabet lines could emblematically effect the weaving of Cynewulf and his Old English audience into the ideological contexts of Judeo-Christian history and the larger tapestry of Latinate Christendom. The use of traditional rune names may contribute to this effect of reconciliatory integration, but what lends the most credence to this argument is that the symbolic script variation does not stand on its own in isolation. Rather, a reader of *Christ II* has been primed from the outset to grasp the associative values infused by the switches, because the same fusion is enacted thematically and stylistically throughout the poem.

Peter Clemoes presents Cynewulf’s image of the Ascension as deriving from a strategic blending of Biblical narrative, traditions of heroic literature, and personal

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<sup>34</sup> Birkett, “Runes and *Revelatio*,” 789.



ecclesiastical experience with liturgical worship and the visual arts.<sup>35</sup> The framework is Christian, and heroic aspects function metaphorically for spiritual concepts and psychological conditions.<sup>36</sup> Clemoes further identifies that,

The metaphorical connection which Cynewulf establishes between the narrative of the Ascension and the elements of heroic society stresses primarily the relationship between Christ the *brega* (456a), *peoden* (457a), *hlaford* (461a), and the apostles, *his þegna gedryht* (457b), *hæleð* (461a), *gesipas* (473a),

and this feature becomes all the more poignant when emotional participation is transferred to readers.<sup>37</sup> The message is a consolation to *us* when “*cyning ure* (our king) departs on line 494.”<sup>38</sup>

Yet, Cynewulf does not stop at this point and settle for a heroic *translation* of the relationship between Christ and his disciples. He takes additional thematic and stylistic steps toward *localizing* the message and making it directly applicable for his audience. Shannon Godlove highlights how Cynewulf deviates from Biblical accounts and his main source in one noteworthy respect; he draws on an alternative patristic tradition that interprets the apostles as grief-stricken by Christ’s departure.<sup>39</sup> The rhetorical outcome of this divergence is that the disciples are subtly recast for the Old English audience. Their fallibility is intentionally exposed alongside their manifest strength and sanctity in a way that “renders the apostles more sympathetic to his audience” and establishes them as “a powerful model of Christian living and belief.”<sup>40</sup> Readers of *Christ II* are encouraged to emulate the disciples, and the

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Clemoes, “Cynewulf’s Image of the Ascension,” in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, eds. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 293-304. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 109-124.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts and Values in Old English Christian Poetry* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton, 1972), 219.

<sup>37</sup> Clemoes, “Cynewulf’s Image,” 110, 114.

<sup>38</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Shannon Godlove, “The Elevation of the Apostles in Cynewulf’s *Christ II: The Ascension*,” *Philological Quarterly* 91.4 (2012): 513-35.

<sup>40</sup> Godlove, “The Elevation,” 514, 530.

poem's terminology and style present this as a demanding but not inapproachable goal.

Finally, I wish to reexamine the pivotal shift from third-person to first-person address that occurs on line 789. Previously, I observed that the shift helps stimulate identification and contemplative reflection in a reader. This perspectival shift may also be more culturally and linguistically tinged than is at first apparent. In an assessment of the oral tradition, Andy Orchard notes how both the *Preface* and the *Metrical Preface* to Alfred's Old English *Pastoral Care* contain poignant shifts from third to first person.<sup>41</sup> In the prose *Preface*, Alfred "was careful to begin with a formal third-person opening ('King Alfred sends greetings...') borrowed from Latin epistolary style, before slipping almost immediately into the first person ('I')," and in the *Metrical Preface* there is a "sudden change from the third person ('this message') in lines 1-10, which describe the Latin text, to the first person ('me') in lines 11-12, which depict the translation."<sup>42</sup> In Orchard's view, this exemplifies "the contrast in perspective between the literate Latin discovered in written books, and the immediate English of the spoken word."<sup>43</sup> In addition to an awareness of the distinctions between the oral and the literate, it also reaffirms the underlying conceptual relevancy of cultural and linguistic difference.

It can ultimately be little more than conjecture to suggest that Cynewulf deliberately employed an analogous paradigm shift as an intentional rhetorical device. Nevertheless, it is distinctly intriguing that the figurative value of the change in person echoes the overall aesthetic of cultural integration detected in *Christ II's*

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<sup>41</sup> Andy Orchard, "Oral Tradition," in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 101-23.

<sup>42</sup> Orchard, "Oral Tradition," 101, 120. Orchard also notes precisely the same rhetorical device yet again in the metrical *Proem* to Alfred's translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.

<sup>43</sup> Orchard, "Oral Tradition," 120.

theme and lexis. Moreover, it is hardly surprising that the same integrative effect should be sought at the climactic moment on the level of script as well. As the poem shifts from its religious narrative to a petition in the first person, it becomes most directly applicable to the lives of its immediate audience. Through Cynewulf's example, it bids readers to reflect on the fate of their own souls, and through multiliteral variation it visually manipulates the associative significances of the runic and Latin alphabets. Rather than argue that Cynewulf's signature is more in line with Latin acrostics than with customary Germanic art practices or vice versa,<sup>44</sup> I would present that it is most productive to grasp Cynewulf as having a foot in both camps. The runic *stafas* metonymically integrate with the Latin *litterae*, just as the peoples of early medieval England sharing in a perceived Germanic linguistic heritage sought to understand themselves as parts of a larger whole, as members of the Church.

This establishes a fundamental premise of multiliteralism's functionality as a narratological device both in *Christ II* and elsewhere. More obscured in a monoscriptal writing context, the use of two discursive scripts introduces auxiliary semiosis. This auxiliary signification is intrinsically tied to, and yet operates independently from, the linguistic words that are transcribed. It draws upon emblematic values which are foregrounded by the script discrepancy itself, and a reader is obliged to take stock of the different characters in use and any cultural, linguistic, emotive, or symbolic associations. In the case of *Christ II*, a reader perceives the manipulation of such emblematicism as developing and recapitulating the central thematic concerns of the poem. Script use visually realizes and reinforces the poem's integrative efforts and the accessibility of its message.

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<sup>44</sup> Again, see Frese, "The Art," 323; Orton, *Writing in a Speaking World*, 115-37; Sisam, *Studies*, 25-6.

## 2.2 *Juliana: The Martyrdom of St. Juliana of Nicomedia*

The second poem in the Exeter Book which contains a runic Cynewulf signature is known after its eponymous heroine as *Juliana*. At 732 lines, *Juliana* is considerably longer than *Christ II*, and its polygraphic epilogue also diverges radically in terms of implementation. Also in comparison with *Christ II* and *Elene*, some early commentators maligned *Juliana* for “what some once considered its plain and uninteresting style” and attributed the work to a period of lesser authorial skill or ability, perhaps Cynewulf’s youth or senescence.<sup>45</sup> Such negative assessment does not do the work justice, however. Stylistically, thematically, and multilaterally, *Juliana* is a text which demands multifaceted engagement on the part of the reader.

One fundamental aspect with the potential to stymie a modern reader is that *Juliana*’s genre and narrative presentation may be unfamiliar. It is a medieval hagiographical narrative which details the passion and martyrdom of the fourth-century saint, Juliana of Nicomedia. As a convert to Christianity, Juliana adamantly refuses to marry the pagan prefect Heliseus (Eleusius) to whom she is pledged by her father, Affricanus. When Juliana does not yield, she is thrown into prison where she is tempted by and overcomes a demon. Juliana survives being placed in hot lead and burned alive, before ultimately being beheaded. Donald Bzdyl and Daniel Calder highlight that the poem’s portrayal of narrative action does not seek to be individualistic nor particularly realistic, but that this is not a failure on the part of the medieval creator(s).<sup>46</sup> The text expounds unwavering dedication to the Christian faith not in a *sequential* or *synoptic* manner, but in what Calder describes as a

<sup>45</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, xiv-xvi (p. xiv). Cf. Rosemary Woolf ed., *Juliana* (London, England: Methuen, 1955), 7.

<sup>46</sup> Donald Bzdyl, “*Juliana*: Cynewulf’s Dispeller of Delusion,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 86 (1985): 165-75. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 193-206; Daniel Calder, “The Art of Cynewulf’s *Juliana*,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 34 (1973): 355-71.

purposefully *ritualistic* one.<sup>47</sup> Bzdyl similarly concludes that the primary objective of *Juliana* is not necessarily to captivate the imagination of its audience, but rather to encourage its readers toward salvation by impressing upon them the encompassing validity of Cynewulf's Christian worldview.<sup>48</sup> These foundational suggestions echo the observations made above in reference to *Christ II*, and they also are the conceptual starting point for unraveling *Juliana*'s multiliteral signature.

*Juliana* is a poem with a deliberately unambiguous message that was meant to be both accessible and readily applicable to the individual lives of its readers. This is even more acutely visible if one contrasts Cynewulf's Old English poem with an analogous Latin version of the saint's life.<sup>49</sup> Two of the poem's editors, Bjork and Rosemary Woolf, both remark that in comparison with the Latin, Cynewulf places a great deal of significance on speech acts and markedly expands segments of direct discourse.<sup>50</sup> Speech acts are structurally important to the narrative of *Juliana*, and their utility and value in spiritual terms are reaffirmed.

Antonina Harbus goes so far as to argue that the presentation of speech in *Juliana* is such that it "invites our construal of a prime role for spoken discourse in constructing as well as representing a person's character and ideological position."<sup>51</sup> Harbus extends this idea beyond the poem's thematic content to include the

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<sup>47</sup> Calder, "The Art," 357.

<sup>48</sup> Bzdyl, "Juliana." Bzdyl's argument is heavily indebted to Erich Auerbach, "Chapter 1: Odysseus' Scar," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 3-23, from which he also imports the designations "Homeric" and "Biblical" narrative to distinguish between these two distinct modes of storytelling.

<sup>49</sup> For lack of a definitive direct source, Allen and Calder note the correspondences between *Juliana* and the prose life of St. Juliana found in the *Acta Sanctorum* 16 February entry. Allen and Calder, *Sources and Analogues*, 122-32. Beyond speculation about Cynewulf's probable source material, the parallel Latin text is also invaluable for clues it provides about the probable content of the sections missing in the manuscript from the Old English poem.

<sup>50</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, xv; Woolf, *Juliana*, 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Antonina Harbus, "Articulate Contact in *Juliana*," in *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, eds. Antonina Harbus and Russell Poole (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 183-200 (p. 198).

authorial figure of Cynewulf and the audience, and she contends that “If it is true, as the poem suggests, that the more straightforwardly speech enunciates core truths, the nearer towards perfection one aspires, then uttering the poem and the prayer provides a benediction to both author and recipient of the text.”<sup>52</sup> The added emphasis on dialogue and preoccupation with speech do more than change the flow of the narrative, they prompt a different type of deictic engagement with the text on the part of a reader or listener.

Further divergences between Cynewulf’s *Juliana* and the Latin likewise illustrate how the Old English poem seeks to focus and direct the contemplative reflection of its audience. In contrast to any mild equivocation that is presented in the Latin analogue, Cynewulf’s version shifts character dynamics and clearly differentiates Juliana and Heliseus so that the good saint and evil prefect are rendered as polar opposites. Joseph Wittig presents *Juliana* as a figural narrative and argues that “The characters are ‘flat’ because they are deliberately generalized.”<sup>53</sup> The rationale for this type of essentialization is twofold.

On the one hand, Cynewulf may have been able to localize and increase the narrative’s accessibility for his audience, “by pruning away some of the excessive detail of his original, particularly facts which would seem irrelevant to an Anglo-Saxon audience.”<sup>54</sup> This could partially explain the deletion of certain characters and the omission of segments such as Juliana’s torture on the wheel.<sup>55</sup> Secondly, “The displacement of the literal details of the vita in favor of imagery that bears the weight

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<sup>52</sup> Harbus, “Articulate Contact,” 199.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Wittig, “Figural Narrative in Cynewulf’s *Juliana*,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1974): 37-55. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 147-169 (p. 156).

<sup>54</sup> Woolf, *Juliana*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> Woolf, *Juliana*, 16. See also Lenore Abraham, “Cynewulf’s *Juliana*: A Case at Law,” *Allegorica* 3 (1978): 172-89. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 171-192 (p. 173); Calder, “The Art,” 370.

of a higher meaning alone is Cynewulf's overall method of adapting his Latin source."<sup>56</sup> Cynewulf's *Juliana* does away with potentially theologically puzzling elements, such as Juliana's duplicitous initial marriage condition that her suitor Eleusius first become a prefect, and markedly accentuates the underlying message of spiritual importance which Cynewulf drew from relevant exegetical and narrative source material and sought to convey in a clear and direct manner.<sup>57</sup> These changes would have enhanced accessibility to the text and the imitable applicability of its message.

Jill Frederick argues that it is "the juxtaposition of perspective corrupted and truth discerned that characterizes the battle between pagan and Christian, which moves the struggle between individuals – however one-dimensional they might be perceived to be – onto the cosmic level."<sup>58</sup> Typological characterization is crucial to emphasize, but it does not in my view produce a comprehensively satisfying reading of the text in and of itself. Furthermore, if one follows critical readings which simply "retreat from discussing [Cynewulf's characters, i.e. Juliana and Elene,] as women," one is also liable to misconstrue the significance of the polygraphic runic passage, since readings which dehumanize the character of Juliana as a woman, "limit – even negate – the literary effect of the poems."<sup>59</sup>

Alexandra Olsen puts forward an alternative and suggests that in addition to the religious considerations:

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<sup>56</sup> R. Barton Palmer, "Characterization in the Old English *Juliana*," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 41.4 (1976): 10-21 (p. 20).

<sup>57</sup> See Kenneth Bleeth, "*Juliana* 647-52," *Medium Ævum* 38.2 (1969): 119-122, and Alexandra Olsen, "Cynewulf's Autonomous Women: A Reconsideration of *Elene* and *Juliana*," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, eds. Helen Damico and Alexandra Olsen (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 222-32, especially at p. 228.

<sup>58</sup> Jill Frederick, "Warring with Words: Cynewulf's *Juliana*," in *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, eds. David Johnson and Elaine Treharne (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60-74 (p. 63).

<sup>59</sup> Olsen, "Cynewulf's Autonomous Women," 223-4.

First, [the changes] make Juliana's actions more psychologically appropriate to a woman who lives an autonomous and active religious life. Second, the changes eliminate the promise that Juliana obviously has no intention of keeping, a promise which shows her to be duplicitous and therefore lacking in sanctity and which would undoubtedly be unacceptable to an audience familiar with heroic Germanic tradition, even when that audience was composed of Christians attuned to Christian stories.<sup>60</sup>

I would argue that the proposed readings of the character do not need to be mutually exclusive. Rather, in the figure of Juliana what can be perceived is simultaneously a theological moralization, a thematic enculturation, and an artistic depiction of an active female character.

In this vein, Frederick argues that *Juliana's* epilogue is of tremendous importance for the way in which it unifies the personal and allegorical elements:

This concluding passage fuses time and space: past, present and future merge, as do Nicomedia and Anglo-Saxon England, linking the original participants of the saint's passion with Cynewulf's contemporary audience, and then enlisting the participation of any future audience for the poem.<sup>61</sup>

Frederick's interpretation parallels my observations thus far in this chapter and points conspicuously toward the emblematic value of the multiliteral signature. I would only wish to add a reiteration of the intratextual significance of the Cynewulf poet persona.

Again, the figure of Cynewulf perceived by the poem's audience plays an important role in the text as a whole. The proper name is included, and specific first-person entreaty is made to be remembered "*bi noman minum* (by my name)."<sup>62</sup> Cynewulf embodies a relatable archetype with whom a reader can identify as part of their contemplative interaction with the poem, and this conceptual linkage of the reader and Cynewulf persona gains additional significance through "a subtle but apparent binding of the sinful poet to the saintly heroine of his poem."<sup>63</sup> In contrast to

<sup>60</sup> Olsen, "Cynewulf's Autonomous Women," 228.

<sup>61</sup> Frederick, "Warring with Words," 72.

<sup>62</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 126-7, l. 720.

<sup>63</sup> Frese, "The Art," 312-34 (p. 318).



the zealous saint, Cynewulf humbly stresses his own anxiety about the ultimate fate of his soul after death and does not present himself as a mirror for Juliana. Yet through poetic skill, he is able “to align his needs with her powers,” “setting himself up, quite consciously, as spokesman and representative of sinful mankind.”<sup>64</sup> As an intratextual exemplar of reverential and penitential reflection, Cynewulf bridges the gap between the saint and his penitent readers, allowing them to understand themselves as active participants in the same spiritual tradition as the holy heroine of the poem.

The implementation of runes in *Juliana*'s signature epilogue is entirely distinct from that of *Christ II*. One additional rune – ‘M (e)’ – appears, and an altered manner of engagement is demanded from the reader. As before, the runes are presented in the correct order to spell out the proper name, but rather than being laced into the text individually, *Juliana*'s runes come in three clustered groups. They are separated in the manuscript by a punctus and the Tironian ‘7 (&)’ abbreviation and appear on lines 704a, 706a, and 708b. Bjork offers the following editorialization and translation which leaves the runes in place unaltered, and which immediately makes evident the need for an alternative interpretative approach to these intratextual runes:

Geomor hweorfeð  
 ƿ ƿ ond †. Cyning biþ reþe,  
 sigora syllend, þonne synnum fah  
 Mƿ ond ƿ acle bidað  
 hwæt him æfter dædum deman wille  
 lifes to leane ƿƿ beofað,  
 seomað sorg-cearig.

Mournful,  
 ƿ, ƿ, and † will depart. The king, the giver of victories,  
 will be harsh when, stained with sins,  
 M, ƿ, and ƿ terrified await  
 what he wishes to decree for them as a reward  
 for their lives according to their deeds. ƿƿ

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<sup>64</sup> Frese, “The Art,” 318.

wretched will shake, tremble.<sup>65</sup>

Purely in terms of visual presentation on the manuscript page, this manner of insertion appears to have much in common with other rune-containing texts of the Exeter Book, and many scholars turn to these texts in their attempts to make sense of the passage.<sup>66</sup> Through comparison and extrapolation, divergent readings and opinions have been produced, but the majority can be seen to follow one of three major argumentative threads, each with its own critical merits and potential shortcomings.

The first viable possibility is that the runes here represent individual words – presumably traditional runic names – much as they did in *Christ II*. Most commentators agree that this is not a fully satisfying explanation, but it cannot be simply discounted. First, in comparison with other rune-containing texts of the Exeter Book, scribal punctuation in *Juliana* seemingly promotes the individual runes as operating independently from one another.<sup>67</sup> Second, and less easily disputed, “When the poem was spoken, the rune-names must have been pronounced, for they fit into the metre and alliteration [...]”<sup>68</sup> Both visually and orally any reading of the poem entailed grasping the runes individually for their name/letter values in this

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<sup>65</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 124-5, ll. 703b-9a. N.b. The manuscript abbreviation “7” is silently expanded by Bjork to “ond.”

<sup>66</sup> E.g. see Birkett, *Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry* (London, England: Routledge, 2017), 48-70; Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 197-8; Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, Chapters 1-2, pp. 17-83.

<sup>67</sup> This claim is a deduction that depends largely on the overall uniformity of the Exeter Book and comparison with other usages of runes. E.g. The *Juliana* runes seem rather more distinguished from one another by the way they are punctuated, in comparison to the runes of *Riddle 19*, which feature an initial and final punctus ostensibly denoting that they are to be interpretively understood as a cohesive unit. While a sufficiently valid inference, a general prescriptive wariness is still advisable concerning punctuation – particularly in light of the inconsistency in runic implementation, size, etc. throughout the Exeter Book and the notable variation in this regard between even the two Cynewulf poems of the manuscript. See René Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta: the English Tradition* (Bruges, Belgium: De Tempel, 1954), 394-6; Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 199; Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 20-2.

<sup>68</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 196.

mode. Yet at the same time, a reading which stops at that point seems almost willfully obtuse. Even Elliott, who unflinchingly insists on the traditional runic names in the case of *Christ II*, acknowledges that insertion of the same names in *Juliana* does not appear to offer a reading that is readily comprehensible.<sup>69</sup> ‘Sad, **torch**, **bow/horn/saddle**, and **necessity/hardship** will depart,’ is enigmatic in the extreme if not entirely nonsensical.

There is also a relevant feature of the passage that is partially masked by the Modern English translation. An incongruity appears to exist, insofar as the groups of runes are not consistently treated as grammatically singular or plural. The first group is accompanied by a singular verb – “*hweorfeð* (will depart/departs)” – whereas, the second group takes a plural form – “*bidað* (await).”<sup>70</sup> These divergent forms add another layer of complexity which makes it hard to accept the traditional rune names as the sole way in which the characters operate. The apparent mismatches also lend a great deal of credibility to the second major interpretative hypothesis.

Elliott and other modern commentators endorse a solution that suggests the clusters should be read as short words that fit into the narrative.<sup>71</sup> “*ƿ ƿ ond ƿ*” can then be interpreted as the word “*cyn* (kindred, nation, mankind, etc.),” and “*MF ond N*” as “*ewu*,” an alternative form of “*e(o)we* (ewes, sheep).”<sup>72</sup> With this manipulation, the passage can be read as ‘Sad, *humankind* will depart [... ] *ewes* terrified await [...].’ The reading is sensible and the verbal shift from singular to plural is effectively

<sup>69</sup> Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 198.

<sup>70</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 124-5, ll. 703-9. See also Elliott “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 198-200; Orton, *Writing in a Speaking World*, 123-5; Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 93-4. Interestingly, the second group also takes the somewhat troubling singular adjectival form “*fah* (stained, guilty, etc.)” rather than the expected plural form ‘*fa*.’

<sup>71</sup> Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 198-200. See also Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 73-4; Page, *An Introduction*, 196-7; Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 32, 93-4.

<sup>72</sup> Theoretically a Northumbrian variant, this prompts further questions of location and dialect. For more in-depth consideration, see first the op. cit. sources Birkett, Elliott, Page, and Symons.

resolved. Yet while this explanation neatly accounts for the first two groups, interpretation of the final pair of runes divides scholarly opinion.

Elliott and Frederick Tupper argue that since “† (l) ƿ (f)” cannot spell out a complete word, a reader’s only recourse is to return to the traditional rune names. They urge the reading ‘*lagu-feoh* (water-wealth),’<sup>73</sup> a poetic kenning that is theoretically plausible given the thematic association of water and wealth established in *Juliana*.<sup>74</sup> Symons allows for the possibility of ‘†ƿ’ also indicating ‘*lagu-flod*,’ a compound already seen above in *Christ II*. She argues that perhaps the two runes are meant to suggest both ‘*lagu-flod*’ and ‘*lagu-feoh*’ simultaneously, due to the interconnectedness of those three words throughout the poem.<sup>75</sup> Birkett offers a third option while still rejecting initialisms.<sup>76</sup> He takes an entirely different tack and proposes ‘*leof* (beloved [a form of address]),’ based on observable analogy to certain riddle clues and ciphers where initial/final letters are indicated and only vowels are dropped.<sup>77</sup> Christine Fell puts forward still another distinct possibility and suggests that it is perhaps an ingenious play on the Biblical theme of sheep and wolves. ‘†ƿ’ may refer to the ‘-[*wu*]/f (wolf)’ element of Cynewulf’s name, left behind when his soul, as a sheep, goes to be with the shepherd.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 199-200; Frederick Tupper Jr., “The Cynewulfian Runes of the Religious Poems,” *Modern Language Notes* 27.5 (1912): 131-7 (p. 136).

<sup>74</sup> Elliott, “Coming Back,” 236-7.

<sup>75</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 94.

<sup>76</sup> Birkett, “Runes and *Revelatio*,” 777-8. On initialisms see John Niles, “The Trick of the Runes in *The Husband’s Message*,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 32 (2003): 189-223 (pp. 216-17) who takes up Moritz Trautmann’s suggestion of ‘*lic-fæst*’ from Moritz Trautmann, “Kynwulf der Bischof und Dichter: Untersuchungen über seine Werke und sein Leben,” *Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik* 1 (1898): 49-50.

<sup>77</sup> Birkett, “Runes and *Revelatio*,” 777-8.

<sup>78</sup> Christine Fell, “Runes and Riddles in Anglo-Saxon England,” in ‘*Lastworda Betst*’: *Essays in Memory of Christine E. Fell with Her Unpublished Writings*, eds. Carole Hough and Kathryn Lowe (Donington, England: Shaun Tyas, 2002), 264-77 (pp. 266-7).

All of these divergent explanations possess their own merits and limitations and are worthy of being raised as possible interpretations. Until a more conclusive argument can be made, however, I follow the skepticism of Page, who first asserts that it is “untidy” for the final pair to require altogether separate treatment and secondly counsels that, “When in the hands of judicious scholars the evidence can lead to conclusions as far apart as these, it is wise to suspend judgment.”<sup>79</sup>

The third prominent hypothesis was first put forward by Sisam. He submits that all three groups of runes are best interpreted as referring to the poet himself; each instance may be read as standing in for the full name ‘Cynewulf.’<sup>80</sup> This allows for tantalizingly forthright translations along the lines of ‘Mournful, *Cynewulf* will depart,’ etc. It also does away with the major sticking point of the second interpretation, since the ‘Ƿ’ pair can be treated and comprehensibly read in the same manner as the first two groups. This theory is also not above reproach, however. Elliot highlights a lack of runological precedent for such practice,<sup>81</sup> and substitution of the proper name also does not easily resolve the previously noted verbal shifts. Nevertheless, it is also hard to discount this conception entirely, given that the poem explicitly encourages the reader to perceive the runes and remember Cynewulf by name. Even if the name should not be audibly inserted when reading aloud, the figure of Cynewulf impacts how one perceives and responds to the reflective epilogue.

Upon review of the most broadly accepted interpretations of *Juliana*’s runic signature, I do not see a compelling reason to argue that one must be valid to the exclusion of the others. In light of the evidence, an entirely plausible explanation

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<sup>79</sup> Page, *An Introduction*, 197.

<sup>80</sup> Sisam, *Studies*, 21.

<sup>81</sup> Elliott, “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 200.

could be Symons's idea that, "each runic letter must be read in three very different ways: as its rune name, as a character within its individual sequence, and as a character within the name 'Cynewulf.'"<sup>82</sup> Rather than being limited to a single intended linguistic referent, the script shifts and transplanted runic groupings encourage readers to reflectively engage with the text as presented on the page so as to grasp the underlying significance.

To be sure, this means grappling with the multivalent functionality of the runic clusters in what Symons argues to be a primarily visual activity.<sup>83</sup> Readers of *Juliana* are not merely thrust into a convoluted, visual linguistic puzzle, however. Birkett argues that, "in breaking the name so pointedly to express the universals of 'mankind,' the 'flock' and the 'beloved ones,' the poet makes an extraordinary effort to reconcile the individual with the collective."<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the emblematic value of the runes would also associatively reemphasize the applicability of this poem's message for its audience. In *Juliana* the encouragement of direct, individual engagement with the text is all the more foregrounded by Cynewulf's augmented role as an intratextual rhetorical device. By explicitly revealing and affiliating himself with the saintly heroine of the poem, Cynewulf facilitates a reader's personal engagement and reflective identification with the spiritual message of the poem. Readers must unpack the runes for themselves – visually, audibly, thematically, and associatively.

The idea that the runic name and authorial figure help to direct the poem's Christian audience may seem untenable if the only associations one ascribes to runes are that they are a deeply mysterious or intrinsically cryptic form of writing.

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<sup>82</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 34.

<sup>83</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 35.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Birkett, "Stitched Up? Cynewulf, Authorial Attribution and Textual Stasis in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Stasis in the Medieval West? Questioning Change and Continuity*, eds. M. J. D. Bintley, M. Locker, M. Symons, M. Wellesley (London, England: Palgrave, 2017), 107-25 (p. 119).

Robert DiNapoli, for example, writes that, “The runes, for Anglo-Saxon poets at least, are ambiguity incarnate.”<sup>85</sup> My next aim is to destabilize precisely this presumption, and I will do so from within the context of a multilateral analysis of *The Fates of the Apostles* – the Cynewulf poem which by far displays the most *riddle-like* implementation of runes.

### 2.3 *The Fates of the Apostles*

The third poem which contains a Cynewulf runic signature survives in the Vercelli Book and is given the modern designation *The Fates of the Apostles*. At only 122 lines, it is the shortest of Cynewulf’s surviving signed poems by a considerable margin. Not unlike *Juliana*, certain early commentators were less than forgiving of the work’s literary merit and deemed it to have “attracted more attention than many critics thought it deserved” in the wake of its recognition as a work associated with Cynewulf.<sup>86</sup> Also akin to the proselytizing and hagiographical *Juliana*, underappreciation for *The Fates of the Apostles* may stem from its textual format.

With regard to poetic structure, the poem has much in common with the Latinate format of passionary lists. It describes in concise fashion the evangelical achievements of Christ’s twelve apostles in the early days of the Church and relates the manner of their deaths. For example, the poem gives a succinct summary of Peter and Paul’s martyrdom on four lines:

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<sup>85</sup> Robert DiNapoli, “Odd Characters: Runes in Old English Poetry,” in *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, eds. Antonina Harbus and Russell Poole (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 145-61 (p. 161).

<sup>86</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, xvi. The modern transcription of the Vercelli Book took place from 1834, but recognition of *The Fates of the Apostles*’s association with Cynewulf followed on from Arthur Napier’s 1889 publication: “Collation der altenglischen Gedichte im Vercellibuch.” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 33 (1889): 66-73 (p. 71). See also Daniel Calder, *Cynewulf* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 29.

Sume on Rome-byrig,  
 frame, fyrd-hwate, feorh ofgefon  
 þurg Nerones nearwe searwe,  
 Petrus ond Paulus.

Notable men in Rome,  
 bold, warlike, gave up their lives  
 through Nero's cunning treachery,  
 Peter and Paul.<sup>87</sup>

It then transitions briskly to an account of the disciple Andrew.

In terms of direct source material, similarities and parallels have been noted between *The Fates of the Apostles* and continental martyrologies including the works of Florus of Lyon, Usuard of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and Ado of Vienne, but according to the investigative comparison of John McCulloh, there is no positive, single source that can at present be identified.<sup>88</sup> Cynewulf may have collated information from multiple discrete sources or, as McCulloh alternatively theorizes, taken inspiration from a now lost passionary collection made up of writings by different individuals.<sup>89</sup> Significantly, both suppositions align with the indications given in the poem's opening lines:

Hwæt. Ic þysne sang sið-geomor *fand*  
 on seocum sefan, *samnode wide*

Listen. Journey-weary, I *devised* this song  
 in my sick heart, *gathered widely*<sup>90</sup>

*The Fates of the Apostles* itself has not always been viewed as independent from the work which directly proceeds it in the Vercelli Book, *Andreas*. Formerly, both have been taken together as a single larger work ascribed to Cynewulf, but analyses of meter and diction highlight discrepancies between the two and link *The*

<sup>87</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 130-1, ll. 11b-14a.

<sup>88</sup> John McCulloh, "Did Cynewulf Use a Martyrology? Reconsidering the Sources of *The Fates of the Apostles*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 29 (2000): 67-83. See also See Allen and Calder, *Sources and Analogues*, 35-9.

<sup>89</sup> McCulloh, "Did Cynewulf Use a Martyrology?" 82-3.

<sup>90</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 130-1, ll. 1-2 Emphasis added.



*Fates of the Apostles* with the other signed poems.<sup>91</sup> That being said, *Andreas* shares twice as many poetic formulae with the signed canon as the work with the next highest frequency (*Guthlac B* – also theorized possibly to be an unsigned Cynewulf poem), and Orchard argues that this figure “strongly suggest[s] either unity of authorship or conscious literary borrowing in one direction or other.”<sup>92</sup> Orchard along with George Krapp and Claes Schaar all contend that the *Andreas* poet was more likely the borrower,<sup>93</sup> but the opposite direction of influence has also been argued for by Jason Puskar. Puskar emphasizes discordant notions of authorship and suggests that the manuscript evidence points toward the scribe of the Vercelli Book perceiving *Andreas* and *The Fates of the Apostles* as a single work.<sup>94</sup> He further speculates that Cynewulf might not have functioned as the original poet in a modern sense, but could have compiled, rearranged, combined, and added to texts already in existence as part of the creative process. These conflicting hypotheses about textual production and manuscript context bear mentioning, because they can continue to impact one’s approach to and paratextual perception of the poems. For the purposes of multilateral investigation, however, I will restrict my focus here to *The Fates of the Apostles* and its polygraphic epilogue.

The poet figure reveals himself on folio 54r of the manuscript and commences from line 98 to lace individual runes into the lines of Roman character text.

Her mæg findan fore-þances gleaw,  
se ðe hine lysteð leoð-giddunga,  
hwa þas fitte fegde. ƿ þær on ende standeþ;

<sup>91</sup> Fulk, “Cynewulf,” 8; Andy Orchard, “Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf,” in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine Karkov and George Brown (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 271-305 (pp. 287-8).

<sup>92</sup> Orchard, “Both Style and Substance,” 287.

<sup>93</sup> Orchard, “Both Style and Substance,” 288-94. See also George Krapp ed., *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles: Two Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poems* (Boston, MA and London, England: Ginn and Company, 1906), lvii; Claes Schaar, *Critical Studies in the Cynewulf Group* (Lund, Sweden: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1949), 261-74.

<sup>94</sup> Jason Puskar, “*Hwa þas fitte fegde?* Questioning Cynewulf’s Claim to Authorship,” *English Studies* 92.1 (2011): 1-19.

eorlas þæs on eorðan brucap. Ne moton hie awa ætsomne,  
 woruld-wunigende. ƿ sceal gedreosan,  
 Ɔ on eðle; æfter tohweorfan  
 læne lices frætewa, efne swa Ʀ toglideð  
 þonne ƕ ond ƕ cræftes neotað  
 nihtes nearowe; on him † ligeð  
 cyninges þeodom. Nu ðu cunnon miht  
 hwa on þam wordum wæs werum oncyðig.

Here one wise of forethought,  
 one who delights in poetic songs, can discover  
 who composed this song. ƿ stands at the end;  
 men enjoy that on earth. But they cannot always  
 be together, dwelling in the world. ƿ must pass away,  
 Ɔ in the native land; after that the transitory adornments  
 of the body will disperse, even as the Ʀ vanishes  
 when the ƕ and ƕ exercise strength  
 with labor in the night; † lies upon them,  
 the service of the king. Now you can know  
 who has been made known to people in these words.<sup>95</sup>

The implementation recalls that which was witnessed in *Christ II*, but with an important distinction. Again, the individual runes seemingly indicate traditional runic names, and each denotes a word that contributes to the alliteration and scansion of its line.<sup>96</sup> E.g. line 98:

*hwa þas fitte feigde. ƿ [(f) = FEOH] þær on ende standeþ*  
 who composed this song. [WEALTH, PROPERTY, etc.] stands at the end

Unlike *Christ II*, however, as one reads through *The Fates of the Apostles*, the runes are not encountered in the proper sequence to spell out the name. They appear in the order: ‘F, W, U, L, C, Y, N.’ This shuffling combined with the indicative hints that precede and follow the runes led Elliott to assert that in the case of *The Fates of the Apostles*, “There is, however, more of the traditional riddle than in either *Christ II* or *Elene*.”<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 136-7, ll. 96-106.

<sup>96</sup> This means that the debates considered in Section 2.1 – in particular, the proper reading of the ‘Ɔ (u)’ rune – should also be kept in mind for this section.

<sup>97</sup> Elliott “Cynwulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*,” 195.

The reader is encouraged to decipher and puzzle out the intratextual anagram, but I am wary of associative interpretations of the runes themselves as intrinsically cryptic or as “ambiguity incarnate.”<sup>98</sup> Preconceptions of this type may be informed by modern cultural perspectives on runes and not an accurate reflection of on-the-ground reality in the context of early medieval England. Quite to the contrary, Birkett puts forward a convincing theory that use of and references to runes in early English manuscripts appear instead to exhibit “unlocking” or “releasing” qualities, which he suggests are best encapsulated by the Latin term “*revelatio*,” with its twin meanings of both “uncovering” and “revelation” in the Modern English sense.<sup>99</sup> From this perspective, the *Fates of the Apostles* runes do not need to be understood as merely adding a layer of visual encryption or disguising certain letters and words. They can be perceived as contributing to the message of the passage and the poem in a reflective and revelatory way.

The signature passage is not simply a personal, first-person epilogue that has been clumsily appended to a poetic listing of the apostles, and an exploration of the poem’s themes and overall format greatly clarifies what is revealed by the runes and their multiliteral implementation. Calder identifies how,

Cynewulf’s own personal cares (conventional as they may be for a medieval Christian) define the themes of the poem – both in the narrative and the runic conclusion [...] In the iterated prayers one item in particular, noted above, is repeated – the journey to an unknown land (91b-95b, 108b-113a). Faced with genuine terror about this journey, Cynewulf finds its parallel and consolation in the journeys of the twelve apostles.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> DiNapoli, “Odd Characters,” 161.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Birkett, “Unlocking Runes? Reading Anglo-Saxon Runic Abbreviations in Their Immediate Literary Context,” *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* 5 (2014): 91-114. By the same author see also the op. cit. works: *Reading the Runes*, “Chapter 2: Releasing Runes,” 49-81, and “Runes and *Revelatio*.”

<sup>100</sup> Daniel Calder, “*The Fates of the Apostles*, The Latin Martyrologies and the Litany of the Saints,” *Medium Aevum* 44.3 (1975): 219-24 (p. 222).

Even more conspicuously than in his other works, Cynewulf's personal involvement in *The Fates of the Apostles* is no afterthought. It is woven into the fabric of the poem in such a way that the inclination to spell out his name after those of the apostles seems intuitive.<sup>101</sup>

James Boren notes that Cynewulf's first-person segment "functions in the same relationship *formally* and *thematically* as do the personae of the apostles"; the poet not only effects structural and thematic unity through the repetition of rhetorical patterns over the course of the poem but also successfully "identifies himself with the apostles."<sup>102</sup> Constance Heiatt further observes a thirteenth corresponding occurrence which somewhat spoils the apostolic symbolism of Boren's twelve, but which nevertheless reinforces the general validity of his pattern.<sup>103</sup>

I have already raised initial arguments on the subject of the Cynewulf poet persona's intratextual role in both *Christ II* and *Juliana*. In the case of *The Fates of the Apostles*, my suggestion that he functions as a rhetorical device which promotes reflection and allows for easier identification with the righteous characters contained in the narratives is visible even more directly. The poet strives to affiliate himself with the figures of the apostles and then unmistakably extends this same affiliation to the discerning reader through hints directed at "one wise of forethought, one who delights in poetic songs"; second-person address; and first-person entreaty.<sup>104</sup> The

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<sup>101</sup> Elliott, "Coming Back," 232-4.

<sup>102</sup> James Boren, "Form and Meaning in Cynewulf's *Fates of the Apostles*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 5.2 (1969): 115-22. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 57-65 (p. 61). Specifically, Boren highlights the recurrence of three discernible elements in the individual narrative sequences which he terms: the "*nominative* element" (designating the subject of the action, frequently one of the apostles), the "*locative* element" (defining the setting or place of action), and the "*instrumental* element" (establishing the means by which an action is attained, i.e. often the figures of the apostles' persecutors through whom their martyrdom is effected).

<sup>103</sup> Constance Heiatt, "*The Fates of the Apostles*: Imagery, Structure, and Meaning," *Papers on Language and Literature* 10.2 (1974): 115-25. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 66-77 (p. 71).

<sup>104</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 136-7, ll. 96-8a, 107-9.

ultimate result is that the poem displays a structure of interconnected images and metaphors which “suggests progression which goes something like ‘Christ > saints > poet > reader > humanity > God?’”<sup>105</sup> “By employing a similar verbal pattern for apostolic and poetic activity, Cynewulf relates the reader, the poet, and the entire Christian brotherhood in a kind of poetic communion of saints.”<sup>106</sup>

The polygraphic inclusion of runes – and specifically ones that indicate a proper name – further accentuates this ideological affiliation. They associatively reemphasize the significance and applicability of the poem’s message for a reader of Old English in early medieval England. At a foundational level, Fred Robinson stresses that Old English writers appear to display a “lively interest” in the narrative and exegetical value of proper names and their etymological significance, whether historical or fictional.<sup>107</sup> In relation specifically to *The Fates of the Apostles*, Raymond Gleason argues that the runes function as an “object of religious meditation,” and beyond designating individual words and letters of the name, they “evoke within the context of the poem a tradition of Christian runic lore to ‘whisper’ a moral allegory on the mysteries of salvation.”<sup>108</sup> Gleason proceeds to make another intriguing suggestion:

Since Cynewulf is requesting suffrages of his readers, he seems to emulate the pre-Christian practice of inscribing the name of the dead on stones in runic symbols. It is interesting to note further that this application of the runic symbols indicates that the poet is quite aware of the written nature of the text since the runic symbols must be seen and re-arranged, not merely heard, to function as letters spelling his name.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Hieatt, “*The Fates of the Apostles*,” 76.

<sup>106</sup> Frese, “The Art,” 320.

<sup>107</sup> Fred Robinson, “The Significance of Names in Old English Literature,” *Anglia* 86 (1968): 14-58 (p. 15). Though certain dubious etymological derivations may not hold up under modern linguistic scrutiny, their critical value from a literary perspective remains.

<sup>108</sup> Raymond Gleason, “The Riddle of the Runes: The Runic Passage in Cynewulf’s *Fates of the Apostles*,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 9 (1992): 19-32 (pp. 28, 19). Cf. Orton who writes that “The use of runes in manuscripts is therefore a clear manifestation of continuity with pre-Christian English culture and the epigraphic traditions associated with it.” Orton, *Writing in a Speaking World*, 94.

<sup>109</sup> Gleason, “The Riddle of the Runes,” 21.

Gleason's points about visuality and Cynewulf's manipulation of associative ties that runes may have had in the minds of his audience are in line with my overall argument in this chapter. However, overemphasis of only the written nature of the text can potentially be misleading. If one ignores the oral/audible aspects of the words, it is easy to miss a striking example of multiliteral signification that takes place in the passage, because it does not appear in the runes, but in a word that is transcribed in Roman letters.

Seven runes which comprise the poet's name present themselves and are theoretically visible to a silent reader.<sup>110</sup> If one reads the passage aloud, or listens to it for that matter, there is an allusion to an eighth rune that is aurally accessible but not literally included. On line 101a, one rune and two Roman letter words are presented visually: "Ń *on eðle* (Ń in the native land)."<sup>111</sup> It is possible here to identify a graphically obscured reference to an additional runic name. "*Eðle*," translated by Bjork as "native land," is an inflected form of 'eðel' or 'æpel.' This word is also used in the senses of 'property,' 'inheritance,' 'land,' 'ancestral home,' etc., and it is the traditional runic name suggested by the *Old English Rune Poem* for the 'ǣ (æ)' rune.<sup>112</sup> In light of the fact that a proper recitation of the polygraphic section demands a degree of multiscriptal proficiency and familiarity with rune names, this allusion *across* scripts cannot have gone unnoticed. A reader can see the workings of one script *through* the other.

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<sup>110</sup> 'Theoretically visible' because the manuscript page of the Vercelli Book is, as Page describes it, "now in part obscured by a stain in the parchment and needing editorial treatment." Page, *An Introduction*, 191.

<sup>111</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 136-7, l. 101a.

<sup>112</sup> The relevant segment of the *Old English Rune Poem* reads: "ǣ byþ ofer lēof æghwylcum men,/ gif he mōt ðær rihtes and gerysena on/ brūcan on bolde blēadum oftast. (The family land is very dear to every man,/ provided that there in his own house he may enjoy/ everything that is right and proper in constant prosperity.)" Maureen Halsall ed., *The Old English Rune Poem: A Critical Edition* (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 90-1, ll. 71-3. This translation is Halsall's. See also Page, *An Introduction*, 74.

One practical repercussion of this observation is that it again compounds the difficulty of properly extricating the name runes for an audience listening to the passage for the first time and provided with no supplementary cues. Earlier in relation to *Christ II*, I noted something similar in the concurrent use of ‘*lif-wynna*’ and ‘*lagu-flode*’ opposite ‘ƿ (*w*) [*wynn*]’ and ‘ᵹ (*l*) [*lagu*].’ I also highlighted the controversy of interpretation which surrounds the ‘ᵿ (*u*)’ rune that directly precedes ‘*eðle*’ here and makes this half-line particularly complex to unpack. It is still possible that the *u*-rune represents ‘*ur* (aurochs)’ in the sense of masculine strength as Elliott argues,<sup>113</sup> but if I accept the more prevalent theory that it should be read ‘*ure* (our),’ then in the space of three short words there is a convoluted inversion of graphic and associative expectations.

A word that is not a runic name must be re-understood as a rune for the visual purposes of spelling out the name, immediately prior to the appearance of an inflected form of a traditional runic name transcribed in the Roman alphabet. This means that on top of the visible mixing that takes place on the page through reordering of the name’s letters, there is an aural layer that underlies both scripts and which plays off of conventional associations to contribute to the reflective and interactive nature of the passage. This fascinating mode of signification is more readily perceptible through a multilateral lens. Moreover, the inference that the ‘ᵿ (*œ*)’ rune and its name retained enough sociolinguistic currency to be recognizable is made all the more plausible by the fact that it is one of “A few runes [...] used in

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<sup>113</sup> Elliott “Cynewulf’s Runes in *Juliana* and *Fates of the Apostles*.”

manuscripts as abbreviations, where they represent the word that supplies their name,” appearing for example on line 520 of *Beowulf*.<sup>114</sup>

I do not highlight this polygraphic use of runes as so-called scribal ‘abbreviation’ merely as a side-comment of passing interest. This feature is of central significance to the final work which I analyze in this case study. For, in addition to its runic signature which is stylistically reminiscent of Cynewulf’s other signed poems, *Elene* as transcribed in the Vercelli Book displays two additional runes employed in this manner. Therefore, I next intend to address what difference – if any – exists between these polygraphic implementations and those which reveal the poet figure. Are the former “nothing more than shorthand practice” as one commentator suggests,<sup>115</sup> or, as I will argue, do they present their own intriguing form of multilateral signification?

#### **2.4 *Elene: The Finding of the True Cross***

The fourth and final surviving Old English poetic work which displays a runic Cynewulf signature is found later in the same manuscript as *The Fates of the Apostles*, the Vercelli Book. *Elene* is the longest of the signed poems, and it unfolds an elaborate, if also historically anachronistic, narrative that details the search for and discovery of the true cross by the poem’s heroine. The poem’s anglicized ‘Elene’ is the important third and fourth-century figure of St. Helena, who among other things was appropriated as a British saint in the Middle Ages and is remembered as the

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<sup>114</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 153. See also Page, *An Introduction*, 77. The runes ‘W (*d*)’ or ‘M (*m*)’ can also sporadically be intratextually encountered in Old English manuscript contexts to stand for their names: ‘*dæg* (day)’ or ‘*man(n)* (human, man, etc.).’

<sup>115</sup> Dieter Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition* (Toronto, Canada and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 83.



mother of Constantine the Great, the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity. The narrative begins with an introduction of the emperor and recounts the legend of his conversion.

Constantine is described as a powerful ruler who is set to do battle with an assemblage of foreign enemies, when he is told by an emissary from God to look to the heavens and receive a “*sigores tacen* (symbol of victory).”<sup>116</sup> After he conquers under the sign, Constantine learns the significance of the symbol provided to him and is baptized. He then commissions his mother to go and seek the location of the true cross upon which Christ was hanged. Elene departs with her retinue across the sea to Jerusalem where she interrogates a reluctant assembly of wise men until one among their number, Judas, is handed over as a hostage for further questioning. Judas continues to refuse and is bound in a pit and starved for seven days, following which he finally succumbs. After Judas lifts up an extended prayer in Hebrew, the precise location is revealed. He promptly repents and succeeds in uncovering the three crosses of Calvary. Unsure which one belonged to Christ, each is taken and raised above a recently deceased youth, who is restored to life under the true cross. Judas then verbally overcomes the devil who appears from Hell, the triumphant news is proclaimed, and joyous word is sent to Constantine of Elene’s success.

Elene is then charged with the construction of a church on the site, and the poem describes how she adorned the holy cross with gems and how Judas received baptism and took on the new name Cyriacus. Still inquisitive, Elene enquires about the nails from the crucifixion and Judas-Cyriacus is prompted again to petition the Lord. A sign in the form of a “*lacende lig* (leaping fire)” then indicates the nails’ resting place, those gathered there also acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God,

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<sup>116</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 148-9, l. 85.

and Elene has the nails prepared for Constantine to use as the bit on the bridle of his horse.<sup>117</sup> Finally, the poem concludes with a first-person epilogue that relates the poet's own conversion experience, advocates similar belief, and contains interlinear runes which form the name Cynewulf.

Even this brief summary of *Elene's* plot and narrative action reveals the important roles that communicative discourse and symbolic representation play in the storyline and morality of the poem. Before I return to assess the epilogue's runic signature, it is particularly beneficial for this longer work to review influential aspects of content and theme, as well as other multilingual and polygraphic features of the text.

With regard to possible source material, Allen and Calder note the resemblances between the Old English *Elene* and Latin versions of the *Inventio Sanctae Crucis* narrative, and they suggest that Cynewulf's source(s) must have been akin to the *Acta Cyriaci* found in the *Acta Sanctorum*.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, "Cynewulf reshapes his Mediterranean source and adds striking and memorable scenes that make the poem both decidedly Anglo-Saxon and clearly his."<sup>119</sup>

Specifically, Bjork highlights the appearance of the 'beasts of battle' motif on lines 110-13 as one element of the markedly heroic nature of the lexis and imagery seen in the opening lines about the battle.<sup>120</sup> Orchard additionally emphasizes the parallels between Old English poetry like *Beowulf* and "Cynewulf's skillful depiction of an epic sea-voyage in *Elene*," a scene which, incidentally, "has no parallel in the putative Latin source."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 220-1, l. 1110.

<sup>118</sup> Allen and Calder, *Sources and Analogues*, 59-69.

<sup>119</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, xvii.

<sup>120</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, xvii.

<sup>121</sup> Andy Orchard, "The Word Made Flesh: Christianity and Oral Culture in Anglo-Saxon Verse," *Oral Culture* 24.2 (2009): 293-318 (p. 300).

Depiction of the protagonist Elene is another aspect of the poem where heroic convention shines through. Thomas Hill urges modern readers to bear in mind that for Cynewulf and presumable original audiences of the poem, the characters of the narrative were undoubtedly historical figures, but they nevertheless display a high degree of figural significance and are presented in a way that is “iconographic rather than realistic.”<sup>122</sup> Elene is an active and robust “*guð-cwen* (war-queen),”<sup>123</sup> and Olsen contends that in comparison with the Latin versions, Cynewulf deliberately heightens her heroic portrayal in Old English by supplying her with more commanding speech verbs and omitting any mention of her death.<sup>124</sup> Both the character and the narrative operate at the intersection of cultural and literary traditions so that Elene plays “paradoxical roles as woman and warrior, saint and tyrant, life-giving mother and death-threatening torturer.”<sup>125</sup>

A similar observation can be made about the correspondence between the poem’s structural design – “with its balanced distribution of details and incidents calculated to reflect on another” – and its thematic organization.<sup>126</sup> Numerous previous commentators express variations on the idea that in conjunction with Elene’s discovery of the physical cross, the poet figure Cynewulf is conspicuously aligned with her and the other adult converts of the story.<sup>127</sup> Through multiple

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<sup>122</sup> Thomas Hill, “Sapiential Structure and Figural Narrative in the Old English *Elene*,” *Traditio* 27 (1971): 159-77. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 207-28.

<sup>123</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 160-1, l. 254.

<sup>124</sup> Olsen, “Cynewulf’s Autonomous Women,” 223-5.

<sup>125</sup> Joyce Lionarons, “Cultural Syncretism and the Construction of Gender in Cynewulf’s *Elene*,” *Exemplaria* 10.1 (1998): 51-68 (p. 55).

<sup>126</sup> Earl Anderson, “Cynewulf’s *Elene*: Manuscript Divisions and Structural Symmetry,” *Modern Philology* 72.2 (1974): 111-22 (p. 122).

<sup>127</sup> Jackson Campbell, “Cynewulf’s Multiple Revelations,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 3 (1972): 257-77. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 229-50; Frese, “The Art,” 323-6; Hill, “Sapiential Structure”; Hill, “The Failing Torch: The Old English *Elene*, 1256-1259,” *Notes and Queries* 52.2 (2005): 155-60; Catharine Regan, “Evangelicism as the Informing Principle of Cynewulf’s *Elene*,” *Traditio* 54 (1973): 27-52. Reprinted in Robert Bjork ed., *The Cynewulf Reader*, rev. ed. (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2001), 251-80.

revelations, evangelism comes to be the overarching and informing principle of the narrative. The *inventio crucis* motif becomes a powerful metaphor for an individual's own personal, spiritual 'finding of the cross.'

This prevalent interpretation of *Elene* echoes my earlier observations regarding the careful alignment of poet figure with his narrative subjects and the accessible reflective capacities this can produce for the different poems' readerships. Yet, the degree to which it is achieved in *Elene* and the manner in which it is realized is unparalleled. Hannah Bailey argues that rather than purely allegorical description, "Cynewulf is in fact deeply interested in the minds of his characters, who model the process by which every person may come to know the Cross."<sup>128</sup> In Bailey's view, the poem critiques "*incomplete* understanding," as Constantine, Elene, Judas-Cyriacus, and then also Cynewulf himself,

must apprehend the Cross through the lenses of learning, experience and grace before they understand it fully. [...] In *Elene* the "text" that is being read is the Cross, and each of the four main characters must learn to read it in a similarly threefold manner before they achieve spiritual maturity.<sup>129</sup>

Whether deliberate on her part or unintentional, Bailey's decision to refer to the cross as a "'text' that is being read" is more than merely an apt metaphor. The distinctive power possessed by language and the written word is a recurring theme throughout *Elene*.

The all-important sign of the cross which is perceived in the heavens by Constantine is not only "*wliti* (beautiful)," "*frætewum beorht* (bright with treasures)," and "*golde geglenged* (adorned with gold)," but it is also described as being "*bocstafum awriten* (inscribed with letters)."<sup>130</sup> At key points in the narrative, the four

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<sup>128</sup> Hannah Bailey, "Memory, Sight and Love in Cynewulf's *Elene*," *English Studies* 97.6 (2016): 577-93 (p. 578).

<sup>129</sup> Bailey, "Memory, Sight and Love," 580-1. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>130</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 148-9, ll. 88-91.

major characters of the poem make specific recourse to and cite the authority of holy books. Constantine is able to find where Christ had been crucified, “*þurh lar-smiðas [...] on Godes bocum* (through scholars in the books of God).”<sup>131</sup> Elene twice references her understanding that the Hebrews were the precious, chosen people of the Lord “*þurg witgena word-gerynol on Godes bocum* (through the word-secrets of the prophets/ in God’s books).”<sup>132</sup> She declares that she will not be dissuaded from finding the cross of Calvary which she has come to know “*þurh halige bec* (through holy books).”<sup>133</sup> Elene coerces Judas to disclose the location, “*wisdom [...] swa gewritu secgaf* (the wisdom, as the writings tell us),”<sup>134</sup> and when at first the company is unable to determine which of the crosses belonged to Christ, she recalls having “*hyrdon þurh halige bec/ [...] þæt twegen mid him/ geprowedon* (‘heard told/ through holy books that two suffered/ with him).”<sup>135</sup>

Judas is described as “*boca gleaw* (wise in books)” once he is transformed into the model bishop Cyriacus,<sup>136</sup> and even the first-person narratorial voice of Cynewulf relates how he often had it in mind “*swa ic on bocum fand,/ wyrda gangum, on gewritum cyðan* (as I found it/ in the course of events, in books, made known in writings).”<sup>137</sup> Finally, toward the end of the verse, this leitmotif of linguistic authority and incumbent responsibility is extended to the easily overlooked fifth participant in the poem, its audience.

Sceall æghwylc ðær  
reord-berendra riht gehyran  
dæda gehwylcra þurh þæs deman muð,  
ond worda swa same wed gesyllan,  
ealra unsnyttro

<sup>131</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 156-7, ll. 203-4.

<sup>132</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 162-3, ll. 289-90. See also pp. 168-9, ll. 364-5.

<sup>133</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 188-9, l. 671.

<sup>134</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 190-1, l. 674. Interestingly, part of Elene’s incredulous plea here on lines 643-8a also references the military exploits of the Trojans.

<sup>135</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 202-3, ll. 852-4.

<sup>136</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 226-7, l. 1211.

<sup>137</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 228-31, ll. 1254-5.

Every speech-bearer  
 must hear truth there  
 through the judge's mouth about every deed  
 and for every word as well, be responsible  
 for all the folly spoken before<sup>138</sup>

The power of speaking and writing are emphasized as an important theme throughout the poem,<sup>139</sup> and boundaries segregating the oral and literate aspects of the poem are exceedingly difficult to define and maintain. Samantha Zacher argues that the poem operates at the interface of literacy and orality, and she highlights the captivating use of both aural and visual effects which include rhyme along with the expected alliteration, and paronomasia that is visual, etymological, and onomastic.<sup>140</sup> Zacher proposes examples of cross-lingual onomastic wordplay based around foreign language (Hebrew, Latinate) names,<sup>141</sup> which make it even more reasonable to view *Elene* as blurring not only the lines between oral and visual, but also conceptual binaries of culture and language.

The poem clearly demonstrates a degree of Latin familiarity on lines 144-5 which read, "*þa wæs gesyne þæt sige forgeafl Constantino cyning ælmihtig* (Then it was seen that the king almighty/ gave victory to Constantine)"<sup>142</sup> Elsewhere, the poem gives Constantine's proper name according to Latin nominative convention as "Constantinus" (e.g. line 79), but the form here "Constantino" seems to be the syntactically appropriate Latin dative form. Interestingly, however, the name does not consistently follow orthodox Latin declension over the course of the poem. For

<sup>138</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 230-3, ll. 1281a-85b.

<sup>139</sup> Fiona Gameson notes that this feature is present not only throughout the poem but throughout the Cynewulf canon. It appears in all the signed poems except *Juliana*. Fiona Gameson, "The Library of Cynewulf," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume I c. 400-1100*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 665-9.

<sup>140</sup> Samantha Zacher, "Cynewulf at the Interface of Literacy and Orality: The Evidence of the Puns in *Elene*," *Oral Tradition* 17.2 (2002): 346-87.

<sup>141</sup> Consider, for example, the intratextual explanatory translation the poet itself offers of the name Cyriacus, "*æ hælendes* (the law of the savior)." Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 216-17, l. 1062.

<sup>142</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 152-3, ll. 144-5.

example, on line 8, it appears to abide by Old English inflectional patterns with the genitive form “Constantines,” as opposed to ‘Constantini.’

Line 610 contains another example that is slightly harder to grasp and even more easily lost in translation.

ludas hire ongen þingode (ne meahte he þa gehðu bebugan,  
oncyrran rex geniðlan; he wæs on þære cwene gewealdum):

Judas spoke to her  
(he could not escape anxiety, nor could the king  
change that torment; he was in the queen’s power):<sup>143</sup>

Bjork’s Modern English translation belies a particularly fascinating use of the Latin word “*rex* (king).” It would be intriguing even if only applied in a one-dimensional sense as a loan borrowing or code-switch, but this usage is uniquely compelling for a different reason. Fell observes that when the line is recited aloud, the alliteration suggests that the Latin written form ‘*rex*’ ought to be vocalized as the Old English ‘*cyning* (king)’; she then extends the notion and suggests it could be a “borrowing from accepted numismatic forms.”<sup>144</sup> She reasons that, “Mixed runic and roman coinages rarely show Latin inflected forms of a name, and often the only Latin is *rex* which Anglo-Saxons were quite capable of reading as a shorthand for *cyning*.”<sup>145</sup> This is fascinating in the framework of *Elene*, not only because an inflected Latin name is present, but also because of the vibrant thematic emphases the poem places on the linguistic and the literary. I would argue that the easiest interpretation

<sup>143</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 184-5, ll. 608b-10. N.b. Bjork’s edition gives the Old English lines on 609-10 and the corresponding translation on 608b-10.

<sup>144</sup> Christine Fell, “Anglo-Saxon England: A Three-Script Community?” in *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions: Grindaheim, Norway, 8-12 August 1990*, ed. James Knirk (Uppsala, Sweden: Institutionen för nordiska språk, Uppsala universitet, 1994), 119-39 (p. 132). Cf. another appearance of the Latin form “*rex*” on line 1040 which reads “*unrihte æ. Him wearð ece rex*, (wrong law. To him the eternal king,)” Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 214-15.

<sup>145</sup> Fell “Anglo-Saxon England,” 132.

of this occurrence is that it is consistent with the text's many examples of cross-lingual and auditory-visual play.

In addition to the Cynewulf signature at its conclusion, *Elene* also contains further multiliteral signification that adds credence to this view. However, just as the cross-lingual auditory/visual discrepancy of *cyning/rex* is rather easily lost in modern translation, the two polygraphic instances at lines 788 and 1089 are readily missed and frequently ignored even in much of the scholarly commentary on the poem. This lacuna is a direct result of modern editorialization of the Old English text. Bjork, for example, follows the conventions established by previous editions, and he renders the relevant passages as follows:

Swa ðu gehyrdest þone halgan wer  
 Moyses on meðle, þa ðu mihta God,  
 geywdest þam eorle on þa æðelan tid  
 under beorh-hliðe ban Iosephes,  
 swa ic þe, weroda *wyn*, gif hit sie will þin  
 þurg þæt beorhte gesceap biddan wille  
 þæt me þæ gold-hord, gaste scyppend,  
 geopenie, þæt yldum wæs  
 lange behyded.

As you listened to the holy man  
 Moses in council when you, God of powers,  
 revealed the bones of Joseph to the man  
 in that noble time under the mountain slope,  
 so, *joy* of hosts, if it be your will,  
 through that bright creation, I want to ask  
 you, creator of souls to reveal to me that  
 gold hoard that was concealed  
 from people for a long time.<sup>146</sup>

Nu ðu hrædlice  
 eallum eaðmedum ar selesta,  
 þine bene onsend in ða beorhtan gesceafte,  
 on wuldres *wyn*. Bide wigena þrym  
 þæt þe gecyðe, cyning ælmihtig,  
 hord under hrusan þæt gehyded gen,  
 duguðum dyrne, deogol bided.

Now,  
 best of messengers, quickly and in all humility  
 send your petition into the bright creation,

<sup>146</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 196-8, ll. 784-92a. Emphasis added.



into the *joy* of glory. Ask the glory of warriors,  
 the king almighty, to reveal to you  
 the hoard under the ground that still remains hidden,  
 concealed from the retinues, secret.<sup>147</sup>

The word ‘*wyn* (joy)’ in both of these two passages represents a silent expansion on the part of modern editors of the solitary runic form ‘ƿ (*w*)’ that is in the manuscript at either point. It is not used as a supplementary letter or isolated phonological constituent but seemingly as a logogram that represents its runic name.

As introduced above, the Old English manuscript record contains instances of certain runes being used in this manner.<sup>148</sup> Occasionally, critics have overgeneralized about this manuscript use of individual runes, identifying it as “nothing more than shorthand practice,”<sup>149</sup> or stating that “we can at least say that the runic alphabet would have been familiar enough to become an unremarkable minor element of monastic scribal practice [...]”<sup>150</sup> Such judgments may stem from analogy to modern practices of writing or to other medieval practices of abbreviation and shorthand,<sup>151</sup> but I would urge a degree of hesitation in order to avoid painting with too broad a brush.

In contrast to Scandinavian examples, Birkett highlights that in early medieval England, “These uses of abbreviations are hardly common or consistent enough to serve much practical purpose [...]”<sup>152</sup> Birkett affirms an assertion of René Derolez

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<sup>147</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 218-9, ll. 1086b-92. Emphasis added.

<sup>148</sup> Barnes, *Runes*, 153; Page, *An Introduction*, 77.

<sup>149</sup> Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called*, 83.

<sup>150</sup> DiNapoli, “Odd Characters,” 46-7.

<sup>151</sup> E.g. DiNapoli, “Odd Characters,” 146: “the runic alphabet was familiar enough for a scribe to use it in what seems an almost offhand way, just as a modern writer might use an ampersand with no consciousness of its being a compressed form of the Latin word *et* [...]”

<sup>152</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 57. Specifically, Birkett contrasts the example of the forty-five uses of the *maðr* rune in the poem *Hávamál* of the Codex Regius manuscript of the Poetic Edda with the observation that “The only consistent application of these so-called abbreviations in Anglo-Saxon England occurs in the glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Durham Ritual, both produced by the same tenth-century glossator, Aldred.”

and proceeds to argue that usage of individual runes in such a manner as *Elene* must be regarded through a distinct interpretative lens.

A rune that appears once in a text in which it could have been employed scores of times is, as Derolez points out, 'exceptional', and particularly so when there is no clear palaeographical rationale for the use of such an abbreviation. [...] we are dealing not with systematic abbreviation, but with the conscious deployment of runic logographs for a particular literary effect.<sup>153</sup>

Already noted above, Birkett's ultimate view is that these types of textual runes may have associations of 'unlocking' or 'releasing' which are directly relevant to their immediate literary context.<sup>154</sup> I concur with Birkett's general perspective that they are employed for a particular literary effect, and in the case of *Elene* his specific suggestion is also conceptually satisfying. The runes mark the narrative points at which the cross and nails' locations are unlocked.

First, these two *wynn* runes are noticeably separated from one another by roughly three hundred lines of verse, during which interval the scribe could theoretically have implemented a similar runic abbreviation an additional three times if inclined to do so.<sup>155</sup> What seems at first to be arbitrariness or inconsistency in graphic application, comes across instead as semiotically meaningful variation when one takes stock of the narrative circumstances that surround these two runes. The first appears in the midst of Judas-Cyriacus's initial prayer to God that he *reveal* the resting place of the cross, and the second occurs in the subsequent plea bidding the Lord to reveal the location of the crucifixion nails.<sup>156</sup>

These prayers come in the text as direct speech, and Marie Nelson proposes that extensive use of this type of discourse "enables [Cynewulf's] readers, or

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<sup>153</sup> Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, 57. Cf. Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta*, 402.

<sup>154</sup> In addition to Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, see again "Unlocking Runes?" and "Runes and *Revelatio*."

<sup>155</sup> At l. 793 "*wynsumne* (joyful)"; l. 843 "*wyn-beam* (tree of joy)"; l. 1039 "*wynne* (joy)." Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 198, 200, 214. See also Birkett, "Unlocking Runes?" 102.

<sup>156</sup> See Birkett, "Unlocking Runes?" 101-3.

listeners who hear his poem read aloud, to respond to words perceived as, and probably actually heard as, spoken words.”<sup>157</sup> Nelson makes the case that “Cynewulf was bridging a gap between oral cultures, plural, and an emerging written tradition,” and she also touches on a second intriguing property – a reader is “told that Judas speaks in Hebrew, and then [is] presented with a long prayer in Old English (which, incidentally, includes three and one half lines of words sung by the seraphim).”<sup>158</sup> Nelson views this as simply another element of the localizing adaptation of the narrative, and I agree that the use of direct speech, the blending of cultural elements, and the blurring of lines between literate and oral are significant. Given the range of examples observed in this and the preceding chapter, however, I wish to push my consideration a step further.

I believe that the explicit framing of the prayer immediately prior is also of consequence. Judas-Cyriacus “*on Ebrisc spræc* (spoke in Hebrew),” and thereafter he entreats the Lord for dozens of lines in Old English alliterative verse. This external framing coupled with the internal runes may be an outpouring of the poet and audience’s comprehension of their role as the people of God – Gentiles, but sharers in the New Covenant through salvation in Christ. Perhaps this is an expression of conceptually mapping onto and/or appropriatively superseding the Chosen People. Annexation and ideological self-insertion into scriptural narratives can be achieved through polygraphic variation tied to a juggling of cultural artifacts and language perspectives.

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<sup>157</sup> Marie Nelson ed. and trans., *Judith, Juliana, and Elene: Three Fighting Saints* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1991), 194.

<sup>158</sup> Nelson, *Judith, Juliana, and Elene*, 194-5.

Moreover, placement in specifically these contexts underscores Birkett's suggestion of potential revelatory runic associations, and while it is impossible to determine whether these *wynn* runes originate with the 'author,' or the scribe, etc.

We might, however, expect a poet engaged in sophisticated runic play in the authorial colophon to *Elene* and who structured the poem by means of 'multiple revelations' (J. Campbell 1972) to be more than capable of leaving signposts in his verse in order to engage the intellectual faculties of the reader.<sup>159</sup>

Following these polygraphic 'signposts,' the eight signature runes are interlarded into the text of the epilogue from line 1257 onwards. The style of implementation recalls that of *Christ II*, but it is not a simple duplication.

A wæs secg oð ðæt  
 cnyssed cear-wealmum, l drusende,  
 þeah he in medo-healle maðmas þege,  
 æplede gold. l̥ gnornode,  
 †, gefera, nearu-sorge dreah,  
 enge rune, þær him M fore  
 mil-paðas mæt, modig þrægde  
 wirum gewlenced. P̥ is geswiðrad,  
 gomen æfter gearum, geogoð is gecyrred,  
 ald onmedla. N̥ wæs geara  
 geogoðhades glæm. Nu synt gear-dagas  
 æfter first-mearce forð gewitene,  
 lif-wynne geliden, swa † toglideð,  
 flodas gefysde. P̥ æghwam bið  
 læne under lyfte

Always until that point  
 the man was tossed with surging cares, l̥ sinking,  
 even though he received treasures, embossed  
 gold, in the meadhall. l̥ grieved  
 †, a companion, endured affliction,  
 a cruel mystery, where before him M  
 measured the milestoned roads, ran proud,  
 adorned with filigree. P̥ is diminished,  
 and game, with the years; youth is changed,  
 old pomp. N̥ was once  
 the radiance of youth. Now the days of old,  
 after the appointed interval, have departed,

<sup>159</sup> Birkett, "Unlocking Runes?" 102. Cf. Campbell, "Cynewulf's Multiple Revelations." Birkett also makes the suggestion on p. 101 that, "As the scribe seems to be a 'mechanical recorder of the texts before him (Szarmach, 1979, 187), it may well be that his exemplar for *Elene* contained the runic abbreviations, and that he copied them in, not thinking to replicate his practice elsewhere." See further Paul Szarmach, "The Scribe of the Vercelli Book," *Studia Neophilologica* 51 (1979): 179-88.

the joy of life gone, just as ʀ, the hastening flood,  
glides away. For everyone under the sky ƿ is  
fleeting<sup>160</sup>

As previously, the eight runes here are again seemingly used to indicate the entirety of their runic names (e.g. [wynn] is *geswiðrad*; [joy] is diminished), and their inclusion is in logical sequence to spell out the proper name. This epilogue also follows the patterns of the other poems in the sense that it leans into identificatory association of the Cynewulf poet persona with the converts and righteous characters of the narrative proper. The association is then in turn extended to the audience, and they are drawn into the divine community of faith through *Elene*'s concluding reminder of the fire of judgment that awaits to purify the morally steadfast and bitterly punish the impious. The rhetoric is effective, and it is again emblematically underscored by the polygraphic use of runes in the signature passage and prior. The multiliteral signification corresponds to the poem's cross-lingual features and its culturally blended themes in ways that reaffirm the accessibility, importance, and applicability of its message for speakers/readers of the English vernacular in the early medieval period.

Over the course of this case study chapter, I have highlighted several key aspects of multiliteral signification in the Cynewulf poems as well as correspondences with other literary features. Principal among these is the way in which the runes of the signature and the intratextual Cynewulf poet persona stimulate a reader's emotive and anagogical contemplative interaction with the text. Simultaneously, they render its spiritual message and theological import more directly applicable and relevant to an early medieval, English-speaking audience. These effects are brought about through the tensions and counterbalances that are

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<sup>160</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 230-1, ll. 1256b-70a.

created by the use and shifting presentation of differing scripts, languages, and cultural reference points. The poems juxtapose, blend, and even transcend conventional conceptual boundaries of language representation, literary perspective, culture, and genre in ways that call into question the very applicability of such delimitations.

In the next chapters, I proceed to an analogous assessment of multiscriptal context and multiliteral literary example in a wholly distinct linguistic and cultural environment. Yet, it is valuable to carry forward the deductions and observations I have made here in Chapters 1 and 2. For, despite tremendous distinctions, manipulation of these same conceptual boundaries – oral : written, native : foreign, conventional : anomalous – underwrites and vivifies multiliteral signification in the disparate writing context of Modern Japanese.

### Chapter 3

## Japanese Multiliteralism in Context

In contrast to a majority of modern language writing practices, written Japanese has developed in such a way that Modern Japanese routinely employs four denotative systems that operate in conjunction but are recognized as distinct from one another: *kanji*, *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *rōmaji*. In this chapter, I will review the cultural contexts and linguistic features that are relevant to multiliteral signification in contemporary writing, and I will lay the critical groundwork for Chapter 4's case study evaluation of narrative multiliteralism in the work of one widely-read contemporary author, Haruki Murakami.

First, I will offer an overview of contemporary norms in Section 3.1 along with a brief survey of the history and development of Japanese writing practices. I will give specific regard to the four scripts' typical current use as tied to linguistic functions and to the ensuing possibilities of emblematic value ascription, both of which features underwrite multiliteral signification that is produced through divergence from expected convention. Next, in Section 3.2 I will provide a clarification of the important role of English (and English-derived) vocabulary within Japanese in order to outline the key perspectival and ideological relationships these have to polygraphic representation and multiliteralism involving *katakana* and *rōmaji*. Finally, in Section 3.3, I will assess the interrelated – and at times conflicting – linguistic, cultural, and literary contexts which influence Murakami's writing and multiliteral practice in three representative fictional works: *Noruwei no mori* (1987; *Norwegian Wood*, 2000), *Umibe no kafuka* (2002; *Kafka on the Shore*, 2005), and *1Q84* (2009-10, published under the same title in English translation in 2011). In addition to the juxtaposed languages of Japanese and English, Japanese and Anglophone literary constructs impact his script usage, cultural positioning, and

critical reception. They are also defining attributes of style and theme in his collected works.

### 3.1 Japanese Scripts: Multiplicities, Standardizations, and Associations

The four scripts that are used in Modern Japanese are: *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana* and *katakana* (phonemic syllabaries), and *rōmaji* (Roman characters). The story of writing in Japan begins with *kanji*, and both the *hiragana* and *katakana* syllabaries originated in relation to that script. Chinese character writing dates back to at least the second half of the second millennium B.C.E., and *kanji* were borrowed into Japan alongside literary Chinese from around the turn of the fifth century C.E.<sup>1</sup> A parallel can in some ways be drawn to the Medieval European uses of Latin, as Japanese initially remained the spoken vernacular while Chinese functioned as the chief literary language of writing.<sup>2</sup> Japonic and Chinese languages do not share a common immediate linguistic ancestor, and different techniques developed for handling Chinese characters and adapting their use for expression in Japanese.

Fundamental linguistic discrepancies informed and influenced the application of *kanji* in ways that are still clearly discernible in Modern Japanese writing practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Kess and Tadao Miyamoto, *The Japanese Mental Lexicon: Psycholinguistic Studies of Kana and Kanji Processing* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000), 14; Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> I will subsequently call further attention to a few of the different forms of writing which are particularly pertinent to script development, but from the outset it is meaningful to note that one cannot speak of a unified Japanese spoken/written 'vernacular' that is segregated from conventions of literary Chinese without being reductive. "Different types of vernacular emerged at different historical stages and often coexisted," and this continued well into the nineteenth century when the *genbun itchi* (unification of spoken and written language) movement arose. Haruo Shirane, "Mediating the Literary Classics: Commentary and Translation in Premodern Japan," in *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000-1919*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 129-46 (p. 129).



First in terms of syntax, Ancient Chinese (like both Modern Mandarin and Modern English) had a predominantly verb medial (Subject-Verb-Object) structure,<sup>3</sup> whereas Classical and Modern Japanese are typically S-O-V or [S]-O-V, with an implied or unspoken subject.<sup>4</sup> For example, in Modern Japanese:

車を買いました。  
*kuruma o kaimashita.*

<i>kuruma</i> – ‘car’	[noun]
<i>o</i> –	[accusative particle]
<i>kaimashita</i> – ‘bought’	[past tense verb]

= [I] bought [a] car.

Consequently, even writing in ‘Chinese (*kanbun*),’ intricate methods of interpretative glossing were established in Japan for indicating reading sequence (*kundoku*), for intermingling grammar and lexical styles (*wakan-konkōbun*), etc. Orthographic developments were also heavily impacted by phonological and morphological factors that distinguish the languages.

Unlike *tonal* Sinitic languages and *stress-accent* languages such as Modern English, Japanese is a *pitch-accent* language.<sup>5</sup> While the adoption of *kanji*, Chinese writing, and linguistic interaction introduced a massive number of Sinitic loanwords into Japanese, the lack of tonality resulted in many borrowed words gaining a homophony they did not initially possess.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Sinitic loans and derivations did not enter a linguistic vacuum but were brought into a wholly distinct lexical system of Japanese words.<sup>7</sup> The clash between these two competing lexical sets

<sup>3</sup> Alain Peyraube, “Ancient Chinese,” in *The Ancient Languages of Asia and the Americas*, ed. Roger Woodard (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 136-162 (pp. 145-6). Peyraube notes that Proto-Chinese and by extension Proto-Sino-Tibetan are theorized to have been SOV, but from the era of Pre-Archaic Chinese SVO order is common.

<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive description, see Natsuko Tsujimura, *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics*, rev. ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2014), “Chapter 5: Syntax,” 229-308.

<sup>5</sup> Tsujimura, *An Introduction*, 28-9.

<sup>6</sup> Kess and Miyamoto, *The Japanese Mental Lexicon*, 16.

<sup>7</sup> Japanese vocabulary can be classified into three basic etymological groups: *yamato kotoba* (indigenous Japanese words), *kango* (Chinese loanwords and Sino-Japanese words created

throws into relief an important multiplicity that underlies the modern use of *kanji* to transcribe the Japanese language. There are multiple readings for individual *kanji*, and specific pronunciation is highly contextually dependent.

An orthodox view of Chinese characters is that they are logographic or ideographic symbols. While perhaps not Platonic Forms, it is reasoned that they indicate and are associated with individual words and certain overarching concepts or ideas. In Japanese, for example, ‘日’ on its own can denote the word ‘*hi* (day, sun)’ and have those basic meanings. By extension, it appears in words such as ‘日曜日 *nichiyōbi* (Sunday),’ ‘日常 *nichijō* (usual, everyday),’ and ‘日本 *nihon* or *nippon* (Japan)’ as the ‘Land of the Rising Sun,’ etc. A traditional school of thought even holds that this conceptual underpinning makes *kanji* indispensable in Japanese for their capacity to differentiate between homophones. This folkloric reasoning is spurious, however. It not only disregards the unproblematic presence of large numbers of homophones in languages with dissimilar writing practices, it unhelpfully mystifies the functional nature of Chinese characters for non-readers of Japanese.

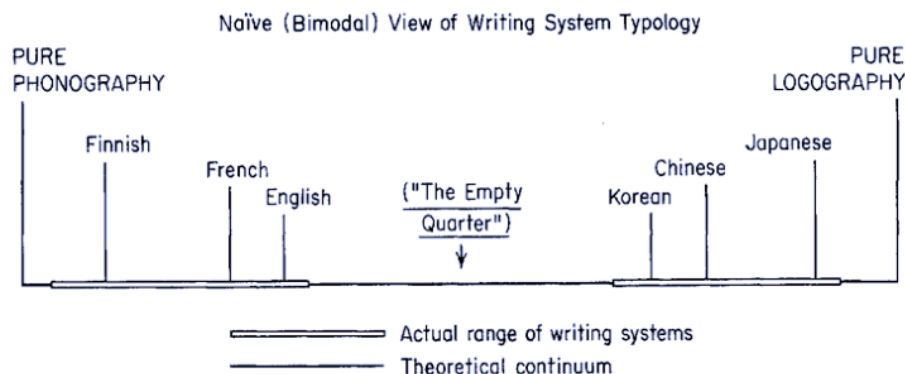
In reality, Sachiko Matsunaga highlights that homophone differentiation is often unnecessary when a word is in proper context and that even with *kanji*, many words may remain vague or indeterminate without said context.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, John DeFrancis and J. Marshall Unger counter what they call the “naïve” *bimodal* argument that “Chinese writing is logographic and thus unlike alphabet writing, which is said to be phonographic”; they argue against the perceived divide between

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from morphological recombinations of *kanji* roots), and *gairaigo* (loanwords from other languages such as Portuguese and English).

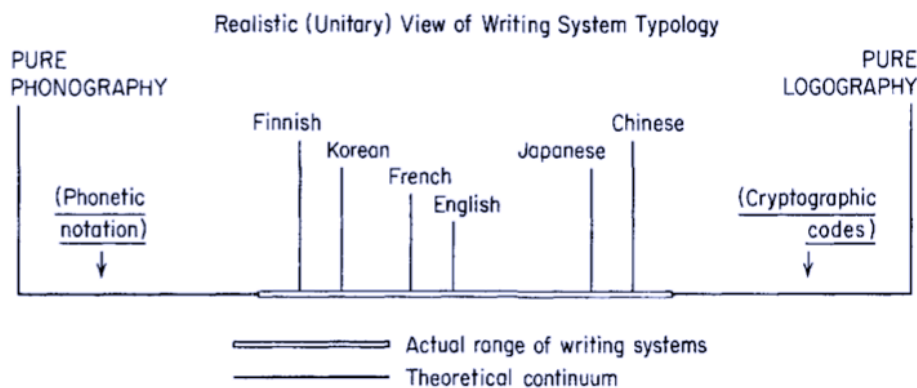
<sup>8</sup> Sachiko Matsunaga, “The Linguistic Nature of Kanji Reexamined: Do Kanji Only Represent Meanings?” *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 30.2 (1996): 1-22 (pp. 7-9).

phonographic and logographic typology which they represent using the following schema.<sup>9</sup>



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Instead of two poles, DeFrancis and Unger propose a “realistic” *unitary* continuum on which all writing systems fall, depending on how fastidiously the system in question strives to reproduce the exact phonetic details of the spoken version of a language.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>9</sup> J. Marshall Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan* (Oxford, England and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10. The arguments and both schemata are adapted from an earlier publication: John DeFrancis and J. Marshall Unger, “Rejoinder to Geoffrey Sampson, ‘Chinese Script and the Diversity of Writing Systems,’” *Linguistics* 32.3 (1994): 549-54. Cf. Geoffrey Sampson, “Chinese Script and the Diversity of Writing Systems,” *Linguistics* 32.1 (1994): 117-32.

<sup>10</sup> Unger further notes how “Korean is commonly lumped together with other East Asian scripts,” and how “Some authorities (e.g., Sampson 1994) claim that Japanese is even more logographic than Chinese because of the high percentage of *kanji* that take multiple readings.” Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform*, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Unger highlights how even languages which ostensibly use a similar script – e.g. Modern French and Modern English – can differ considerably in this respect, and how some scripts seem to offer only the vaguest of hints as to actual spoken pronunciation. Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform*, 13.

Rather than ‘pictographic’ or even ‘ideographic,’ DeFrancis suggests the terms ‘morphophonetic’ or ‘morphonic’ as best classifying the function of *kanji* in Modern Japanese, because these designations more clearly indicate how *kanji* denote either morphemes or phonemes depending on linguistic context.<sup>12</sup> In terms of an individual *kanji*’s number of possible readings, there is considerable variation. Entirely new characters were created in Japan by analogy to borrowed ones,<sup>13</sup> and en route to contemporary usage Japanese *kanji* took on bivalent – and in many cases multivalent – representative values.

Individual *kanji* came to be applied to etymologically unrelated and phonetically dissimilar words of Chinese, mixed Sino-Japanese, and indigenous Japanese origin. The general present pattern is that most commonly used *kanji* possess at least two possible readings: *on’yomi* and *kun’yomi*. *On’yomi* readings are those which evolved based around the inherited or recreated ‘Chinese’ pronunciation of the character,<sup>14</sup> and *kun’yomi* readings are those which reflect a Japanese pronunciation. An example already given above demonstrates the concept of *on’yomi* and *kun’yomi* in a single word. The same Chinese character ‘日’ appears twice in the word ‘日曜日 *nichiyōbi* (Sunday), first with an *on’yomi* reading of ‘*nichi*’ and then with a *kun’yomi* pronunciation of ‘*bi*’ in this context.

Hannas summarizes fundamental morphological discrepancies that also impact writing practice:

Chinese, like Vietnamese, is an ‘isolating’ or ‘analytic’ language with no (or little) inflection. Most of its morphemes have sounds that do not vary with their grammatical function. Japanese, a so-called agglutinative language, by contrast has

<sup>12</sup> John DeFrancis, *Visible Speech: The Diverse Oneness of Writing Systems* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 58. See also Matsunaga, “The Linguistic Nature,” 17-18.

<sup>13</sup> Kess and Miyamoto, *The Japanese Mental Lexicon*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> “[T]he Japanese, in all likelihood, were not originally taught Chinese pronunciations, but rather were taught Chinese filtered through the pronunciation of Paekche.” John R. Bentley, “The Origin of Man’yōgana,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 64.1 (2001): 59-73 (p. 72).

inflected verbal and adjectival endings, which do not lend themselves to character representation. Moreover, the indigenous part of the Japanese lexicon is composed of morphemes that are predominantly polysyllabic. Since these words have to be accommodated too, the regular one-character-one-syllable pattern of Chinese gives way in Japanese to a system in which a character can represent as many syllables as there are in the word or some fraction of that number, depending on how the word is analyzed and represented, or even less than one syllable.<sup>15</sup>

This incongruity reemphasizes the multivalent representational values of *kanji* in Modern Japanese writing, and it is also relevant to the contemporary uses of *hiragana* and *katakana*, two syllabaries that developed as Chinese characters were applied to the writing of Japanese.

In addition to acquiring alternative readings through application to Japanese words, the convention developed of using Chinese characters not only for semantic meaning but also purely for their phonemic values to transcribe Japanese. This is still possible in Modern Japanese (*ateji*), and the earliest instances are referred to as *man'yōgana* due to their appearance in the eighth-century collection of Japanese poetry, the *Man'yōshū*. Diversity and variants (*hentaigana*) did not diminish until fairly recent standardizations, and both of Japanese's syllabaries evolved under this principle. In some cases the same *kanji* form even produced both the *hiragana* and *katakana* forms. For example, '礼' gave rise to *hiragana* 'れ *re*' and *katakana* 'レ *re*.'

*Hiragana* stems ultimately from "the vernacular written language of the Heian period (794-1185), exemplified by the *Tale of Genji* and other vernacular classics."<sup>16</sup> The cursive script was used primarily by female writers for secular texts including private letters, poetry, and narrative works. *Katakana*, on the other hand, was initially associated with more masculine spheres of writing such as Buddhist scripture, since it "derived from Japanese reading conventions (*kundoku*) for classical Chinese."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> William C. Hannas, *Asia's Orthographic Dilemma* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 27.

<sup>16</sup> Shirane, "Mediating the Literary Classics," 129.

<sup>17</sup> Shirane, "Mediating the Literary Classics," 129.

In contemporary writing practice, *hiragana* and *katakana* function cooperatively with *kanji* as three distinct scripts, each with their own patterns and usage norms. *Kanji* are consistently used for the majority of semantically important words and morphemes in texts produced for literate adult readers. *Hiragana* is used otherwise as more or less a default script for words and grammatically important elements that are not expressed by *kanji*. *Katakana* is used primarily for loanwords and proper names that are not of Sino-Japanese origin. Expansion of my previous example illustrates how all three scripts are used concurrently in everyday writing.

私はドイツで車を買いました。

**watashi** wa *doitsu* de **kuruma** wo **kaimashita**.

<b>watashi</b> – ‘I’	[first-person pronoun]
wa –	[topic marking particle]
<i>doitsu</i> – ‘Germany’	[proper noun]
de –	[locative particle]
<b>kuruma</b> – ‘car’	[noun]
o –	[accusative particle]
<b>kaimashita</b> – ‘bought’	[past tense verb, tense denoted by <i>hiragana</i> ]

= I **bought** [a] **car** in *Germany*.<sup>18</sup>

Frequently, it is commented that *katakana* has the additional function of highlighting or altering the aspect of certain words akin to the Modern English use of italics.<sup>19</sup>

The analogy is largely valid, but it does not acknowledge Modern Japanese’s use of similar glyphic variants (boldface, font changes, etc.), and it oversimplifies the emblematicism that can be produced through script variation.

In consideration of the aforementioned script conventions, and in particular those of *kanji*, Motoko Ezaki determines there to be a great deal of arbitrariness.<sup>20</sup> Selection of script depends not solely on convention tied to linguistic function, but

<sup>18</sup> In this transliteration and translation, **boldface** represents *kanji*, *italics* = *katakana*, and normal typeface = *hiragana*.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform*, 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> Motoko Ezaki, “Strategic Deviations: The Role of *kanji* in Contemporary Japanese,” *Japanese Language and Literature* 44.2 (2010): 179-212.

also on authorial intent and stylistic decision. Ezaki highlights examples which deviate from convention in order to achieve specific representative aims, and she concludes that the flexibility of the system allows for “plenty of room to cleverly manipulate orthographic [= script] convention and apply the characters strategically to enrich our written expression.”<sup>21</sup> The systemic multiplicity means that the scripts themselves to take on emblematic values, in addition to fulfilling their roles of linguistic transcription.

Wes Robertson catalogues many of the common associations that are ascribed to each script as follows:<sup>22</sup>

<i>Hiragana</i>	<i>Katakana</i>	<i>Kanji</i>	<i>Rōmaji</i>
feminine, soft, smooth, round, tender, simple, childish, lovely, unmarked, intimate, private, nice, elegant, poetic, Japanese	novel, foreign, imitative, emphasizing, hard, simple, inorganic, fake, marked, young, male, futuristic, neutral, sharp, fresh, jarring, precise, angular	scientific, rigid, elite, masculine, formal, hard, difficult, intellectual, conspicuous, learned, visual, adult, Chinese, substantial, Japanese	prestigious, global, decorative, international, eye-catching, symbolic, cool, sophisticated

Deliberate variation can exploit these associative/emotive values and signify without altering the transcribed linguistic utterance. The same word is, therefore, liable to be perceived in a different manner by readers when it is presented in a different script – e.g. 車 くるま クルマ *kuruma* (car) – or as Michael Seats summarizes, “In Japanese the choice of script (*hiragana*, *kanji* or *katakana*) affects, in a fundamental

<sup>21</sup> Ezaki, “Strategic Deviations,” 197.

<sup>22</sup> Wes Robertson, “Orthography, Foreigners, and Fluency: Indexicality and Script Selection in Japanese Manga,” *Japanese Studies* 35.2 (2015): 205-22 (p. 207). N.b. Many of the associations ascribed to each script appear to contradict one another, to overlap with those of another script, and to stem from historical awarenesses.

way, the semantic value and orientation of a word or expression.”<sup>23</sup> I will continue to discuss aspects of emblematic signification that relate to context and association, but I wish to integrate Japanese’s fourth system of writing into my interpretative scaffolding.

If taken into consideration at all, many commentators interpret the Japanese use of *rōmaji* (Roman alphabet characters) in a reductive way. Joseph Kess and Tadao Miyamoto highlight that in comparison with the other scripts, only a limited amount of research has been conducted in terms of *rōmaji* literacy and word recognition, but that “the romaji script has made such inroads into popular Japanese printed media that it must at least be noted as a separate system within the totality of the Japanese orthographic inventory.”<sup>24</sup> The functions of *rōmaji* overlap to a degree with those of *katakana*, in that *rōmaji* also often denote foreign language words or are used for types of emphasis. Yet, *rōmaji* also possess their own distinct usage possibilities and tendencies, such as in acronyms, and if I again revise the example above slightly, all four scripts can be glimpsed working in unison: 私はドイツで BMW を買いました。

The Roman characters stand out acutely, and many of the commentators that do address the literary or aesthetic use of *rōmaji* seize upon this aspect to explore stylistic use in advertising and marketing.<sup>25</sup> Nicolas Tranter suggests that regardless of the language which is presented – Japanese or English, etc. – “The choice of script [between *katakana* and *rōmaji*...] is determined by whether the text primarily

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Seats, *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (Lanham, MD and Plymouth, England: Lexington Books, 2006), 208-9.

<sup>24</sup> Kess and Miyamoto, *The Japanese Mental Lexicon*, 111.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Bernard Saint-Jacques, “Bilingualism in Daily Life: The Roman Alphabet in the Japanese Writing System,” *Visible Language* 21.2 (1987): 88-105.



communicates (katakana) or decorates or draws the eye (Roman).”<sup>26</sup> Another commentator, Ory Bartal, even goes so far as to argue that “the text itself becomes a visual image [...]”<sup>27</sup> This may be an accurate assessment of certain ornamental uses – e.g. alphabetic writing on clothing that is reminiscent of web designers’ use of placeholder *lorem ipsum* dummy text. Reduction of all *rōmaji* text to mere imagery or ornamentation, however, is a misconceptualization of the linguistic and semiotic situation.

Roman characters can be and are used for their emblematic value to emphasize, convey foreignness or modernity, etc.,<sup>28</sup> but one should not lose sight of the fact that despite being a highly emblematic script, *rōmaji* is still viable as a script in a discursive sense. *Rōmaji* is taught as a mandatory part of the Japanese public school education system, and even acknowledging generational differences, an ability to work with Roman characters penetrates nearly all levels of society, especially following the development and widespread use of word processors, computers, mobile phones, etc., which often rely on the Roman alphabet as an efficient means of initial character input.<sup>29</sup> Thus, while *rōmaji* is a script with a high degree of emblematic value, it nevertheless retains expressive functionality and can convey semantic information. It is not, for example, akin to the purely ornamental Chinese characters which decorate Japanese restaurant menus abroad and which are not intended for linguistic processing by the clientele.

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<sup>26</sup> Nicolas Tranter, “Nonconventional Script Choice in Japan,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 192 (2008): 133-51 (p. 148).

<sup>27</sup> Ory Bartal, “Text as Image in Japanese Advertising Typography Design,” *Design Issues Massachusetts Institute of Technology* 29.1 (2013): 51-66 (p. 51).

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Hyde, “Japan’s Emblematic English,” *English Today* 71.18.3 (2002): 12-16.

<sup>29</sup> See James Unger, “Functional Digraphia in Japan as Revealed in Consumer Product Preferences,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 150 (2001): 141-52. Written less than two decades ago, this article is already significantly outdated in many respects. Rather than simply being obsolete, however, it fascinatingly captures *in media* aspects of Japanese language, Roman character input strategies at an earlier stage of sociolinguistic development.

Nanette Gottlieb offers the following appraisal:

Romanisation in Japan complements rather than replaces existing orthography, adding to the prized diversity and multiplicity of options afforded by the multi-script writing system. Playing with the accepted conventions of the orthography affords endless opportunity for creativity intended to amuse, to shock, or sometimes to act as an in-group code for particular subgroups of society.<sup>30</sup>

This assessment echoes that of Ezaki and others noted above, and multiliteral signification is no less possible with *rōmaji* than with the other three scripts. Yet due to associative ascriptions, the emblematic values that Roman characters contribute are altogether distinct. To comprehend *rōmaji*'s place within the overall semiotic situation and its unique multiliteral potential, it is necessary to grasp the imaginative connections that exist between *rōmaji* and the English language within Japanese.

### 3.2 English and Japanese, English in Japanese

Elementary English is taught in Japan as a segment of the state-mandated public education curriculum, and while no claims can be made about societal bilingualism, there is a shared social awareness of the English language that manifests not alongside but within Japanese. Nobuyuki Honna suggests that “Japan is not a society in which English plays a meaningful role as a language of international communication,” and despite – or perhaps because of – this lack of practical, daily application for many speakers, “Japanese do not hesitate to use English if the purpose is intralinguistic.”<sup>31</sup> This summation is accurate, but it does not perhaps adequately convey the magnitude of the phenomenon nor the spectrum of different types of English present. It may also inadvertently give the impression that

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<sup>30</sup> Nanette Gottlieb, “The Rōmaji Movement in Japan,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Third Series*, 20.1 (2010): 75-88 (p. 76).

<sup>31</sup> Nobuyuki Honna, “English in Japanese Society: Language Within Language,” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 16 (1995): 45-62 (pp. 57, 60).

such usage is a ‘contamination’ of Japanese or a ‘debasement’ of prescriptively correct English.

One comparatively straightforward variety of Japanese English is the case of loanwords which have been implemented to fill semantic gaps and describe objects or concepts that are perceived to be of foreign origin, e.g. ‘バター *batā* (butter).’ Such concrete borrowings, however, do not even represent a majority of foreign-derived words within the Japanese lexicon. In addition to these more purely referential words formed by “direct translation,” Jackie Hogan categorizes six additional rules for the formation of English-derived vocabulary in Japanese: semantic restriction, semantic expansion, loan truncation, loan blending, foreign lexeme composites, and Japanese + foreign lexeme composites.<sup>32</sup>

Rule	Derivation	Term	Meaning
Direct translation	butter	バター ( <i>batā</i> )	butter
Semantic restriction	instant	インスタント ( <i>insutanto</i> )	ready-to-cook foods
Semantic expansion	up	アップ ( <i>appu</i> )	increase, intensify, improve, close-up
Loan truncation	personal computer	パソコン ( <i>pasokon</i> )	PC, personal computer
Loan blending	kiss + する ( <i>suru</i> ‘to do, etc.’)	キスする ( <i>kisu-suru</i> )	to kiss, kisses, etc.
Foreign lexeme composites	open + car	オープンカー ( <i>ōpunkā</i> )	convertible, cabriolet
Japanese + foreign lexeme components	教育 (‘education’) + mama; gorilla + 鯨 ( <i>kujira</i> ‘whale’)	教育ママ ( <i>kyōiku-mama</i> ); ゴジラ ( <i>gojira</i> )	pejorative term for a mother who doggedly pushes children to study; ‘Godzilla’

<sup>32</sup> Jackie Hogan, “The Social Significance of English Usage in Japan,” *Japanese Studies* 23.1 (2003): 43-58 (p. 45). This table is adapted from Hogan but includes also untransliterated Japanese, as well as personally observed examples and ones drawn from Tsunoda Waka, “The Influx of English in Japanese Language and Literature,” *World Literature Today* 62.3 (1988): 425-30.

Neologisms which are not found in standard English are referred to as ‘*wasei eigo* (English made in Japan),’ and the distinction between these words and more conventional *gairaigo* loanwords can be difficult to discern in many cases. Further complexity is added by the fact that less assimilated words of English origin and entirely unassimilated *hapax legomena* of sorts are witnessable in addition to legitimately assimilated loanwords and widely accepted pseudo-English. Moving beyond questions of etymological derivation, Laura Miller emphasizes the important reality that, such examples “didn’t get into the Japanese language through the usual contact situation, but were calculatedly propagated in Japan.”<sup>33</sup>

Calculated propagation combined with a degree of linguistic detachment from English – both in terms of syntactical dissimilarity and infrequent usage as an operative language of communication for many speakers – motivates instances of English to function with heightened supplementary associative value. Alterity is even further enhanced for less assimilated examples, and in contrast to the neat groupings above, it is not simple to categorize English-derived words’ associative connotations. These associations unavoidably vary based on contextual factors and the choices of individual language-users. The following patterns, therefore, should be understood not as delimiting boundaries but as exemplars of flexible and overlapping archetypes.

Speakers do use borrowed English and English-derived terms in semantically concrete ways to fill perceived lexical gaps. In specialist areas such as business and academia, for example, there is a remarkable array of English-derived technical terminology and field-specific jargon that is used to designate specific concepts or

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<sup>33</sup> Laura Miller, “*Wasei Eigo*: English ‘Loanwords’ Coined in Japan,” in *The Life of Language: Papers in Linguistics in Honor of William Bright*, eds. Jane Hill, P. J Mistry, and Lyle Campbell (Berlin, Germany and New York, NY: De Gruyter Mouton, 1998), 123-39 (p. 135).

new items. These instances are reasonably straightforward, and despite being intralinguistic their usage is comparable to code-switching practices of multilingual individuals and communities. They are routinely employed for similar interlinguistic and interpersonal purposes, such as “fitting the word to the topic,” “finding a word with [an unavailable] nuance,” “strengthening intimacy,” etc.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, commentators such as Honna note that English is also used in less clear-cut cases for diglossic purposes of establishing “a new version of an old thing to impress that something is different between the two.”<sup>35</sup> He cites the example of the English-derived *katakana* word ‘キッチン *kitchin* (kitchen)’ as opposed to the older term, ‘台所 *daidokoro* (kitchen),’<sup>36</sup> and this illustrates how the borrowing of English goes beyond filling a lexical gap since roughly the same concept is indicated by both words. Instead, what the loan achieves by means of pseudo-code-switching is a *re-imaging* of the concept itself.

Much like previously noted patterns of *rōmaji* usage, the re-imaging of a concept in these instances purportedly relies on certain innate associations that supplementary ‘English’ vocabulary has with ‘the West.’ Whether written in *rōmaji* or *katakana*, it has been theorized that these associations are exploited in order to convey notions of modernity, trendiness, etc., that are profitable in the fields of marketing, branding, and advertising. These same contexts also give rise to extensive and creative use of bilingual word play. Yet as Mark Rebeck points out, the emblematic use of English does not always depend on nor entail positive associations; it can operate along negative or more neutral lines, such as triggering

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<sup>34</sup> John Edwards, *Multilingualism*, rev. ed. (London, England and New York, NY, 2003), 78. See also Peter Unseth, “The Sociolinguistics of Script Choice: An Introduction,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 192 (2008): 1-4.

<sup>35</sup> Honna, “English in Japanese,” 52-3.

<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, this example of *kitchin* vs. *daidokoro* is a narrative element in one Murakami short story, *Zō no shōmetsu* (*The Elephant Vanishes*).

what are essentially ethnocentric stereotypes or distinguishing between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ versions of a similar concept.<sup>37</sup> For example, ‘ガーデニング’ *gādeningu* (gardening) refers to the leisure activity of maintaining a Western-style garden, whereas ‘園芸’ *engei* (gardening) calls to mind more traditional Japanese-style horticulture.

A third interrelated use for intralinguistic English is euphemism. English can be seen to “camouflage” or conversely to “embellish” aspects of socially sensitive, taboo, or more risqué topics.<sup>38</sup> For example, the English-derived ‘ローン’ *rōn* (loan) does away with some of negative connotations that may accompany the term ‘借金’ *shakkin* (loan, debt),’ and ‘ソーランド’ *sōpurando* (‘soapland’) masks – albeit transparently – what is for all intents and purposes a house of prostitution.<sup>39</sup>

Beyond lexical expansion, substitution, and euphemism, Hogan adds two further potential functions for English-derived terminology and argues that “Unassimilated terms in particular not only convey semantico-referential meaning, but also reflect power relations between interlocutors and between cultures.”<sup>40</sup> She suggests that on the level of the individual speaker, English can be made to “assert authority or status,” “to manage social distance,” and in a slightly broader sense “to inflect [speakers’] statements with subtle value judgments about the West.”<sup>41</sup> Hogan writes that,

The use of English-derived vocabulary allows speakers to manage personal impressions and social distance, and to talk more comfortably about taboo or

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<sup>37</sup> Mark Rebuck, “The Function of English Loanwords in Japanese,” *Nagoya University of Commerce and Business Administration Journal of Language Culture and Communication* 4.1 (2002): 53-64 (pp. 58-9).

<sup>38</sup> Miller, “*Wasei Eigo*,” 132.

<sup>39</sup> Further examples can be found in the op. cit. articles by Hogan, Honna, Miller, and Rebuck.

<sup>40</sup> Hogan, “The Social Significance,” 45.

<sup>41</sup> Hogan, “The Social Significance,” 44, 48.

intimate topics, while simultaneously expressing acceptance or rejection, approval or criticism of the West and Western cultural influences in Japan.<sup>42</sup>

All of these patterns, and in particular those highlighted by Hogan, are worth bearing in mind for the relevance that intralinguistic Japanese English has to multiliteral signification tied to Roman character and *katakana* usage.

My purpose in reviewing the connotative and emblematic functions of English in Japanese is not to support the supercilious view that many Japanese speakers “see [English] not as a communicative system which can actually be put to use but as inert knowledge to be learnt and then forgotten.”<sup>43</sup> Rather, it is to affirm observations like those of Johannes Scherling and Miller who respectively propose that:

The Japanese case shows that loanwords, once incorporated into a certain language system, no longer obey the structural rules, nor share the semantic domains, of the donor language, but become entirely the property of the recipient language to be used as new language material wherever and however needed.<sup>44</sup>

*Wasei eigo*'s novel and provocative blends and constructions go way beyond a simple borrowing of English and represent an imaginative syncretism of the linguistic materials at hand.<sup>45</sup>

The notion of imaginative linguistic syncretism is not only more critically stimulating, it also mirrors my conclusions in Section 3.1 about imaginative multiscriptal syncretism.

To begin to unite these subjects, I would first acknowledge that thus far in this section I have not made a point of distinguishing between English-derived words that are presented in Roman characters and those that are presented in *katakana*. The justification behind an individual's choice of *katakana* over *rōmaji*, or vice versa, is a vexing issue that many commentators simply pass over in silence. Others decline to

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<sup>42</sup> Hogan, “The Social Significance,” 57.

<sup>43</sup> Hyde, “Japan's Emblematic English,” 16.

<sup>44</sup> Johannes Scherling, “The Creative Use of English in Japanese Punning,” *World Englishes* 35.2 (2016): 276-92 (p. 277).

<sup>45</sup> Miller, “*Wasei Eigo*,” 135.

engage with it fully and acknowledge the complexity of the enterprise, e.g. Honna, who writes that, it is “a decision whose socio-psychological nature is too complicated to go into here.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, it is impossible to produce a universally satisfactory paradigm that distills the variety of individual occurrences into a succinct generalization. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify certain overarching features that in turn prove beneficial to the examination of multilateral signification.

A question that lies at the crux is whether Roman characters that depict ‘English’ can or should be interpreted as equating to English and representing an authentic code-switch. Peter Backhaus highlights an interesting aspect of *rōmaji*’s frequent employment for words of foreign language origin and points out that word spellings often emulate English spellings, regardless of a word’s actual pronunciation in spoken Japanese.<sup>47</sup> For example, the spelling ‘haircut’ is consistently preferred over the theoretically more phonologically precise ‘*heakatto*’ which is closer to a one-for-one match for the *katakana* rendering, ‘ヘアカット.’ However, Backhaus also acknowledges the potential validity of arguments made by Honna and Hiroko Someya that it is the *katakana* version of the word (i.e. the more faithful reflection of Japanese pronunciation) that mentally precedes and allows for such Anglicized spellings.<sup>48</sup> While a reasonable deduction, it presents a minor dilemma of causality, since as Tranter notes, the pronunciation of many English loanwords in Japanese marks them instead as “graphic loans” with pronunciations based more on spelling than on pronunciation in spoken English.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Honna, “English in Japanese,” 54.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Backhaus, “Alphabet *ante portas*: How English Text Invades Japanese Public Space,” *Visible Language* 41.1 (2007): 70-87 (p. 83).

<sup>48</sup> Backhaus, “Alphabet *ante portas*.” Cf. Honna, “English in Japanese”; Hiroko Someya, “*Kanban no moji hyōki*,” in *Gendai nihongo kōza* 6, eds. Y. Tobita and T. Satō (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 2002), 221-43.

<sup>49</sup> Nicolas Tranter, “Graphic Loans: East Asia and Beyond,” *Word* 60.1 (2009): 1-37.



The situation seems only murkier if one considers the array of representative possibilities that are facilitated by the lack of a universal standard for the Romanization of Japanese,<sup>50</sup> the possibility for error, individual preference, instances apparently void of discursive meaning, and additional complexities such as *furigana*.<sup>51</sup> Viewing Japanese multiscryptality as a more open-ended writing system provides a degree of resolution, and still further clarification comes in the form of DeFrancis's classification in his monograph *Visible Speech*. The Latin alphabet has dual and overlapping scriptal capacities in Japanese. It can be used to represent indigenous or Sino-Japanese words, and in those cases it typically functions as an authentic, more phonologically faithful representation of spoken Japanese. It can alternatively operate along the same lines as Modern English as a "meaning-plus-sound" system of writing, and this latter happens especially frequently when indicating words that are of foreign, often European, language origin.<sup>52</sup>

In either case, English-seeming words and phrases in Japanese writing contexts are regularly better understood if they are interpreted first and foremost as Japanese, even when rendered in *rōmaji* that is informed by English spelling. Laura MacGregor reaches a similar conclusion in her analysis of polygraphic and multilingual Tokyo signage, where by analyzing the various scripts that are used

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<sup>50</sup> In addition to the modified Hepburn Romanization employed here which is modeled on English phonology and is likely most familiar to non-readers of Japanese, two notable other varieties of Romanization exist: *kunrei-shiki* (Cabinet Style) which is taught in Japanese elementary schools, and the now less frequently encountered *nihon-shiki* (Japanese Style) which closely maps Japanese *kana*.

<sup>51</sup> *Furigana* is ruby text which appears above and glosses other characters. It often functions as a reading aid or pronunciation guide but can also be used in compelling aesthetic and idiosyncratic ways as will be examined in Chapter 4.

<sup>52</sup> DeFrancis, *Visible Speech*. Some critics opt to categorize and distinguish even further between these two types of usage referring to the former as *rōmaji* and the latter as "eiji (lit. 'English characters')," e.g. Kazuko Miyake, "How Young Japanese Express Their Emotions Visually in Mobile Phone Messages: A Sociolinguistic Analysis," *Japanese Studies* 27.1 (2007): 53-72 (p. 57). I do not hold to this distinction in this study, in part because of the already noted difficulties of separating intralinguistic assimilated loans from more marked code-switches, etc.

stylistically for foreign and indigenous/Sino-Japanese words, she determined that foreign languages function “as an extension of Japanese [...] widening an already rich language and text palette with the potential to communicate on several different levels.”<sup>53</sup> Whether on a sign or in the pages of a Japanese novel, English usages in either script are likely to be misinterpreted if taken as linguistic code-switches into English, rather than on their own terms as being intended for readers of Japanese and functioning from within that matrix language.

Thus, I would argue that at its core the issue of deciding between and semiotically interpreting *rōmaji* and *katakana* is governed by the same socio-psychological factors that govern the uses of all the scripts in the Japanese writing system. Whereas the uses of *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana* are distinguished by greater conventionalization, inter- and intrapersonal aspects and personal background are apt to play a larger role in the case of *rōmaji-katakana*, particularly as these possess associative links to English, foreign culture(s), etc. Yet, it is the same semiotic processes that inform the individual writer’s choices and reader’s perceptions.

To this point, I have identified the following major features which can exert influence over script choice and contribute to scripts’ emblematic value: historical precedents, commonplace linguistic norms, conventions of usage, as well as individual writer background and authorial style. A text’s audience – both the anticipated audience and the actual reader – also plays a key role. The predicted, presumed, and actual reception by a particular audience directs script choice and associative value, enabling multiliteral meaning creation. One simple example is that Japanese children’s books are monoscriptally oriented toward their intended

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<sup>53</sup> Laura MacGregor, “The Language of Shop Signs in Tokyo,” *English Today* 73 (2003): 18-23 (p. 22).

audience by being written entirely in *hiragana*, customarily the first script a child is taught to read and write.<sup>54</sup>

For a literate adult reader, the perception that a particular script usage conforms to or deviates from expected convention plays off of one's preexisting associations in a way that calls to mind Hans Jauss's *horizon of expectation* and reception aesthetic.<sup>55</sup> Just as a reader approaches a text with a framework of cultural knowledge and textual expectations regarding genre, style, and so forth, they bring to a polygraphic text their experience and expectations which relate to script. Manipulation of these expectations through variation draws on readers' associations and can encode supplementary metalinguistic "emotional semantic information" along with the linguistic content transcribed in a text.<sup>56</sup>

This dependence on reception goes a long way toward rationalizing many commentators' hesitancy to address the issues of emblematic script usage and multiliteral signification. Yet at the same time, it emphasizes a prevailing virtue of specific literary case study for such a purpose, and in particular the study of a bilingual English-Japanese author/translator like Murakami for the contemporary Japanese context. While literary analysis has to grapple with its own limitations and

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<sup>54</sup> As an aside, I would reiterate that this formative association contributes to the impressions of the script which I noted above. As Mutsuko Hudson and Yoshi Sakakibara write in regard to atypical *kana* usage, "The curved *hiragana* is generally regarded as giving soft, amiable, and/or childlike impressions, while the angular *katakana* is regarded as giving tough, distant, and/or modern impressions." Mutsuko Hudson and Yoshimi Sakakibara, "Emotivity of Nontraditional *Katakana* and *Hiragana* Usage in Japanese," in *Applying Theory and Research to Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language*, ed. Masahiko Minami (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 180-95 (p. 189).

<sup>55</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Brighton, England: The Harvester Press, 1982).

<sup>56</sup> Akihiko Iwahara, Takeshi Hatta, and Aiko Maehara, "The Effects of a Sense of Compatibility Between Type of Script and Word in Written Japanese," *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 16 (2003): 377-97. Cf. Hudson and Sakakibara, "Emotivity"; Kuniyoshi Kataoka, "Affect and Letter-Writing: Unconventional Conventions in Casual Letter Writing by Young Japanese Women," *Language in Society* 26.1 (1997): 103-36.

the same baseline difficulties involved with dissecting a subjective phenomenon, it has the advantage avoiding potential bias from the observer effect.

Over the course of a linguistic survey of Japanese English language usage, Hogan realized the high possibility for skewed and subtly distorted findings, as participants consciously and subconsciously attuned their spoken and written usage to the perceived goals of a study, the patterns of another speaker, or even a non-native speaker's presumed level of linguistic competence.<sup>57</sup> Although it is narrower in focus and therefore demands critical restraint, a literary study of texts which are *de facto* intended for readers of Japanese offers something of a controlled experiment in this regard. Grounded in specific example, what is observed in microcosm allows for broader, more applicable and informed speculation about multiliteral functionality and overarching trends.

In addition to being widely read, Murakami's writing is worthy of in-depth consideration as a lead case study, because it frequently displays a high level of deliberate multiliteral complexity. For example, Ezaki has observed specific instances in even Murakami's nonfiction where he chooses to use *katakana* for Sino-Japanese words in a "self-deprecating" way "to avoid the bookish impression" a *kanji* rendering might impart; "to create casual intimacy with the reader"; and to "[maintain] the casual tone of the text."<sup>58</sup> Choice of script in these cases reflects the

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<sup>57</sup> Hogan, "The Social Significance," 47. On this last point especially, see also Steven Ross and Ian Shortreed, "Japanese Foreigner Talk: Convergence or Divergence?" *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* 1 (1990): 134-45. Ross and Reed discuss how certain Japanese speakers seem to have an impression that 'convergent' linguistic strategies are somehow less empathetic than 'divergent' ones. I.e. It is less empathetic for a native speaker to maintain standard Japanese register with a non-native speaker than to converse using so-called 'foreigner talk' that incorporates increased English code-switching, lower register, etc., irrespective of the non-native speaker's displayed degree of Japanese language proficiency.

<sup>58</sup> Ezaki, "Strategic Deviations," 197-8. Specifically, Ezaki cites the examples of "シコー (taste, preference)" and "モホー (*mohō* imitation, copying)" in place of "嗜好" and "模倣" respectively. These are drawn from Haruki Murakami, *Murakami asahi-dō no gyakushū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1986), 152, 262.

associations of *katakana* with sound and of less commonly used *kanji* with societal conceptions about the extent of one's education, poshness, etc. Moreover, as a translator of English fiction and previously a long-term resident abroad, Murakami has a personal background that includes a profound relationship with the English language and Anglo-American literature. His individual bilingualism and cognizance of Japan's societal awareness of English play out in the texts of his monolingual novels in ways that incorporate intertextuality, intralinguistic English, and *rōmaji* into the polygraphic play. So as to approach and unravel specific instances of multilateralism his novels contain, I will conclude this chapter with a contextual overview of Murakami's work with regard to linguistic, cultural, and literary convention.

### 3.3 Murakami and Emblematic Exploitation of Cultures and Scripts

Haruki Murakami was born in 1949 in Kyoto and spent his formative years in the Osaka-Kobe area speaking the Kansai dialect of Japanese that is characteristic of the region. The grandson of a Buddhist priest, Murakami's parents Chiaki and Miyuki,

were high-school teachers of Japanese Language and Literature when they met and, although his mother became a full-time housewife when she married, the young Haruki would often hear his parents discussing eighth-century poetry or medieval war tales at the dinner table.<sup>59</sup>

On paper, Murakami had a quintessentially Japanese cultural upbringing and literary pedigree that would presumably have fostered a degree of aptitude for and interest

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<sup>59</sup> Jay Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (London, England: Harvill Press, 2002), 14.

in the Japanese classics. Yet, in his own words, “Not once, throughout my formative years did I have the experience of being deeply moved by a Japanese novel.”<sup>60</sup>

Instead, Murakami claims to have fallen in love first with Russian novelists the likes of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy, and later with Anglophone novelists including Raymond Chandler, Truman Capote, Kurt Vonnegut, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. It is also through these authors’ works that Murakami became able to read English, as during high school he made his way through numerous secondhand paperbacks left by foreign expats in the used bookstores of Kobe.<sup>61</sup> Later in life, Murakami would undertake the translation of many of these same works. In college, Murakami’s undergraduate thesis at Waseda University pertained to the idea of journey in American culture, and he explains in an interview from 2006 that he cannot help but view his generation in Japan as the one that was heavily impacted by and particularly entranced with newly imported items of American culture, more so even than subsequent generations which have grown up always having had access to the same.<sup>62</sup>

He wrote his first novel, the 1979 Gunzo New Writers’ Prize-winning 風の歌を聴け *Kaze no uta o kike* (*Hear the Wind Sing*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum 1987; trans. Ted Goossen 2015) while the owner and operator of the Peter Cat, a coffee house and jazz bar.<sup>63</sup> Murakami continued to write, publish, and meet with growing success

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<sup>60</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen shōsetsu annai* (Tokyo, Japan: Bungei Shunjūsha, 1997), 10. This English translation is borrowed from Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 15.

<sup>61</sup> John Wray, “Haruki Murakami, The Art of Fiction No. 182,” *The Paris Review* 170 (2004), accessed October 2018. <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2/haruki-murakami-the-art-of-fiction-no-182-haruki-murakami>.

<sup>62</sup> Roland Kelts, “Look, Here’s America: Part Two, Haruki Murakami on Salinger, The Great Gatsby, and Why American Readers Sometimes Miss the Point,” *A Public Space* 1 (2006): 150-6.

<sup>63</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike* (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1979); *Hear the Wind Sing*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1987); *Wind/Pinball: Two Novels*, trans. Ted Goossen (London, England and New York, NY: Vintage International, 2015).

and repute, and eventually he left the Peter Cat. He garnered unexpectedly explosive fame following the immense response in Japan to his 1987 novel, ノルウェイの森 *Noruei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*, trans. Birnbaum 1989; trans. Jay Rubin 2000),<sup>64</sup> and for many years Murakami and his wife, Yoko, lived outside of Japan, spending considerable time in both Europe and the United States. Murakami's fiction shows immense influence from foreign cultures and languages, both in the form of textual references and in terms of writing style. Many previous commentators emphasize these features, and as Matthew Strecher writes, "The American 'tone' of [Murakami's] work has been evident from the beginning [...]."<sup>65</sup> I would, however, urge caution against taking the next critical step that some readers make when they view Murakami's work as thoroughly Westernized to the extent that it is no longer identifiable as Japanese in character.

Masao Miyoshi, for example, offers the caustic claim that both Murakami and fellow author Yukio Mishima (1925-70) "wrote for export," and Miyoshi argues that whereas Mishima displayed an exotic, nationalist Japan, Murakami exhibits an equally exotic, but international version of the country; "Both, however, are preoccupied with the idea of Japan, or to put it more precisely, with what they imagine the foreign buyers like to see in it."<sup>66</sup> Depending upon the personal tastes and critical inclinations of the commentator, such reductive interpretation may follow this negative tack or have more of a positive spin. One example of the latter is Henry Hughes, who does not display the same vitriol as Miyoshi but reaffirms that,

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<sup>64</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Noruei no mori*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1987); *Norwegian Wood*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1989); *Norwegian Wood*, trans. Jay Rubin (London, England and New York, NY: Harvill Vintage, 2000).

<sup>65</sup> Matthew Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (Minneapolis, MN and London, England: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 11.

<sup>66</sup> Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991), 234.

“Murakami's figures are exceptional in a country that still observes conservative social codes regarding sex, marriage, and deference to superiors.”<sup>67</sup>

Some of these appraisals are perhaps defensible in light of their coming prior to publication of the Yomiuri Prize for Literature-winning *ねじまき鳥クロニクル* *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (1994-5; *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* 1997),<sup>68</sup> a novel which has been seen as an artistic turning point for Murakami away from ‘detachment’ and toward ‘commitment.’<sup>69</sup> Following on from 1992’s *国境の南、太陽の西* *Kokkyō no minami, taiyō no nishi* (*South of the Border, West of the Sun*, 2000),<sup>70</sup> it has become increasingly hard to pigeonhole Murakami as a writer that is pandering to readers abroad and virtually impossible to ignore the connections his works have with Japan and Japanese literature.

Murakami himself has spoken in response to critical judgments of this sort and admitted in interview that he personally had never considered the possibility of his work having the renown and global appeal that it has had, and that his reasoning behind the inclusion of internationally recognizable pop culture artifacts in his books was simply that it felt more realistic to him that way.<sup>71</sup> While American literature has overtly impacted his work, Murakami has explicitly disavowed any claim that he writes deliberately and primarily for foreign audiences, noting that were he to do so, he would hardly include references that would presumably be less familiar to a non-

<sup>67</sup> Henry Hughes, “Letter from Niigata,” *Harvard Review* 2 (1992): 156-8 (p. 156).

<sup>68</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, 3 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 1994-5); *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, trans. Jay Rubin (London, England and New York, NY: Vintage International, 2003).

<sup>69</sup> Katsushi Kuronuma, “Detachment to komittamento e,” in *Murakami Haruki sutadizu* 04, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Teruhiko Tsuge (Tokyo, Japan: Wakakusa Shobō), 236-41.

<sup>70</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Kokkyō no minami, taiyō no nishi* (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1992); *South of the Border West of the Sun*, trans. J. Philip Gabriel (New York, NY and London, England: Vintage International, 2000).

<sup>71</sup> Minh Tran Huy, “Haruki Murakami: Écrire, c'est comme rêver éveillé,” *Le Magazine Littéraire* 421 (2003). This interview is reproduced in Japanese translation in Haruki Murakami, *Yume o miru tame ni maiasa boku wa mezameru no desu: Murakami Haruki intabyū-shū 1997-2011*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Bungeishunju, 2012), 153-78.



Japanese reader base, such as to Sōseki Natsume's 坑夫 *Kōfu* (1908; *The Miner*, trans. Rubin 1988) or Akinari Ueda's 雨月物語 *Ugetsu Monogatari* (1776; *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*, various translated editions).<sup>72</sup>

To the contrary, Murakami has a robust Japanese readership, and he creates characters and writes stories almost exclusively about Japanese people living in Japan. He is on record as having explained that, "Though I've been very heavily influenced by American and foreign literature, I personally think that there's all the more significance in using those sorts of means and writing about Japan."<sup>73</sup>

Murakami is also by no means free of influence from Japanese literary traditions.

Yūji Katō observes that:

Haruki Murakami pretended he had never read Japanese literature and refused to admit his continuity to traditional Japanese literature in his early career, yet he did read Japanese literature and his works, particularly after *South of the Border, West of the Sun*, are more like Japanese novels than his early writing.<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, Murakami's longform works show themselves as more than fully capable of working within the traditional frameworks of the Japanese 'shōsetsu,' a term which Miyoshi presents as not perfectly equivalent to the English 'novel.'<sup>75</sup>

The *shōsetsu* format possesses its own formal characteristics which have remained fairly consistent and which Miyoshi asserts distinguish it from the Western novel format. He lays out the following principle features:

- One, there is no attempt at formal coherence – as understood in the West – in the *shōsetsu*. Often there is not even a central event; instead the work consists of separate episodes and anecdotes. Underlying the disparate actions might be some consistent

<sup>72</sup> Both of these works are mentioned by name in *Kafka on the Shore*. See Yutaka Yukawa and Tetsurō Koyama, "Umibe no kafuka o chūshin ni," *Bungakukai* April (2003). This interview is also reproduced in the op. cit. interview collection: Murakami, *Yume o miru*, 97-152.

<sup>73</sup> “僕はアメリカ文学、外国文学に非常に強い影響を受けているんだけど、その方法みたいなものを使って日本のことを書くからこそ意味があるんだと自分では思ってるんです。” Murakami, *Yume o miru*, 144. This English translation is my own.

<sup>74</sup> Yūji Katō, "Our Old Haruki Murakami and the Experience of Teaching His Works in Japan," in *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*, eds. Matthew Strecher and Paul L. Thomas (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2016), 17-30 (p. 18).

<sup>75</sup> Miyoshi, *Off Center*, 46.

tone or mood, but what is important is the definite indifference to the formation of a center and structure [...]

- Two, the plot is of course sequential, but hardly consequential. That is, the events are not syntactically cumulative, but paratactically aggregative [...]
- Three, its characters are largely types or names [...]
- Four, the narrative point of view is hardly ever fixed [...]
- Five, the *shōsetsu* texture is often dense, rhetorical, and formulaic [...]
- Six, the length is extremely variable [...]

The list can go on to include many more features such as the mode of production and consumption, the role of authorship, and the politics of literary associations and connections, which are markedly different from the Western counterparts.<sup>76</sup>

Thematic and stylistic borrowing from Anglophone literature notwithstanding, all six of Miyoshi's *shōsetsu* patterns are readily identifiable throughout Murakami's body of writing.

Miyoshi's first, second, and sixth points about structure, narrative coherency, and length can immediately be perceived as applicable. Uninitiated readers of Murakami, and particularly those less familiar with Japanese literature, may be perplexed at a given novel's pacing and its many 'loose ends' that are never explicitly tied up or resolved. Although, as Yoshio Iwamoto proposes, the rise of postmodernist literary modes may have helped "to close the gap that Western readers have apparently sensed in approaching Japanese works with their episodic, nonlinear structures [...] thus rendering them less 'exotic.'"<sup>77</sup>

With regard to points three and five concerning character types and the dense, formulaic nature of *shōsetsu*, both facets are witnessed time and again in Murakami's larger opus. They are even especially visible in Murakami's critically polarizing earliest writings which, contradictorily, were suggested above to be less 'Japanese' in nature – the so-called Trilogy of the Rat (*Hear the Wind Sing*; 1973 年のピンボール *1973-nen no pinbōru* [1980; *Pinball, 1973*, trans. Birnbaum 1985;

<sup>76</sup> Miyoshi, *Off Center*, 46-9.

<sup>77</sup> Yoshio Iwamoto, "A Voice from Postmodern Japan: Haruki Murakami," *World Literature Today* 67.2 (1993): 295-300 (p. 296).

trans. Goossen 2015]; 羊をめぐる冒険 *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* [1982; *A Wild Sheep Chase*, trans. Birnbaum 1989].<sup>78</sup> Not only do characters often work as identifiable types, many of Murakami's novels themselves are captivating explorations of genre which are formulaic in character (detective fiction, science-fiction, etc.), but which have results and purposes that bear the marks of postmodernist practice.<sup>79</sup> Strecher painstakingly examines this particular quality and presents Murakami as “inject[ing] the mimetic into what is, by definition, *non*-mimetic literature.”<sup>80</sup> Murakami deliberately juxtaposes predictable literary formulae and the unpredictability of real life.

Murakami's tendency toward the juxtaposition of mutually exclusive elements also emerges in relation to Miyoshi's fourth point about *shōsetsu*'s less fixed points of view. One of the foremost established literary genres in Japanese fiction is that of the *I Novel* (*watakushi shōsetsu/shi-shōsetsu*), a narrative format with a first-person confessional or revelatory story structure that may draw upon and fictionalize events from the personal life of the author. On the surface, this format seems contradictory to the claim that the works have unfixed viewpoints. However, Miyoshi clarifies that despite being an autofictional record of the author's life, it is neither egocentric nor persona-fashioning in the way of an autobiographical novel. Instead, it displays for the reader “the limits of homogeneity,” by “exemplif[ying] the normative life of a member of the collective.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Haruki Murakami, *1973-nen no pinbōru* (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1980); *A Wild Sheep Chase*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (London, England and New York, NY: Vintage, 2003); *Hear the Wind Sing*; *Hitsuji o meguru bōken*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1982); *Kaze*; *Pinball*, 1973, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1985); *Wind/Pinball*.

<sup>79</sup> Matthew Strecher, “Beyond ‘Pure’ Literature: Mimesis, Formula, and the Postmodern in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57.2 (1998): 354-78 (p. 355).

<sup>80</sup> Strecher, “Beyond ‘Pure’ Literature,” 370.

<sup>81</sup> Miyoshi, *Off Center*, 48.

Well-known exemplars of this novel form include works by such prominent authors as Osamu Dazai (1909-48), Yukio Mishima (1925-70), and Yasunari Kawabata (1899-1972). These respected writers are typically regarded as belonging to a sphere of literature known as *jun-bungaku* (literally ‘pure’ or ‘genuine literature’) which is in contrast to ‘popular fiction.’ Nobel Prize laureate Kenzaburō Ōe defines the classification as follows: “[The term *jun-bungaku*] is used today to refer to, as it were, literature that has passively secluded itself from the literature of the mass media; that is, it is used to denote literature that is not ‘popular’ or ‘mundane.’”<sup>82</sup>

Murakami offered his own assessment of *jun-bungaku* during a 1992 lecture at the University of California, Berkeley:

In Japan, with its relatively homogeneous population, different literary customs have evolved. The language used in literary works tends to be the kind that communicates to a small group of like-minded people. Once a piece of writing is given the seal of approval with the label *jun-bungaku* – “pure literature” – the assumption takes hold that it only needs to communicate to a few critics and a small segment of the populace. There’s nothing wrong with writing like that, of course, but there’s nothing that says that *all* novels have to be written this way. Such an attitude can only lead to suffocation. But fiction is a living thing. It needs fresh air.<sup>83</sup>

Murakami’s perspective revealingly underscores how his own works have persistently defied easy categorization in either direction. His writing blends elements of high and low culture, as well as high and low registers. It possesses a depth and complexity that is not associated with popular fiction, and yet deliberately pokes fun at conventional aspects of *jun-bungaku* and even specific works. For example, the title of Murakami’s second novel, *Pinball, 1973*, is a tongue-in-cheek pastiche of Ōe’s 万延元年のフットボール *Man’en gannen no futtobōru* (1967; *The Silent Cry*, trans. John Bester 1974).<sup>84</sup> While Murakami does often write in the first person, his

<sup>82</sup> Kenzaburō Ōe, “Japan’s Dual Identity: A Writer’s Dilemma,” in *Postmodernism and Japan*, eds. Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian (Durham, NC and London, England: Duke University Press, 1989), 189-213 (p. 193).

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 202.

<sup>84</sup> Kenzaburō Ōe, *Man’en gannen no futtobōru*, rev. ed. (Tokyo, Japan: 1988); *The Silent Cry*, trans. John Bester (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1974). The English translation’s title, *The Silent*

narrators regularly prefer the masculine pronoun ‘僕 *boku* (I)’ to the more neutral ‘私 *wata(ku)shi* (I)’ that lends its name to the *I Novel* (私小説 *watakushi shōsetsu/shi-shōsetsu*).

The best vantage point for approaching Murakami’s body of work is to understand his fiction not as an *either/or* scenario but rather in terms of *both/and*.

Nathen Clerici suggests that,

Murakami strikes a nerve because his writing appears to be what Karatani and others expect from a serious author, and that proximity (with a difference) causes anxiety. Instead of the ‘pure literature’ they are after, critics get taken in by a bait-and-switch; sincerity is replaced with ironic artifice and a breezy detour through popular culture.<sup>85</sup>

By drawing on and simultaneously participating in distinct literary traditions and modes, Murakami is able to use both effectively and play them off one another ironically toward his own artistic ends. As such, the most fitting critical approach is not to sequester Murakami’s work dualistically but to understand it stylistically and thematically in terms of both postmodern – even pop – Anglo-American fiction and in more orthodox terms of Japanese *jun-bungaku*.

The same multifaceted interpretative framework is applicable and altogether necessary when approaching Murakami’s language use in the novels. In point of fact, Murakami’s first attempts to write were made in English rather than Japanese. Jay Rubin likens the practice in some ways to Samuel Beckett’s writing in French, given that “the effect in both cases was a liberating coolness and distancing, not only in language but in the humorously detached view of life – and death.”<sup>86</sup> Once

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*Cry*, belies the allusion. A direct translation of ‘*Man’en gannen no futtobōru*’ might be ‘Football, Man’en Year One,’ or even ‘Football, 1860.’

<sup>85</sup> Nathen Clerici, “History, ‘Subcultural Imagination,’ and the Enduring Appeal of Murakami Haruki,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 42.2 (2016): 247-78 (p. 266). Cf. Kōjin Karatani, “The Landscape of Murakami Haruki: *Pinball in the Year 1973*,” trans. Hisayo Suzuki, in *History and Repetition*, ed. Seiji M. Lippit (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 117-49.

<sup>86</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 36-7.

resolved to write in his native language, Murakami worked at developing his own unique Japanese style, and it is one that patently displays a direct influence from English while being “キュウリのごとくクールに *kyūri no gotoku kūru ni* [literally ‘cool as a cucumber’].”<sup>87</sup>

Naomi Matsuoka emphasizes that the *Englishness* of Murakami’s writing is one of the major appealing aspects of his fiction:

As a matter of fact, when we read Murakami’s Japanese, we can sense the English expressions behind it at the same time. Readers with some knowledge of English (actually most Japanese people nowadays) enjoy these kinds of narratives, those which seem to be written in both Japanese and English at the same time.<sup>88</sup>

Rubin also agrees that, “Murakami’s style strikes the Japanese reader as fresh and new because it often reads like a translation from English.”<sup>89</sup> The effect is not so pronounced that the prose becomes overly clunky or awkward, but it is a result of features like non-idiomatic borrowings and more frequent use of subject pronouns.

Strecher writes that, “[Murakami’s] Japanese is easily translated into foreign languages, partly for its simplicity and partly for its reliance on foreign (or foreign-sounding) idioms.”<sup>90</sup> This cannot be taken at face value, however. These aspects may make Murakami’s Japanese prose more accessible than that of many Japanese authors for non-native readers and language students tackling literary works in the original language. Yet, adequately conveying the Japanese intralinguistic sense of *Englishness* into a foreign language is a difficult task. Doing so in an English language translation that is geared toward a monolingual readership is an enigmatic paradox of representation. How is linguistic *Englishness* to be conveyed in English?

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<sup>87</sup> This example is drawn from Haruki Murakami, *Umibe no kafuka*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 2002), vol. 2: 187. ‘Cool as a cucumber’ is not a Japanese idiom but is used in the novel as a transparent calque of the English phrase.

<sup>88</sup> Naomi Matsuoka, “Murakami Haruki and Raymond Carver: The American Scene,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 30.4 (1993): 423-38 (p. 434).

<sup>89</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 288.

<sup>90</sup> Strecher, “Beyond ‘Pure’ Literature,” 356.

Rubin, one of Murakami's major English language translators, has acknowledged that:

Murakami Haruki's style is influenced by English, and could be described as *batakusai* [obtrusively Westernized; literally, 'butter-stinking']. I said that translating it into English was easy, but that peculiar *batakusasa* [the noun form of *batakusai*] completely disappears in English. The freshness, the most central and important feature of his style is lost. But it cannot be helped.<sup>91</sup>

The problem extends beyond idiomatic and lexical choices. It also seeps into script usage. On the subject of *katakana* within the novels, Rubin confesses a certain loss.

Written in a special syllabary used for foreign words, some of the ingredients have a tantalizingly foreign sound and look in the Japanese text, but they inevitably lose this quality when they are translated 'back' into English and are surrounded by other English words.<sup>92</sup>

All of this contributes to make the works of Murakami particularly compelling in terms of multiliteral signification.

Murakami exploits polygraphic variability in ways that mirror his other narrative, stylistic, and thematic strategies. Rebecca Suter makes two relevant observations. First, she stresses strategic connections between polygraphy, cultural alterity, and language.

By means of a number of strategies based on the polygraphy of Japanese, Murakami's texts highlight some crucial aspects of Japan's relationship with the West, while at the same time foregrounding the linguistically constructed nature of reality.<sup>93</sup>

She then further builds on the notion of language's constitutive functionality with regard to culture and individual identity, and argues that in Murakami's writing:

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<sup>91</sup> "Il Paneru diskasshon: Honyakusha ga kataru, Murakami Haruki no miryoku to sorezore no yomarekata," in *A Wild Haruki Chase: Sekai wa Murakami Haruki o dō yomuka*, eds. Motoyuki Shibata, Mitsuyoshi Numano, Shōzō Fujī, and Inuhiko Yomota (Tokyo, Japan: Bungē Shunjū, 2006), 85-116 (p. 95). This English translation is borrowed from Daisuke Kiriyama, "'You're Probably Not That Innocent Either, Mr. Murakami': Translation and Identity between Texts in Murakami Haruki's 'Nausea 1979,'" in *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*, eds. Matthew Strecher and Paul L. Thomas (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2016), 101-16 (p. 107).

<sup>92</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 288.

<sup>93</sup> Rebecca Suter, *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 62.

The distancing of one's own culture through the American/Western 'Other,' in order to question one's own cultural presuppositions and to foreground the discursive and constructed nature of individual identity and of reality itself, is directly connected to the question of the linguistic sign evoked through polygraphy, i.e., the emphasis on the opacity and arbitrariness of the sign.<sup>94</sup>

Suter's points neatly encapsulate several aspects of Murakami's writing that are easy to misapprehend.

Murakami is a reader and translator of English with a keen interest in various items of foreign culture, and these elements inform his writing. His fiction also demonstrates an appreciation for Japanese society's awareness of English 'Western' culture, and globalization. English and the Roman alphabet are employed not merely as communicative tools, but also for the ideological functions they accomplish within Japanese. Though not referring specifically to scripts, Philip Seargant suggests in a more general sense that English is "a cultural symbol – an idea, whose meaning is discursively constructed and then utilized as part of wider social and cultural debate."<sup>95</sup> Nor is it a one-way street. Murakami does not write primarily with a foreign audience in mind, but neither does he make any special effort to normalize or familiarize foreign cultures and languages for Japanese readers. To the contrary, Murakami has even expressed the sentiment that he had an interest in America as a sort of "fiction," as compared with American the *real* entity.<sup>96</sup>

I began this chapter with an overview of Japanese script practice and a consideration of English's intralinguistic functionality in Japanese. Examination of these two aspects illuminated the semiotic potential of multiliteral variation therein, and correspondingly revealed the central idea that script choice and emblematic

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<sup>94</sup> Suter, *The Japanization*, 86.

<sup>95</sup> Philip Seargant, *Idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the Evolution of a Global Language* (Bristol, England and Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2009), 134.

<sup>96</sup> Johnathan Ellis and Mitoko Hirabayashi, "In Dreams Begins Responsibility': An Interview with Haruki Murakami," *The Georgia Review* 59.3 (2005): 548-67 (p. 555).



usage are bound up with associative and connotative qualities that stem from cultural conventions, individual background, and emotive intent. I then narrowed my view to look at the cultural and critical positioning of Murakami as an individual writer. I noted the ironic, distancing, and destabilizing characteristics of his work which are recognizable in terms of lexis, style, theme, and cultural value. I also introduced the argument that his polygraphic strategies align with these same characteristics. In the next chapter, I will use the contextual observations and deductions made here to assess specific examples from three representative novels and to analyze how destabilizing multiliteral signification amplifies components of subjective perspective and highly context-dependent narrative features.

## Chapter 4

### Case Study: Haruki Murakami

In this chapter, I examine three representative Japanese novels by the popular writer Haruki Murakami and assess polygraphic variation of different scripts within these texts in order to identify the ways in which multiliteralism adds supplementary signification to narrative elements and dialogue. In broad terms, I outline how multiliteral semiosis accentuates and/or undermines aspects of setting, theme, characterization, voice, identity management, and perspective. I begin in Section 4.1 with the work that first boosted the author's profile and launched the so-called "Murakami phenomenon"<sup>1</sup> – ノルウェイの森 *Noruei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*). I note that while the novel's script usage contextually and associatively reinforces its setting and characterization by largely echoing conventional practices, the text also plays with perspective and occasionally cultivates estrangement through irony, cultural reference, and pointed script variation.

From there, I proceed in Section 4.2 to an analysis of Murakami's 2002 novel, 海辺のカフカ *Umibe no kafuka* (*Kafka on the Shore*). This surreal work displays more numerous examples of multiliteralism, and I unpack layered instances that are used in disorienting conjunction with intertextuality and intralinguistic code-switching. These bolster the novel's themes of literacy, individuality, and *post-ironic* engagement. Stylistically, *Kafka on the Shore*'s alternating use of first-person and third-person narration also bridges the distance between *Norwegian Wood* and the final novel of this case study. I conclude in Section 4.3 by outlining the multiliteral features of *1Q84*, a novel that is not only massive in scope, but which is an intricate metafictional text preoccupied with the acts and constitutive functions of writing,

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<sup>1</sup> Jay Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (London, England: Harvill Press, 2002), 152.

communication, and storytelling. Ultimately, I advance the case that through ties to expectation and association, Murakami's narrative multiliteralism produces auxiliary semiotic meaning for readers that can reveal perspective and reflect *paralinguistic* aspects of interpersonal discourse.

#### 4.1 *Norwegian Wood*

First published in 1987, *Norwei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*, trans. Jay Rubin 2000) is ideal in several respects as the initial text of this case study of multiliteral style.<sup>2</sup> It propelled its author to fame, and various elements of the plot fictionally parallel Murakami's personal life. It also features a first-person narrator that is prototypical of Murakami's early writing, and yet *Norwegian Wood* is actually something of an anomaly amongst his larger body of work. Murakami has stated that in writing *Norwegian Wood*, one of his primary intentions had been to produce a "realistic novel,"<sup>3</sup> and though perhaps not entirely true to life, it provides an accessible entry point into the investigation of Murakami's literary and polygraphic style.

To summarize briefly, *Norwegian Wood* tells the story of Toru Watanabe, a young man who comes across as both passively apathetic and unreservedly derisive of the hypocrisy and pretense that he perceives in such group assemblies as the student protests and demonstrations at his university. He is also individualistically well-defined in terms of his literary and musical tastes. *Norwegian Wood* opens with

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<sup>2</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Norwei no Mori*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1987); *Norwegian Wood*, trans. Jay Rubin (London, England and New York, NY: Harvill Vintage, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Murakami has affirmed this multiple occasions, but the precise phrasing "realistic novel" is provided by Matthew Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (Minneapolis, MN and London, England: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 244, note 20, in a translated excerpt from Haruki Murakami, "Rongu intabyū: *Umibe no kafka* o kataru," *Bungakukai* 57.4 (2002).

Watanabe traveling to Germany many years after the main plot of the novel, and when he hears the Beatles' song that lends its title to the book, he recalls the activities of his life as a student in Tokyo, and in particular his interactions with two young women, Naoko and Midori. After the sudden and unexpected suicide of Watanabe's friend and Naoko's boyfriend, Kizuki, at the age of seventeen, both Watanabe and Naoko find their lives and general outlooks irreparably altered.

Watanabe and Naoko come to spend time together walking the streets of Tokyo, and eventually the pair sleep together for the first and only time on the night of Naoko's twentieth birthday. Thereafter, Naoko withdraws from school and goes to live in a secluded mental health facility, where Watanabe later visits her and meets her roommate, the middle-aged Reiko Ishida. Over the course of the narrative, Watanabe also interacts with the exceptionally charismatic Nagasawa whom he periodically accompanies to bars solely to encounter random women and engage in casual sex. Watanabe additionally meets and befriends the eccentric Midori Kobayashi, and he struggles to articulate the nature of his feelings and relationship with her until near the end of the novel when he is wrestling with the news of Naoko's own eventual suicide.

Script variation is a reasonably prominent feature of the novel, despite the fact that usage is in keeping with the 'realistic' tone and abides for the most part by normal Japanese patterns of use. I will first present accessible examples that are far from unique to the writing of Murakami, and then afterwards I will turn to the text's more profound and layered multiliteral effects.

At the Ami Hostel facility, Naoko and Reiko care for a parrot that screeches “アリガト *arigato* (thanks),” “キチガイ *kichigai* (loony, crazy person, etc.),” and “ク

ソタレ *kusotare* (bastard, shithead, etc.).<sup>4</sup> More sensitive words like ‘*kichiga?*’ or ‘*kusotare*’ may habitually appear in *katakana*, but transcription of all the bird’s utterances completely in *katakana* underscores the sound quality of the words. The parrot is merely reproducing sounds that it does not properly understand or that should not be perceived as legitimately discursive language. This type of *katakana* rendering that emphasizes sound and distinction is exceedingly common in many different types of written entertainment media.<sup>5</sup>

Another example that draws on the same functionality but inverts the principle is witnessed in a conversation that takes place between Watanabe and Midori’s father. Mr. Kobayashi is bound to his bed in the hospital, and he is unable to utter more than a few words at a time. In this extract, he urgently attempts to communicate something to Watanabe:

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「気分どうですか？」と僕は訊いてみた。  
 へすこしと彼は言った。へアタマ  
 「頭が少し痛むんですか？」  
 そうだ、というように彼は少し顔をしかめた。  
 「まあ手術のあとだから仕方ありませんね。僕は  
 手術なんてしたことないからどういふもんだ  
 かよくわからないけど」  
 へキップと彼は言った。  
 「切符？なんの切符ですか？」  
 へミドリと彼は言った。へキップ  
 何のことかよくわからなかったので僕黙って  
 た。それからへタノムと言った。「頼む」とい  
 うことらしかった。彼はしっかりと目を開けて  
 じつと僕の顔を見ていた。彼は僕に何かを伝え  
 たがっているようだったが、その内容は僕には  
 見当もつかなかった。  
 へウエノと彼は言ったへミドリ  
 「上野駅ですか？」  
 彼は小さく背いた。  
 「切符・緑・頼む・上野駅」と僕はまとめてみ  
 た。でも意味はさっぱりわからなかった。

<sup>4</sup> Murakami, *Noruwei*, vol. 1: 275.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. The dialogue of non-human characters in video games or *manga*, awkward Japanese spoken by a non-native speaker, etc. See Mutsuko Hudson and Yoshimi Sakakibara, “Emotivity of Nontraditional *Katakana* and *Hiragana* Usage in Japanese,” in *Applying Theory and Research to Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language*, ed. Masahiko Minami (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 180-195, especially p. 185.

<sup>6</sup> Murakami, *Noruwei*, vol. 2: 93-4. In the subsequent translation provided, **boldface** differentiates *katakana* usage by Midori’s father from *hiragana*.

In order to make script use more transparent, I offer the following reasonably literal, if stilted, translation.

“How do you feel?” I ventured to ask.  
 <A little> he said. <**head** (*atama*)>  
 “Does your head hurt a little?”  
 As if to say exactly, he screwed up his face a little.  
 “Well, since it’s after an operation, it can’t be helped. Though I’ve never had an operation, so I don’t really understand what sort of thing it is.”  
 <**ticket** (*kippu*)> he said.  
 “Ticket? What sort of ticket is it?”  
 <**Midori**> he said. <**ticket**>  
 I didn’t really understand what sort of thing it was, so I kept silent. After that he said, <**Please/I’m counting on you, etc.** (*tanomu*). It seemed to be “Please/I’m counting on you, etc.” He opened his eyes fully and looked fixedly into my face. He seemed to be wanting to communicate something to me, but I didn’t have the slightest idea about the content.  
 <**Ueno**> he said. <**Midori**>  
 “Is it Ueno Station?”  
 He nodded slightly.  
 “Ticket • Midori • Please/I’m counting on you, etc. • Ueno Station,” I tried bringing it together. But, I didn’t understand the meaning at all.

Throughout the novel, Midori’s father is limited to extremely short, typically one-word responses. For example: “もういい *mō ii* (That’s enough),” “うまい *umai* (delicious),” etc.<sup>7</sup> His dialogue mostly appears in *hiragana* with very occasionally a simple *kanji*. In the interaction reproduced above, however, *katakana* is employed in a way that accomplishes a specific effect. Watanabe attempts to piece together the meaning of isolated *katakana* words by asking questions and repeating ostensibly the same words back to Midori’s father. Yet when Watanabe speaks, he seeks to confirm meaning and repeats the words in *kanji*. The distinction is subtle, but the shifting of script reflects Watanabe’s grasp of the situation. Whereas *katakana* merely records sound, the *kanji* carry greater semantic weight.

The effect is one that is difficult to reproduce in a monoscriptal text. In endeavoring to produce a more fluid and readable English translation one may be

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<sup>7</sup> Murakami, *Noruvei*, vol. 2: 88-92.

tempted to render Mr. Kobayashi's text as less intelligible somehow, perhaps through use of atypical spellings, clipped words, or a similar editorial technique. It is to Jay Rubin's credit, therefore, that he avoids such stylistic instruments in his treatment of the scene. Rubin offers an altogether more authentic approximation by presenting Mr. Kobayashi's words in isolation and slightly adjusting Watanabe's responses to suit.<sup>8</sup> This more accurately recreates the atmosphere of the original scene, because it is not Mr. Kobayashi's speech that is presented as garbled. Rather, it is the lack of comprehension on the part of Watanabe that prompts the use of *katakana*. This also has the side effect of visibly filtering the reader's perspective through that of Watanabe as the first-person narrator.

In a similar vein, character interactions, emotions, and relationships all can be seen to influence script with regard to the depiction of personal names. Chiaki Takagi even goes so far as to read intense cultural symbolism into the scripts of each character name. She writes:

*Norwegian Wood* is the first novel in which Murakami gives real names to his characters. Although Watanabe's name should be written with Kanji (Chinese characters), it is written with Katakana throughout the novel. If his Katakana name also implies his Americanized self, the fact that he is attracted to Midori is all the more symbolic. For whenever he refers to her, her name is written with Kanji. The only times it is written with Katakana is when she introduces herself to him and when she is called on by somebody else. I believe that this implies that Boku [=the narrator, i.e. Watanabe] recognizes Midori's Japaneseness. Considering that Naoko's name is written with Kanji throughout the novel, it can be contended that Boku seeks 'home' in the women he loves. Boku's repeating Midori's name at the end of the novel implies his search for home/Japaneseness.<sup>9</sup>

Though an intriguing interpretation, I would argue that the emblematic values of script choice in relation to names are hardly so clear-cut and uniform.

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<sup>8</sup> Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, 252-3.

<sup>9</sup> Chiaki Takagi, "From Postmodern to Post Bildungsroman from the Ashes: An Alternative Reading of Murakami Haruki and Postwar Japanese Culture" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2009), 98.

Murakami has admitted in interview to an early career preference for giving character names in *katakana*. He explains that:

Each word has its own image as a Chinese character. I wanted to avoid those characterizations. If I put the name in *katakana*, it's more anonymous, as you say. It's a kind of symbol. It's a sign [...] So I use *katakana* names for my characters, mostly.<sup>10</sup>

Value ascription is thereby left deliberately ambiguous and open to interpretation.

Moreover, Takagi overlooks one poignant example in *Norwegian Wood* where the distinction between *katakana* and *kanji* seems to demonstrate a heightened level of intimacy between Midori and Watanabe. During an emotionally charged conversation between the pair, Midori asks Watanabe to say something nice to her, something to make her feel good. She specifically asks him to use her name, to say “ミドリ *Midori*,” and when he obliges, he also addresses her using *katakana* for her name rather than *kanji*.<sup>11</sup>

Another recurring technique that deserves special comment is the idiosyncratic use of *furigana*. *Furigana* is a ruby text system used in Japanese that appears above other characters as a gloss. It often provides a reading or pronunciation guide for particular *kanji* that a reader may have trouble recognizing or processing. Examples of this standard usage style can be drawn from *Norwegian Wood* itself, for instance “<sup>すずき</sup> 鱈 *suzuki* (Japanese sea perch).”<sup>12</sup> The superscripted *hiragana* acts as pronunciation guide for the *kanji* below.

In contrast to the novel's straightforward *furigana*, there are several places where it is used in a more unorthodox fashion. One finds, for example: “<sup>リンボ rinbo</sup> 辺土 *hendo*

<sup>10</sup> Johnathan Ellis and Mitoko Hirabayashi, “‘In Dreams Begins Responsibility’: An Interview with Haruki Murakami,” *The Georgia Review* 59.3 (2005): 548-67 (p. 562).

<sup>11</sup> Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 2: 171-2.

<sup>12</sup> Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 2: 116.



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(remote region),”<sup>13</sup> “シスター s h i s u t ā sister 修道尼 *shūdōni* (nun),”<sup>14</sup> and “シエスタ shie sutā siesta 午睡 *gosui* (nap).”<sup>15</sup> In each of

these cases the superscripted *katakana* does not clarify the proper pronunciation of the *kanji* but instead offers a foreign loanword. This results in what is ostensibly a single written word that borrows aspects from two separate words and demands interconnected reading and interpretation.

The feature of idiosyncratic *furigana* glosses is far from unique to Murakami, and in other forms of writing it is made to serve a variety of different functions, including translation, emphasis, and clarification of specialist terminology. In Murakami’s writing, however, it introduces a certain unreliability into the literal text. Rebecca Suter addresses the subject of Murakami’s foreign word *furigana* and argues that,

this creative use of the graphic potential of Japanese writing also adds layers of meaning to the text making it richer and more complex, while at the same time raising the reader’s awareness of the existence of different linguistic realities and the textual nature of the text itself, and also constructing a multifaceted vision of reality.<sup>16</sup>

The destabilizing presentation reinforces the novels’ ironic and distancing modes. I have noted these as prominent aspects of Murakami’s writing style and narrative tone in general, and in the case of *Norwegian Wood*, these qualities materialize even prior to the start of the novel proper.

The title page contains a multifaceted use of idiosyncratic *furigana* that sets the tone for the novel linguistically, referentially, and in terms of script. The dedicatory epigram reads: “フェト 多くの祭りのために f e t o *ōku no matsuri no tame ni* (For

<sup>13</sup> Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 1: 21.

<sup>14</sup> Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 1: 39.

<sup>15</sup> Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 1: 193.

<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Suter, *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 73.

Many Festivals).<sup>17</sup> Superficially, the French ‘*fêtes*’ that is presented as *katakana* ruby text obtrusively conflicts with the *kanji* beneath it. ‘祭り *matsuri* (festival, etc.)’ is not only a commonplace word that hardly merits a pronunciation guide, but the *furigana* also superscripts *hiragana* ‘り *ri*,’ a phonemic *okurigana* character that accompanies the *kanji* stem and does not merit a guide whatsoever. Coupled with this and even more telling, the line is an apparent dedication to the author F. Scott Fitzgerald; it echoes the dedication that precedes *Tender is the Night*, “To Gerald and Sara: Many Fêtes.”<sup>18</sup> The ties to Fitzgerald are made even more explicit within the novel, as both Watanabe and Nagasawa admire *The Great Gatsby*.<sup>19</sup> My purpose in highlighting this is not to emphasize superficial intertextual connections between the two writers, but rather to note from the outset the ways in which Murakami’s polygraphic strategies parallel his manipulation of foreign languages and cultural referents.

Even the Japanese title of the novel (ノルウェイの森 *Noruwei no mori*) presents analogous cross-cultural and linguistic disingenuity. In opposition to the sense from the Beatles’ song lyrics, ‘*mori*’ indicates ‘wood’ only in the sense of ‘forest’ and not of ‘lumber.’<sup>20</sup> Even if the mistranslation did not originate with Murakami, he nonetheless declined to improve upon it despite his English

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<sup>17</sup> Murakami, *Noruwei*, vol. 1: 5.

<sup>18</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 153.

<sup>19</sup> N.b. *The Great Gatsby* is one of the English language works which Murakami has translated into Japanese.

<sup>20</sup> One might reasonably expect ‘木材 *mokuzai* (timber),’ if not simply a transliteration: ‘ウツド *uddo* (wood).’ The anomaly is effectively illustrated by the glossary entry in Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian eds., *Postmodernism and Japan* (Durham, NC and London, England: Duke University Press, 1989), 292. Miyoshi and Harootunian’s volume was published prior to Rubin’s mass-market English language version and roughly contemporaneously with Birnbaum’s translation. They either strove to reproduce Murakami’s title faithfully or neglected to pick up on the Beatles reference despite explicit and recurrent mention throughout the novel. For, they list Murakami as “Writer, concerned with the spirit of contemporary Japanese youth whose *Forests of Norway* [sic] was a runaway best-seller.”

proficiency and his passionate, extensive knowledge of music. Daisuke Kiriyama suggests that “through his ‘non-Japanese Japanese’ style as well as his frequent use of (mis)translation,” Murakami “directs our attention to the interspace between texts [...]”<sup>21</sup> Before one even cracks the cover, the authenticity and reliability of text and authorial figure are called into question.

Following an examination of the apparent discrepancies between Murakami as real individual and authorial entity, as well as the unreliable narrator, Hideyo Sengoku argues that the major characters of *Norwegian Wood* suffer from an ill-defined yet paralyzing, language-based ailment.<sup>22</sup> Despite his efforts, “Watanabe is unable to save this person, Naoko. The reason being that he too is also a person suffering from language.”<sup>23</sup> Sengoku colorfully illustrates his argument with his own idiosyncratic *furigana*. He pairs the *katakana* “アメリカニズム *amerikanizumu* (Americanism)’ with the word “言葉 *kotoba* (word, language)” as in the previous quotation and elsewhere with “片仮名語 *katakanago* (*katakana* words, loan words).” Sengoku suggests that the characters display a linguistic and cultural *chic*-ness that becomes simultaneously a *sick*-ness.<sup>24</sup>

The notion that language plays a key role in the novel’s presentation of identity creation is important. However, I would caution against clumsy overemphasis

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<sup>21</sup> Daisuke Kiriyama, “‘You’re Probably Not That Innocent Either, Mr. Murakami’: Translation and Identity between Texts in Murakami Haruki’s ‘Nausea 1979,’” in *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*, eds. Matthew Strecher and Paul L. Thomas (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2016), 101-16 (p. 115).

<sup>22</sup> Hideyo Sengoku, *Airon o kakeru seinen: Murakami Haruki to amerika* (Tokyo, Japan: Sairyūsha, 1991), 6-38.

<sup>23</sup> “ワタナベ君にこの人物直子を救うことはできない。なぜなら、かれもまた 言葉に病む人物だからだ。” Sengoku, *Airon*, 30. The English translations of Sengoku provided here are my own.

<sup>24</sup> Sengoku, *Airon*, 30. Sengoku’s wordplay is lost in English, but he uses *katakana* “小粋 *shikku* (*chic*)” and “病氣 *shikku* (*sick*)” as homophones.

of Sengoku's Americanism malady. The characters do exhibit an ineffable Bildungsroman sort of paralysis that stems from questions of self-definition arising amidst the novel's societal, political, and relational backdrops. Yet, Murakami's literary, linguistic, and cultural borrowings are not used in an overtly exoticizing Occidental capacity, nor in an expression of *cooler-than-thou* cosmopolitanism. Borrowings, references, and allusions are often presented in a flat way, and I have already identified the novel's pervasive lack of earnest sincerity.

Suter makes the convincing case that literary and cultural references ought hardly to be taken unironically at face value. In her view, "Murakami's references to American and European culture do have an ironic function, which is not to create a distance *from* the West but a distance *through* the West, to move away from conventional reality using foreign literature and culture for their alienating effect."<sup>25</sup> I do not see it as reasonable to interpret all of Murakami's non-Japanese references as ironic, given his declaration that they enhance realism.<sup>26</sup> Yet, denying the ironic qualities of many references seems equally obtuse. Takagi makes the suggestion that what Murakami presents in his early works is not the colonization nor *Americanization* of Japan but rather the "*Japanization* of the West," whereby the West is conceptually manufactured as an invented simulacrum "that Japan lets colonize itself."<sup>27</sup>

There are two major notions to take away from Suter's and Takagi's assertions. First, it is necessary to come to terms with Murakami's repeated usage of

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<sup>25</sup> Suter, *The Japanization*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 3.3; Minh Tran Huy, "Haruki Murakami: Écrire, c'est comme rêver éveillé," *Le Magazine Littéraire* 421 (2003). This interview is reproduced in Japanese translation in Haruki Murakami, *Yume o miru tame ni maiasa boku wa mezameru no desu: Murakami Haruki intabyū-shū 1997-2011*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Bungeishunju, 2012), 153-78.

<sup>27</sup> Chiaki Takagi, "Is the 'Post-' in Postwar the 'Post-' in Postmodern? Rethinking Japan's Modernity in Works of Murakami Haruki," *Virginia Review of Asian Studies* 12 (2010): 39-65 (p. 56).

cultural references and allusions that exhibit varying degrees of irony. He does not do so with an eye toward *othering* foreign peoples and cultures – i.e. Suter’s “distance *from* the West” – since the same variable irony applies to many of his Japanese cultural referents. Rather, Murakami exploits different cultural artifacts and foreign language fragments from within the Japanese context in disorientingly realistic and surrealistic ways, creating “distance *through* the West.” How earnestly particular elements ought to be perceived is open to individual interpretation.

Second, the same logic can be found to apply to multilateral signification present in Murakami’s texts. Cited also in Section 3.3, Suter elaborates that:

The distancing of one’s own culture through the American/Western “Other,” in order to question one’s own cultural presuppositions and to foreground the discursive and constructed nature of individual identity and of reality itself, is directly connected to the question of the linguistic sign evoked through polygraphy, i.e., the emphasis on the opacity and arbitrariness of the sign.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to being linguistic media tools, scripts have an ideological associative function that is open to the same manipulation – sincere or ironic – as cultural referents. A consequence of this is that Murakami’s use of the Roman alphabet and snippets of foreign language in *Norwegian Wood* should not simply be taken as chic cosmopolitanism. They participate in the same ironically-engineered disorientation that is witnessable on the levels of allusion, theme, and motif.

The novel’s use of Roman characters in large part conforms to conventional practice. *Rōmaji* appears, for example, in fairly utilitarian acronyms and abbreviations: “TV,” “NHK,” “IBM,” etc.<sup>29</sup> Realistically unremarkable in many cases, even commonplace usages of this type are occasionally employed to striking effect. The car model that Kizuki asphyxiates in is an “N360,” and in the section that describes his suicide, that Roman-letter Arabic-numeral compound stands out

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<sup>28</sup> Suter, *The Japanization*, 86.

<sup>29</sup> Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 1: 6, 37, vol. 2: 67.

ominously and hauntingly recurs in the passage.<sup>30</sup> Reiko also uses the word “OK” in more of a conversation-turning sense to acknowledge Watanabe’s request to hear the second part of her story, and then pages later she uses the *katakana* “オッケー *okkē*” in a more affirmative sense.<sup>31</sup>

One might make a valid attempt to isolate and interpret such minor instances in terms of their general connections to cultural spread, technology, and language influence, but there are further, extended examples of polygraphic variation that are explicitly tied to foreign cultures and languages, and which demand more detailed consideration. Multiliteral signification not only illuminates aspects of character and setting, but by challenging cultural perceptions and connections between spoken and written language, polygraphic play actualizes what Suter proposes to be one of Murakami’s perennial themes: “foregrounding the linguistically constructed nature of reality.”<sup>32</sup>

The first prominent example in the novel comes from the opening pages. Watanabe is sitting on an airplane that has just landed in Germany when he is spoken to by a German flight attendant. Rubin’s English translation renders the scene as follows.

Before long one of the German stewardesses approached and asked in English if I were sick.

“No,” I said, “just dizzy.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure. Thanks.”

[...]

The stewardess came to check on me again. This time she sat next to me and asked if I was all right.

“I’m fine, thanks,” I said with a smile. “Just feeling kind of blue.”

“I know what you mean,” she said. “It happens to me, too, every once in a while.”

She stood up and gave me a lovely smile. “Well, then, have a nice trip. *Auf Wiedersehen.*”

“*Auf Wiedersehen.*”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Murakami, *Noruegi*, vol. 1: 51-3.

<sup>31</sup> Murakami, *Noruegi*, vol. 2: 10, 16.

<sup>32</sup> Suter, *The Japanization*, 62.

<sup>33</sup> Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, 1-2.

While the English version presents a minor code-switch at the end that reminds the reader Watanabe is in Germany, the same interactions in the Japanese version are much more visually and linguistically disorienting.

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やがてドイツの stewardess がやってきて、気分がわるいのかと英語で訊いた。大丈夫、少し目まいがしたただけだと僕は答えた。  
 「本当に大丈夫？」  
 「大丈夫です、ありがとうございます」と僕は言った。  
 [...]
   
 前と同じ stewardess がやってきて、僕の隣りに腰を下ろし、もう大丈夫かと訊ねた。  
 「大丈夫です、ありがとうございます。ちょっと哀しくなったただけだから (It's all right now, thank you. I only felt lonely, you know.)」と僕は言ひつて微笑んだ。  
 「Well, I feel same way, same thing, once in a while. I know what you mean. (私も時々同じようなことがありますよ。よくわかります)」彼女はそう言っつて首を振り、席からたちあがってとても素敵な笑顔を僕に向けてくれた。  
 「I hope you'll have a nice trip. Auf Wiedersehen! (よい御旅行を。さようなら)」  
 「Auf Wiedersehen!」と僕は言った。

Before long a **German stewardess** came around and asked in English if I were sick. I answered that I just got a little dizzy.

“Are you really alright?”

“I am alright, thanks.” I said.

[...]

The same **stewardess** as before came around, sat down next to me, and asked again if I was alright.

“I am alright, thanks. I just became a little sad. (*It's all right now, thank you. I only felt lonely, you know.*)” I said and smiled.

“Well, I feel same way, same thing, once in a while. I know what you mean. (I have that very thing sometimes too. I understand well), she said that, shook her head, stood up from the seat, and turned a very lovely smile toward me. “*I hope you'll have a nice trip. Auf Wiedersehen!* (Have a good trip. Good-bye)”

“Auf Wiedersehen,” I also said.<sup>35</sup>

In the first case, typical Japanese is used to transcribe all the narrativized speech and direct dialogue for a conversation that the reader is told explicitly takes place in English. When the flight attendant returns and asks Watanabe again if he is alright, there is a noteworthy shift. Watanabe's half of the dialogue appears in Japanese with parenthetical Roman-letter English translations, and the woman's speech is

<sup>34</sup> Murakami, *Noruegi*, vol. 1: 7-8.

<sup>35</sup> In this more deliberately literal translation, **boldface** represents English or German-derived words written in *katakana*, and *italic type* the instances of Roman characters.

presented in reverse order. Within just a few lines, the linguistic variation and script transplantation achieves a number of different aesthetic effects.

On the surface, the Roman characters and use of English and German help to establish the conversation's setting. The differing translation directions of the parenthetical glosses characterize Watanabe as a speaker of Japanese and the woman as an English-speaking German, and yet that reading is incomplete in its assessment of these switches. If merely a means of setting and character establishment through reflection of perceived linguistic and script norms, then surely the same patterns would have been applied to the initial interaction as well. As it stands, the shift from typical Japanese direct speech to cross-lingual glossed speech is the first of many disorienting instances.

Despite its outward appearance as English with a borrowed German greeting, the exchange ought not to be interpreted as linguistic code-switches that function outwith the Japanese text. Rather, the interaction is an artistic *intralinguistic* use of English,<sup>36</sup> and one that is revealing in terms of narrative level. As readers of contemporary Japanese – if not also statistically native Japanese speakers – the vast majority of the text's audience possess at least an elementary ability to process this brief English exchange. In processing the English as part of the Japanese text, one encounters not simple repetition but minor instability in the fairly loose, sense-for-sense translations. Dynamic translation of this variety is not employed consistently, and it does not come across in this case as stylishly modern so much as distancing.

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 3.2. This could also be a viable justification for Rubin's omission of the switches in the English translation.



With regard to the woman's slightly stilted English line, "I feel same way, same thing," there are several possible readings. It could simply be an incidental, irregular usage on the part of Murakami as the author. The intranarrative conversation is not disrupted by abnormality, nor is the feature duplicated in the parenthetical Japanese. Other plausible readings emerge, however, with an eye toward Strecher's rejoinder to readers of Murakami: "language does not exist in a vacuum; it is rather, dependent on two fundamental factors: experience and culture."<sup>37</sup> In addition to an accidental error made by Murakami, the line could also be feasibly interpreted as any or all of the following: a characterizing element of this specific character's English, a mishearing/misremembering on the part of Watanabe as narrator, or even a ploy to make the line accessible and less alienating to a Japanese readership.

From the very beginning of the novel, the language and script use in the text is revealed as unstable and open to interpretation. Subjective impressions and experiences are incorporated so that they are inextricable from the 'objective' recording of occurrences and depictions of dialogue. In the above instance, the multiplicity and deliberate mismatching introduce misgivings about the reliability of the written word to faithfully convey Watanabe's individual experience into the narrative and literal text. A similar but more minute switch happens when Watanabe considers that the "阿美寮 *ami ryō* (Ami Hostel)" despite being in *kanji* must take its name from the French "*ami*," which appears in *rōmaji* and is translated parenthetically into Japanese.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*, 29-30.

<sup>38</sup> Murakami, *Norwegian*, vol. 1: 185.

Interpretative difficulties regarding language are further compounded when reading with attention to Watanabe's German studies. As a young man, he remarks time and again throughout the main plot of the book on his studies of language. Yet, if the opening scene taking place in Germany where he uses English is any indication, these particular linguistic endeavors have apparently not come to full fruition for the mature Watanabe.<sup>39</sup> If not wholly Sengoku's Americanism, this thematic observation does at least play along with other aspects of the novel and partially situate *Norwegian Wood* in the sphere of pseudo-deconstructionist isolationism and the inherent fallibility of language. Nevertheless, a reader is unable to form a hasty, one-dimensional reading of this variety, in part because of another superficially similar shift that features an American cultural reference.

While drinking together in a bar, Watanabe and Midori have a conversation with entirely distinct aesthetic results to those seen above. Midori ruminates on how pleasant it would be if Watanabe had been her first kiss, and then prompts him with the following.

40

「ねえ、どうしてそんなにぼんやりしているの？もう一度訊くけど」  
 「たぶん世界にまだうまく馴染めてないんだよ」と僕は少し考えてから言った。「ここがなんだか本当の世界じゃないような気がするんだ。人々もまわりの風景もなんだか本当じゃないみたいに見える」  
 緑はカウンターに片肘をついて僕の顔を見つめた。「ジム・モリソンの歌にたしかさういうのあったわよね」  
 「People are strange when you are a stranger」  
 「ピース」と緑は言った。  
 「ピース」と僕も言った。

“Hey, why are you spacing out like that? I’m asking again.”

<sup>39</sup> Sengoku, *Airon*, 35.

<sup>40</sup> Murakami, *Norurwei*, vol. 2: 48-9. Here again the **boldface** in my translation represents English-derived words in *katakana*, and *italic type* the Roman characters.

“Probably I’m not used to the world yet, you know.” I said after I thought for a bit. “I get the feeling somehow that this place is not the real world. The people and the surrounding scenery like somehow seem not real.”

Midori rested one elbow on the **counter** and stared at my face. “I’m pretty sure there was something like that in a **Jim Morrison** song, right?”

“*People are strange when you are a stranger*”

“**Peace**,” said Midori.

“**Peace**,” I also said.

In many ways, this instance parallels the previous example. It features literal transplantation tied to an apparent linguistic code-switch. A simplistic interpretation would be to read Murakami and his characters in light of their cosmopolitan knowledgeability of American pop culture as represented by the untranslated, untransliterated fidelity to the original song. However, as one element of the Japanese passage, the usage does not come across as cool and fashionable. It is not even technically faithful to the song’s lyrics – “People are strange when *you’re* a stranger.”<sup>41</sup>

Tongue is instead firmly in cheek for both Murakami and Watanabe. The shift further emphasizes the underlying irony and self-deprecatory nature of the entire scene. A *katakana* rendering of the lyric along the lines of ‘ピープルアーストレンジ *pīpuru ā sutorenji*’ might theoretically have sufficed to convey the spoken conversation faithfully, but the Roman character match for the false linguistic code-switch plays along visually with an ironically deployed cultural referent. Emblematic aspects of script, language, and allusion combine, allowing Murakami and his characters sarcastically to quash the sincere tone of the conversation and abruptly withdraw from the seriousness of the scene. The conversation then returns to *katakana* and more well-known loanword English, as the pair offer one another the playfully self-mocking and deflated “ピース *pīsu* (peace).” Utterly drained of

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<sup>41</sup> N.b. The quote is in fact amended in this way in Rubin’s translation. Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, 223.

earnestness and imbued with altered, ironic significance, the same *katakana* 'peace' is used once by Midori prior to this scene and twice later on.<sup>42</sup>

In summary, my assessment of *Norwegian Wood* demonstrates foremost that Murakami's polygraphic practice echoes and accentuates thematic and stylistic aspects of the text. Script plays into the text's deceptive 'realism' and largely abides by norms of convention, but it also stimulates feelings of disorientation and estrangement. Murakami occasionally employs strategic script switches that rely on readers' associations and contribute to the establishment of setting and characterization. These are tied to specific contexts, and they also relate to the presentation and perceptions of narratorial perspective. At specific junctures, a reader's conventional approach to the text is disrupted by transplanted Roman-letter, *faux* code-switches that reemphasize ironic cultural referents and literary allusions. With these baseline stylistic observations and principles in hand, I will now proceed to an interpretation of the more varied multiliteral signification that is present in two of Murakami's dreamlike, intensely surreal works.

## 4.2 *Kafka on the Shore*

*Umibe no kafuka* (2002; *Kafka on the Shore* 2005) represents a departure both from the more realistic plot of *Norwegian Wood*, and from its comparatively restrained script play. Polygraphic and multiliteral features highlighted above appear with much greater frequency in *Kafka on the Shore* and function in more significant ways as essential elements of theme, setting establishment, and characterization.

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<sup>42</sup> The pair have a similar exchange, and Watanabe uses it again after monologuing to Midori's bedridden father about Greek drama and the concept of *deus ex machina*. Murakami, *Norueji*, vol. 1: 133, vol. 2: 70, 91.

The characters themselves display a nearly metatextual, hyperawareness of the literary and offer up candid exegetical aphorisms like, “Symbolism and meaning are two separate things.”<sup>43</sup> Yet in provocative counterpoint,

Murakami stubbornly insists that the images in his work are not symbols and that he himself does not understand their ‘meanings.’ They come out of his unconscious, he says, almost like automatic writing, and any reader’s interpretation is as valid as his own [...] The very act of identifying a symbol and defining it, as far as Murakami is concerned, drains it of much of its potential power.<sup>44</sup>

This simultaneous denial of and fascination with metaphorical symbolism, semantic meaning, and literacy pervades the plot and the text of the novel. There is also a clearly demarcated split between first-person and third-person narration that makes *Kafka on the Shore* particularly enticing for what it reveals about multiliteral signification and perspective.

*Kafka on the Shore* contains two discrete but intertwined and labyrinthine narratives. The odd-numbered chapters are told in the first person, with occasional shifts into second person, from the point of view of fifteen-year-old Kafka Tamura whose birth name is never revealed. He adopts the pseudonym Kafka after running away from home at the beginning of the novel, in part to flee a quasi-Oedipal prophecy made about him by his father. As Kafka makes his way from Tokyo to Shikoku, he is aided by a young woman named Sakura whom it is intimated may be his sister in some intangible capacity. Once in Takamatsu, Kafka passes his time in the Komura Memorial Library reading, and eventually living and working, after he is befriended by the library employee, Oshima. Kafka encounters a spectral vision of the library administrator Saeki as a young girl and afterwards becomes romantically

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<sup>43</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, trans. J. Philip Gabriel (London, England and New York, NY: Vintage Harvill, 2005), 262. This quote is drawn from a conversation Oshima and Kafka Tamura are holding with one another about the meaning of the lyrics to the fictional song “Kafka on the Shore.”

<sup>44</sup> Jay Rubin, “The Other World of Murakami Haruki,” *Japan Quarterly* 39.4 (1992): 490-500 (p. 493).

involved with her. Kafka also ends up spending considerable time alone at Oshima's mountain cabin in order to avoid the police who are seeking to question him in connection to his father's apparent homicide.

The murder itself takes place during the third-person, even-numbered chapters that lay out the story of Satoru Nakata. As a child during the Pacific War era, Nakata underwent a bizarre experience that left him unable to read, and at the start of *Kafka on the Shore*, he is already an elderly man living on a government subsidy in Tokyo. He possesses the uncanny ability to converse with cats, and this has led to his having a reputation for being adept at locating lost pets. While on the trail of one, Nakata is led to confront and stab the malicious figure of the cat murderer Johnnie Walker. This act dually functions as a sort of vicarious *murder-by-proxy* of Kafka's father. Nakata attempts to turn himself in but fails to convince a police officer of his guilt, and thereafter embarks on his own journey to Shikoku. He hitches a ride with the truck driver Hoshino, and driven toward an unclear goal, the two ultimately arrive at precisely the same library as Kafka before Nakata passes away.

As in *Norwegian Wood*, throughout the novel Murakami both abides by commonplace norms governing Japanese script usage and manipulates atypical shifts to achieve particular literary effects. Some are more straightforward and are in much the same vein as examples which I highlighted in Section 4.1. For example, idiosyncratically paired *kanji* and *furigana* appear, and in one case acutely mirror Kafka's inability to articulate the nature of the ethereal young Saeki he encounters. Murakami as author and Kafka as first-person narrator manufacture a single written word with a double reading, as the figure is described with an epithet that fuses the nuances of the Japanese '妖精 *yōsei*' with the English 'spirit' – “スピリット *supiritto* 妖精 *yōsei* (fairy,

sprite, etc.).”<sup>45</sup> When the word “妖精” appears again on the following page without any gloss, the previous mismatch is likely still fresh in a reader’s mind, but they are left to fend for themselves and interpret as they will.

Similarly, situational aspects operate along with a character’s personality and background to exert influence over script usage. For instance, the postwar-era intellectual Dr. Nakazawa uses *kanji* for the word “<sup>かばん</sup>鞆 *kaban* (bag),” while the contemporary young Kafka has *katakana* for the same word: “カバン *kaban* (bag).”<sup>46</sup> A lack of proper comprehension is also portrayed time and again throughout the novel by means of *katakana* replacing *kanji*. Kafka fails for a moment to understand the word “他者 *tasha* (another, other person)” and comes up with “タシヤ *tasha*.”<sup>47</sup> Hoshino is similarly perplexed into *katakana* when he does not recognize Colonel Sanders’s use of the word “完遂 *kansui* (accomplishment).”<sup>48</sup> Elsewhere, Hoshino entirely misunderstands the word “大公 *taikō* (archduke, grand duke),” and this is literally revealed to the reader through his use of inappropriate *kanji* while speaking, “太鼓 *taiko* (drum, taiko percussion instrument).”<sup>49</sup>

The feature is such a staple element of the illiterate Nakata’s speech acts that J. Philip Gabriel takes a different strategy than Rubin did with *Norwegian Wood* and endeavors in the English translation to reproduce similar effects to Murakami’s literal shifts. For example, he handles one particularly dense series of Nakata’s *katakana* for *kanji* replacements by changing slight details in the English version.

<sup>45</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Umibe no kafuka*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 2002), vol. 1: 470-1.

<sup>46</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 53, 70.

<sup>47</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 411.

<sup>48</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 120.

<sup>49</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 213.

Katakana Provided	Roman Transliteration	Inferable Kanji (Definition)
キンユウロン	<i>kin'yūron</i>	金融論 (financial theory)
イトウチュウ	<i>itōchū</i>	伊藤忠 (proper noun, i.e. the corporation name)
ブチョウ	<i>buchō</i>	部長 (department head, section chief, etc.)
ツウサンショウ	<i>tsūsanshō</i>	通産省 (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)
ショウガイ者 <sup>50</sup>	<i>shōgaisha</i>	障害者 (handicapped or disabled person)
ホジョ	<i>hojo</i>	補助 (assistance, subsidy, aid, etc.)

Gabriel elects simply to omit the company's proper name, and he offers the following italicized intentional misspellings: “*theory of fine ants, depart mint chief, minis tree of trade and indus tree, and sub city.*”<sup>51</sup> While a less than perfect correlation since Nakata may not be mispronouncing the words, the intrusion is justified because ignoring the prominent multiliteral play would be itself a misrepresentation.

There are other instances where *kanji* falls away for reasons other than misunderstanding and is replaced with not only *katakana* but occasionally *hiragana*. To highlight a few examples, Hoshino teasingly names himself to Nakata in *katakana*, providing a playfully mocking form of clarification.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, when *kanji* is stripped away during a scene charged with erotic tension between Kafka and Sakura, the shift to *katakana* “カラダ *karada* (body)” seems to indicate an altogether different tone during the intimate interaction.<sup>53</sup> So too, during the disorienting and pseudo-metaphorical sandstorm of the Boy Named Crow section

<sup>50</sup> Note that this example is a *katakana* + *kanji* compound. ‘障害 or ショウガイ *shōgai* (disability, etc.)’ + the suffix ‘者 *sha* (person, ‘-er’).’

<sup>51</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 96-7; Murakami, *Kafka*, 49-50.

<sup>52</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 247.

<sup>53</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 192. Cf. Elsewhere in the novel one consistently observes one of the following *kanji*-based renderings for the same word: “身体、からだ身体、体。”



that precedes the first chapter, where at one point the *kanji* of “ある場合 *aru ba'ai* (lit. ‘in certain case(s)’)” are whisked away leaving only *hiragana*.<sup>54</sup>

These examples all demonstrate that the polygraphy of the text reinforces what Michael Seats deems to be,

one of the greatest artistic achievements of the novel, its brilliant deployment of *character as register*. In the juxtaposition and clashing of the different linguistic registers, the text foregrounds the possibilities of dialogue and the representation of spoken discourse in radically new ways.<sup>55</sup>

This is a significant assertion that requires supplemental qualification through examination of *rōmaji* and English use in the novel.

Reasonably simple English words and Roman characters appear often, and they are used in ways that both resemble and differ from implementations in *Norwegian Wood*. One section even presents the opportunity to pinpoint precisely where a script borderline apparently exists between *katakana* and *rōmaji* for a particular character. Oshima is in several places a focal point for ironic English usage and ‘speaking’ in *rōmaji*, such as when he responds to Kafka’s thanking him with the transplanted Roman-character, “My pleasure.”<sup>56</sup> This teasingly self-deprecatory *faux* English at the beginning of Chapter 19 characterizes the amicable relationship between the pair, and it partially foreshadows the verbal sparring match that comprises much of the remaining chapter.

Shortly thereafter, two library visitors come conducting a survey of public facilities in the area “from the viewpoint of women,” and they have several issues they feel must be raised with the library management.<sup>57</sup> While there is no *rōmaji*

<sup>54</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 10.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Seats, *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (Lanham, MD and Plymouth, England: Lexington Books, 2006), 338. Emphasis added. Seats’s usage of ‘character’ appears only to indicate ‘individual,’ but it nevertheless functions as an unintentionally valid pun on the additional graphic sense of the word.

<sup>56</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 362.

<sup>57</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 188.

usage initially, this leads to an increasingly heated discussion throughout which *katakana* English is employed in a conspicuous, almost totemic way by the visitors in their attempt to overwhelm Oshima and dominate the interaction. The following excerpt comes from near the beginning of the section where both the dispute and *katakana* usage begin to intensify.

58

「そのあたりのことについて、いちおうアドミニストレーションの側のご意見をうかがいたく思います。よろしいでしょうか？」  
 「アドミニストレーションというような大げさなものはここに存在しません。僕でよろしければなんなりとも」  
 「まずここには女性専用の洗面所がありません。そうですね？」  
 「そのとおりです。この図書館には女性専用の洗面所はありません。男女兼用になっています。」  
 「たとえ私立の施設とはいえ、パブリックに開放された図書館であれば、原則として洗面所は男女別にされるべきではないでしょうか」  
 「、、、、」  
 「原則として」と大島さんは確認するように相手の言葉を繰り返さず。  
 「そうです。男女兼用の洗面所は様々な種類のハラスメントにつながります。調査によりますと、女性の大半は男女兼用の洗面所に対して使いづらさを切実に感じています。これは明らかに女性利用者に対するニグレクトです」

“And we’d like to bring this up with your **administration** and hear their response, so if you don’t mind?”

“We don’t have something as fancy as an **administration**, but I would be happy to listen to you.”

“Well, first of all you have no restroom set aside for women. That’s correct, isn’t it?”

“Yes, that’s right. There’s no women’s restroom in this library. We have one restroom for both men and women.”

“Even if you are a private facility, since you’re open to the **public** don’t you think --in principle-- that you should provide separate restrooms for men and women?”

“In principle?” Oshima says.

“Correct. Shared facilities give rise to all sorts of **harassment**. According to our survey, the majority of women are reluctant to use shared bathrooms. This is a clear case of **neglect** of your female patrons.”

The visitors’ *katakana* English has an overbearing and self-aggrandizing impression, and still unsatisfied, they continue to press the issues even after Oshima’s apologetic explanation of the library’s shortcomings. Soon, however, Oshima can no longer remain in a passive role and launches his own analogous rhetorical ploy.

<sup>58</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 370-1; Murakami, *Kafka*, 188-9. For the sake of clarity, this and the following translation are Gabriel’s but with added emphases. Here **boldface** indicates *katakana*, and underscore represents the emphatic punctuation of the original.

59 「曾我さん」と大島さんは言う。「学校で出欠をとられるときには、曾我さんは田中さんの前だし、関根さんのあとだったはず。あなたはそのことに對して文句を言いましたか？たまには逆から呼んでくれと抗議しましたか？アルファベットのGは自分がFのあとになっているからといって腹を立てますか？本の67ページは自分が68ページのあとになっているからといって革命を起こしますか？」

「それとは話がちがいます」と彼女は声を荒げて言った。「あなたはさつきから、意図的に話を混乱させています」

それを聞きつけて、書架の前でノートをとりつづけていた背の低い女性も足早にこちらにやってくる。

「意図的に話を混乱させる」と大島さんは、まるで文字に傍点でも打つみたいに相手の言葉を反復する。

「そうじゃないとでも言うんですか？」

「レッド・ヘリング」と大島さんは言う。

曾我という名前の女性は口を軽く開けたまま、なにも言わない。

「英語に red herring という表現がありません。」

“Ms. Soga,” he begins, “when they called the role in school your name would have come before Ms. Tanaka, and after Ms. Sekine. Did you file a complaint about that? Did you object, asking them to reverse the order? Does G get angry because it follows F in the **alphabet**? Does **page 68** in a book start a revolution just because it follows 67?”

“That’s not the point,” she says angrily. “You’re intentionally trying to confuse the issue.”

Hearing this, the shorter woman, who’d been standing in front of a stack taking **notes**, races over.

“Intentionally trying to confuse the issue,” Oshima repeats, like he’s underlining the woman’s words.

“Are you denying it?”

“That’s a **red herring**,” Oshima replies.

The woman named Soga stands there, mouth slightly ajar, not saying a word.

“In English there’s this expression *red herring*.”

Oshima goes on to explain the concept of a red herring, translate the phrase literally into Japanese, and generally aggravate the visitors.

Oshima effectively overbalances them with their own rhetorical technique and surpasses their patronizing *katakana* and pseudo-English usages by stepping into what appears to be the realm of genuine idiomatic English knowledge. Breaking this unseen boundary prompts the shift into Roman characters, and despite being a repetition of ostensibly the same spoken words, the last is the only true code-switch

<sup>59</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol.1: 373-4; Murakami, *Kafka*, 190. As before, **boldface** represents *katakana* and underline indicates emphatic punctuation. Additionally, *italic type* represents *rōmaji*.

that seems to take place during the interaction.<sup>60</sup> The contrast is made all the starker by virtue of the alphabetic ‘G’ and ‘F’ that are also included in the passage. Unlike ‘red herring,’ these retain the vertical orientation of the Japanese text and function more like algebraic, placeholder characters. The shift is so marked that a reader may be inclined to imagine Oshima’s spoken pronunciation adjusting to conform with more native English speech patterns for the second iteration of ‘red herring.’ Along with its explicit labeling as English, the visual shift in script introduces an emblematic distinction to the two different renderings of the same phrase. Yet as much as Oshima’s usage sets the women back on their heels, I would nevertheless argue that this ‘red herring’ is itself something of a red herring.

*Rōmaji*, foreign language borrowing, and various cultural referents are exploited throughout *Kafka on the Shore* in ways that are even more deliberately destabilizing than in *Norwegian Wood*. These elements are again employed for the purposes of setting establishment and characterization, and they appear especially frequently in the early even-numbered chapters which are written in the format of U.S. Army dossiers and interviews on the subject of the “RICE BOWL HILL INCIDENT,” i.e. the event that caused Nakata to lose the ability to read. *Kafka on the Shore* also contains a quotation that mirrors the song lyric from above. It is presented as being from a poem by the Irish writer W. B. Yeats, but however deeply one delves into the examination of this reference, it proves alienating and disorienting.

In the first place, Kafka encounters the quotation in an unlikely context. He finds it as a note about the relationship between imaginative capacity and

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<sup>60</sup> Even taking into account such *katakana* English as “ハセテック *pasetikku* (pathetic)” and “ジェンダ— *jendā* (gender),” which the visitors subsequently continue to put forward.

responsibility that Oshima has penciled into the back of a book about Adolf Eichmann. The line reads, “In dreams begin the responsibilities.”<sup>61</sup> As Kafka mentally translates the line into Japanese on the following page, the ideas and the phrase resonate with him. The quote has even more weight in light of the novel’s recurrent emphases on the importance of individual imagination, and this is precisely the quality that Oshima finds lacking in the library visitors he rebuffs. Later, Kafka repeats his Japanese version of the quote to Oshima who in turn recognizes it for a Yeats reference.<sup>62</sup>

There are, however, two inconsistencies which surround the quote and which the scholar and translator Gabriel has evidently taken pains to circumvent in his English version. He chooses both to restore the accurate original English (“In dreams begins responsibility”) and to eschew a misconstrual of the line as coming directly from a Yeats poem.<sup>63</sup> Gabriel’s English text gives simply “Yeats” in an acknowledging sense where Murakami’s Japanese has the more explicit “イ エ ー ツ の詩だ *Yētsu no shi da* (literally, ‘It’s a poem of Yeats’).”<sup>64</sup> In addition to restoring fidelity, the latter alteration is presumably an acknowledgment of the fact that the line is technically found first as one of the epigraphs at the beginning of *Responsibilities*, where it is in turn ascribed to an “Old Play.”<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps these components are indeed English mistakes, transmission errors, or less than painstaking citation on the part of Murakami, but the decision to adjust them in translation is at best overly fastidious and at worst a thematic misportrayal.

Murakami has expressed his conscious awareness that *Kafka on the Shore* contains

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<sup>61</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 277.

<sup>62</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 278, 431.

<sup>63</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 141.

<sup>64</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1, 431; Murakami, *Kafka*, 219.

<sup>65</sup> William Yeats, *W. B. Yeats: The Poems*, ed. Richard Finneran (London, England: Macmillan, 1984), 100.

far more intertextual citations and references than his previous works,<sup>66</sup> and whether deliberate or unintentional, the gisted memory of the line and its source result in a portrayal that is perfectly in keeping with the novel's literary motifs and its prioritization of individual discernment and imaginative effort over acceptance of prescriptive authority. Destabilization deflates one's ability to perceive the quotation and code-switch in a totally earnest, unironic manner. In this regard, the function is very much like that of the novel's characters Johnnie Walker and Colonel Sanders.

These two figures take the form of internationally-known corporate mascots, and while instantly recognizable in that sense, they are immensely alienating when they appear suddenly in the novel's realistic-seeming world. Outside of the physical appearances which they assume, these figures have little to do with either corporate entity. They are hollow referents with a misrepresentative nature that is neatly turned on its head by Nakata who lacks the appropriate experience or cultural background knowledge; he has no associations and fails to identify Johnnie Walker when he meets him.<sup>67</sup> He is left with only his spontaneous, personal assessment of Walker's gruesome actions to inform him throughout their interaction. Elsewhere Nakata's cultural ignorance is linked to his illiteracy in what is otherwise a standard usage of *rōmaji*. To help explain where she lives, Mimi tells Nakata that it is the house where the cream-colored "BMW" is parked.<sup>68</sup> Nakata is successfully able to spot the cream-colored car and identify the house, but he is left by the narration to wonder what on earth 'BMW' could possibly indicate. Nakata grasps the *signified* while patently missing the *sign*.

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<sup>66</sup> Yutaka Yukawa and Tetsurō Koyama, "Umibe no kafuka o chūshin ni," *Bungakukai* April (2003). Reprinted in *Yume o miru tame ni maiasa boku wa mezameru no desu: Murakami Haruki intabyū-shū 1997-2011*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Bungeishunju, 2012), 97-152 (pp. 131-2).

<sup>67</sup> On this subject, see further Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*, 100.

<sup>68</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 160.

A final example toward the end of the novel employs multiple tactics I have already highlighted and ties together many of the novel's overarching thematic concerns. As in many of Murakami's works, there is a dreamlike, *otherworld* space that characters interact with and enter,<sup>69</sup> and *Kafka on the Shore's* otherworld exhibits a unique connection to the act of reading itself. First, it is after entering that space that the young Nakata is left illiterate, and while immobilized for a time, both he and the other children affected during the incident are noted as having their eyes move conspicuously side to side.<sup>70</sup> Later during a passage about the peculiar way time flows for Nakata, it is mentioned explicitly that in that other world, there are no "characters (= 字 *ji*, i.e. in the sense of letters)."<sup>71</sup> Kafka also discovers this to be the case when he ventures deep into the woods surrounding the cabin toward the end of the novel. He is escorted by two soldiers to a place where he can encounter the young Saeki, and despite longing for a book or any sort of "活字 *katsuji* (printed text)" to read, there is nothing of the sort and even the clothing that is there has no logos or markings.<sup>72</sup>

After so much attention and symbolic weight has been given to the written word and lack thereof, it is noteworthy that one of the first printed texts Kafka comes into contact with after emerging from that otherworld are the *rōmaji* English words "NO FEAR" that are emblazoned on the shirt of Oshima's brother, Sada.<sup>73</sup> I read this as yet another reversal. The specious code-switch works in the opposite direction of previous examples. In contrast to the irony that has pervaded the language of superficially profound-seeming literary references and disingenuous political

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<sup>69</sup> An extensive consideration of this motif in various of Murakami's writings is offered in Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*.

<sup>70</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 58.

<sup>71</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol.1: 176.

<sup>72</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 456.

<sup>73</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 504.

correctness, the cliché ‘NO FEAR’ is not presented as wry, but as blatantly simplistic and even painfully sincere. From his own experience in that other space, Sada explains that, “It’s not something you can get across in words. The real response is something words can’t express.”<sup>74</sup> In the Japanese, Sada’s sentiment is further visually accentuated through multilateralism. ‘Words’ is reduced to a more elemental form by being presented in *hiragana* “ことば *kotoba*” rather than *kanji* ‘言葉 *kotoba*’.<sup>75</sup>

This last sequence encapsulates the novel’s overarching themes of literacy and individuality which are tied to the pitfalls and inherent shortcomings of inter-/intrapersonal communication. Knowingly paradoxical, written language about written language is used in a post-ironic attempt to gesture earnestly at aspects of the individual human experience which lie beyond the restrictive limitations of language itself. Analogously, Murakami’s polygraphic implementations in *Kafka on the Shore* correspond with and reinforce this artistic trajectory. They generate and contribute to the same dreamlike and *distancing* qualities that are also realized by narrative, thematic, and stylistic means. The text skeptically calls into question the stability and reliability of the language one uses, and yet it skirts a nihilistic or trivializing presentation by blending together sincere and ironic cultural references, linguistic borrowings, and multiscritpal variation. In particular, the language of prescriptive authorities and established societal narratives is probed, and a great deal of value is placed upon individual discernment and imaginative engagement.

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<sup>74</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 252.

<sup>75</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 509.



### 4.3 1Q84

The third and final novel of Murakami's that I will analyze in this case study is one of his longest and most intricate fictional works to date. *1Q84* (2009-10; English translation 2011) provides illuminating contrast with *Norwegian Wood* and *Kafka on the Shore*. *1Q84* is filled with a massive number of literary and cultural references, and it is also something of a rarity among Murakami's larger body of work, because it is written entirely in the third person. These features play significant roles in the unfolding of a gargantuan plot with intertwined character relationships, and they also shape and inform the text's script usage and multiliteral signification.

Not unlike *Kafka on the Shore*, perspective shifts with each chapter of *1Q84*. Though the actions and thoughts of both are recounted in third-person description, odd chapters are devoted to the character of Masami Aomame, and even chapters to the story of Tengo Kawana. From the fifth volume onwards, chapters also begin to follow the character of Ushikawa, and the narration rotates between these three characters until Aomame and Tengo are at last reunited in the final chapter of the text.

After having been raised in a deeply religious family, Aomame is living alone at the start of the novel and working as a physical trainer. In addition, she possesses the supernatural ability to pierce the skin at a specific point with an icepick-like device in such a way that it causes instantaneous death and leaves essentially no external trace. She is intermittently contracted by a wealthy dowager to use this bizarre talent and engage in pre-planned homicide to eliminate men responsible for particularly severe domestic abuse. After Aomame assassinates the Leader of the religious group Sakigake at his own instigation, she goes into hiding and waits for the remainder of the novel in a prearranged safehouse. Ostensibly, this is in preparation

for taking on a new identity following cosmetic surgery, but of greater importance to Aomame personally, she hopes to be able to meet with Tengo.

The son of a door-to-door fee collector for the NHK public broadcasting organization, Tengo met and subsequently lost contact with Aomame when he was an elementary school student and young mathematics prodigy. By the time of the book's principal setting in 1984, Tengo has come of age and earns his living by working part-time as a math instructor at a cram school. He spends the majority of his unoccupied time writing and developing as an amateur novelist under the guidance of Yūji Komatsu, an editor for a literary magazine. Through this connection, Tengo comes to undertake the furtive ghost-rewriting of a novel manuscript entitled *Air Chrysalis*, which was produced by the seventeen-year-old Eriko Fukada.

The eccentric 'Fuka-Eri' is the daughter of Sakigake's Leader and following her flight from the religious commune at the age of ten, she is currently in the care of her father's former friend, Professor Ebisuno. It is soon revealed that Fuka-Eri did not write but rather dictated the story of *Air Chrysalis*, since Fuka-Eri suffers from dyslexia, and reading or writing anything requires considerable time and effort on her part. By having Tengo rhetorically polish *Air Chrysalis* in secret, Komatsu's intention is to set up the attractive young Fuka-Eri as a literary phenomenon and media darling in the hopes of covertly making a farce of the publishing and critical literary establishment. It is the progression of these two activities – Tengo's involvement in the publication of a novel that shines light on Sakigake and Aomame's assassination of their Leader – that ultimately prompts Sakigake to solicit the services of lawyer-turned-private detective, Toshiharu Ushikawa, to investigate the pair.

*1Q84* is a novel that is preoccupied with the nature of storytelling and textual production, and many of the overtly self-aware narrative characteristics of *Kafka on*

*the Shore* can be seen to recur. Intertextual references, multilingual code-switches, and polygraphic variation akin to previous examples are found, and these perform more elaborate and integral functions as critical components of *1Q84*'s thematic development and dialogue. An acute intratextual alertness to the outcomes of language presentation is discernible from the narration, as well as from the thoughts and dialogue of individual characters.

Aomame passages, for example, occasionally acknowledge script choice and emblematic value ascription directly. When Aomame comes into the presence of Sakigake's Leader, the reader of the English translation is told that, "He was not so much 'looking' at her as 'viewing' her"; this is a distinction achieved through orthographic emphasis in Murakami's Japanese – “<sup>み</sup>視る *miru*” as opposed to “見る *miru*.”<sup>76</sup> Previous sexual partners are characterized as likely working for a less old-fashioned company, one that probably has a name in *katakana*.<sup>77</sup> Even Aomame's reading of the commercially-released *Air Chrysalis* reveals conscious mindfulness of script choice, because Tengen has himself evidently taken creative pains in his rewriting to use *katakana* renderings for words not fully understood by the protagonist, a girl who is essentially a stand-in for Fuka-Eri.<sup>78</sup>

The tactic of employing idiosyncratic *furigana* for purposes of characterization and contextualization appears in *1Q84* with extraordinary frequency. For example, beyond explaining the *kanji* of his name (‘*戎野 Ebisuno*’) to Tengen with a code-switch

<sup>76</sup> Haruki Murakami, *1Q84*, 6 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 2009-10), vol. 3: 242; Haruki Murakami, *1Q84: The Complete Trilogy*, trans. Jay Rubin and J. Philip Gabriel (London, England and New York, NY: Harvill Vintage, 2012), 590.

<sup>77</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 311. Rubin's translation recreates the effect of this allusion to script by offering: "they worked for a more aggressive, flexible company *with a cool, foreign-sounding name* [...]" Murakami, *1Q84*, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 412. Emphasis added. It is also worth noting that what Rubin translates as "aggressive" is quite literally the English loan “アグレッシブ *aguresshibu* (aggressive).”

<sup>78</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 4: 171-2.

to English (“field of savages”),<sup>79</sup> the former anthropologist and academic figure of Professor Ebisuno has his choice of vocabulary thus emblematically characterized.

He uses terms like “<sup>ヘゲモニー</sup> *shudōken* (hegemony)” while describing the situation of Fuka-Eri’s father.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the proprietor of an upscale French restaurant offers Aomame and Ayumi a bottle of expensive wine from a “noble domain,” presented in the Japanese as “<sup>ゆいしよ</sup> <sup>ドメーヌ</sup> *yuisho aru jōzōsho* (venerable brewery, etc.).”<sup>81</sup>

These and similar examples are readily intelligible as *pseudo-code-switches* with accompanying translations to ensure comprehensibility. Other superficially similar instances, however, achieve an altogether different aesthetic result.

The twin examples of “<sup>マザ</sup> *jittai* (entity, substance)” and “<sup>ドウタ</sup> *bunshin* (parturition, one’s child, one’s other self) best embody this latter, more opaque variety.<sup>82</sup> They appear frequently elsewhere in the text simply in *katakana* without explanatory *kanji* (‘マザ *maza*,’ ‘ドウタ *dōta*’), and though they stem transparently from English ‘mother’ and ‘daughter,’ they are not simply loans. The paired terms are deliberately used in *1Q84* to formulate a distinction and denote a surreal, paranormal connection between two entities according to the internal logic of the novel.<sup>83</sup>

Even when not in the form of unconventional *furigana*, the novel employs examples of English-derived *katakana* vocabulary for unique connotative purposes. The Leader describes his and his daughter’s respective roles as:

<sup>79</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 1: 272-3.

<sup>80</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 190.

<sup>81</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 84; Murakami, *1Q84*, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 271. Given contrast to the existent *katakana* rendering of ‘ドメイン *domein* (domain),’ the rendering here of “ドメーヌ *domēnu*” seems to be a deliberate transliteration of the French ‘*domaine*’ rather than the English equivalent.

<sup>82</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 4: 200.

<sup>83</sup> In acknowledgment of this peculiar usage, the English translation makes consistent use of the ersatz terms ‘*maza*’ and ‘*dohta*.’

レシヴァー = 受け入れるもの  
*reshivā = ukeireru mono (receiver = one who receives)*

and

パシヴァー = 知覚するもの  
*pashivā = chikaku-suru mono (perceiver = one who perceives).<sup>84</sup>*

These appellations also appear in relation to Tengu and Fuka-Eri, and Tengu refashions them into their so-called “正しい *tadashī* (correct, proper)” Roman character equivalents “receiver” and “perceiver.”<sup>85</sup>

In reference to another similar example, the Leader offers clarification and provides insight into the unique expressive functionality of such isolated English-derived *katakana* words used in the novel. While explaining the designation ‘Little People’ (consistently ‘リトル・ピープル *ritoru pīpuru*’ in the Japanese text), the Leader informs Aomame that, “The expression ‘Little People’ is just an expedient. My daughter called them that when she was very young and brought them with her.”<sup>86</sup> Perhaps unavoidably, this English translation omits one original comment entirely, and it glosses over a pertinent distinction.

リトル・ピープルという名前はあくまで便宜的なものに過ぎない。当時まだ幼かったわたしの娘が彼らを『小さな人たち』と呼んだ。彼女が彼らを連れてきた。わたしがその名前を『リトル・ピープル』に変えた。そのほうが言い易かったからだ。

The name *Little People* is nothing more than an expedient. At that time when my daughter was still young, she called them ‘little people.’ She brought them with her. I changed that name to ‘*Little People*.’ Because it was easier to say that way.<sup>87</sup>

The discrepancy established in Japanese between ‘リトル・ピープル *ritoru pīpuru*’ and ‘小さな人たち *chīsana hitotachi* (little people)’ succinctly encapsulates overriding features observed throughout this case study. Namely, two co-dependent and

<sup>84</sup> Murakami, 1Q84, vol. 4: 16.

<sup>85</sup> Murakami, 1Q84, vol. 4: 247-8.

<sup>86</sup> Murakami, 1Q84, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 632.

<sup>87</sup> Murakami, 1Q84, vol. 3: 309. In my translation provided here “*Little People*” in *italics* denotes the English-derived *katakana* renderings as opposed to “little people” which indicates a translation of the *hiragana* and *kanji*, non-English derived rendering.

interrelated means of differentiation are theoretically applicable and visibly at work in the text.

On the one hand, intralinguistic differentiation between English and Japanese words for a single concept can affect presentation and reception. Simultaneously, this differentiation can be accentuated or undermined by differentiation between scripts. There are thus two layered distinctions that distinguish *hiragana* ‘小さな人たち *chīsana hitotachi* (little people)’ from *katakana* ‘リトル・ピープル *ritoru pīpuru*,’ one linguistic and one script-based.

In contrast, a conversation between Tengo and his girlfriend at the close of Book 1 gives rise to an example of script differentiation but not linguistic differentiation. It is similar to Oshima’s ‘red herring’ highlighted in Section 4.2, and it is again referentially tied to a work of English literature.

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「テキストは『マーティン・チャズルウィット』。私は十八歳で、フリルのついたかわいいワンピースを着て、髪はポニーテイル。すごく真面目な学生で、そのときは処女だった。なんだか前世の話をしているみたいだけど、とにかく「lunatic」と「insane」の違いが、大学に入って最初にみにつけた知識だった。どう、想像して興奮する？」

「もちろん」、彼は目を閉じて、フリルのついたワンピースとポニーテイルを想像した。すごく真面目な学生にして処女。でもあらゆる論理を超えて嫉妬深い。ディッケンズのロンドンを照らす月。そこを徘徊するインセインな人々と、ルナチックな人々。彼らは似たような帽子をかぶり、似たような髭をはやしている。どこで違いを見分ければいいのか？目を閉じると、今どこの世界に自分が所属しているのか、天吾には自身もてなくなつた。

“The text was *Martin Chuzzlewit*. I was eighteen and wearing a cute pleated dress. My hair was in a ponytail. I was a very serious student, and still a virgin. I feel like I’m talking about something from an earlier life. Anyhow, the difference between ‘lunatic’ and ‘insane’ was the first bit of knowledge I ever learned at the university. What do you think? Does it get you excited to imagine that?”

“Of course it does,” he said, closing his eyes, imagining her pleated dress and her ponytail. A very serious student, a virgin. But jealous beyond reason. The moon illuminating

<sup>88</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 361-2; Murakami, *1Q84*, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 442. Further comparable examples are found elsewhere in the conversation beginning from p. 357.

Dickens's London. The insane people and the lunatics wandering around London. They wore similar hats and similar beards. How was it possible to distinguish one from the other? With his eyes closed, Tengo could not be sure which world he now belonged to.

In the English translation, nothing except for the inverted commas which accompany the first appearance of 'lunatic' and 'insane' (*rōmaji*) visually distinguishes them from the subsequent appearance. In Murakami's Japanese, however, the second inclusion is graphically adjusted in a way that semiotically enhances discursivity. They appear in *katakana* as part of the narration. In correlation, this instance of multiliteral variation can also be compared to the aurally foregrounded use of *katakana* “エネーチケ— *enēchikē* (NHK)” rather than the commonplace Roman character acronym, which appears in the dialogue of both Fuka-Eri and the wandering spirit of Tengo's NHK collector father.<sup>89</sup>

In Murakami's writing, it can be hard to extricate and consider 'linguistic differentiation' in isolation from 'script differentiation.' Matters are further complicated as readers' perceptions are also impacted by the intermingling of 'cultural alterity' and 'variability' that is presented by Murakami's many intertextual references and allusions to literature, music, and pop culture from Japan and around the world. I have already advanced the argument that Murakami's cultural references, language, and script usage achieve varieties of post-ironic engagement through a muddling of irony and sincerity. The same holds true in *1Q84* as contrasting and conflicting degrees of irony are again witnessable on all three levels.

The very title of the novel is a prime case in point and shows these three avenues of differentiation operating in conflict/unison. “*1Q84*” works on multiple levels: literally, paronomastically, and referentially in ways that illustrate the text's overarching stylistic and thematic concerns. At the most basic level, the title

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<sup>89</sup> E.g. Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 5: 84, 121.

references the historical setting for the story. The interactions and events of the novel occur over the period from April until December during the year 1984.

Aomame creates the tongue-in-cheek portmanteau ‘1Q84’ in order to refer to the alternate version of reality in which she finds herself; the pun is devised with a ‘Q’ for ‘question mark’ and is based on the more or less homonymous pronunciation of the letter and the Japanese number ‘9 *kyū*.’<sup>90</sup> Secondly, the title also functions as a literary reference to the renowned dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, and the nature of the correlation between these two works is a sizable point of contention for some commentators.

*1Q84* contains its own dystopian elements, and characters sporadically reference Orwell’s novel and ideas from it directly, e.g. “思考犯罪 *shikō-hanzai* (‘*thoughtcrime*’).”<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, it is made explicitly clear that aspects of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are no longer directly applicable to the world as experienced in the lives of Murakami’s characters. Professor Ebisuno explains, for example, that the widespread modern proliferation of “ビッグ・ブラザー *biggu brazā* (‘Big Brother’) as a term effectively disallows for such an entity’s existence in quite the same form without its being immediately identified and decried by the public at large.<sup>92</sup> The ambiguity – if not outright contradiction – that this produces prompted one particularly scathing reviewer of the novel to write the allusion off entirely. Allen Barra remarks derisively that “Even the title’s allusion to Orwell seems vague,”<sup>93</sup> and I

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<sup>90</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 1: 259. Also peculiar to note is the unorthodox *rōmaji* rendering “<ichi-kew-hachi-yon>” offered on the dust jackets of the Japanese volumes and the fact that at this precise point in the text, the English “question mark” is itself transcribed in Roman characters.

<sup>91</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 3: 181-2.

<sup>92</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 193.

<sup>93</sup> Allen Barra, “How Murakami’s ‘1Q84’ Became 2011’s Biggest Literary Letdown,” *The Atlantic*, December 16, 2011, accessed January 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2011/12/how-murakamis-1q84-became-2011s-biggest-literary-letdown/250119/>.



would argue that 'vague' is an apt descriptor but not in the desultory manner which Barra implies. As demonstrated previously in relation to *Norwegian Wood* and *Kafka on the Shore*, this type of referent is misunderstood if taken as simple allegory. The purpose is not to recreate a contemporary version of Orwell's story but to contribute to the dreamlike qualities of *1Q84* by destabilizing a reader's frame of reference. Allusions are made without assurances of reliability or authenticity.

An analogous interpretative approach should be the basis for unpacking the novel's stylistic, metatextual, thematic, and polygraphic strategies, as well as its multiliteral signification. Deliberate linguistic inconsistency with the 1984 setting is acknowledged in a post-textual note which cautions that the work contains words and phrases not in widespread use at that time. At the end of a chapter which contains discussion of and extensive quotation from Anton Chekhov's *Sakhalin Island*, the reader is told explicitly of Chekhov's sentiment that an artist ought to present a problem correctly but is not necessarily obliged to solve it.<sup>94</sup> Whence, after Aomame acquires a gun and is warned about the dramatic principle of Chekhov's Gun, the weapon remains conspicuously unfired. On top of the Little People's vexation with having been put into print, Tengo discovers upon reading reviews of *Air Chrysalis* that fictional critics of the novel are as incensed as the real critic Barra with their inability to discern the underlying significance of the 'Little People.'<sup>95</sup> The examples do not point toward referential accuracy nor faithfulness to reality. The aim is rather to pose questions and present inconsistencies that contribute to Murakami's familiar-seeming but surreally disorienting, fictional world.

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<sup>94</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 256-7.

<sup>95</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 343, vol. 3: 158-60.

This finds vivid embodiment in the novel's de-emphasis of the importance of referential authority and its destabilization of paratextual reliability, and it is echoed by *1Q84*'s strategic polygraphy. An instance that parallels previous examples comes while Tengo is out with three of the nurses at his father's care facility. He brings to mind the witches from *Macbeth*, and the reader encounters in the text a Roman character rendering of the English quote: "By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes, Open, locks, Whoever knocks."<sup>96</sup> This is foreboding in a way that contributes to the atmosphere of the scene, but the transplanted reference cannot be taken at face value, especially given that later in the text when Shakespeare is cited again, the character who recalls a quote is unable to remember if it is from *Richard III* or *Henry IV*.<sup>97</sup>

Murakami goes further to disrupt the validity of his intertextual references and complicates matters by introducing fabricated paratextual elements into the text. In addition to *Air Chrysalis* and the second novel that Tengo begins to write which borrows *Air Chrysalis*'s setting, there is also the short tale he reads on the way to visit his father. "Town of Cats" is purported to have been written by a German author in the period between the First and Second World Wars, and it is described as being included in an anthology of short travel stories.<sup>98</sup> Such fictitious paratextual information informs the reader's perception of the "Town of Cats" interlude, and it undermines the veracity of other allusions to non-fictional entities.

This destabilization is pertinent to the examination of language and script usage in the novel for two reasons. First, as already suggested, 'cultural differentiation' operates along the same lines as linguistic and polygraphic play.

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<sup>96</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 5: 160-1.

<sup>97</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 6: 272.

<sup>98</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 3: 210-6.

Second, as Strecher notes in his analysis of *Kafka on the Shore* and *1Q84*, a major stylistic and thematic feature of Murakami's writing is that he "places words and language first, and existence second, thus positing for language a clearly constitutive function, that is, the power to create new realities."<sup>99</sup> Strecher's reading of the novel is that what brings about the existence of the surreal world '1Q84' is in fact its declaration and depiction by Tengo and Fuka-Eri, two characters who can be understood as metaphorically representing written language and spoken language respectively.<sup>100</sup> The resultant juxtaposition of Tengo's and Fuka-Eri's dialogue and language usage results in several of *1Q84*'s most illuminating polygraphic contrasts, in that they lay bare auxiliary multiliteral semiosis's ties to convention and expectation.

While Tengo rewrites the manuscript of *Air Chrysalis* and interacts with Fuka-Eri, he continually observes, clarifies, and adjusts her language usage, even if only privately in his own mind as revealed to readers through the narration. Tengo rewords or expands her unnaturally clipped statements, but very often he simply repeats a phrase uttered by Fuka-Eri with the use of additional *kanji*. For example, after Tengo lengthens a question she poses to him, he then also restates her sentence: “かたちにはキヨウミはない *katachi ni wa kyōmi wa nai* ([I'm] not interested in form)” as “かたちには興味がない *katachi ni ha kyōmi ga nai* ([I'm] not interested in form).”<sup>101</sup>

Fuka-Eri's speech patterns are comparable to those of Nakata in *Kafka on the Shore*. Her dialogue is marked for its brevity, its preference for *katakana* over *kanji*, and its occasional inclusion of non-standard phonemic representations of words, e.g.

<sup>99</sup> Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*, 28.

<sup>100</sup> Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*, 63.

<sup>101</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 1: 113-14.

“ニチヨウ *nichō* (Sunday)” as compared to ‘日曜 *nichiyō* (Sunday).’<sup>102</sup> Clearly perceptible to the reader visually, these qualities are acknowledged within the text by Tengo, who is keenly aware of Fuka-Eri’s terseness and lack of punctuation.<sup>103</sup> When Tengo encounters a rare instance of her personal handwriting, he remarks directly on the prominent lack of *kanji*, indentation, etc.<sup>104</sup> In her own assessment, Fuka-Eri identifies herself as sharing something fundamental in common with members of more oral cultures, as opposed to highly literate ones. Her exact phrasing is: “ジをもたない *ji o motanai* (do not have characters/letters)” with *katakana* ‘ジ *ji*’ in place of *kanji* ‘字 *ji*.’<sup>105</sup>

This background information characterizes Fuka-Eri and throws two key shifts in her dialogue into exceedingly bizarre relief. Though superficially quite distinct both from one another and from previous Roman character implementations, the following two excerpts shed light on the underlying multilingual and polygraphic mechanisms at work. Moreover, they are once again tied to cultural/literary allusions. The first comes from a conversation between Fuka-Eri and Tengo about her musical preferences and most specifically the works of Bach.

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<sup>102</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 1: 125. This instance displays *katakana* in place of *kanji* and also indicates a variation in pronunciation with a small ‘ヨ (*yo*).’ See also Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*, 140.

<sup>103</sup> E.g. Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 174, 335.

<sup>104</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 5: 370. The segment is even further set off to the reader by its being reproduced on the page with horizontal character orientation in stark contrast to the main text’s vertical orientation.

<sup>105</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 2: 338.

「とくにお気に入りものは？」

「BWV 846 から BWV 893」

天吾はしばらく考えてから言った。「『平均律クラヴィーア曲集』。第一巻と第二巻」

「そう」

「どうして番号で答えるの？」

「そのほうがおぼえやすい」

『平均律クラヴィーア曲集』は数学者にとって、まさに天上の音楽である。十二音階すべてを均等に使って、長調と短調でそれぞれに前奏曲とフーガが作られている。全部で二十四曲、第一巻と第二巻をあわせて四十八曲。完全なサイクルがそこに形成される。

「ほかには？」

「BWV 244」

BWV 244 が何だったか、天吾にはすぐに思いだせなかった番号に覚えはあるのだが、曲名が浮かんでこない。ふかえりは歌い始めた。

Buß' und Reu'

Buß' und Reu'

Knirscht das Sündenherz entzwei

Buß' und Reu'

Buß' und Reu'

Knirscht das Sündenherz entzwei

Knirscht das Sündenherz entzwei

Buß' und Reu'

Buß' und Reu'

Knirscht das Sündenherz entzwei

Buß' und Reu'

Knirscht das Sündenherz entzwei

Daß die Tropfen meiner Zähren

Angenehme Spezerei

Treuer Jesu, dir gebären.

“Anything in particular?”

“BWV 846 to BWV 893.”

“Tengo mulled that one over. “*The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Books I and II.”

“Yes.”

“Why did you answer with the BWV numbers?”

“They’re easier to remember.”

*The Well-Tempered Clavier* was truly heavenly music for mathematicians. It was composed of prelude and fugue pairs in major and minor keys using all twelve tones of the scale, twenty-four pieces per book, forty-eight pieces in all, comprising a perfect cycle.

“How about other works?” Tengo asked.

“BWV 244.”

Tengo could not immediately recall which work of Bach’s had a BWV number of 244. Fuka-Eri began to sing.

Buß und Reu'

Buß und Reu' [...].

<sup>106</sup> Murakami, 1Q84, vol. 2: 124-6; Murakami, 1Q84, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 295-6. I have abbreviated Rubin’s translation following the pertinent shift.

As an extended shift into German, this example is considerably different in nature from the English alphabet transplantations and *faux* code-switches thus far considered. I have observed that various instances of Roman character English are included and presented as elements of the Japanese text that are meant to be read and processed intralinguistically as one processes through the novel. However, the same generalization cannot be applied in this case.

The average reader of contemporary Japanese can be presumed to have less familiarity with German than with English, if for no other reason than that English is a compulsory subject in the state-mandated education curriculum in Japan, whereas German is far less likely to be available for study until higher levels of education.<sup>107</sup> Fuka-Eri's song, therefore, appears to be a more purely ornamental usage of both language and script, rather than one with discursive communicative intent. Despite being an extended shift, it is not required that one 'read' the segment in a discursive sense for it to fulfill its function. Indeed, I would submit that the passage's characterizational opacity is more likely to be lost upon competently biliterate readers of Japanese and German, as the passage works toward highlighting Fuka-Eri's unique and otherworldly position in relation to language, memory, and the written word.

I would also point out that the shift is accompanied by the use of script features that are customary to German but that are not shared with Japanese or Japanese-English conventions of Roman character usage, such as the 'sharp S' grapheme (ß) and umlaut diacritic. Two emblematic effects are thereby simultaneously achieved. First, the passage is rendered less linguistically accessible

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. This disproportionate circumstance comes through even in the fiction of *Norwegian Wood*. Watanabe and Midori have a more advanced conversation about the function of English present and past subjunctive, while Watanabe's German studies at the university level apparently include learning more basic irregular verbs. Murakami, *Norurwei*, vol. 2: 63, 210.

and more visually ornamental for a majority of readers. Second, and more intriguing from a multilateral perspective, is the fact that Fuka-Eri abides here by written conventions of German orthography, capitalization, and punctuation far more faithfully than she ever does equivalent conventions of written Japanese.

Immediately following her musical outburst, Fuka-Eri is unable to recall the lyrics that she produced. Yet Tengo is astounded with the impeccability of her German pronunciation, if not quite with her singing ability. Orthographic conformity, therefore, in this case emblematically reemphasizes the oral precision of Fuka-Eri's spoken German.

A similar manifestation appears several chapters later and presents a revealing counterpoint. In Chapter 20 of the second volume, Fuka-Eri and Tengo discuss literature and their conversation eventually gives rise to the following exchange.

「ききたいところをいってみて」  
 天吾は『平家物語』にどんなエピソードがあつたか思い出してみ  
 た。なにしろ長い物語だし、エピソードは無数にある「壇ノ浦の  
 合戦」と天吾は適当に言った。  
 ふかえりは二十秒ばかり黙って神経を集中していた。それから暗  
 唱を始めた。

源氏のつはものども、すでに平家の舟に乗り移りければ  
 水手・梶取ども、射殺され、切り殺されて

舟をなほすに及ばず、舟底に倒れ臥しけり。

新中納言知盛卿、小舟に乗って、御所の御舟に参り

「世の中は今ほかうと見えてさうらふ。見苦しからんものども  
 みな海へ入れさせ給へ」とて、ともへに走りまはり、掃いたり、  
 のごうたり

塵ひろひ、手づから掃除せられけり。

女房たち、「中納言どの戦はいかにや、いかに」と口々に問ひ給  
 へば

「めづらしき東男をこそ、ごらんせられさうらはんずらめ」とて  
 からからと笑ひ給へば、「なんでうのただいまのたはぶれぞや」  
 とて

こゑこゑにをめき叫び給ひけり。

「…」

“Tell me what you want to hear.”

Tengo tried to recall some episodes from *The Tale of the Heike*. It was a long book, with an endless number of stories. Off the top of his head, Tengo name “The Battle of Dan-no-ura.”

Fuka-Eri took some twenty seconds to collect her thoughts in silence. Then she began to chant a decisive part of the final sea battle in the original verse.

The Genji warriors had boarded the Heike ships to find  
 The sailors and helmsmen pierced by arrows or slashed by swords,  
 Their corpses lying in the bilge, leaving no one to steer.  
 Aboard a small boat, New Middle Counselor Tomomori  
 Approached the Imperial Ship and said:  
 “And so it seems to have come to this.  
 Heave everything unsightly into the ocean.”  
 He ran from stem to stern, sweeping, scrubbing,  
 Gathering litter, cleaning everything with his own hands.  
 The ladies-in-waiting asked, “How goes the battle, Counselor?”  
 “Soon you will behold those marvelous men of the east,”  
 He replied with caustic laughter.  
 “How dare you jest at a time list this?” the women cried.  
 [...].

<sup>108</sup> Murakami, 1Q84, vol. 2: 235-6. N.b. This short extract suffices for illustrative purposes, but the deliberately lengthy recitation continues until page 238. Murakami, 1Q84, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 364-5.



Though less readily apparent in the English translation due to limitations of representation, the Japanese text displays a shift that is analogous to the previous example.<sup>109</sup> As the excerpt indicates, Fuka-Eri's recitation is from a particular episode of *The Tale of the Heike*, the epic record of the twelfth-century Genpei War, and its inclusion in this manner as part of the text of 1Q84 results in several emblematic effects.

First, the recitation produces a sharp linguistic contrast with a shift from Modern Japanese to archaic, Classical Japanese lexical and grammatical forms. Moreover, a script shift accompanies this linguistic shift. The quotation makes use of the 'historical kana system (歴史的仮名遣い *rekishi-teki kana-zukai*)' which was employed in Japanese up until the writing reforms of the period following the second World War.<sup>110</sup> Historical *kana* differs from contemporary convention in various important respects, several of which are directly observable within Fuka-Eri's speech. For instance, one sees the distinctions in *h*-row *kana* usage and long sound representation – '笑ひ (cf. Modern 笑い *warai* 'laugh, smile'),' and 'さうらふ (cf. そうろ う *sōrō* 'to be, to do [archaism]')' – as well as the phonetic character “𑄎 (*we > e*)” which is no longer frequently employed in Modern Japanese.

In theory, this linguistic + corresponding script shift is less inhibiting and more discursively accessible for a Modern Japanese readership than the German transplantation, given the study of Classical Japanese as part of school curricula. Nonetheless, it is much akin to the preceding example in terms of emblematic

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<sup>109</sup> The English does attempt to mark and set off the shift in its own way with supplementary editorialization not included in the Japanese: “a decisive part of the final sea battle in the original verse.”

<sup>110</sup> An English-language introduction to Japanese historical *kana* and Classical Japanese orthography + pronunciation can be found in Haruo Shirane, *Classical Japanese: A Grammar* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), “Chapter 2,” 18-23.

functionality. At a basic level, the variation impacts possible perceptions of the recited passage in the same way a shift from contemporary to archaic forms might in another language or work. Yet, what is again most striking is the stark contrast between this quotation and the majority of Fuka-Eri's dialogue in terms of fidelity to orthographic convention. Her speech here not only uses archaic forms, it is presented as more or less abiding by norms of Classical Japanese writing convention.<sup>111</sup>

Tengo's subsequent response provides additional clarification about the multilateral emblematicism at this point in the text.

Listening to her recite the story with his eyes closed, Tengo felt as though he were hearing it the traditional way, chanted by a blind priest accompanying himself on the lute, and he was reminded anew that *The Tale of the Heike* was a narrative poem handed down through an oral tradition. Fuka-Eri's normal style of speaking was extremely flat, lacking almost all accent and intonation, but when she launched into the tale, her voice became startlingly strong, rich, and colorful, as if something had taken possession of her.<sup>112</sup>

Still further comparison is prompted between these two instances, because the reader is eventually provided with the following interpolation hundreds of pages after Fuka-Eri's singing in German.

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<sup>111</sup> That is to say, not historical norms of writing but norms of convention accepted and perceived in a contemporary context based on normalized presentations in modern editions of classical works, etc.

<sup>112</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 366.

113

罪の悲しみは  
 悔いの心を千々にさいなむ  
 我が涙のしづく  
 うるわしき香水となりて  
 まことなるイエスよ  
 御身に注がんことを

それが、先日ふかえりが歌った『マタイ受難  
 曲』のありあの歌詞の内容だった。天吾は氣  
 になったので、その翌日うちにあるレコード  
 を聴き返して訳詞を調べた。

Contrition and repentance  
 Tear the sinful heart in two.  
 O that my teardrops may be  
 A sweet balm unto thee  
 Faithful Jesus.

This was the meaning of the aria from the *St. Matthew Passion* that Fuka-Eri had sung the other day. He had wondered about it and listened again to his recording at home, looking up the words in translation.

If not entirely archaicized, the grammatical forms and vocabulary selected appertain to a register that is decidedly more formalized than the bulk of the text. The words of Christ – “世界のどこにあっても、この福音の伝えらるるところには、[...] (Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world [...])” – are presented twice as dialogue in this same fashion, and such classicizing even spills out into the main body text of the novel as the chapter concludes.<sup>114</sup> When viewed alongside English language insertions and seemingly conventional Japanese portions of the text, these related examples provide insight into the novel’s polygraphy as it relates to perceptions of culture and language.

<sup>113</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 3: 123-4; Murakami, *1Q84*, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 517-18.

<sup>114</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 3: 124-5; Murakami, *1Q84*, trans. Rubin and Gabriel, 518.

At the risk of possible oversimplification, what I have highlighted is that cultural, linguistic, and script differentiation seen in various components of the text (segments, allusions, words, morphemes, etc.) are themselves governed by their relative positioning on two interdependent, and yet highly subjective, conceptual axes. These are: alterity/familiarity and congruity/incongruity.

On one hand, items display markedly different levels of linguistic, graphic, and cultural accessibility, and this range is exploited to achieve destabilizing and disorienting effects. Linguistically, the novel's Modern and Classical Japanese, English, German, etc., diverge in this respect with different sections offering different levels of familiarity for different readers. The degree of accessibility is impossible to delineate in a universal way, and it logically fluctuates depending on context and the background of the individual reader. The same assertion can be applied to the novel's script usage and multicultural references, provided precisely the same caveat. That is to say, different scripts and references possess purposefully differing degrees of familiarity/alterity. *Kanji*, Roman characters, and all the linguistically discursive symbols of the novel exhibit mutable levels of decipherability for different readers, just as literary allusions and references to musical artists must vary with regard to recognizability. Rather than an entrenched set of binaries – (in)comprehensible, (in)decipherable, and (un)familiar – Murakami's fiction (and perhaps especially *1Q84*) deliberately plays up and down these continua and seeks to derive flexible meaning from subjective variability. Yet this does not imply that anything goes, as it were.

These features are bound to the equally subjective conceptual axis of applicative appropriateness. If it is impossible to formulate a universal paradigm with regard to familiarity/alterity, the difficulties are only amplified for determining graphic

congruousness. A modified version of Hans Robert Jauss's reception-theory concept of the 'horizon of expectation' is well-suited to a description of multiliteral semiotic response.<sup>115</sup> Just as a reader brings their own prior knowledge of literary history and experience with genre to a text as a whole, they bring with them pre-existing expectations regarding script and orthography. These expectations are informed by conventions, precedents, and associations. Conformity to or deviation from said expectations influences the *metalinguistic* perception a reader attributes to a given word in a particular script. How one interprets a word is affected. Variable appropriateness in terms of this *metaperception* lies at the heart of the examples highlighted in this case study of Murakami's multiliteral style. (In)congruity impacts the presentation and reception of the texts' multilingual variation and transplantation. It also impacts the novels' cross-cultural allusions with disproportionate degrees of irony, as well as their script implementation.

Suter suggests in reference to his 1985 novel 世界の終りとハードボイルド・ワンダーランド *Sekai no owari to hādo-boirudo wandārando* (*Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum 1991) that Murakami frequently relies on the

narrative strategy [...] known as metalepsis, a confusion between different levels of reality within a fiction, and it is often used to problematize the supposedly clear-cut separation between the fictional reality of the text and 'our' reality outside the page.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Brighton, England: The Harvester Press, 1982).

<sup>116</sup> Rebecca Suter, "Critical Engagement through Fantasy in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*," in *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*, eds. Matthew Strecher and Paul L. Thomas (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2016), 59-71 (p. 69); Haruki Murakami, *Sekai no owari to hādo-boirudo wandārando* (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 1985); *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (London, England: Vintage, 2003).

Similar disorientation is achieved in the novels I have considered here through the stretching and crossing of linguistic, cultural, and script convention boundaries.

By way of conclusion, I wish to offer a final illustrative example that appears in various places in *1Q84* and epitomizes Murakami's destabilizing stylistic tendencies. It first appears prior even to the table of contents page in the first volume of the novel, where the reader is greeted with an epigraph:

ここは見世物の世界  
 何から何までつくりもの  
 でも私を信じてくれたなら  
 すべてが本物になる

[This is a world of spectacle  
 anything and everything is an imitation  
 but if you believed in me  
 Everything would become real.]<sup>117</sup>

Directly beneath which one finds the English quotation,

It's a Barnum and Bailey world,  
 Just as phony as it can be,  
 But it wouldn't be make-believe  
 If you believed in me

This is attributed to "Billy Rose, E. Y. Harburg & Harold Arlen," and the lyrics are referenced as from the jazz standard "It's Only a Paper Moon." In addition to introducing the recurring motif of the moon, this sets the tone for the surreal setting and romantic aspects of the story.

Despite being linguistically and orthographically conventional Japanese and English, there is a subtle destabilization introduced by the sense-for-sense rather than stringently literal parallel translation. Later, the Leader sings lyrics from the song in transplanted *rōmaji* English and then translates them into Japanese, after which Aomame provides the title of the tune in *katakana* English – “イッツ・オンリー・

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<sup>117</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 1: np. This translation is my own.

ア・ペーパームーン *ittsu onrī a pēpāmūn.*<sup>118</sup> Finally, at the very close of the novel, Aomame recalls the lyrics in unaccompanied, conventional Japanese, and this provides something of a thematic bookend for the novel.<sup>119</sup> The song and allusion crop up and play across language and script in the text as suits the particular context and purpose.

In Chapter 3, I addressed how the shared acknowledgement of plurality imbues Japanese scripts and script choice with emblematic values that are tinged by a plethora of different cultural, historical, and linguistic associations. In this chapter, I presented specific narrative examples where conformity to expectations and strategic deviation produced auxiliary semiotic meaning, and in particular conveyed paralinguistic aspects of perspective and interpersonal discourse that are communicatively significant, such as degrees of comprehension and ironic tone. In my subsequent final chapter, I advance my argument for the associative and emotively-based signifying potential of multiliteralism by placing my two case study contexts and corpora into comparative juxtaposition.

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<sup>118</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 4: 12.

<sup>119</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 6: 375.

## Chapter 5

### Contributive Literature: Transcribing Perceptions of Voice

In the preceding four chapters I have assessed two highly divergent polygraphic writing contexts and literary corpora in turn while remaining alert to their non-equivalences and intrinsic distinctiveness. My overriding purpose has been to lay the groundwork for an analytical approach to the contributive narratological potential of multiliteral semiosis, and to develop this in a way that is restrained and less “ideologically programmed in favor of a universal uniformity in aesthetic values.”<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I unfold that approach by drawing my case studies into apposition in order to pose questions about the phenomenon’s underlying functionality. I perform a cross-cultural, transhistorical comparison of multiliteral signification encountered in Old English and Modern Japanese narrative writings, and I appraise structural correspondences amidst tremendous contrast. In so doing, I will identify multiliteralism’s narratorial connections to voice and textual presence.

First, in Section 5.1, I advance the parallel considerations of previous chapters and interrogate central contrasts between my contexts and corpora with regard to the interrelated (*para-*)textual issues of: authority and voice, audience reception, and text content/agenda.<sup>2</sup> This comparison of significant disparities leads me to carve out three integral premises of polygraphic writing which are contingent upon reception aesthetics and highly relevant to narrative voice. Specifically, I present the recognition of graphic mediation and the experiential priming of a text’s readership as two key features that play into emblematic signification. Thirdly, the

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Palencia-Roth, “Contrastive Literature,” *Journal for the Comparative Study of Civilizations* 2 (1997): 21-30 (p. 29).

<sup>2</sup> By ‘*paratextual*,’ I refer to those facets of a text which Gérard Genette suggests serve to locate and identify it for a reader, such as the Author, Preface, etc. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane Lewin (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997).



comparison reveals that multiliteralism is also culturally and individually subjective in the sense that its semiotic use is not intrinsically bound to one particular, universal mode of application which governs its associative and emotive signifying potential in different settings.

In Section 5.2, I build upon the central premises outlined in 5.1 through a practical and theoretical contrast of the case study texts' specific implementations. Observing and extrapolating from the texts' manipulation of conceptual boundaries, I draw up a rudimentary typology for approaching multiliteral signification. I first differentiate (un)perceived linguistic variation from (un)perceived script variation while acknowledging their frequent concurrence. After then recognizing and allowing for dynamic elements of culture, context, and content, I add nuance to this paradigm by incorporating the factors of reader expectation and perception.

Based on the critical conclusions drawn from this central comparison, I conclude in Section 5.3 by arguing that polygraphic variety and multiliteral semiosis offer intriguing narrative opportunities for *paralinguistic* signification and perspective configuration. Partially akin to 'external,' paratextual factors that can influence reader-response, multiliteral signification merits critical enquiry and evaluation as it possesses the capacity to influence 'internally' the perceptions of specific words and speakers. Through an exploration of narratorial level and textual presence alongside notions of 'literal' diegesis and mimesis, I ultimately make the case for narrative multiliteralism's utility as a semiotic device of *meta-commentary*.

## 5.1 Authority, Audience, and Agenda

In addition to the cultural and linguistic gulfs that distinguish Old English writing practice from that of Modern Japanese, there are particular discrepancies between the works of Haruki Murakami and Cynewulf that are tied to authority and voice, audience reception, and text content/agenda. I begin my comparison in this chapter with an exploration of specifically these aspects, because the incongruities that are revealed here, as well as the resonances, relate to and impact the specific polygraphic implementations witnessed in the case study texts.

As a popularly read and widely translated contemporary writer, Murakami has achieved and maintains a degree of international literary celebrity. Festivities and excitement from fans now habitually accompany the publication of a new work,<sup>3</sup> and the so-called *Murakami phenomenon's* scope of influence can be seen to extend even further in the Japanese language market than in the Anglophone sphere due to his prolific work as a translator of English language (and in particular American) literature.<sup>4</sup> Increasingly, the authorial name and figure of 'Murakami' loom large over his body of work and possess a high degree of brand marketability in a highly literate contemporary society.

By stark comparison, Cynewulf is something of a rarity, being a named poet in a largely anonymous tradition during an era of developing literacy. Indeed, in many ways it is hardly appropriate to speak of Cynewulf in at all similar terms of figural authority, owing to certain fundamental distinctions between conceptions of

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<sup>3</sup> See for example a news article reporting on the initial release of Murakami's 2017 novel 騎士団長殺し *Kishidanchō goroshi* (*Killing Commendatore*, 2018, trans. J. Philip Gabriel and Ted Goossen): "Murakami Haruki-san shinsaku 24-ka hatsubai fan ya shoten, omatsuri mūdo," *Nihon keizai shinbun*, February 7, 2017, accessed April 2018. [https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXLASDG17H0E\\_X10C17A2CR0000/](https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXLASDG17H0E_X10C17A2CR0000/).

<sup>4</sup> Jay Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (London, England: Harvill Press, 2002), 74-7.

'authority' in medieval contexts and other literary environments.<sup>5</sup> While Cynewulf does internally reveal himself as the one responsible for the verse, and "at least some Anglo-Saxon readers might have recognized the embodied historical figure who is apparently being referenced by the name," "it seems to be the case that nothing in the Cynewulfian poems depends upon a reader's recognition of Cynewulf as an authorizing figure."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, as argued in Chapter 2, his position as an intranarrative poetic conceit and identifiable narratorial voice is of central thematic significance. The persona of the poet figure and the polygraphic inclusion of his name in runes not only allow for identificatory engagement with the texts and their message, they also encourage participatory involvement and reflection on the part of a reader.

Conversely, a convincing case can be made that the 'Murakami' persona, or more precisely the perception(s) held about the author by his various readerships, can similarly be seen to have a great effect upon the reading and interpretation of his work. In conventional Foucauldian terms of "author-function,"<sup>7</sup> the name 'Murakami' itself has come to be an impactful *paratextual* entity that, from a strictly utilitarian perspective, irrefutably helps to market and sell books. "[Murakami] has been called the first writer completely at home with the elements of American popular culture that permeate present-day Japan,"<sup>8</sup> but particularly in light of the conflicting and deliberately fallacious instances which I highlighted in the Chapter 4, it is hardly judicious to ascribe consistency to Murakami as a candid and reliably forthright

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<sup>5</sup> On the idea of authority being inherently connected with the text and its message more so than individual creative figures, see Alistair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, England: 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse* (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London, England: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 46.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113-38.

<sup>8</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 17.

external authoritative presence. Moreover, in addition to indexing his various works and translations, the bilingual writer figure of Murakami plays an important intratextual role, functioning as an anchoring reference point on which readers may pin associative or conceptual responsibility for his *Translation-ese* writing style and the many code-switches, transplantations, calques, multicultural allusions, and other foreign language and literary references his works display.<sup>9</sup> This implied/inferred internal 'speaking' figure is tied to what I will propose as a first initial premise of multiliteral signification's underlying functionality – perceived mediation.

Tensions between script choice come into existence as a result of readers' acknowledgment of script plurality and deliberation. Emblematic values that stem from and are attached to these tensions and graphic distinctions can thus be created by readers while decoding a text. As one processes and extracts linguistic content from the written symbols, visible multiplicity compels the reader to recognize and apply judgment as to *why* one script or symbol has been used in a given instance as opposed to another, perhaps equally viable, graphic alternative.

Thus, there is a two-step process in operation: the perception of deliberation and mediation with regard to graphic selection on the side of literary production, and the simultaneous or subsequent assigning of semiotic value to this differentiation. This is not to suggest that it is the responsibility of individual readers to puzzle out the sole and definitively correct symbolic signification which corresponds to original authorial intent. Strictly speaking, certain readers may ignore graphic deliberation altogether, and conscious intent on the part of a text's producer(s) is not even

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<sup>9</sup> Recall that in Chapters 3 and 4 the aesthetic effects achieved by Murakami's inclusion of biographical, historical, crosslingual, and multicultural information and references were deemed not all to be simply authentic manifestations of modern cosmopolitanism and personal experience. Instead, they are often destabilizing and alienating in ways that may be identified as postmodern, transnational, and even *post-ironic*. Perceived personal and societal hypocrisies are both confronted directly and gestured at thematically in dreamlike fashion.

required for perception of mediation and value attribution to occur. Rather, as readers perceive a given non-equivalency and ascribe some manner of semiotic significance to it, they are also compelled to identify a narratorial voice/perspective on whom to pin responsibility for such textual mediation.

To build on this first conceptual premise and unpack these issues of mediation and narratorial status, it is necessary to take stock of a text's potential *narratees*, not simply to understand distinctive aspects of contextual setting and audience, but also to grasp the relationships these bear to script use, convention, and emblematic value ascription. Here again, the difference in perspective regarding the scripts employed by the polygraphic Old English and Modern Japanese texts of this study proves enlightening and allows for a deeper probing into questions of interactive meaning creation.

Simply by virtue of their having been composed in the vernacular and in an Old English verse style with ties to Germanic oral performative traditions, it is rational to deduce that the initial audience(s) for the Cynewulf poems as they survive would undeniably have been readers of Old English, and in all conceivable likelihood, speakers for whom Old English was a primary language. By extension, an ideal viewer of the polygraphic passages must necessarily also have been a literate individual trained to be a reader of the language and also one possessing sufficient familiarity with runic forms and names.

As analyzed in Chapter 2, these deductions stem from the fact that the Cynewulf runes are not merely used ornamentally as visual embellishment, nor as a simplistic cypher that a reader is meant to transliterate mentally in order to reveal the

name of the poet figure. Despite their later period manuscript context,<sup>10</sup> the runes retain discursive linguistic functionality and contribute to the alliteration, scansion, and narrative of the verse lines in which they appear. These assertions merit recapitulation for the insight and reminder they provide of how a reader of Old English in pre-Conquest England might have been inclined to view, interpret, and associatively/emotively respond to the emblematicism produced by such deliberate graphic variation.

Multiliteral signification is liable to be misconstrued or missed entirely if viewed from an unchecked 'external' perspective, and interpretations of the Cynewulf runes seem apt to reveal very nearly as much about an individual critic's background and argumentative trajectory as they do about the emblematicism of the text(s) in question. Even in groundbreaking research investigations of textual runes, Victoria Symons points out a troubling scholarly tendency,

to be biased heavily towards, on the one hand, treating them as literary constructs divorced from the manuscript page (with the runes interesting but marginal details) or, on the other, towards examining the runes alone and studying them for their linguistic and historical significance with little regard for the textual contexts in which they appear.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps by no great mystery, this polarization of critical opinion unmistakably parallels customary and firmly entrenched disciplinary divisions – English literary studies on the one hand; and historical, linguistic, runological, technological research on the other.

Critically helpful as these discrete methodologies are, to some degree they embody 'external' perspectives that remain singularly limited in their individual capacities for engagement with what a text semiotically achieves or might have

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to Chapter 1, see in particular René Derolez, "Epigraphic Versus Manuscript Runes: One or Two Worlds?" *Academiae Analecta* 45.1 (1983): 69-93.

<sup>11</sup> Victoria Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Berlin, Germany and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2016), 11.

semiotically achieved for a particular audience. Far too many moving parts are involved. If one's aim is to develop a satisfyingly credible, retrospective interpretation of what emblematic value(s) may have existed (e.g. for Cynewulf, for the compilers of the Exeter and Vercelli Books, for a pre-Conquest era reader of Old English verse, etc.), manifold approaches and insights should be considered collectively. As far as is possible, one needs a nuanced conceptual approximation of an 'internal' reader perspective, not only with regard to the specific works in question, but also to the general phenomenon of multiscryptality in the broader context.

For writers and readers of Old English during and shortly subsequent to the proposed times of the manuscripts' production, runes would not have possessed the same applicative status as the Latin alphabet. Nevertheless, their productive usage within the poems demonstrates a sufficient degree of familiarity to imply their persistence as a remembered cultural artifact. I reviewed the case in Chapter 2 that as an ideological entity, distinctiveness that the runes would have exhibited for a reader during the period can potentially be attributed to literateness itself and a type of perceived historicity rather than purely cryptic exoticism. Plausibly, such associations may have come conceptually bundled with complex notions of cultural heritage and alterity, scripture and theology, and identity management. Even further, speculation as to how individual responses would in all likelihood have differed for readers in diverse areas – e.g. the heavily Scandinavian-influenced Danelaw region as compared with Wessex and further south, or, indeed, between different religious foundations prior to the Benedictine reform – drives home the point that precise emblematic value(s) not only vary contextually from instance to instance, but also stem from and draw upon readers' own experiential and emotive associations with the scripts in question.

This is the same critical roadblock which in Chapter 3 impeded my production of a comprehensive outline detailing all the semiotic specificities of each script's usage in the linguistic context of Modern Japanese. Much in the same way that theories of reader-response afford 'the Reader' participatory agency in textual meaning creation, different readers can reasonably be expected to experience their own unique semiotic responses to different scripts in concurrent use. Emblematic value ascription, like meaning creation, necessarily stems from these personal and subjective responses. That said, the subjective perceptions of the various scripts in use are by no means wholly arbitrary. Quite to the contrary, an individual's prior experiential interaction with the different scripts in question shapes – if not effectively governs – the types of responses they are likely to have in a given reading context. By extension, readers with similar backgrounds and linguistic experiences can logically be expected to share broadly similar multiscriptal perspectives, and it is possible to carve out certain general associative tendencies.<sup>12</sup>

Also as outlined in Chapter 3, there are numerous frequent and commonly recurring associations attached to the four scripts employed in Modern Japanese.<sup>13</sup> The continuum of interpretative perspectives illustrates diverse aspects of alterity, ownership, maturity, and aesthetic value. There are a spectrum of different possible associations which overlap with, play off, and contradict one another. Viewed alongside the comparatively more homogenous Old English literary context, the variation is perhaps of a different order. Yet, I would suggest that possible emblematic values in either context can, at their core, be analogously grasped as

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<sup>12</sup> In theory, the more homogenous a literary culture is determined to be, the easier these associative tendencies would be to ascertain.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to Chapter 3 where conventions of script usage and common associations are considered in greater detail, see also Wes Robertson, "Orthography, Foreigners, and Fluency: Indexicality and Script Selection in Japanese Manga," *Japanese Studies* 35.2 (2015): 205-22.



emanating from shared awarenesses of historical precedents, conventions of usage, and inherited associations.

This observation comprises a second foundational premise for narrative multiliteralism and its critical interpretation – a text's audience and their experiential background(s) effectively determine the range of associative/emotive reactions and interpretative responses to polygraphic emblematicism. It thereby becomes possible to gauge and theorize general ascriptive proclivities by mentally taking into account the nature and discernible features of a text's inferable or observable audience, assuming of course that the critical objective is to detect what standard or mainstream semiotic responses may be or might have been in a particular context.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond striving for detached objectivity and guarding against potential biases deriving from one's own ideological conditioning (cultural, temporal, linguistic), appreciating a text's multiliteral signification obliges us to 'step into the shoes' of an audience in a multifaceted way, and this is particularly worth reemphasizing given the nature of my two case studies. On either side, it can be all too easy for commentators to slip into alarmingly similar over-exoticizing and essentializing thought patterns or argumentative modes when approaching these texts from an 'external' perspective and not on the texts' own terms.

A third crucial distinction between the works of Cynewulf and Murakami which is to be addressed is that of ideological frameworks and textual agenda. These aspects are difficult to extricate from the preceding issues of narratorial voice and audience perception, but textual purpose must be taken into account in order to grasp the import of specific instances of multiliteralism. As previously established,

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<sup>14</sup> While not my present purpose, it is no less fascinating to observe how audiences and individual readers with distinct perspectives (cultural, temporal, etc.) have responded to, variously interpreted, and even appropriated particular texts and their multiliteral aspects.

narrative context and linguistic conventions play semiotically contributory roles that are every bit as influential as individual perception and historical/cultural context.<sup>15</sup>

The writings of Cynewulf and Murakami could hardly be further apart at the very basic levels of genre, format, and ideological milieu. Not to undermine either's literary merit, a commercial reality distinguishes the case study corpora. Murakami's novels exist as mass-marketed products for a highly literate society in a way that the four Cynewulf poems, uniquely surviving in the Vercelli Book and Exeter Book manuscripts, did not when they were initially produced.<sup>16</sup> Murakami himself is not at all reticent about these consumerist circumstances, and he has been entirely forthcoming in interviews about his awareness of the contemporary medium and the effectively obligatory entertainment component of his works.<sup>17</sup> His flair for effective branding and successful marketing has even been sardonically praised by Masao Miyoshi who castigates *Norwegian Wood* as a "vacuous" love story whose "inanity must have been unapparent, however, to the more than four million people who bought the book [...]."<sup>18</sup>

"[A] smooth, popular item of consumption,"<sup>19</sup> Murakami's prose fiction is also intended for and interacted with by solitary and in all probability silent readers,

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<sup>15</sup> Recall not only the conventions of usage for each script in Modern Japanese, but also the glyphic distinction tenth-century English scribes often habitually maintained between continentally influenced English Caroline minuscule Roman characters for Latin writing and Anglo-Saxon minuscule for Old English. See Chapters 1 and 3; Mildred Budny, "Old English Poetry in its Material Context," in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, eds. Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: VU University Press, 1994), 19-44; Wes Robertson, "Orthography, Foreigners, and Fluency."

<sup>16</sup> Though if recited, their vernacular message could theoretically have been accessible to a substantial percentage of the population.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. John Wray, "Haruki Murakami, The Art of Fiction No. 182," *The Paris Review* 170 (2004), accessed October 2018, <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2/haruki-murakami-the-art-of-fiction-no-182-haruki-murakami>, where Murakami explains that in his view, modern authors have to compete any number of different contemporary pastimes.

<sup>18</sup> Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991), 235. Specifically, Miyoshi highlights the design savvy and market awareness shown in the glossy green and red dustjackets of *Norwegian Wood*'s publication prior to Christmas.

<sup>19</sup> Miyoshi, *Off Center*, 234.

whereas the same presuppositions cannot be made for the Cynewulf poems.<sup>20</sup>

Though composed in a captivating verse style with deep roots in performative traditions, the Cynewulf poems are explicitly didactic and are meant to be spiritually edifying for both author and audience. As argued in Chapter 2, moreover, the intranarrative conceit of the poet persona and the multiliteral runic signatures further this purpose by encouraging self-projection and accessible personal involvement with the texts' subject matter. The persona and signatures also graphically effect the conceptual incorporation of the poet figure and his audience into the grander, encompassing Old Testament and New Testament narratives of the Christian religious tradition.

For a reader of Modern Japanese interacting with the novels of Murakami, on the other hand, overarching effects of both style and theme are types of isolating alienation, reminiscent of postmodern literary trends and propensities.<sup>21</sup> An exceptional aspect of Murakami's writing, however, is that the alienating introspection stimulated by his fiction is not characterized by nihilism nor is it meant to express apathetic existential debilitation. Instead one finds *post-ironic* reaffirmation of the value of individualism and empowerment produced through deductive thought and personal judgement.<sup>22</sup> "Murakami challenges his readers to

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<sup>20</sup> On the likelihood that the majority of medieval reading was neither practically nor conceptually a silent act, see Chapter 1; Henry Chaytor, "The Medieval Reader and Textual Criticism," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 26 (1941-2): 49-56.

<sup>21</sup> Though my study is predominantly focused on the Japanese language texts and their contexts, Matthew Chozick has interestingly suggested that by virtue of complementary narratological features characteristic of Murakami's writing, similar thematic effects are achieved by his fiction in both Japanese and English-speaking contexts. I.e. Murakami's fiction is almost paradoxically "universally 'foreign,' while at the same time universally accessible." Matthew Chozick, "De-Exoticizing Haruki Murakami's Reception," *Comparative Literature Studies* 45.1 (2008): 62-73 (p. 64).

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Strecher views this as a fraught tension between one's 'individual narrative' and potentially subsuming societal, religious, etc. 'group narratives,' and he is not alone in highlighting a major thematic shift as beginning from Murakami's 1994-5 novel *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, 1997), wherein the protagonist's successful rescue of his wife and battery of his brother-in-law with a baseball bat represents "the signal from Murakami that some of his protagonists were about to drop their nice-guy facade and start kicking some

think for themselves and not simply and uncritically to accept the narrative offered by society or religion or the state, however 'mainstream' and uncontroversial it may appear to be."<sup>23</sup> Despite a lack of metanarrative, the texts do not present 'meaning' as entirely absent. Rather than having it spoon-fed to them, however, readers are left to their own devices and challenged to take responsibility for discerning and creating it themselves. It is precisely this outlook, as argued in Chapter 4 and touched on above, that is instilled into the texts' imagery, narratorial voices, and polygraphic strategies.

The point of this exposition of textual aims is not to attempt to make grandiose, and frankly unconvincing, overgeneralizations about the two author figures and their respective cultural milieux. Instead, what my critical juxtaposition foregrounds is a third principle of multilateral practice that brings this comparative project full circle. Rather than being bound to one specific textual format, genre, or ideological framework, multilateralism is instead simply a contextually dependent tool of auxiliary semiosis. Multilateral signification is not itself inherently characterized by such emblematic results as those which I have observed over the course of this study (alterity and inclusivity/exclusivity, ironic dissolution and integrative harmonization). Rather, it is a conventionalizable semiotic system that incorporates distinct emblematic values and has the potential to achieve dissimilar semiotic results in different contexts.

Through exploration of voice and reception in relation to both sets of corpus texts, it was possible in this section to lay out two related premises of polygraphic

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ass." Matthew Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (Minneapolis, MN and London, England: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 20. On this subject of transition 'from detachment to commitment', cf. Katsushi Kuronuma, "Detacchimento kara komittomento e," in *Murakami Haruki sutadīzu 04*, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Teruhiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō), 236-41.

<sup>23</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 246.

literary practice. First, perceptions of deliberation and mediation with regard to script selection by a reader were determined to be fundamentally important features which allow for emblematic signification. Second, I presented that appropriately grasping the nature, conventions, and experiential background of a text's inferred or observed readership (whether intended target audience or otherwise) was key to unlocking associative semiotic values that are tied to script selection and variation in polygraphic texts.

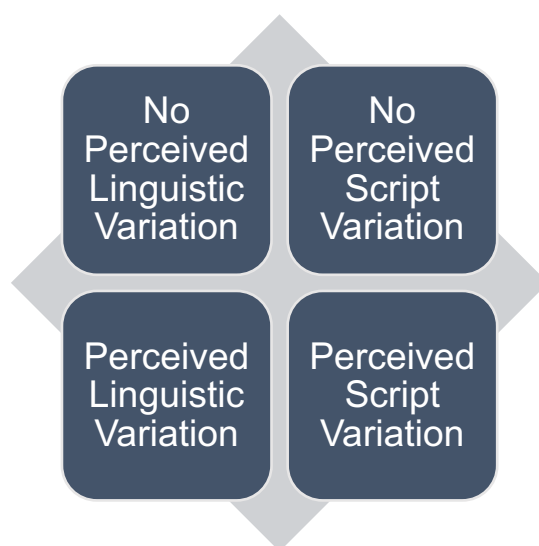
Finally, by considering the markedly differing genres and frameworks of Cynewulf's and Murakami's writings, a third important aspect of multiliteral practice was thrown into relief. I observed that multiliteral signification does not in and of itself exhibit an overarching applicative inclination that is independent from cultural context. Instead, it can work in distinct settings to underscore altogether dissimilar textual agendas through associative and emotive means. Moving forward now to an extrapolative and comparative analysis of the case study texts' specific polygraphic strategies, it is essential that all three premises be brought forward, because I shall observe how similar multiliteral and multilingual strategies can be employed to achieve altogether dissimilar aesthetic results.

## **5.2 Literal, Linguistic, and Cultural Conventionality and Nonconformity**

Perhaps more immediately recognizable in the case of Murakami's writing, the intertwined factors of cultural and language difference have proven no less relevant to the polygraphic analysis of the Cynewulf poems, and were identified at the end of Chapter 2 in the form of manipulable conceptual boundaries between oral : written, native : foreign, and conventional : anomalous. In response to these recurrences, I

will in this section analyze and structurally integrate linguistic concerns – such as the literary application of multilingualism and code-switching – alongside polygraphy as a guide for practical comparison and a supplement for theoretical exposition. Following this, I will also incorporate underlying notions of cultural perspective and subject matter into my discussion.

While acknowledging the high potential for reductivism, the observation of polygraphic practices from my parallel case studies makes it possible to draw up a preliminary conceptual matrix for approaching the linked storytelling phenomena of multilingualism and multiliteralism. Interpretation of specific instances in terms of the following paradigm provides further clarification, but it also reveals the binaries suggested by the diagram to be oversimplifying abstractions in need of supplementary qualification. The graphic's four quadrants should not in actual practice be interpreted as delimiting boundaries with fixed borders, but rather as archetypal poles on overlapping continua:



As depicted by the poles of this graphic, there are theoretically four principal expressive modes one can expect to see manifest in writing that employs multiple languages and/or legitimately discursive scripts:

- No perceived variation (e.g. a purely monolingual and monoscriptal text)

- Perceived linguistic but not script variation (e.g. code-mixing or transplantation)
- Perceived script variation but not linguistic variation
- Simultaneously perceived linguistic and script variation

Even presumably the least estranging of the four termini from a Modern English linguistic perspective – i.e. neither perceptible linguistic nor script variation – occasions comment and cautionary proviso. Concrete examples of this mode are the most generally available and form the bulk of each text in both case studies. In the Cynewulf texts, this amounts to the majority of words and Old English verse lines written in Roman characters, since ‘perceived script variation’ is pointedly not meant to refer to a discrepancy between a script and language of origination, but rather variation from expected convention in a given context. There is ‘no perceived variation,’ because historical context for the poems in the manuscripts stipulates an augmented version of the Latin alphabet to be the expected means for such a transcription of Old English.<sup>24</sup>

As opposed to two scripts displaying clearly dissimilar convention and hierarchical status, Murakami’s writing and the larger context of Modern Japanese letters in general provide a further degree of clarification in this respect. A certain broadening of perspective is necessitated by the simultaneous use of four distinct scripts with their own accepted linguistic roles. As stressed above, each of the four scripts consistently used in contemporary Japanese writing possesses its own usage conventions which govern implementation, and which in turn relate to associative values and ascriptions.

Use of any of the four scripts that abides by such accepted practices can therefore be deemed to fall under the heading of ‘no perceived script variation’ for a

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<sup>24</sup> This is not to suggest, however, a type of regulated or mandated orthographic rule, especially given other facets of medieval writing which appear inconsistent from a modern perspective (spelling, spacing, etc.).

reader (again, by far the vast majority of the case study novels' printed Japanese text). It is not strictly necessary that one of the scripts be singularly dominant or primary. Rather, what is most crucial in terms of multiliteral significance is the notion of perceptible conformity or nonconformity to accepted script conventions, along with any linguistic code-mixing or lack thereof. Complexities of language distinction and additional facets of linguistic variation must be further unpacked, but it will first prove useful to pivot and offer a clarification of the category 'perceived script variation, but no perceived linguistic variation.'

Whereas writing that displays neither type of variation is likely the most commonplace and familiar in a general sense to readers of Modern English, my investigative close readings of Chapters 2 and 4 make the classification of script variation without linguistic variation the next most readily accessible. A large percentage of the instances highlighted in both case studies align most closely with this notion.

First, it is worth revisiting the final four runes of *Christ II* in order to develop a point raised in Chapter 2 that can contribute definition to this theoretical elaboration:

Bīþ se ƿ scæcen  
 Eorþan frætwa. ƿ wæs longe  
 ƿ-flodum bilocen, lif-wynna dæl,  
 ƿ on foldan

The ƿ of treasures of earth  
 will have fled. ƿ share of life-joys was long  
 shut in by the ƿ-streams,  
 our ƿ on earth.<sup>25</sup>

To reiterate, it is significant to note that in this short space, the same Old English morphemic element of 'wynn (joy, delight, etc.)' appears in both scripts, first as the

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Bjork ed. and trans., *The Old English Poems of Cynewulf* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013), 26-7, ll. 804-7a. The translation provided here is Bjork's.



discrete word suggested by the ‘Ʒ (w)’ rune and then in Roman characters as part of the compound ‘lif-wynna.’ Likewise, one may encounter the appearance elsewhere of Latin alphabet renderings of the reasonably common Old English words suggested by ‘l (l) lagu (water, sea, etc.)’ and ‘ƿ (f) feoh (wealth, property, etc.)’ There is thus perceptible variation in terms of script selection, but not in terms of language change.<sup>26</sup>

This is similarly the case in many examples noted as part of my Japanese case study. The dialogic idiosyncrasies and verbal tics of *Kafka on the Shore*’s Nakata and *1Q84*’s Fuka-Eri offer themselves as illustrative recurring examples which align reasonably well with this categorization. In Nakata’s speech, for example, the words ‘金融論 *kin’yūron* (financial theory),’ ‘通産省 *tsūsanshō* (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry),’ and ‘補助 *hojo* (assistance, subsidy, aid, etc.)’ are all rendered in *katakana* rather than *kanji*.<sup>27</sup> The use of *katakana* is a multiliteral reflection of Nakata’s circumstances as an illiterate individual, and the script choice presents him to the reader as either irregularly pronouncing and/or perhaps not fully grasping the meanings of these words. There is visible graphic variation from typical script convention, but there is no ostensible linguistic shift or code-mixing perceived in these and other comparable instances.

Moving forward to offer a definition of the inverse possibility – i.e. perceived linguistic variation, but not script incongruity – necessitates a critical about-face. It also obliges me to begin redrawing, expanding, and thoroughly blurring the lines of the provisional paradigm offered above, because the categorizational demarcations

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<sup>26</sup> This is not to suggest, however, that the coding of morphemes is always necessarily equal in all respects. E.g. Speed of processing and accessibility would surely vary between runes and Roman or between *katakana* and *kanji*, etc. for different readers.

<sup>27</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Umibe no kafuka*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 2002), vol. 1: 96-7.

reveal themselves to be subjective divisions of what is better understood as an unbroken spectrum or as overlapping Venn diagrams of semiotic potential.

To proceed, I will review the example of Fuka-Eri's outburst of German singing found in *1Q84*.<sup>28</sup> This could be viewed as a straightforward linguistic shift; there is undeniably a code-switch from Japanese or a transplantation of German that is perceptible to the reader. Notwithstanding that departure, there is 'no perceived variation' in terms of script, because the passage conforms to expected conventions of transcribed Modern German. Yet as laid out in Chapter 4, this instance cannot reasonably be assumed to function as a linguistically accessible section for a majority of the Japanese text's readers. While a technically accurate and faithful depiction of language, it is not necessarily to be perceived nor processed in a discursive capacity. Rather, it serves more ornamental purposes of associative signification. The language and its visible transcription have semiotic, if not discursive meaning.<sup>29</sup>

Examples of linguistic code-mixing that are superficially similar but distinct in that they remain more discursively communicative for their readerships could include Latin interspersions into various vernacular medieval texts or comprehensible English intrusions into Modern Japanese. It is also not particularly vexing to conceive of examples which would exhibit both linguistic variation and nonconformity to expectations of script, and indeed, ones have been noted in passing during previous chapters – *Norwegian Wood*'s French language word depicted in *kanji* '阿美 *ami*

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<sup>28</sup> Haruki Murakami, *1Q84*, 6 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Shinchōsha, 2009-10), vol. 2: 124-6.

<sup>29</sup> By no means a one-for-one correspondence, one might be compelled to wonder if the ideological positioning towards the Hebrew language evidenced in Cynewulf's *Elene* is not also in somewhat of a similar conceptual vein or positioning as Murakami's use of German here. See Damian Fleming, "Rex regum et cyninga cyning: 'Speaking Hebrew' in Cynewulf's *Elene*," in *Old English Literature and the Old Testament*, eds. Michael Fox and Manish Sharma (Toronto, Canada, Buffalo, NY, and London England: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 229-52.

(friend)',<sup>30</sup> and the Franks Casket and Ruthwell Cross's Latin language words transcribed in runes. Still, an insurmountable critical impediment is the reality that individual readers' interpretative responses depend largely upon their own unique experiential interactions with the language(s) and script(s) in question in a way that is inexorably subjective. Accordingly, I would posit that in reading the previously cited example of Fuka-Eri's singing, a proficient reader of both Japanese and German would be inclined to have an altogether different semiotic response than a majority of the text's audience.

This principle can be more fully illustrated by returning to a referential English language transplantation highlighted in the case study assessment of *Norwegian Wood*. Recalling solely the most relevant lines:

「ジム・モリソンの歌にたしか  
そっくりのあったわよね」  
「People are strange when you  
are a stranger」  
「ピース」と緑は言った。  
「ピース」と僕も言った。

“There was something like that in a **Jim Morrison** song, I'm pretty sure.”

*“People are strange when you're a stranger”*

**Peace,**” said Midori.

**Peace,**” I said.<sup>31</sup>

Here, the multilayered semiotic complexity which I argue pervades each of the texts reveals itself in an unmistakable way. In addition to the Roman alphabet quotation of the English song lyrics spoken by Watanabe, Midori references the American singer

<sup>30</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Noruwei no mori*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, Japan: Kōdansha, 1987), vol. 1: 185.

<sup>31</sup> Murakami, *Noruwei*, vol. 2: 49; Haruki Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, trans. Jay Rubin (London, England and New York, NY: Harvill Vintage, 2000), 223. Emphasis added to the translation such that **boldface** indicates *katakana*, and *italicization* Roman characters.

Jim Morrison by name (in *katakana*), and both ironically exchange *katakana* renderings of “peace.” An attempt to interpret this brief excerpt in unwaveringly rigid terms of the previously offered theoretical paradigm foregrounds several difficulties that oblige a redrawing of the matrix. Rather than a dichotomizing typology, it is more fruitful to grasp its function as a rough sketch of configurations. Which of the various English and English-derived words of this passage ought to be regarded as markedly exhibiting linguistic or script variation and which not? Are they to be viewed as intralinguistic or as English that is ‘marked’ and external to Japanese? Hard and fast dividing lines cannot possibly account for the different perceptions of readers with unique perspectives arising from their own linguistic proficiencies, referential knowledge, and cultural/individual backgrounds.

A similar set of questions must also be asked of the words and names of non-Old English, foreign language origin found within the Cynewulf poems. If one is able to presume varying degrees of reader bilingualism or biliteracy given the institutionalized ecclesiastical use of Latin, it can be exceedingly difficult for the modern commentator to draw neat lines between the phenomena of loan borrowing, code-mixing, and transplantation. As touched on in Chapter 2, for example, Samantha Zacher highlights apparent examples of cross-lingual onomastic wordplay that is based around foreign language (Hebrew, Latin) names,<sup>32</sup> and I drew attention to occurrences of the Latinate name “*Constantinus*” in *Elene* which abide alternatively by Latin and Old English patterns of grammatical inflection. To what degree and in what manner would all of these assorted linguistic variations be ‘marked’ for readers around the era of production and in subsequent years and

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<sup>32</sup> Samantha Zacher, “Cynewulf at the Interface of Literacy and Orality: The Evidence of the Puns in *Elene*,” *Oral Tradition* 17.2 (2002): 346-87.

centuries? Additionally, through polygraphic inclusion of the runes of the signatures, what manner and what degree of semiotic marking is introduced into the texts?

Unique individual background and experiential points of reference must shape and influence the answers one provides to these questions in either – and in truth any – reading context. The degree of variation and (non-)conformity to convention that one perceives is highly subjective and heavily influenced by one's individual previous experience of having interacted with the language(s) and script(s) involved. While I can remark on broader societal tendencies and observe larger patterns of reader-response to language and script, I am unable to draw and maintain sharp dividing lines that are universally applicable for all readers of a given text. It is impossible to establish incontestable points at which linguistic and associative boundaries have or have not been crossed.

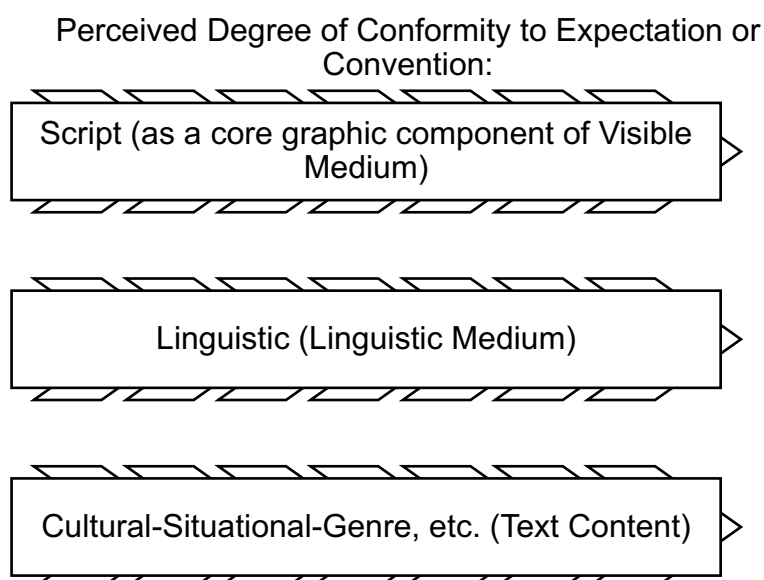
This instability of borders is patently recognizable in the problematic task of determining script congruity while differentiating between the following.

- Code-switches and transplantations – language *perceived as extralinguistic* that may nevertheless function in a discursively processable manner in a text
- 'Fremdwort' or marked loans – foreign-derived language that functions *intralinguistically* so that it may be discursively processed but is un-adapted or somehow retains a high degree of marked alterity
- 'Lehnwort' or integrated loans – foreign language derivations and loan borrowings that are more commonplace or deeply ingrained in a language and do not associatively exude similar intense levels of foregrounded alterity
- 'Erbwort' or so-called heritage words – words understood by speakers to be 'original' to a language or inherited from an earlier form of it

Better understood as a continuum than as discrete categories, I would argue that the individually subjective factors which distinguish these classifications also reaffirm the inseparability of perspective and cultural awarenesses (such as identification and alterity) from the creation of associative symbolism through variation. I have noted that such awarenesses play significant roles in script usage conventions, and I have

argued that the manipulation of associative values is fundamentally important to the production of multiliteral signification through the juxtaposition of differing scripts in a polygraphic textual environment. The picture is still incomplete, however, as my case studies have revealed that the message and *content* cannot be excluded from an analysis of multiliteral signification.

Narrative components undoubtedly contribute in their own right to perception. This may seem a banal observation, and more so even than in the case of script and language, the category of ‘text content’ is impossibly broad and subjective to the extent that it can hardly be succinctly delineated. Yet, no less than the graphic and linguistic media of a text, aspects of content can likewise be perceived as in accord with or breaking from various norms of textual convention, whatever these conventions may be for a particular context (e.g. cultural perspective, situational, thematic, genre). Moreover, because text content and its (non-)conformity to expectation can both impact and be impacted by the perceptions of script and language, these features should not be disregarded nor undervalued when interpreting particular instances of multiliteral signification. I would, therefore, restructure my theoretical diagram along the following lines:



This outline forms a concise theoretical model encapsulating central aspects relevant to polygraphic reading and auxiliary semiotic potential. It seeks to do away with conceptually restrictive binaries, but it is nevertheless slightly misleading in its own right. The three facets of content, linguistic medium, and visual medium should not be conceived of as in discrete parallel, but instead recognized as overlaid atop one another and mutually influential. Reader responses to these three related components, their interplay, and perceived (non-)conformity to convention produce associative and emotive multiliteral signification, different examples of which I identified in my case studies and revisited here. This basic paradigm does not, unfortunately, fully explicate the semiotic processes at work in *all* of the various instances highlighted in my case studies. To approach and gain additional perspective on multiliteral signification, it is helpful to bring to bear an assessment of narratorial level and textual presence.

### 5.3 Show and Tell: Literal Diegesis and Mimesis

From our own strictly analytic point of view it must be added [...] that the very idea of *showing*, like that of imitation or narrative representation (and even more so, because of its naively visual character), is completely illusory: in contrast to dramatic representation, no narrative can 'show' or 'imitate' the story it tells. All it can do is tell it in a manner which is detailed, precise, 'alive,' and in that way give more or less the *illusion of mimesis* – which is the only narrative mimesis, for this single and sufficient reason: that narration, oral or written, is a fact of language, and language signifies without imitating. Unless, of course, the object signified (narrated) be itself language.<sup>33</sup>

This quotation excerpted from Gérard Genette's seminal *Narrative Discourse* finds strong resonance with and serves as the starting point for my final critical proposition in this chapter. By drawing on the preceding case studies and building on

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<sup>33</sup> Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 163-4. Emphasis in the original.

the theoretical frameworks established above, I will argue that script selection and scripts themselves have the potential to function as *semi-diegetic* elements in polygraphic narrative contexts. That is to say, they are not merely the operative visible media or tools by which a story is conveyed but can also be elements that function from within and signify as part of the narrative story. I shall simultaneously make a case for the possible achievement and narrative implementation of *literal mimesis*, by which I mean the emulation or suggestion of aspects of non-written communicative language. Already deemed to be crucial, the emblematic and associative values attributed to scripts are shown with the further capacity to trigger signification that is pseudo-imitative or suggestive of paralinguistic aspects of spoken discourse.

My considerations of narratorial role, textual mediation, and multiliteral signification above can be extended by interpreting these aspects in terms of the paradigms that Genette lays out for narrative voice, level difference, and relationship to text. Moreover, Genette's typologies provide a lens that allows me to come to terms with relevant aspects of speech perspective, narrative distance, and what he terms "the *narrating situation* itself, whose two protagonists are the narratee – present, absent, or implied – and the narrator."<sup>34</sup> All represent crucial components of narrative voice and perspective that are key to the understanding of multiliteralism's use as a device of auxiliary semiosis, even in narrative contexts where conceptions of the paratextual *Author* are found to be less than wholly applicable. Since regardless, these texts, "like every discourse, [are] necessarily addressed to someone and always [contain] below the surface an appeal to the receiver."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 255.

<sup>35</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 260.



It is possible to adapt Genette's explanations and produce the following more generalized diagram which illustrates four basic types of narratorial status subdivided by narrative level and by relation to story.<sup>36</sup>

<u>Level:</u>	<b>Extradiegetic</b> (narration external to the narrative)	<b>Intradiegetic</b> (narration internal to the narrative)
<u>Relation:</u>		
<b>Heterodiegetic</b> (narrator absent from narrative)	a narrator in the first degree who tells a story from which they are absent	a narrator in the second degree who tells stories from which they are absent on the whole
<b>Homodiegetic</b> (narrator a participant in narrative)	a narrator in the first degree who tells their own story	a narrator in the second degree who tells their own story

As stock examples, Genette offers: the legendary Greek poet Homer (*extradiegetic-heterodiegetic*), the narrator-hero Gil Blas from Alain-René Lesage's *L'Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (*extradiegetic-homodiegetic*), the *One Thousand and One Nights* storyteller Scheherazade (*intradiegetic-heterodiegetic*), and Ulysses from Books IX-XII of the *Odyssey* (*intradiegetic-homodiegetic*). It is also worthwhile to raise the notion of *focalization*, because of the potential bearing that perspective can have on the interpretation of individual characters and specific passages.

Focalization further classifies narration in terms of viewpoint, and different focalization –

*zero focalization*: an 'omniscient narrator' who knows more than a character

*internal focalization*: a narrator says only what a character knows

*external focalization*: a narrator says less than what a character knows

– is possible in the four types of status laid out above.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 243-52, especially at p. 248.

<sup>37</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 188-9.

The presence and examples of each of these four fundamental narrating situations with variance in focalization can be discovered within my case studies, and even prior to a consideration of aspects of speech that are relevant to narrative distance, a comparative assessment allows for the broaching of a vexing and yet vital question: At what diegetic level(s) and in what narrating situation(s) can the associative and emotive emblematic of multiliteral signification be understood as occurring?

One narratorial presence that possesses *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* status in Murakami's work is the already discussed authorial figure. In third-person segments of the novels (*1Q84* in its entirety and Nakata's chapters of *Kafka on the Shore*), the narration is external to the story. Multilingual or multiliteral variation that occurs in descriptive passages can be grasped as taking place in a narrative situation comprised of the semi-anonymous, implied narrator and the corresponding *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* narratee. Presumably for many readers, these two figures more or less amount to a mentally interposed storyteller/writer persona (Murakami?) and a reader themselves. Or, in Genette's words:

For the extradiegetic narratee is not, as the intradiegetic narratee is, a 'relay point' between the narrator and the implied reader. He merges totally with this implied reader, who is in turn a relay point with the real reader, who may or may not 'identify' with him – that is, accept as meant for himself what the narrator says to his extradiegetic narratee – whereas in no case can the real reader identify (in this sense) with the intradiegetic narratee, who is, after all, a character just like all the others.<sup>38</sup>

This situation is accordingly reflected in the varieties of signification produced.

Cited also in Chapter 3, Motoko Ezaki has drawn attention to examples from Murakami's nonfiction essay writing and notes that Murakami employs the not

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<sup>38</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 131.

uncommon script practice of deliberately avoiding *kanji* and choosing *katakana* for particular vocabulary of Sino-Japanese origin.<sup>39</sup> Ezaki explains that:

Sino-Japanese words are consciously associated with their kanji in our minds, much more so than native-Japanese words. The more advanced the vocabulary becomes, the more strongly the association is felt, since the word is increasingly perceived as being of written, rather than spoken, language.<sup>40</sup>

The perceptible graphic shifting alters the nature of the presented interaction or ‘conversation’ taking place with the narratee. The signification that is produced directs readers’ perceptions of the narrator/writer’s ‘speech’ and of the narrator/writer himself.

This perspective can help shed light on what was a critically challenging feature in Chapter 4, the functions of idiosyncratic *furigana* usage. In this narrating situation, even intriguingly mismatched pairings – such as in the epigraph of *Norwegian Wood* (“多くの<sup>フェト</sup>祭りのために *ōku no matsuri no tame ni* ‘For Many Festivals’<sup>fêtes</sup>”)<sup>41</sup> – can be relatively easily interpreted as single words with double readings/graphic representations for the reader/narratee. It is similar to more conventionalized use of *furigana* which merely provides a reading or pronunciation guide. Sociolinguistic and associative nuances are fused, and regardless of whether or not oral recitation is genuinely undertaken, a reader perceives aspects which indicate ‘aural’ perception and which offer ancillary ‘visual’ clarification.

It is also possible to categorize significant portions of the Old English case study poems as falling under the paradigm of *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* narrative status. Until the explicit introduction of the Cynewulf poet figure at the conclusion of

<sup>39</sup> Motoko Ezaki, “Strategic Deviations: The Role of *kanji* in Contemporary Japanese,” *Japanese Language and Literature* 44.2 (2010): 179-212.

<sup>40</sup> Ezaki, “Strategic Deviations,” 197.

<sup>41</sup> Murakami, *Noruegi*, n.p.

the poems, the first-degree (and often first-person) narrator is unnamed and effectively absent from the narratives themselves. Yet, even prior to that unambiguous shift in narrating situation, the various poems transition between and artfully blend aspects of different narrative statuses. For example, each can be seen to begin in a distinct fashion. The first-person narrator of the *Fates of the Apostles* begins by immediately telling of the song's devising (*intradiegetic-homodiegesis?*), whereas in *Juliana* "we" are straightaway involved in the story as a first-person plural, having "heard men, bold in deeds,/ declare and proclaim what happened in the days of/ Maximian (*hyrdon hæleð eahtian/ deman dæd-hwate, þætte in dagum gelamp/ Maximianes*) [...]."<sup>42</sup> *Christ II* leads with an exhortatory second-person address to "ðu (you)," "mon se mæra (excellent man)," and only *Elene* commences with what might easily be labeled *extradiegetic-homodiegetic*, third-person descriptive narration.<sup>43</sup>

Before I elaborate on the notions of narratorial presence in relation to Cynewulf's self-insertion and direct speech, there is one textual feature that appears in *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* narration and merits reconsideration. Though not a graphical shift, I noted in Chapter 2 the cross-lingual occurrence of "rex (king)" on line 610 of *Elene* where "alliteration requires *cyning* [...]."<sup>44</sup> There, I argued for the existence of a visually presented multiplicity and tension between 'rex' and 'cyning' that does not indicate an audibly perceptible distinction, since 'rex' is used in a seemingly ideogrammatic way. To extend my interpretation that this suggests a word

<sup>42</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 130-1, l. 1; 78-9, ll. 1-3. This and subsequent translations provided are Bjork's.

<sup>43</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 2-3, l. 440; 142-3.

<sup>44</sup> Christine Fell, "Anglo-Saxon England: A Three-Script Community?" in *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions: Grindaheim, Norway, 8-12 August 1990*, ed. James Knirk (Uppsala, Sweden: Institutionen för nordiska språk, Uppsala universitet, 1994), 119-39 (p. 132); Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 184-5, l. 610.

for which the graphematic transcription does not phonemically denote what one ought to 'read,' I would observe that the instance appears between two segments of direct speech offered by Elene and Judas.<sup>45</sup> It is thus in a narrating situation comprised of the first-degree narrator + narratee. The cross-lingual graphic signification is shared between the *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* narratee and the corresponding narrator, i.e. the audience and the descriptive voice of the poem that will eventually transform into the poet persona of Cynewulf.

Adequate assessment of *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* narrative status and polygraphic implementation further necessitates the recognition of textual presentation of speech acts. On this subject, Genette writes that: "The truth is that mimesis in words can only be mimesis of words. Other than that, all we have and can have is degrees of diegesis. So we must distinguish here between narrative of events and narrative of words."<sup>46</sup> In addition to this distinction between "narrative of events" and "narrative of words," Genette further identifies three states of characters' speech in relation to narrative *distance*. From "most distant, and generally [...] the most reduced" to most mimetic. These can be summarized as:

- 1) *narrated or narrativized* discourse – "treated like one event among others and taken on as such by the narrator himself"
  - *He spoke with her, explaining that he bought a car.*
- 2) *transposed* speech – "Although a little more mimetic than narrated speech, and in principle capable of exhaustiveness, this form never gives the reader any guarantee – or above all feeling – of literal fidelity to the words "really" uttered: the narrator's presence is still too perceptible in the very syntax of the sentence for the speech to impose itself with the documentary autonomy of a quotation"
  - *He spoke to her and explained that he bought a car.*
- 3) *reported* speech – "where the narrator pretends literally to give the floor to his character"<sup>47</sup>
  - *He spoke to her and explained, 'I bought a car.'*

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<sup>45</sup> Note also a subsequent occurrence of "rex" found on line 1041 which comes within a third-person descriptive account of Judas-Cyriacus's conversion and baptism.

<sup>46</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 164.

<sup>47</sup> Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 170-3.

Whether *extra-* or *intradiegetic* and somewhat irrespective of focalization, the third state of reported speech ought to be comprehended to varying degrees as *homodiegetic*, given that that different voices are permitted to take responsibility and narrate their own speech acts. Thus, as per Genette's taxonomy, representation of direct speech or dialogue is theoretically the closest to pure mimesis of linguistic discourse. There are, however, two relevant methods of narratorial mediation that Genette's outline does not adequately address – namely, explicit mediation through descriptive framing and visibly perceptible mediation through multiliteral variation.

By explicit mediation through descriptive framing, I refer to all manner of expository narrative accompaniment to an instance of direct speech. More generally, this could be in the form of reporting verb choice (e.g. 'she asked' as opposed to 'she implored'), supplementary adverbial usage (e.g. 'he stated unknowingly'), and so forth. In specific terms of my case study texts, there are examples of this type of mediation which display an interesting correspondence, and which are tied to one of my investigation's recurring themes – conceptions of linguistic difference.

Prior to the reclamation of the true cross in *Elene*, it is the prayer of Judas-Cyriacus that prompts its revelation and discovery. This prayer extends from line 725 to 801, it contains a polygraphic runic instance at line 788, and it is presented as a prolonged example of direct speech within the poem. The section even introduces a further degree of narration as Judas-Cyriacus describes the cherubim and directly recounts on lines 750-3 the words which are sung in the presence of God.<sup>48</sup> While this segment is representatively mimetic of a genuine, spoken prayer (and internally, a song of praise), it is marked in its entirety and tinged in the mind of the

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<sup>48</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 192-8.

reader/listener by the external descriptive framing that accompanies it. Lines 723b-4 read: “*Word stunde ahof/ elnes oncyðig, ond on Ebrisc spræc: (Revealing courage, he raised up words at once and spoke in Hebrew:).*”<sup>49</sup> Whether it be perceived actively or at a more subconscious level, there is associative significance in first declaratively identifying Judas-Cyriacus’s oral supplication as the raising up of words in Hebrew, and then mimetically reenacting them in Old English. The audience of this poem are *told* of a linguistic attribute possessed by the passage that is subsequently neither *heard* nor *shown*.

Yet as previously addressed in Chapter 2, there is a quality revealed about the passage of reported speech that is visibly *shown* to a reader of the manuscript text. In Judas-Cyriacus’s two spoken petitions that God should make manifest the locations of the true cross and thereafter of the nails, a reader encounters singular manuscript usages of the ‘P (w)’ rune not as a phonemic constituent, but as apparent abbreviations of the word ‘wyn(n) (joy).’ As already cited, Thomas Birkett argues that Old English textual runes of this sort may possess associations of ‘unlocking’ or ‘releasing’ which are directly relevant to their immediate literary context.<sup>50</sup> If one accepts Birkett’s premise that these runes exhibit such associative qualities, then Judas-Cyriacus’s prayers are *shown* through graphic variation to relate to or to occasion the *revelation* and discovery of the cross that subsequently follows. The suggestion is attractive with regard to *Elene*, and more than rehashing my previous

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<sup>49</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 192-3.

<sup>50</sup> In addition to Chapter 2, see Thomas Birkett, “Unlocking Runes? Reading Anglo-Saxon Runic Abbreviations in Their Immediate Literary Context,” *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* 5 (2014): 91-114; as well as *Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry* (New York, NY and Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2017); and “Runes and *Revelatio*: Cynewulf’s Signatures Reconsidered,” *The Review of English Studies* 65 (2014): 771-89 by the same author.

arguments, what is worth reexamining at this juncture is the diegetic level at which these runes operate.

Even hesitating from fully accepting Birkett's interpretation, if I posit that any manner of associative value or 'markedness' whatsoever might have been ascribed to the runes, then I am able to clarify an important aspect of multiliteral signification. Logically, the visible distinction between 'P' used to stand for its runic name 'wyn(n)' and the same word etched in Latin alphabet characters is not a distinction that exists in purely oral, spoken discourse. Therefore, through exploitation of a shared recognition for the possibility of script multiplicity (and any accompanying emblematic values), a form of narratorial mediation shines through the dialogue and can be *shown* to readers even in passages of direct, reported speech. In what are superficially presented as utterances that are highly mimetic of spoken discourse, script variation allows for narratorial intrusion and internal mediation of an utterance that does not fundamentally alter that which is being said. It follows that such intrusive mediation of the direct speech of a represented character visibly signifies to a narratee who is one step removed from the story and dialogue as reported. The narratee to whom the dialogue is addressed and the narratee who perceives the visual semiosis do not need to be the same party. Perceptible mediation can thus provide something of a window into the scene and the quality of the speech act itself.

I raised a corollary example of Murakami toying with reader expectation and precisely this same type of mediation in Chapter 4 as part of my analysis of *Norwegian Wood*. I will now revisit that initial scene of the novel where the following,



semiotically and narratologically complex interaction takes place between the main character, Watanabe, and a German flight attendant.

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やがてドイツのステューワーデスがやってきて、気分がわるいのかと英語で訊いた。大丈夫、少し目まいがしたただけだと僕は答えた。  
 「本当に大丈夫？」  
 「大丈夫です、ありがとうございます」と僕は言った。  
 [...]
   
 前と同じステューワーデスがやってきて、僕の隣りに腰を下ろし、もう大丈夫かと訊ねた。  
 「大丈夫です、ありがとうございます。ちょっと哀しくなっただけだから (It's all right now, thank you. I only felt lonely, you know.)」と僕は言っつて微笑んだ。  
 「Well, I feel same way, same thing, once in a while. I know what you mean. (なんじふじふと私もときどきわかりますよ。よくわかります)」彼女はそう言っつて首を振り、席からたちあがってとても素敵な笑顔を僕に向けてくれた。  
 「I hope you'll have a nice trip. Auf Wiedersehen! (Have a good trip. Good-bye)」  
 「Auf Wiedersehen!」と僕も言っつた。

Before long a German stewardess came around and asked in English if I were sick. I answered that I just got a little dizzy.

"Are you really alright?"

"I am alright, thanks." I said.

[...]

The same stewardess as before came around, sat down next to me, and asked again if I was alright.

"I am alright, thanks. I just became a little sad. (*It's all right now, thank you. I only felt lonely, you know.*)" I said and smiled.

"Well, I feel same way, same thing, once in a while. I know what you mean. (I have that very thing sometimes too. I understand well), she said that, shook her head, stood up from the seat, and turned a very lovely smile toward me. "*I hope you'll have a nice trip. Auf Wiedersehen!* (Have a good trip. Good-bye)"

"Auf Wiedersehen," I also said.<sup>52</sup>

The reader is expressly informed that the conversation is being held in English, and yet as with Judas-Cyriacus's Hebrew prayer this is not linguistically reinforced by the reported dialogue itself in the first exchange. It is presented entirely in Japanese that is conventional in terms of both language and script. During their second interaction, Watanabe's speech appears in the same fashion, but it is now followed by a parenthetical English translation that abides by English script and

<sup>51</sup> Murakami, *Noruegi*, vol. 1: 7-8.

<sup>52</sup> This and the following reasonably literal English translations are again my own and are intended only for reference. *Italic type* indicates the use of Roman characters in the original.

linguistic norms. The cabin attendant's lines of dialogue, on the other hand, are presented in the reverse order. She speaks in English with parenthetical Japanese.

As pointed toward in Chapter 4, this demonstrates in broad terms how linguistic variation and graphic selectivity possess the capacities to augment and/or to undercut the mimetic qualities of direct speech instances. While ostensibly representing the genuine words of each character in a faithfully direct manner, the nature of their perception by readers is heavily influenced by the surrounding description and by their visible presentation on the page. Moreover, even instances of polygraphic variation which occur in *Norwegian Wood's* first-person, *homodiegetic* narration must be unpacked very carefully on their own terms. It is possible that they represent a *literal mimesis* that seeks to visually suggest paralinguistic qualities of non-written discourse. It is equally possible that they represent narratorial impositions and mediation which influence a reader's perception(s) of the specific speech act from a different level of narration, or indeed, some combination of these two capacities.

Further, it is intriguing to apply these notions to the assessment of a largely *homodiegetic* text like *Norwegian Wood* that also contains degrees of *intradiegesis*, such as when Reiko relates her own story to Watanabe. It is debatable whether Watanabe's first-person narration ought to be read as colored by and subordinate to an inferable, higher-level paratextual author figure. It is, however, undeniable that Watanabe's narratorial presence and perspective permeate the story and are a filter for the reader's perceptions of the narrative description, the lines of reported speech spoken by the characters, and seemingly also the choice of scripts as part of the visual presentation.

Given that the entirety of the conversation above must be comprehended as Watanabe's presentation of the interaction, his own dialogue and that of the cabin attendant are not at equivalent levels of narration. Surely then, the most reasonable interpretation is that Watanabe's own speech resembles what he sought to convey in his native language of Japanese, and this comes before the English rendering of what was audibly spoken. Conversely, the dialogue of the German stewardess (or perhaps even Watanabe's unreliable recollection of it) is followed by a Japanese translation, effectively reflecting the manner in which Watanabe has understood and processed what was said. By the same logic, Watanabe simply might not have deemed the exceedingly brief initial interaction personally meaningful enough to merit precise, word-for-word recollection and interpretatively explanatory translation.<sup>53</sup>

None of these lines seek to keep up the pretense of genuine mimesis. Rather, Watanabe's perspective and perceptions entirely dominate the interaction and dictate linguistic ordering. Also worth noting, if also more obvious, is the fact that the narratorial status of this example reveals the implied narratee also to be an individual for whom Japanese is the most readily accessible or familiar of the languages involved. A similar functionality can be observed in another key passage of multilateral dialogue from *Norwegian Wood* considered in Chapter 4.

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<sup>53</sup> Alternatively, one could hypothetically elect to perceive some or all of these effects as taking place at the higher diegetic level of writer figure (narrator) engaging directly with reader (narratee).

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「気分どうですか？」と僕は訊いてみた。  
 「すこし」と彼は言った。〈アタマ〉  
 「頭が少し痛むんですか？」  
 そうだ、というように彼は少し顔をしかめた。  
 「まあ手術のあとだから仕方ありませんね。僕は手術なんてしたことないからどういふもんだかよくわからないけど」  
 〈キップ〉と彼は言った。  
 「切符？なんの切符ですか？」  
 〈ミドリ〉と彼は言った。〈キップ〉  
 何のことがよくわからなかったので僕黙っていた。それから〈タノム〉と言った。「頼む」ということらしかった。彼はしっかりと目を開けてじっと僕の顔を見ていた。彼は僕に何かを伝えたがっているようだったが、その内容は僕には見当もつかなかった。  
 〈ウエノ〉と彼は言った。〈ミドリ〉  
 「上野駅ですか？」  
 彼は小さく背いた。  
 「切符・緑・頼む・上野駅」と僕はまとめてみた。でも意味はさっぱりわからなかった。

“How do you feel?” I ventured to ask.

<A little> he said. <**head** (*atama*)>

“Does your head hurt a little?”

As if to say exactly, he screwed up his face a little.

“Well, since it’s after an operation, it can’t be helped. Though I’ve never had an operation, so I don’t really understand what sort of thing it is.”

<**ticket** (*kippu*)> he said.

“Ticket? What sort of ticket is it?”

<**Midori**> he said. <**ticket**>

I didn’t really understand what sort of thing it was, so I kept silent. After that he said, <**Please/I’m counting on you, etc.** (*tanomu*). It seemed to be “Please/I’m counting on you,

etc.” He opened his eyes fully and looked fixedly into my face. He seemed to be wanting to communicate something to me, but I didn’t have the slightest idea about the content.

<**Ueno**> he said. <**Midori**>

“Is it Ueno Station?”

He nodded slightly.

“Ticket・Midori・Please/I’m counting on you, etc.・Ueno Station,” I tried bringing them together. But, I didn’t understand the meaning at all.

Here, unlike in the preceding example of Watanabe’s conversation with the German flight attendant, there is no linguistic interference, and no code-mixing or transplantation to complicate interpretative assessment. Yet it is still Watanabe’s own perceptions of Midori’s father’s utterances that impinge upon their purely

<sup>54</sup> Murakami, *Norurwei*, vol. 2: 93-4. In my reference translation here, **boldface** indicates *katakana* usage by Midori’s father.

mimetic quality. Watanabe's struggle to comprehend adequately what is being stated prompts the graphic discrepancy between *kanji* and *katakana/hiragana* representations of the same sounds, and in so doing, Watanabe as narrator visibly mediates and influences the possible reception of Mr. Kobayashi's 'direct speech' for his narratee, as well as for the reader.

This example offers an illustrative contrast with ostensibly similar usages encountered in the speech of other characters in Murakami's novels. Appearing far more frequently and given much more extensive dialogue than Midori's father, both 1Q84's Fuka-Eri and *Kafka on the Shore*'s Nakata share the characteristic of having *katakana* or *hiragana* replace expected *kanji* in representations of their direct speech. In all three cases, a reader can perceive multiliteral signification that takes place at a diegetic level that is one removed, or 'over the heads' of the speaking characters. Unlike in Mr. Kobayashi's case, however, Fuka-Eri and Nakata's third-person narratives do not designate a *homodiegetic* narrator on whom the reader can easily pin conceptual responsibility for perceptual influence produced through graphic distinction.

Narratorial responsibility and apparent lack thereof is a primary reason why in Chapter 4, I put forward the initial argument that such instances are able to gesture at non-linguistic aspects of interpersonal discourse.<sup>55</sup> By deemphasizing the narratorial presence and accordingly also a narrator's mediating role, script variation becomes increasingly capable of suggesting paralinguistic semiotic qualities to a reader. As opposed to primarily highlighting influence that is directly attributable to a specific 'speaker' figure, a shift in script can more readily achieve *literal mimesis* that

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<sup>55</sup> In addition to the examples of Nakata and Fuka-Eri's limited literacy, recall also Hoshino's use of *katakana* and misuse of *kanji* in instances which reveal to the reader his lack of proper lexical recognition and comprehension. Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 2: 120, 213.

foregrounds non-linguistic aspects of the utterance itself. Graphic change can indicate something about the 'speech act.'

To recapitulate, there are several fundamental aspects of narrative multiliteralism that I have extracted from this comparison of reported speech instances and *homodiegetic* narratorial status. First, alongside linguistic code-switching and other methods of external framing, graphic script variation can be used to perform a type of internal mediation that has the power to influence a reader's perception of an utterance without functionally altering the underlying language, whether presented as direct speech or otherwise. A reader can perceive disruptions in expectation (or lack thereof), and this manner of mediation is often easily attributable to a narrator and reflective of their own perceptions of the speech act or speaker in question. The reader is guided to view an utterance or speaker through the interpretative lens positioned by a narrator. If, on the other hand, the narrator's presence is purposefully diminished or less foregrounded, it is possible for such visible variation to embody an illusory, literal mimesis that reflects paralinguistic attribute(s) of the utterance. The reader is permitted to gauge the speech act itself.

I have also circumscribed a basic pattern that I do not envision as being a delimiting rule. In my specific case studies, *homodiegesis* seems to ally itself easily with multiliteral perceptions of narratorial perspective and mediation, whereas *heterodiegesis* lends itself readily to literal mimesis and perceptions of the speech act. A broader investigation of texts and contexts may reinforce and/or contradict this observation, and indeed, I do not mean to suggest that this configuration is universally consistent nor even that these two forms of multiliteralism are entirely distinct and mutually exclusive. If, as I have argued, the signification takes place at a diegetic level that is different than that of the utterance itself, it becomes crucial in

any case to recognize which mediating narratorial figure(s) are involved with speaking and with determining or influencing the choice of scripts. It is equally vital to identify the observable or inferable corresponding narratee(s), as these are the parties for whom a speech act and any multilateral signification are intended.

All of these factors contribute to the mediating and/or mimetic qualities of a specific multilateral instance, and an increased attentiveness to narratorial status is helpful for unpacking multilateral signification and *intradiegesis*. A straightforward example of *intradiegetic-homodiegetic* narration from *Norwegian Wood* which I mentioned above in passing is that of Reiko Ishida, Naoko's roommate during her time in the Ami Hostel. Reiko meets Watanabe when he comes to visit Naoko and relates her own personal history to him on separate occasions towards the end of volume one and the beginning of volume two. She becomes a second-degree narrator with Watanabe in position as narratee, and thus the text's lexical and graphic choices in these passages must be interpreted through at least a double lens. The reader must determine not only what manners of signification are reflected, but also the narrative situation in which they take place. The reader is obliged to discern between semiotic mediation and mimesis that is intended for Watanabe and is attributable to Reiko (as narrator one diegetic level removed the figures in her story), and that which is attributable to Watanabe and signaled to his narratee 'over the head' of Reiko.

Slightly different in nature, Murakami's creative exploitation of narratorial status and *intradiegetic-heterodiegesis* in *1Q84* is more varied and similarly complex. For example, readers must be very cautious in their interpretation and perceptions of the language and script use found in the third volume's intranarrative tale of the

“Town of Cats.”<sup>56</sup> As noted in Chapter 4, the reader is told that the story was written by a German writer during the period between the two World Wars, and this fabricated paratextual framing affects and influences the approach to any interpretation of the tale itself. No less remarkable is the fact that the story is not presented as separate from the ongoing narrative on the pages of the novel (i.e. It is not presented in German or otherwise framed in Japanese translation). The narrative is conveyed to the reader through the lens of Tengo’s third-person perspective as he reads it on the train. Subsequently, both Tengo and his father discuss the story after Tengo reads it aloud to him. The story, its fictional paratext, and the reader response to it are all narrativized in such a way that it becomes tortuously complex to parcel out diegetic level + focalization and satisfactorily assign narratorial responsibility.

Analogous too is the intranarrative novel of *Air Chrysalis* which serves as both a central plot element and prominently recurring leitmotif in *1Q84*. The setting, characters, and plot of *Air Chrysalis* are drawn from the ‘real-life’ experiences of the young Fuka-Eri while growing up as a part of the Sakigake religious group. Following her flight from the commune, Fuka-Eri tells the story to the daughter of her new guardian, Professor Ebisuno, who initially records the written version of the text. At the behest of the publishing company editor Komatsu, the story is then reworked and revised for mass-market publication by Tengo. From the perspective of an *1Q84* reader, however, much of the novel’s plot and precise content remain largely shrouded in ambiguity until late in the text. It is finally revealed more openly in Chapter 19 of Volume 4, when the sequestered Aomame reads through the commercially released edition. Yet nonetheless, even this third-person perspective on the narrative related in Aomame’s chapters cannot simply be taken at surface

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<sup>56</sup> Murakami, *1Q84*, vol. 3: 210-16.



value. Its reliability is undercut by the fact that upon Tengo's completion of the ghostwriting of Fuka-Eri's book, he proceeds to write his own novel set in the same surreal world as *Air Chrysalis*. The world with two moons his novel describes bears an uncanny resemblance to the shifted reality of '1Q84' in which Aomame finds herself. The reader is prompted through metalepsis to wonder whether it might not in fact be Tengo who lies behind the narration of her current situation.

Matthew Strecher and Jay Rubin present the case that Murakami's fiction frequently demonstrates a tension between one's own 'individual narrative' and potentially subsuming societal, religious, etc., 'group narratives.'<sup>57</sup> Murakami seeks to promote for his readers the ideals of individualistic critical thought, and as a novel overwhelmingly fixated on the acts of storytelling and narrative creation through spoken and written language, *1Q84* inescapably compels its readers to participate and to assign meaning in the manner they see fit. External 'authority' is thoroughly destabilized by the fact that an authoritative interpretation and guidance are not only not offered but are entirely prohibited by virtue of the fact that narrative levels fold back in upon one another in what amounts to a diegetic Möbius strip. Numerous subtle and overt fluctuations between *extra-* and *intradiegetic* and between *homo-* and *heterodiegetic* narration can be observed, such that it becomes all but impossible to assign responsibility to a single figure with a clearly definable narratorial status. Presences and perspectives bleed into one another, and readers are forced to fend for themselves in terms of meaning creation with regard to theme, referential allusion, linguistic and graphic emblematic value, as well as mediation and paralinguistic signification.

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<sup>57</sup> Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music*, 246; Matthew Strecher, "Haruki Murakami and the Chamber of Secrets," in *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*, eds. Matthew Strecher and Paul L. Thomas (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2016), 31-46 (p. 33); Strecher, *The Forbidden Worlds*, 20.

While perhaps less convoluted, narrative involvement is similarly obliged in *Kafka on the Shore* in a way that parallels these strategies and significantly impacts possible perceptions of multilateralism. In *Kafka on the Shore*, chapters alternatively relate the narratives of the young Kafka and of the elderly Nakata in odd and even-numbered chapters respectively. Nakata's chapters are told in the third person, while Kafka's are related from his own first-person perspective. This counterbalance of perspective is interesting in and of itself and bears a certain resemblance to the narrative techniques noted above in *1Q84* and encountered in other of Murakami's works.<sup>58</sup> The most captivating segments in terms of narrative inversion are those where Kafka interacts with 'the boy named Crow,' a figure that is interpretable as part of Kafka's psyche or some manner of alter ego. Prior to the first chapter of the novel proper, there is one such segment wherein fate is likened to the image of a sandstorm. Crow tells Kafka that he will have to become tougher in order to survive, and the main plot of Kafka's story about running away and living at the library is laid out.<sup>59</sup>

This segment is particularly relevant to the consideration of diegesis and narratorial status in Murakami's fiction. If indeed the boy named Crow is an embodiment of some aspect of Kafka, then the representation of spoken dialogue between them takes on a peculiar aspect. As an externalization of Kafka's own inner mental processes, it becomes a doubly false mimesis. Presence and perspective themselves are lost in the 'swirling sandstorm' discussion as lines of Crow's dialogue are repeated verbatim in the narration, and the multilaterally varied repetition of "ある

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Especially Murakami's 1985 novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, where chapters alternate between two first-person perspectives that differ in their use of first-person pronoun. The intertwined narrators of the 'Hard-Boiled Wonderland' and of the 'End of the World' segments are characterized and distinguished by their respective use of '私 *watashi* (I)' and '僕 *boku* (I)'.

<sup>59</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, vol. 1: 5-13.

場合 *aru ba'ai* (lit. 'in certain case(s)')” as “あるばあい *aru ba'ai*” without *kanji* takes on an altered nuance if the narrator (Crow/Kafka?) is interacting with and attempting to assure himself rather than some outside party.<sup>60</sup> The literal shift seems to show his thoughts and expressive capabilities becoming muddled, but to whom can one attribute the narratorial mediation? Readers are not only hard-pressed to puzzle out the narratorial situation of this passage, they then have the rug pulled out from under them in a diegetic sense. They may understand themselves as being directly addressed. Dialogue and narration blend into one another, and it is ambiguous whom precisely is being addressed by usage of the second-person (“君 *kimi* ‘you’) in the narrative passage.<sup>61</sup>

Significantly, this is also the manner in which *Kafka on the Shore* comes to a close. First-person Kafka wonders in the narrative description if he has done the right thing, and he is assured by Crow through reported speech dialogue that he has. In the English translation, Crow tells him:

“You’d better get some sleep,” the boy named Crow says. “When you wake up you’ll be part of a brand-new world.”  
 You finally fall asleep. And when you wake up, it’s true.  
 You are part of a brand-new world.<sup>62</sup>

The novel concludes with the same shifts introduced at the beginning. Voice, presence, and perspective are questioned and made thoroughly unreliable.

Correspondences between observable/inferable narrators and their counterpart narratees are destabilized. Rather than more ‘passive’ external perception guided by

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<sup>60</sup> Murakami, *Umibe*, 10-13.

<sup>61</sup> Magdalena Rembowska-Płuciennik suggests that “this mode of narration [i.e. second-person address] is a special narrative technique of self–other negotiation.” “The narrative ‘you’ places the capacities of declarative pointing, social referring and adopting another’s viewpoint at the very core of the transmission and processing of narrative information. It makes explicit and apprehensible the narrator’s effort to place him- or herself in the same deictic centre where a character is situated and to participate in each of the protagonist’s thoughts, sensations, emotional experiences and actions.” Magdalena Rembowska-Płuciennik, “Second-Person Narration as a Joint Action,” *Language and Literature* 27.3 (2018): 159-75 (pp. 163, 167)

<sup>62</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 505.

an authoritative narratorial voice, readers are compelled to situate themselves in the narrative and to participate 'actively' in the creation, assigning, and rejecting of meaning as part of the reading process.

Shifting gears to return to the Old English context and assess the possibilities of *intradiegetic* narration within my case study corpus, I would first reiterate Symons's core argument in relation to the Cynewulf signature passages. She writes that,

The purpose of these signatures is not, as it is easy to assume, primarily the preservation of the poet's name in order to elicit the prayers of his readers. Rather the Cynewulf poet uses these embedded runes in order to explore the material nature of the written word and its ability to function as a visual symbol, and to remind readers of the necessity of correctly interpreting what is read. These epilogues are designed primarily for the benefit of the reader's reflection rather than the poet's posterity.<sup>63</sup>

Symons's views are convincing and compatible with my presentation of active meaning creation. Still, I would contend that there is more to be gleaned with regard to multilateral potential through assessment of the passages' narrative status and diegetic functionality.

I remarked above that apart from instances of direct character speech, the majority of the text of the Cynewulf poems can be understood as operating at an *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* level of narration, given that the unnamed (albeit intermittently first-person) narrator relates the stories of the four poems in absentia. There is, however, a dramatic paradigm shift that is compelled by the interposition of the Cynewulf poet figure at the conclusion of the poems. This shift also retroactively impacts interpretative perceptions of preceding narrative content and of script usage.

The form this takes in *Christ II* is a somewhat general musing on the need of all humans for salvation, and it comes directly on the heels of the poem's description

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<sup>63</sup> Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters*, 85. Cf. Birkett, "Runes and *Revelatio*," 784-5.

of Christ's final "*hlyp* (leap)" to his heavenly home.<sup>64</sup> It is "us," "we" are the ones who must take to heart what we have discovered through holy books, to believe and strive after righteousness. Then from line 789, first-person narration expresses dread of the coming judgment; the runic signature providing the individual letters of the name 'Cynwulf' appears, and the first-person narration declares: "*Forþon ic leofra gehwone læran wille* (Therefore I want to teach each of loved ones) [...]."<sup>65</sup> Likewise, in *Elene* following the tale of the successful recovery of the cross, a first-person segment presages and follows the multiliteral runic segment. It depicts a penitent narrator who recalls his own conversion and concludes with remarks on the spiritual recompense that awaits all mankind at the end of days.

In *The Fates of the Apostles* (whose runes do not appear in proper sequence to spell out the name and must be rearranged) and in *Juliana* (where they appear in bunched groups of three, three, and two) the revelation of the poet figure in first-person narration is made all the more explicit. In the former, the runic passage follows the accounts of the twelve apostles and the tantalizing hint that "*hwa þas fitte fegde* (who composed this song)" may be discovered.<sup>66</sup> In the latter, there is an unambiguous first-person plea to be remembered by name and prayed for right at the conclusion of the poem, following the lines which contain the three groups of runes.

Despite the stylistic variation in Cynewulf's self-insertions, all effect an analogous shift in narrative status. Cynewulf may not be *authorizing* these works in a conventionally modern sense,<sup>67</sup> but through shifts in narrative presence – wherein

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<sup>64</sup> Depiction of the sixth leap can be found beginning from line 736. Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 22-3.

<sup>65</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 26-7, l. 815.

<sup>66</sup> Bjork, *The Old English Poems*, 136-7, l. 98.

<sup>67</sup> See Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences*, 47.

the proper name is provided and the figure of the poet belatedly revealed – a narratorial transformation is produced through diegetic intervention. The narratorial status of the poem in these segments makes a sweeping transition across Genette's paradigm table from *extradiegetic* to *intradiegetic* status, as the narration goes from external to internal. This interestingly calls to mind certain rhetorical techniques that are encountered in modern narratives, such as metalepsis and retrospective heightening of authenticity through self-reveal. Moreover, perspective play of this kind is not unique to Cynewulf even amongst texts from roughly his own era,<sup>68</sup> and if one additionally considers the probability that an added figural level would theoretically be in place for one listening to the poem as recited live by a lector, the already knotted issue of *hetero-* or *homodiegetic* narratorial distance becomes even trickier to untangle.

Most important to note is the corresponding realignment of narratee this shift demands, since as I have repeatedly observed, comprehension of narrator-narratee roles and their relationship proves invaluable to unraveling multiliteral signification. Advancing the arguments made in Chapters 1 and 2, my view is ultimately that the shift in narratorial status dynamically involves a reader in both the narrative action and the didactically evangelical epilogue reflection, much in the way that the runes emblematically contribute to a localizing of the poem's message for a reader and to a graphical reemphasis of the act of writing itself. Furthermore, in light of the deductions made with regard to Japanese literary examples, it is worth entertaining the possibility that multiliteral signification might indicate an altered quality to the signature runes as spoken utterances. In truth, this amounts to little more than

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<sup>68</sup> E.g. Various Exeter Book riddles function by virtue of perspective adjustment; inanimate objects speak for themselves. The Vercelli Book's *Dream of the Rood* also contains poignantly layered degrees of narration.

speculation, but it is not at all hard to imagine some paralinguistic differentiation or performative indication (tone, pause, volume, gesture, display of the page, etc.) marking the runes' place in a vocal recitation the poems.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

In summary, this comparative analysis of multiliteralism in disparate literary modes has proven informative in several respects. At the start of this chapter, I addressed the three issues of authority and voice, audience reception, and textual agenda/content and this helped to etch out three fundamental premises of narrative multiliteralism. First, I presented perceived deliberation between scripts and graphic mediation as foundational features that are required for the creation of multiliteral signification. If differentiation is not perceived, signification cannot be achieved. Second, I argued that attention must be given to the experiential background and sociolinguistic conventions of a text's audience if one seeks to discern the 'internal' associative and emotive emblematic values which are ascribed to script selections in polygraphic textual environments. Third, observation of markedly differing forms and textual objectives reinforced the pivotal concept that multiliteral signification is itself merely a semiotic tool. It does not appear to possess an overriding applicative predilection that is independent from cultural and ideological context. Multiliteralism accentuates the distinct styles and dissimilar textual agendas of Cynewulf's didactically integrative medieval religious narratives and of Murakami's post-ironically destabilized contemporary consumer fiction.

From there, Section 5.2 laid out principal underlying features which allow for the diverse range of multiliteral signification that was witnessed in my case studies. I

presented the case that convention and expectation play central roles in the functionality and interpretation of narrative multiliteralism. Conformity and deviation, I argued, respectively curtail and foreground emblematic value tied to script use. This line of reasoning presents complexities, however. Perceived conventionality, familiarity, alterity, and appropriateness must be parceled out not only in terms of script + graphic media variation, but also with respect to language + linguistic media variation and even further into the more abstract realm of content (e.g. regarding situation, cultural perspective, genre). In many instances, it is all but impossible to divorce these components from one another as they appear concurrently and run together conceptually for readers. To account for that overlap and interaction, I laid out a provisional conceptual model for engaging with multiliteralism in terms of graphic, linguistic, and content-centric expectational conventionality.

I then proceeded to a joint reconsideration of my polygraphic case studies in terms of narrative level, speaking voice, and textual presence. Through the lens of Genette's narratorial status paradigm, I revealed multiliteralism to be a form of signification that necessarily takes place/is perceptible on a different level of diegesis – at least one degree removed from the narrative action being depicted or speech utterance being transcribed. Expressed alternatively, multiliteral signification can be understood as a type of non-linguistic and yet semiotically interpretable interaction between observed or inferred narrator(s) and their corresponding narratee(s).

Accordingly, I observed two basic modes of multiliteral signification which readers can perceive, and which are, in fact, interrelated. On one hand, it is possible to exploit polygraphic conventionality and deviation to emphasize some characteristic aspect or quality of the speaker/narrator. The associative and emotive perceptions of individual speaking figures can be influenced through mediation of the



visual aspect of transcribed words attributable to them. At the same time and in equal part, the same process of visual mediation can alternatively produce emblematic values that pseudo-mimetically gesture at the nature or various properties of the transcribed utterance itself. Multiliteralism can show the reader something about the 'speaker' (e.g. Murakami's conversational casualness by not using *kanji*) or the 'speech act' (e.g. a *revelationary* quality of Judas-Cyriacus's prayers conveyed by the *wynn*).

Neither are these functions disconnected. In actuality, both patterns can operate in unison and bolster one another by simultaneously informing perceptions of speaker, speech act, and interconnections between the two. I posited that the specific examples of graphically unconventional reported speech in Murakami's novels and of Cynewulf's visual and diegetic self-insertions were instances of the expressive modes working in conjunction. In effect, this is because these two ostensibly distinct aesthetic results of graphic mediation are little more than two sides of a single coin. They are related aspects of narrative multiliteralism as an auxiliary semiotic system that offers readers a manner of supplemental interpretative guidance. Multiliteral signification can function as an internal *meta-commentary* apparatus with the capacity to orient readers and influence how they perceive a given word and its speaker.

## Conclusion

The twin objectives of this thesis have been to illustrate that script variation can function as an auxiliary semiotic system of signification and to propose a rudimentary theoretical framework for approaching its interpretation in polygraphic narrative contexts. With respect to the former goal, I have been able to identify the phenomenon of multiliteral signification in two highly distinct writing situations. My transhistorical and cross-cultural assessment of Old English and Modern Japanese revealed the manipulation of emblematic values that stem from scripts as ideological entities, and it also exposed structural similarities regarding underlying awarenesses of voice/perspective that are tied to historical precedents, cultural conventions, sociolinguistic relationships, and identity management. Moreover, my critical investigation of two literary case studies brought to light the associative and emotive manners in which multiliteral semiosis can augment the linguistic content of a text.

In terms of my second aim, this study has resolved several fundamental issues involved with untangling auxiliary multiliteral signification in narrative contexts. Parallel and contrastive analysis of the works of Cynewulf and Murakami showed that script deviation from or conformity to readers' conventional and semiotic expectations causes the emblematic value of script choice either to be made prominent or diminished. Along with the perception of meaningful differentiation and mediation of script use, readers ascribe emblematic value(s) to the appearance of a particular script in a given context (e.g. values which are tied to linguistic association, to familiarity/alterity, or to other aspects of textual content). I also noted how said emblematic values are contingent upon culture and functionally bound up with a readership's experiential background. I determined that grasping these features is key to unpacking the semiotic values a given audience may attach to script selection

and variation, and that as such, there does not appear to be an overriding applicative predisposition for multilateral semiosis which is detachable from cultural and ideological context. It is a culturally and contextually dependent auxiliary means of signification, and one which I observed to bolster themes of ideological harmonization and integration, no less successfully than post-ironic unreliability and dissolution.

Through examination in narratological terms, I presented the case that multilateral signification operates at a different level of narration than the linguistic content of a text. This premise forms a baseline entry point into the evaluation of polygraphic narrative and into a clearer understanding of what functional purposes multilateralism can serve. Removed by a diegetic level, multilateralism is able to orient a reader's perceptions of the narrated events and dialogue. A reader (that is to say the semiotic narratee by whom signification is perceived) should determine the extent and location of narratorial responsibility for any visual mediation, whether that be with an easily discernible internal character, an obscured and unidentifiable external figure, the text itself as a discursive object, or any such perspectival configuration. Assessment of narratorial status reveals how multilateralism can influence readers' reception and perceptions of a given speaker and/or speech act, to the effect that speakers and individual words can be differently characterized, and paralinguistic aspects of discourse can be suggested through illusory mimesis.

While constructive, I recognize that these essential tenets which I have carved out are still inescapably unrefined. My analysis has, moreover, opened new avenues of inquiry by raising further questions regarding stylistic and media differences, subjectivities and audience variability, as well as developments in semiotic reception across time and cultures. My work not only builds on the efforts of scholars like

Daniel Bunčić, Sandra L. Lippert, and Achim Rabus who work directly with the interdisciplinary issue of multiscryptality,<sup>1</sup> it has brought together literary, linguistic, and historical scholarship from fields of study that are rarely united but which have proven complementary and generatively challenging. I envision that future research addressing wider stylistic ranges, diverse sociolinguistic and temporal literary environments, and alternative graphic combinational varieties will lend definition to the preliminary approach I present here.

In the Introduction, I hypothesized that script-based signification is present in any act of writing where emblematic value is attached to the visual aspect of transcribed language, and I would speculate that much is to be gained from multilateral and polygraphic assessments of other texts and writing contexts where forms of value attribution are clearly in evidence. To name just a few potential instances, I will point to such dissimilar cases as – the transitions between Arabic, Latin, and Cyrillic for the Kazakh language; the Ancient Egyptian development and simultaneous use of hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic writing; German glyphic differentiation between blackletter or Gothic (*Fraktur*) and Roman type in printing beginning from 1749; and even modern orthographic pluricentricities such as the divergent use of simplified/traditional Chinese characters and U.S. vs. U.K. English spelling conventions. Assessments of these and other cases will, I believe, both support and challenge the approach I put forward here in ways that add depth and speak to its universality. Equally, I suspect that semiotic investigations of distinct media and language + image storytelling formats – e.g. iconographic studies,

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Bunčić, Sandra L. Lippert, and Achim Rabus, eds., *Biscryptality: A Sociolinguistic Typology* (Heidelberg, Germany: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016).

postmodern art installations, comics and graphic novels, narrative video games – also will temper and contribute applicative nuance to multiliteral interpretation.

For these reasons, I see my observations and deductions as relevant more broadly to semiotic textual studies and considerations of narratological perspective/voice. Extensions and fruitful parallels may be drawn to non-linguistic signs such as pictograms or *emoji*, and to other manipulable, non-linguistic elements that contribute to a text's presentation and comprise its interface, such as size, color, sequence, *mise-en-page*, and so forth. However sophisticated or conventionalized it is deemed to be in a given setting, multiliteral semiosis based on script differentiation is one of multiple, non-autonomous means of signification with the power to impact reception. In other words, multiliteralism is one instantiating contextual component of non-compartmentalized communication as per the models of *integrational* linguistics put forward by Roy Harris.<sup>2</sup> Barry Powell writes that, "We might define language as any system of symbols that serves the innate human faculty of symbolization. Speech is one such system, writing is another."<sup>3</sup>

Script differentiation is itself another system of symbolization, but it is one that is inherently auxiliary in nature, since it cannot be considered in isolation from the communicative system of transcribed language. In closing, I would return to my initial suggestions of classification and present multiliteralism as a method of supplemental symbolization by which layered significance can be ascribed to and decoded from written words. As the language is read, scripts are able to shape how it is seen.

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<sup>2</sup> "[I]ntegrationism (as opposed to 'segregationism', i.e. any approach which assumes that systems of communication are independent of their potential users or of the contexts in which they can operate) denies the existence of context-free signs." Roy Harris, "Integrationism," *Roy Harris Online*, accessed July 2020, <https://www.royharrisonline.com/integrationism.html>. See further, Roy Harris, "Chapter 9: Segregational Models of Signification," in *Signs, Language, and Communication: Integrational and Segregational Approaches* (London, England and New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 124-45.

<sup>3</sup> Barry B. Powell, *Writing and the Origins of Greek Literature* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59.

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## Appendix A: Japanese Language Terminology

Ateji (当て字)- Phonemic application of Chinese characters to write Japanese with minimal regard given to character meaning

Eiji (英字)- 'English characters'

Ekkkyō (越境)- Border-crossing

Furigana (振り仮名)- Ruby text that appears above and glosses other characters, often functions as a reading aid or pronunciation guide

Gairaigo (外来語)- Non-Sinitic loanwords

Genbun itchi (言文一致)- Unification of spoken and written language

Hentaigana (変体仮名)- Non-standard, variant *kana* forms

Hiragana (平仮名)- Syllabary used predominantly for native Japanese words, especially inflections and functional elements

Jun-bungaku (純文学)- 'Pure' literature

Kana (仮名)- Japanese syllabaries, *hiragana* and *katakana*

Kanbun (漢文)- Classical, literary Chinese.

Kango (漢語)- Chinese loanwords and Sino-Japanese words created from morphological recombinations of *kanji* roots

Kanji (漢字)- Chinese characters

Katakana (片仮名)- Syllabary used predominantly for loanwords

Kundoku (訓読)- Reading a Chinese text (*kanbun*) in Japanese

Kunrei-shiki rōmaji (訓令式ローマ字)- Cabinet Style of romanization

Kun'yomi (訓読み)- Chinese character readings which reflect a Japanese-derived pronunciation

Manga (漫画)- Comics, cartoons

Man'yōgana (万葉仮名)- First known *kana* system to represent Japanese phonemically, seen in the eighth-century *Man'yōshū* poetry collection

Nihon-shiki rōmaji (日本式ローマ字)- Japanese Style of romanization which closely maps Japanese *kana*

Okurigana (送り仮名)- *Kana* written after a *kanji* to complete the reading of the word, declensional ending

On'yomi (音読み)- Chinese character readings which evolved based around the inherited or recreated 'Chinese' pronunciation of the character

Rekishi-teki kana-zukai (歴史的仮名遣い)- Historical *kana* orthography

Rōmaji (ローマ字)- Roman characters

Shi-shōsetsu (私小説)- 'I-novel,' novel narrated in first-person, also *watakushi-shōsetsu*

Shōsetsu (小説)- Novel, story

Wakan-konkōbun (和漢混淆文)- Mixed writing of literary Japanese and Chinese

Wasei eigo (和製英語)- Pseudo-English coined in Japan

Watakushi shōsetsu (私小説)- 'I-novel,' novel narrated in first-person, also *shi-shōsetsu*

Yamato kotoba (大和言葉)- Words of indigenous Japanese origin

**Appendix B:  
'Anglo-Frisian' *Futhorc* (Runic Alphabet)**

ƿ	f
ƚ	u
ư	þ
ƿ	o
ᚱ	r
ᚲ	c
ᚷ	g
ƿ	w
ᚹ	h
ᚺ	n
ᚻ	i
ᚾ	j
ᚿ	ɨ
ᛀ	p
ᛁ	x
ᛃ	s
ᛄ	t
ᛆ	b
ᛇ	e
ᛈ	m
ᛉ	l
ᛊ	ŋ
ᛋ	d
ᛏ	œ
ᛒ	a
ᛑ	æ
ᛗ	y
ᛚ	ea

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This model rune-row is adapted from: Michael Barnes, *Runes: A Handbook* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2012), 5. N.b. Barnes stresses that despite certain commonalities, there are of course significant differences between English and Frisian usages, as well as earlier and later period discrepancies.