Aural, Ocular, and Sequential Rhetoric in Two Contemporary American Stories, in Prose
and Film: Patterns of Anxiety in *Fight Club* and *The Road*

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

The dissertation rhetorically examines anxiety and fear in *Fight Club* and *The Road,* in their both cinematic and prose versions, texts that reflect a mood of contemporary American society that has been characterized by humanities scholars with terms such as a "culture of fear" and a "culture of anxiety." In dialogue with these scholars, I argue that literary and rhetorical criticism need additional strategies to make this culture, and the affect of texts more generally, more generative of critical knowledge. In this context, I advance two critical readings, in a triangulating methodology that leverages sound, image, and sequence. *Fight Club* I read as a modern-day psychomachia—a war of, for, and by the soul, in which a schism of the psyche glosses itself as divine or authentic and motivates a suffering subject to struggle for transformation or recovering to identity. *The Road* I read as a quest narrative to regenerate a blasted world. Quests, too, are centered on conflict and struggle, not for supremacy over threatening forces, but toward a goal of regeneration. Both patterns, as mythoi of strife and contention, serve a storyteller dealing with the anxieties of a culture at crisis.

My hybrid methodology brings insights from several disciplines together to study the suasiveness of anxiety and fear materialized in sound, image, the sequence of these two media, and their roles in cultural depictions. Texts colonize the audience's consciousness through aural and visual dimensions, as well as through the sequential arrangement of their trajectories. I argue that literary and rhetorical criticism can reveal fuller meaning through a hybrid methodology that accounts for the three dimensions. With my 'sound' enquiry, using

a strategy I call 'Aural Rhetoric,' I contribute to the turn in humanities towards the epistemological significance of sounds and offer an analytical framework that brings out meanings lost to 'unhearing' criticism. With my second strategy, 'Ocular Rhetoric,' I further argue that film and novel imprint their audiences through input from the sense of sight or symbolic means that are visual. I scrutinize cinematic and prose scenes for auditory and visual implications of anxiety and fear, for ways that soundscapes, cinematography, and scenography manage an audience's engagement with a story. With 'Sequential Rhetoric,' my third analytical regime, I argue that the arrangement of the aural and visual constitutes a logos, or sequential argument, in which pathos, or affective response, is induced and fostered.

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My examiners, Dr. Abby Coykendall and Dr. Glenn Stillar, made critical and improving observations about my methodologies and findings. My dissertation has benefited

To Randy Allen Harris

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Chapter One

Introduction

When it is advisable that the audience should be frightened, the

orator must make them feel that they really are in danger of something,

pointing out that it has happened to others who were stronger than they

are, and is happening, or has happened, to people like themselves, at

the hands of unexpected people, in an unexpected form, and at an

unexpected time. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1383a7–13.

Societies organize their experiences in sights, sounds, and their temporal arrangement.

Cultures give intended rhythms to their sounds and images to communicate their moods,

impact one another, influence each other's will, propose remedies to their malaise, suggest

probabilities in their fate. To achieve these goals, rhetors of a society, its storytellers, and

filmmakers utilize sound, sight, and the sequence of these two objects of perception to

dominate the consciousness of their audiences. Each society at a particular time might

understand itself to be experiencing a particular mood that manifests itself in various aspects

of that society's culture; hence, in the examination of the tonality and rhythm of the sights

and sounds of a society, we might speak of the ways that a society deals with its concerns. I

aim to study American culture for manifestations of anxiety and fear, as symptomatic of the

emotions, in ways that American cinema and fiction, specifically the novel and film versions

of *The Road* and *Fight Club*, deal with society's concerns and anxieties.[1] A society that

understands itself in anxiety communicates the mood to its audience in the most persuasive

ways, making the audience feel their crises and terrors in a rhythm of sounds and images that

capture the spirit of the culture. I specifically argue that prose and cinematic stories of

anxiety make strategic use of sounds, imagery and their temporal arrangement to dominate

the consciousness of their audiences; however, rhetorical knowledge of these strategies has to

be based on a triangulating methodology that scrutinizes sounds, images and sequences for

their individual and collaborative function in moulding the affective response of the

audience. In the following, I clarify my use of the terms "anxiety" and "fear" in their

individuated meanings as they have been used in my analyses.

Anxiety and Fear: Definitions and Connections

Fear defines an unpleasant disturbance when a threat is *identified* and its source is

known to the suffering subject. But anxiety is objectless. No clear target can be found to

couple with anxiety. However, a generalized anxiety might later be identified in a specific

target. This last shift in anxiety is where rhetoric, filmmakers and writers may attend to the

anxieties of a society and shape stories such as apocalyptic, Zombie, alien, and dystopian

stories, including stories that a large number of people turn into psychos. Richard J. McNally

explains the distinction between fear and anxiety in this way: "Fear is a state triggered by an

immediate threat whose function is to mobilize the person to defend against the threat by

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[1] By America, in the entire dissertation, I mean the geographical USA, which is the
colloquial use of America.

freezing, fleeing, or fighting. Anxiety is a state triggered by the prospect of future threat whose function is to motivate the person to take steps to prevent the threat from materializing" (17). To illustrate this distinction, we might consider Aristotle's quotation in the epigraph. His use of "frighten" might imply fear in the beginning. But his description of threat by "unexpected people" in "unexpected time" makes the source of the threat, not identified, but unknown. This kind of reference to "fear," implies anxiety more than fear. In my arguments that follow, when I use "fear," I refer to cases in novels and movies that a threat can be specifically named and identified rather than just an impression of a threat that is generated before the actual threat is present in its sound, image, or combination of both.

For my analytical framework that locates anxiety and fear in the framework of persuasion, I use Aristotle's discussions of terror, in *Rhetoric,* as *proximity* of threats. Aristotle defined fear as a "disturbance arising from a mental (representation or) impression of coming evil" (1382a20–5). His definition allows an understanding of anxiety (and fear) based on a temporal, spatial and hierarchical relation between the subject and object of anxiety and fear. Aristotle's emphasis on "impression" of a "coming" threat both has the implication of temporal progress of a threat towards a subject and the mental response to it. Aristotle characterizes fear based on temporality (the sensation of evil being "not remote…but … imminent" [1382a25–30]), though spatial proximity of threats can be construed from his reference to imminence and coming; but Aristotle's discussion of proximity does not specify a known and identified threat and therefore his notion of proximity implies anxiety, which is associated with enigmatic situations, cued in nervous

tones, tunes, aural signals of sinister, and manipulations of imagery that suggest an impression of a threat.

As far as cinematic and prose narratives are concerned, temporal and spatial proximity are marked in the motion of sounds, imagery, and the cadence of sequence. This rhetorical interpretation must be understood in psychological terms. Fear, as formulated by Gretchen Reevy et al., involves a mobilization of energy (265). These psychologists use mobilization of energy to mean the impact of an external force on a subject such that the impact results in some responsive behavior. A threatening force comes as input to a subject's consciousness; the reacting subject manifests the impact as fight or flight. For my rhetorical purpose, I pursue the auditory, visual and sequential semiotics of anxiety and fear as manifested in the motion of energy in sounds, imagery and their sequence; for instance, the biological symptoms of anxiety and fear (higher heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration), depending on the competence of the rhetor, may be represented in linguistic, auditory, or visual components of an artifact.

For my framework, I explore cognitive and perceptual management of anxiety and fear in ways that the mood of a cinematic or prose story is extended to the readers and spectators. In *Rhetoric,* Aristotle speaks of inducing fear through strategies that evoke listeners to feel that they are actually subjected to some danger (1383a7–13). While Aristotle refers to storytelling and orations, he does not engage in a systematic study of the auditory or visual and sequential dimensions of these fear mongering strategies. I argue that a persuasive narrative must alter the consciousness of an audience by creating an illusion of presence of

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threat; rhetors must demonstrate a threat proximate and imminent to a subject. Perelman and

Olbtechts-Tyteca's (1969) idea of rhetorical "presence" is a generalization of Aristotle's

observation on impacting the consciousness of audiences. Perelman and Olbtechts-Tyteca

postulate that persuasion can be effectively attained through infiltrating "the consciousness of

the audience" by enhancing "the presence of elements" (118). Perelman (1979) presents the

notion of "presence" as a form of argument, arguing that an orator "must select certain

elements on which he focuses attention by endowing them, as it were, with a 'presence'"

(17). The rhetor or orator might choose from the "body of opinion, convictions,

commitments" that an audience has already accepted or from "the elements left out" (17). So,

a novelist or filmmaker is not limited merely to the concerns and anxieties that are deeply

seated in the psyche of the audience. Novels and movies might create, displace, or distort an

audiences' appetites. A novelist, filmmaker or any other rhetor might "push into the

background" certain ideas, emotions and desires and give prominence to others instead.[2] Like

Kenneth Burke's argument in "Terministic Screens," that attention might be directed in one

direction [more] than other, Perelman argues that "[s]uch a choice implicitely sets a value on

some aspects of reality [more] than others" (17). Now to connect my arguments of the

rhetorical use of anxiety, a rhetor must shift the attention of an audience to their anxiety by

selecting themes, sounds, imagery and rhythms of anxiety. Perelman notes that "[t]hings

present, things near to us in space and time, act directly on our sensibility" (17). Proximity

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[2] By rhetors other than novelists or filmmakers, I mean poets and songwriters such as
Leonard Cohen who, especially in his album *The Future,* uses insights from real events and
Kabbalistic sources to create songs with prophetic and menacing tone.

bestows presence. According to Perelman, "The orator's endeavors often consist, however, in bringing to mind things that are not immediately present" (17). In terms of argument and how a rhetor reasons with an audience, Perelman cites Francis Bacon that "[a]nd therefore the present filling the imagination more, reason is commonly vanquished; but after that force of eloquence and persuasion hath made things future and remote as present, then upon the revolt of the imagination reason prevaileth" (17). Perelman explains that presence is created by "all kinds of literary techniques and a number of rhetorical figures" (17). While Perelman's application of presence is limited to the written text, I extend the concept to film and I delineate presence through a variety of prose and cinematic potentials and devices. If there is a semiotic sign of an approaching threat, the implication is that either the narrator or the characters have perceived the motion of the threat towards them; its sounds, imagery and sequence must create a semblance of the emotional state and ideally stretch it to the audience. I do these inquiries to find out how co-affection, identification and sympathy or just emotional similarity are induced. Through several other influences, such as Adam Smith's notion of "sympathy," Edmund Burke's notion of "terror," Kenneth Burke's "psychology of form," "psychology of audience," and "progressive form," and especially through the findings of cognitive science, I locate anxiety and fear inside an analytical framework of persuasion.

Why Study Anxiety and Fear?

Anxiety and fear are highly rhetorical and thinkers at least as early as Plato have spoken of fear in relationship with politics, reasoning and freedom. Plato, in the *Republic,*

was thinking of a polis in which free men had to be trained "to fear slavery more than death" (387b3–4). This Platonic anxiety of dictatorship is realized in *Fight Club's* narrator who, in desire to overcome capitalism, hallucinates a terroristic revolution based on terrorizing other citizens. This kind of anxiety, in the argument of *Fight Club*, can make people go psychos and terrorists.

Fear has got the attention of philosophers who favored reason over emotion. For instance, Edmund Burke's observation that fear "effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning" (57) and Michel de Montaigne's impression of fear as a motion in humans that "throws our judgement off its proper balance" (69), both show fear as a barrier to rationality. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his First Inaugural Address, stated that fear is a "nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror" (*Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States*). In fact, his specification of fear by "nameless" qualifies anxiety; for instance, the anxiety of losing masculinity and spiritual independence that leads *Fight Club* men to engage in violence and terror. The above philosophers and politicians speak of fear as an enemy of reason, but they do not offer a system of knowing and examining fear or anxiety. I use their insights to foreground the need in humanities to bring anxiety and fear to methodological systems of study and my aim is to provide strategies of criticizing anxiety and fear as realized in cultural artifacts.

Although fear is the alpha emotion in the work of Charles Darwin, Carl Lange and William James, as Jerome Kagan argues (14), anxiety is omnipresent. As Darwin notes, fear has been "expressed from an extremely remote period, in almost the same manner as it is

now in man" (362); but anxiety, depending on the dominant forces of a society and the rhetors' intentions can be shifted and guided to various targets. And while our historical moment has been characterized by many other thinkers as a "culture of fear" (Frank Furedi: 1997, 2005, 2006, 2007; Barry Glassner: 1999), other critics define it as a "culture of anxiety" (Epstein: 1994; Kobialka: 2007). As Furedi (2007) points out how fear has "dominate[d] the public imagination, and that politics has become a contest of doom-mongering" (*Spiked*). But while these subjects of doom-mongering might include violence, terrorist attacks, mass murders, epidemics, global warming, internet surveillance, and economic failure and so on, rhetors can shift them to any target in various forms of expression in culture, from music to painting, to fiction and to cinema. My argument on anxiety is that these concerns are sometimes shifted by storytellers to themes other than identified fears, sometimes with a prophetic tone that portends a future of bloodshed, violence, drought, and extinction.

While anxiety and fear are known to rob the mind of its intellectual faculties, I argue that instead of criticizing narratives of anxiety and fear as abusive and manipulative we should study them as symbolic ways that a culture deals with the emotions. Studies of anxiety should explore the logic of anxiety with at least two critical orientations: first, to find out how cultural artifacts represent the emotional state of the era in ways that sounds, images, and sequences are deployed to the representation of anxiety. Secondly, rhetorical enquiry should explore how utilizing the aural, the ocular, and sequential as conduits shapes our consciousness of anxiety.

If the men of *Fight Club* are in anxiety of losing their masculinity or their spiritual freedom, and therefore lose living fully, if they need to overcome that anxiety, the argument can also be made that *Fight Club* as an artifact is itself symptomatic of domestic anxiety in America, namely in its imagination of, not foreign terror, but terror arising from Americans themselves who might be bombing the superstructures of capitalism and civilization; and if the good guys of *The Road* hide from one another, therefore becoming weaker against the degenerated cannibals, an argument can also be made that *The Road* is symptomatic of popular myths of apocalypse and their attendant terrors of atomic annihilation, environmental disaster, catastrophic pandemics, and the like. Whether it is a story of walking dead, Zombies, nuclear destruction, or wildly contagious diseases, 'road narratives' (e.g., *The Road*) and 'cult stories' (e.g., *Fight Club*) show a problematic power dynamic within which sometimes people's lives and actions are influenced by anxiety and fear that they have of other people. Within the stories, people are driven to moral deeds and social relations, because of their anxiety and fear, that they would otherwise refuse. Narratives of anxiety relate to our current societies, and a rhetorical study of anxiety and its instantiation in some specific fears can explain how cultural artifacts and society reciprocally inform and shape one another. One needs only to watch the appeal of fear and anxiety in many 21st-century elections that feed on people's anxieties of disease, economic and environmental concerns and immigrants taking jobs from the 'old stock' nationals.

My dissertation applies a rhetorical analysis of anxiety in America in the decade before and the decade after 9/11. I apply my critical analysis to two popular novels and their film

adaptations: *Fight Club* by Chuck Palahniuk (1997) and its film adaptation by David Fincher (1999), and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006) and its film adaptation by John Hillcoat (2009).

Texts: Case Studies

***Fight Club*: Novel and Film**

Fight Club is the story of a young American man torn emotionally into two halves: one half of this personality sticks a gun in the mouth of the other half and one bombs the symbols of greed and consumerism that the other half desires and represents. James R. Giles describes *Fight Club* as "a satire of excessive American consumerism," an "exploration of fascist ideology" and a "cult of masculinity" (24). The emotional impetus of the story may be summarized in the words of the narrator himself:

> I hated my life. I was tired and bored with my job and my
>
> furniture, and I couldn't see any way to change things … I felt
>
> trapped ... I wanted a way out of my tiny life…I took a
>
> vacation. I fell asleep on the beach, and when I woke up there
>
> was Tyler Durden. (Palahniuk 172–3)

As a consequence, the narrator loses sleep, suffers with anxiety, and his mind becomes a theatre of imminent dangers. He joins support groups for people with cancer where he is exposed to more deaths and, as a result, his anxiety is further intensified to a point that he realizes that life is precarious and could end at any moment. In his confrontation with the

anxiety of death, the narrator realizes that the proper solution to his weakened soul and his slavery to office work and home fashion is to fight regimes of false happiness and consumerism, when he identifies with his stronger alter ego. The internal conflict is externalized through vandalism and destruction of the manifestations of capitalism. David Fincher's movie adaptation employs cinematic strategies to recreate the tormented psyche of the narrator by externalizing his anxiety-driven hallucinations in disordered episodes. The narrator's contending personalities are projected on two actors. *Fight Club* has been criticized vastly by many critics, most of whom approaches the story from either a Marxist or Marxist-influenced perspective. A pioneer of these critics is Henry Giroux (2006) who has criticized the movie *Fight Club* for its misogyny and its collaboration with the consumer culture it tries to criticize. Graham Matthews is one such critic who argues that "*Fight Club* is first and foremost a satiric critique of contemporary consumer culture" (59). These critics centralize ideological arguments against capitalist and misogynist subtexts in *Fight Club*, but they do not provide explanations for the storytelling principles and ways that the novel and the movie treat the psyche of the narrator and the audience's engagement with the artifacts. My criticism aims to explore anxiety and instances of fear in *Fight Club* through two main analytical orientations. First, I account for the psychological state of the narrator through his motives in connection with the body of the myth to which the story links deeply. Second, I scrutinize *Fight Club* for all its ingredients, namely sounds, imagery and sequence to reveal meanings that the story renders allegorically and through the senses of sight and hearing. Colin Harrison's observations on American culture in the 1990s sheds light on the anxiety

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that shaped both American society and its cinematic representation. Harrison locates *Fight Club* among popular cinematic artifacts that "reflected and amplified … anxieties," related to race, gender, and class, that were caused by the "broad social changes," such as "the decline of manufacturing, the rise of service industries, the proliferation of different forms of family, the relative decline in male-headed households and the emergence of male-oriented consumerism" (16). Such criticisms, despite their validity, do not engage the rhetorical and cognitive methods that cinematic and prose artifacts reflect anxieties. Harrison's comment on the cultural productions of the era that showed a "desire to return to a pre-feminist age of gender certainties" can be further explored in my reading of *Fight Club* through the mythos of internal war (16). I find Matthews' criticism close to my reading. He pursues some deeper meanings in light of Lacan's concept of the Symbolic. The Symbolic is the laws, the norms, and codes that "shape the sociocultural order" (60). Probing into the causality between the Symbolic and the Real, Mathews argues that "individual subjects are produced by discourse," that is they are subjugated to the Symbolic (60). Utilizing Lacan's terms and concepts, Matthews presents that the subjugated individuals "manage to retain some capacity for resistance" (60). While Matthews' criticism locates the tormented subjectivity of *Fight Club*'s narrator within psychoanalytical terms, I argue that the narrator's malaise can be mapped into the broader structure of the myth of the Fall, although both forms of readings reveal that the motive for "change," which I read as "ascent" involves violence. Reading *Fight Club* in light of myth can explain the complexity and conflict in human motives that are lost in Giroux's and other Marxists' analyses. And while a psychoanalytic criticism such

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as Matthews' sharply notices that "[d]esire and loss are highly significant themes throughout *Fight Club*" (60), it fails to notice that the tormenting dynamism of desire/loss is subjected to an internal war that then extends to the social, in forms of vandalism, arson, mischief, sacrifice, and terror. My reading of *Fight Club* in the framework of allegorical does not ignore the repressive force of socioeconomic systems that Marxists or psychoanalysts believe enslave humans; I argue that reading *Fight Club* in terms of psychomachia (more fully explained below) can explain other forms of break with dominant signifying systems, such as religious or secular dictatorships. While most of the existing criticism of *Fight Club* recognizes the emergence of Tyler Durden, the narrator's double, and his fight club as, to use Matthews' terms, "a radically destabilizing agency" (63), the role of fear in the turn of the plot towards murdering Tyler is unrecognized or under-appreciated. Matthews recognizes the "uncertainty" in *Fight Club* that is the result of the lack of "a feeling of permanence and stability" in the ego, but his criticism fails to account for this uncertainty as anxiety. Neither does such criticism have the analytical/methodological tools that can explain how these uncertainties and anxieties are framed in each medium, namely prose and cinema. I study the emergence of Tyler Durden and fight club that other critics, such as James R. Giles, have read in terms of "disintegration" of identity (23), through the concept of psychomachia, explained fully below. Through the voice of his double that he is a "decaying organic matter" and part of a "compost pile" of other subjugated humans (134), *Fight Club*'s narrator is suffering with anxiety of being wasted and anxiety of dying any moment. I argue that in the contention between the two subjectivities of the narrator, fear and anxiety shape a narrative

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that can be mapped into the mythos of internal war as a result of the guilt of failure and the motive for ascending the existential condition.

The Road: Novel and Film

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is the post-apocalyptic story of a father who risks his life along a road in America to save his boy from starvation, despair, and deadly adversaries. The story imagines America destroyed by an unsaid cause, turning the country into a wasteland where large groups have degenerated to cannibalism from whom others must always hide in anxiety or flee in fear, always in search of food and temporary shelter.

The existing criticism of *The Road* is not as extensive as the criticism written on *Fight Club* or McCarthy's other novels. The rarity is more regrettable with the movie *The Road.* Criticism on *The Road* has engaged the story with general observations on the concept of "quest," the linguistic style of the novel, its mirroring of the apocalyptic chaos in a deteriorated language that escapes syntax and a narrative that fuses the mind of the narrator with that of the father-protagonist. None of these analyses make anxiety central to the storytelling principles of *The Road*, in ways that its aural, ocular and sequential trajectories contribute to the making of the story, its relation to the body of myth and American anxieties after 9/11. I find John Cant's reading of *The Road* (novel), as "a critique of American Exceptionalism" (276), insightful in the relationship that Cant finds between the story and McCarthy's anxiety-driven imagination of the future of America. In stating that the fictional lies of *The Road* reveal "the faith in the future" is "illusory" (276), Cant suggests that the imagination of the apocalypse contradicts the narratives of certainty. Similarly, Mary

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Manjikian states that "the apocalyptic novel represents a direct affront to the narrative of American exceptionalism. The apocalyptic novel is thus both a vehicle for creating new discourse and interrogating old myths" (158). I read this "new discourse" in American fiction as symptomatic of anxiety, and while I agree with Cant's observation that the novel is symptomatic of uncertainty, my reading scrutinizes fear and anxiety in a more fully detailed analysis of all media through which the cinematic and the prose versions of *The Road* become expressive of anxiety. For a beginning we might look at the following passage, as the spectacle of a vulnerable America that McCarthy imagines in *The Road*. The scene is focalized from the perspective of the father at some point in his journey towards South of America in search of a refuge from famine and cannibalism:

> Years later he'd stood in the charred ruins of a library where blackened books lay in pools of water. Shelves tipped over. Some rage at the lies arranged in their thousands row on row. He picked up one of the books and thumbed through the heavy bloated pages. He'd not have thought the value of the smallest thing predicated on a world to come. It surprised him. That the space which these things occupied was itself an expectation. (41)

McCarthy's impression that books lie to Americans, fashioning a myth with which they feel exceptional and invulnerable, is symptomatic of the anxieties that plagues us with the dawn of terrorism. Although I am not basing my criticism on biographical information, we cannot ignore McCarthy's own response to 9/11 when in an interview with David Kushner he said "I think about John [his son] all the time and what the world's going to be like … It's going to

be a very troubled place" (David Kushner). McCarthy's anxiety resonates with Mary

Manjikian's interpretation of the apocalyptic fiction: "9/11 made us aware of something

much greater than that since it forced us to interrogate the narrative of America's place in

history, and to question whether the trajectory which we had planned for America is as

simple, as sure, and as easy as we had previously posited" (158–59).

Some critics have commented on the style of *The Road* and their observations can

support my interpretations of the ways that text of *The Road* generates a persuasive novel of

anxiety and fear. For instance, Robert C. Clark interpretation of *The Road* as a novel with

"poetic style characteristic of works of American Minimalism" implies that *The Road*

expresses condensed meanings that must be drawn through a vigorous examination of the

sound, imagery, and their sequential arrangement. In my focus on the detailed explication of

the sounds and imagery I argue that the film and novel of *The Road* use these trajectories to

touch the imagination, the body and sensation through the visual and auditory representations

of the post-apocalyptic oblivion, deprivation, chaos, and prevalence of death and danger that

interrogate the so-called American exceptionalism. One such example is the following

description in which all signs of stability are gone and a "late" world is afloat on the wind:

"[t]he ashes of the late world were carried on the bleak and temporal winds to and fro in the

void … Unsupported in the ashen air" (10). As a quest narrative, *The Road,* in its cinematic

and prose realizations, attends to anxiety through the impressions of the senses and polarizes

a world of good and evil in which the good is always disempowered against various

oppressive forces, from sublime darkness to cold, starvation and cannibalism. Both the novel

and the movie stage the quest in a logic of anticipation of threat, encounter with threat, and crippling anxiety and fear through the arrangement of auditory and visual elements that keep anxiety and fear always present in the consciousness of the readers and film viewers. In the following, I shall lay the foundation for a rhetorical framework with which I explore quest mythos and psychomachia with centrality of anxiety as realized in visual, auditory and sequential dimensions of *The Road* and *Fight Club.*

A rhetorician should explore the psychodynamism of anxiety and fear in terms of input (the external causes) and output (the internal effects as manifest on the mind, body, and action of a character) as manifested in various modes of expression in the artifact. As an illustration, we might consider the movie *Fight Club*'s 'sacrifice scene' where Tyler-putting-a-gun-to-Raymond's-head is the fear input for Raymond and the output is Raymond's terror manifested in several ways, such as his verbal disorder, sobbing, facial expressions, and total submission. We must address another important enquiry that shapes rhetorical analysis: sometimes readers and film viewers may perceive fears and anxieties more exaggerated, more intensified and more enhanced than they have been perceived by characters; furthermore, it is not uncommon that readers and spectators become aware and impacted by fears and anxieties that characters have not even experienced.

With this enquiry, I intend to develop my central argument through two subarguments. First, I introduce the concept of psychomachia, an internal war of the soul, to reveal the allegorical dimensions of *Fight Club.* Second, I deploy Northrop Frye's (1976; 1969) and Joseph Campbell's (1968) delineation of quest (agon-pathos-anagnorisis or departure-

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initiation-return) to show that *The Road* contains a quest narrative: a father endures struggles in the deadly post-apocalyptic world to save his boy and regenerate goodness despite several adversaries. I bring the two subarguments together via the centrality of fear and anxiety. I advance the arguments through three methodologies in three chapters. First, in my 'Aural Rhetoric' chapter, I explore representations of psychomachia and quest as framed in sounds, noises and voices, in both prose and cinematic realizations. Second, in my 'Ocular Rhetoric' chapter, I study visual representations of psychomachia and quest in both cinematic and prose media. Finally, in my 'Sequential Rhetoric' chapter, I explore how cinematic and prose media manage fear and anxiety in sequential arrangement, by which I mean that both of the emotions are outcomes of sequential ordering and that in the narratives anxiety comes before fear and becomes generalized in the characters and the audience after some threat is identified and therefore the threat becomes a sinister omnipresent danger that might be near at any moment.

My dissertation contributes to rhetorical theory and critical methodology by formulating an analytical framework that utilizes the senses of vision and hearing together for a richer meaning. The dissertation brings together insights from philosophy, psychology, sound studies, visual rhetoric, and narratology, always with a cognitive perspective, to speak of the alpha emotion (fear) and its diffuse correlate (anxiety). It is overcoming of anxiety and fear by making them objects of knowledge that the greatest philosophers have called upon critics to understand in order to train their societies to learn how to cope. My methodologies, explained in the next section, in the study of anxiety and fear through sounds, imagery, and

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narrative offer a workable rhetorical strategy of meaning-enquiry in both literary criticism and film studies.

Methodologies: Aural Rhetoric, Ocular Rhetoric, and Sequential Rhetoric

I use analytical apparatuses to develop my arguments of psychomachia and quest with a focus on the centrality anxiety, keyed to three rhetorical dimensions: sound, image, and sequence. Each receives its own chapter. Two of these methodologies treat the senses of hearing and sight and therefore the aim of my analyses is to explain the importance of perception of stories of anxieties by the senses. However, while 'sequence' is not in any way a sensory experience, my arguments on sequence (which include temporality and narrative) explain *perception* of the passage of time sequentially. And while 'hearing' is a sense that perceives sound and 'sight' perceives images, the chapter on sequence argues that the sounds and imagery of an artifact are perceived sequentially. Anxiety in any narrative form is received by the audience in the sequence of sounds and imagery that frame the perception of anxiety.

Aural Rhetoric

My criticism of sound is influenced by the so-called "auditory turn" theorists who argue that sound criticism offers meaning that can be lost in non-auditory criticism (Don Ihde 13; Jacques Attali 3; Bruce R. Smith 129). Sounds signify indexically, iconically, or symbolically; they are markers of events, motions, actions, and communications between characters. I call my approach "Aural Rhetoric" as the critical framework for the study of the

suasiveness of sounds. The approach employs a strategy I call *sonoanalysis,* an investigative method for the close reading of individual sounds and those in combination onscreen, offscreen, and onpage. Aural rhetoric must provide answers for foundational enquiry questions: "Who hears whom?", "What is heard?", "What are the hearer's response to the sounds?", and "How are the sounds represented?" These questions shape two analytic orientations: the interpretation of diegetic sounds (which characters hear) and the interpretation of added sounds (non-diegetic or extra-diegetic sounds, which the characters do not hear). Through the two subarguments of the psychomachia in *Fight Club* and the quest-narrative in *The Road*, I demonstrate that criticism of sound has long been sacrificed to ocularcentric epistemology. Film viewers, but also readers, experience aesthetic worlds audially/aurally as well as visually. In film, the sounds and images are directly represented whereas in prose they are cognitively reconstructed. Based on my sound criticism, I argue that sounds shape *audioscenes*, or complete audiovisual impressions of situations, where meaning resides.

My approach to Aural Rhetoric arises from working with a loose and ad hoc confederacy of thinkers. This confederacy includes an informal school of philosophers whose general assertions on the significance of sound, noise and voice have shaped my perspective of sound: sound should be made a critical object in both cinematic and prose texts for broader rhetorical meaning. These thinkers include Jacques Attali, who believed that the ignorance of sounds results in the reduction and restriction of meaning, and Don Ihde and Bruce R. Smith, who argue that sound criticism opens up new doors of perception for texts. To this group, we

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can add T. S. Eliot and his notion of "auditory imagination," by which he meant "the feeling for syllable and rhythm" (118). Eliot did not really develop a strategy to apply to texts, but his impact on my thought is profound, with his emphasis on perceiving literary texts as inherently sonic—a swarm of syllables, words, intonations and rhythms. Reading is not merely imagining the sonic experience of characters; readers may hear sounds that are part of the sonic composite of the text itself.

Michel Chion's writings on sound and voice, especially his notion of acousmatic sounds and vococentrism in movies, have also been important in shaping my criticism of sounds. They are a major influence on my criticism of film soundscapes, but I also adapt his observations to sound in prose as well. I have also benefited from I. A. Richards' notion of "imaginal" sound and onomatopoeia, especially in Benjamin Hrushovski's refinement of his concepts. Hrushovski also adds the valuable concept of "patterned sounds".

A problem with speaking of sound in two materially different media (film and prose) relates to the nature of sound. Film plays to the biological ear. A book does not. Throughout the history of literary criticism, theorists have spoken of the auditory poetics, accounting for sonic strategies such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, isocolon, onomatopoeia, and other phonologically rhetorical moves. But my sound criticism argues that textual sonics are shaped by rhythmic phrases and patterns, typography as a realization of voice, as well as descriptions of diegetic sounds, auditory events, and dialogic enunciation.

I also explore voice for meaning in both film and prose. For this objective, I argue that voice is performed, like an instrument, with acoustic qualities (amplitude, timbre, prosody,

and tone) to deliver intended meaning. My voice criticism is influenced by Quintilian, Chion, and Murray Schafer. Schafer does not give a theory of voice, but I enrich my understanding of the rhetorical meaning of voice based on his observation that listening is hierarchical (in Bull and Back 21); I utilize his insight to interpret the dynamism of domination in a close reading of voice, and I develop this thesis in light of Quintilian's characterization of "good voice" (11.3.3). Voice induces assent, dissent, and subjugation because of the acoustic qualities that frame power dynamics. Precisely, I explore Quintilian's and Schafer's hierarchical notion of voice in *Fight Club*, in Tyler's masculine, certain, and narcissistic rhetoric (albeit masked in altruistic terms), and in his use of a megaphone to emancipate his "space monkeys" from consumerism while subjugating them to his revolution. I read voice in prose for acoustic qualities, in utterance-verbs such as shouting, whispering, whistling, sobbing, and screaming for impressions of amplitude and attitude. Part of this analysis is impacted by Chion's notion of vococentrism, by which he argues that in any audio-mix the mere presence of a human voice generates a hierarchy of perception. I coin the term *voice-in-extremis* with which I explore the appeal of fear in human vocal behavior in confrontation with overwhelming threats or at the point of extermination. The term can be applied to both prose and cinematic to cases of shouting, crying out, and screaming, as well as to moaning, and grunting at moments of horror, such as in *The Road*'s representation of life at the point of extinction and *Fight Club*'s ritualistic intake of pain and reclamation of masculinity and power. I link the implications of the non-verbal linguistic signs in voice-in-extremis to Aristotle's definition of pathos as representations of "deaths on stage" (*Poetics* 1452b11), but

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challenge Aristotle's phrase as inherently ocucentric. Voice criticism has started to employ research on the brain and ways that the brain processes auditory information. In light of Jeanne Fahnestock's argument that "rhetorical" capacities of language can be explored by cognitive science (162–166), I investigate features of speech that shape readers' responses to text. For instance, I use Christopher I. Petkov and Pascal Belin's neurocognitive research which finds that direct quotation affects regions of the brain that activate the inner voices (R155). I deploy this enquiry to ways that fiction induces sympathy and identification through discursive methods.

Edmund Burke is one of the pioneers of the theory of terror whose observations on sound and its association with terror and the sublime is regrettably absent in the rhetorical study of sound. My methodology of sound displays a thread of analysis throughout that is impacted by the connections that Burke makes between acoustics, obscurity, suddenness, and terror. I have linked Burke's acoustics to Chion's notion of acousmatic, or unseen sounds, to explain auralities of anxiety in *The Road*. Kenneth Burke also touched on cognitive aspects of sound in terror and sympathy experienced in a psychodynamic of "substitution" when we put ourselves into the place of the other (1968: 34). Based on these observations, I argue that sympathy needs to be seen not just in ocularcentric tradition, but in auditory terms, when sympathy is induced by shared aural-points with 'others.'

Ocular Rhetoric

My second methodological tool in the study of anxiety and fear attends to the visual strategies by which writers and filmmakers signal fear and anxiety and induce those emotions

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in readers and film viewers. I have developed a framework shaped by two sets of sources. First, I formulate a visual analysis strategy that draws on my insights from Aristotle and Perelman and Olbtechts-Tyteca's framework of persuasion. Based on that theoretical framework, that anxiety and fear are the impression of the presence of a near danger, I explore ways that visual strategies shape the affective atmosphere of a movie or novel and techniques by which the mood of the story is extended to the readers and spectators. Also in this set are Kenneth Burke's observations on the psychology of form and identification, Adam Smith's and Aristotle's related notions of sympathy, and Edmund Burke's emphasis on obscurity and enigma in perception of terror. The second set of theories that shape my visual methodology comes from film studies and visual semiotics, including cinematographic concepts (cutting, lighting, framing, rhythm and tempo), studies of point of view and gaze, the latter through concepts of "vector" and "reactional phenomenon" discussed by Kress and Leeuwen (46–59).

My visual analysis bridges between prose and cinema with insights into each that enrich the understanding of the other. For instance, I find Edmund Burke's observation of the bodily semiotics of fear as a pain traceable in both prose and cinema:

> [a] man who suffers under violent bodily pain, (I suppose the
> most violent, because the effect may be the more obvious), I
> say a man in great pain has his teeth set, his eyebrows are
> violently contracted, his forehead is wrinkled, his eyes are
> dragged inwards, and rolled with great vehemence, his hair

stands on end, the voice is forced out in short shrieks and

groans, and the whole fabric totters. (131)

We might consider how from the earliest days of written literature authors have demonstrated

anxiety and fear linguistically. Regarding prose, I argue that fear and anxiety become present

in the consciousness of readers through a cognitive visual process, while in movies, this

reception is direct. We might further compare visual perception of multiple close-ups on an

onscreen image in *Fight Club* where Tyler sticks a gun into Jack's[3] mouth with recurrent

sentences in the novel: "Tyler's pushing a gun in my mouth" (11); "Tyler and me at the edge

of the roof, the gun in my mouth"; "Tyler [is holding] a gun in my mouth" (204). The novel's

image works in a more mediated "semantic" and symbolic way, but the movie's image is

directly received. With such examples, I argue that linguistic signs become markers that

enact an imagistic impression in the minds of the readers and, like movies, novels are capable

of filling the consciousness of readers with imagistic impressions.

My theory of image in prose is influenced by the tradition of philosophy that argues for

inner imagery. John Locke, for instance, argues that words are marks of ideas and that in the

absence of actual entities words communicate ideas between minds (405); similarly, David

Hume argues that humans "use words for ideas" (61) and he further argues that in the

absence of things, the linguistic sign activates imaginative impressions of them in the mind

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[3] Neither the novel nor the film of *Fight Club* does name the narrator directly. The novel uses
a series of "I-am-Joe's X," (such as "I am Joe's Shrinking Groin" and "I am Joe's Cold
Sweat") which the movie changes to "I-am-Jack's X." Several critics have chosen to use Jack
for reference to the narrator and I use the same name to refer to the narrator in both the novel
and the movie.

(61–62; 93). However, the modern theory of literary image begins with the notion of the

novel as spectacular, which Percy Lubbock adapted from Henry James. The novel as

spectacle implies a textual ocularity that handles readers' imaginal eye by linguistic means

that set into imagistic rhythms. Textual ocularity allows us to import visual terms from film

studies to conceptualize how prose regulates readers' visual-cognitive perception in ways

similar to how film uses gaze, shifts of angles, distance, lighting and other cinematic tools

("Don't look back there. Look at me," the father says to his son in *The Road* [00:14:04]; the

cannibal "looked at the gun and he looked at the boy," the narrator tells us [63]). One way

that I have developed my imagistic impression of prose is an understanding of the novel, not

as a static sequence of linguistic units, but in terms of a "wordshow" in which images are set

in motion.

To sum up my image methodology, I argue that a close reading of imagery in films and

novels brings to light meanings that are absent in sounds and at other times manipulated by

sounds and sequence. Anxiety and fear studies, rhetorical theory, and the study of film and

novel together around the concepts of psychomachia and quest can explain the presence of

fear and anxiety, their impact on our lives and culture's dealing with them.

Sequential Rhetoric

The third analytical regime with which I explore the psychomachia of *Fight Club* and

the quest structure of *The Road* (both under the guiding themes of fear and anxiety) is

through sequential rhetoric. I first arrive at an account of sequence through the existing

definitions of narrative that suits both cinematic and prose narratives, defining narrative as a

sequencing machine or trajectory, its working material being events and states materialized in both sounds and imagery. Narratives arrange sounds and images for a desired meaning. In this way, a sequential rhetoric also contrives the aural and ocular rhetoric of a narrative artifact. In doing so, each narrative serves a genre. Psychomachia and quest narratives centralize fear and anxiety because they both contain conflicts whose resolution is compelling; they involve struggles, either with the self or with external, sometimes deadly, others. *Fight Club* and *The Road,* because they constitute a logic of overcoming anxiety and fear, both magnify terror and contain a high degree of eventfulness (imminent and drastic changes in status quo); they also contain enigma and obscurity in a rhythm shaped by struggle. My rhetoric of sequence methodology, therefore, leverages an Aristotelian tradition that examines narrative in terms of sequence and emotion. For the purpose of my dissertation, I read sequentiality as logos that represents and induces pathos. However, while prose sequence arranges the symbolic (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters) to conjure up sequences of events in the minds of readers, cinematic narrative arranges the iconic and the indexical (objects of the senses, such as images and sounds).

A second major concept in my sequential rhetoric methodology is what Wolf Schmid (2010) explains as eventfulness, which is the possibility of a drastic change in the status quo or the direction of events. A narrative of anxiety and fear deploys sequential ordering to generate a rhythm of anxiety and fear. *Fight Club*'s psychomachia narrative utilizes sequencing of eventfulness for a mimesis of a war in the psyche, to mimic the internal terror of its narrator. And *The Road*'s quest uses sequential logic of eventfulness to give a mimesis

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of the father's anxiety in a rhythm of anticipation, struggle, and overcoming. In light of Schmid's observations, I stress the communicating role of narrator as "a mediating authority" that creates an "immediate presentation of reality" (1). A plotted sequence also implies telos—it has a direction, whether progressive or regressive/degenerative—driven by causality and figures of linkage, which narratives of anxiety and fear utilize to suggest transformation or change in the fate of characters or the status quo. Kenneth Burke (1968) influences my analysis of teleological form. Burke noticed that textual form plays to audience psychology in his assertion that form is "the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite" (31). I further analyze the generation of fear and anxiety as a product of figures of linkage, particularly through metonymy, which is a tool that, as Peter Brooks explains, links a signifying chain in a movement towards a desired outcome (91). In a number of examples, I illustrate how certain objects function in the rhythm of the sequence as indications of a near threat.

I pointed out above that the working materials of sequentiality are sounds and images. I use my critical analysis from the chapters "Sound" and "Imagery" to examine ways that cinema and prose manage their audience's senses of sight and hearing in a phenomenon I call attentional management. Managing attention may be attained by the creation of unrealities that readers and spectators take as reality. *The Road*, for instance, intensifies our perception of the father's anxiety by suggesting motion and the presence of threats that actually do not exist. *Fight Club* generates a rhythm, in both the novel and the movie, that mimics the narrator's hallucinations. Sometimes attentional management is achieved by the manipulation

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of duration-and-movement-unreality, for example, through the choice of camera angles and frames that alter our perception of what goes on. At other times, these movements evoke in the audience the illusion of being affected, making them feel as if they are directly involved in the action. I call the whole phenomenon *sensory proximity*, to mean a manipulation of perspective that splices the viewer's perspective with the character's perception because of closer frames, rapid cuts, and audio amplification. I deploy this observation to *Fight Club*'s peak of psychomachic moments, when Jack's mental split and contending motives shape tension in the sequential rhetoric. I also apply the observation to *The Road*'s moments of high anxiety, when the protagonists are shown to be in danger of cannibals, struggle to save themselves and eventually overcome the precarious situation. I argue that in scenes with high tension, sequences are arrangements of sounds and images, as signals of the emotional atmosphere of a story, which the sequencing machine extends to the readers and viewers: the consciousness of the story is made the content of the consciousness of the audience. Therefore, the rhetoric of sequence, or the study of narrative, needs to be a combinatory form of analysis that brings the explorations of "aural rhetoric" and "ocular rhetoric" into the analysis of the persuasiveness of the sequence.

On a final note, I argue that *Fight Club*'s and *The Road*'s appeal to fear and anxiety is managed partly by the cinematic voice-overs and prose narrators. In *Fight Club*, both the voice-over narrator and the prose narrator are unaware of the psychomachic hallucinations, and these make readers and viewers adapt to the consciousness of the narrator. In *The Road*, the voice-over narrator's words make readers and viewers adopt the narrator's anxiety. I

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advance this line of argument through Sarah Kozloff's observation that voice-over can impose the narrator's gloss over consciousness of the story (13). In case of voice-overs the border between showing and telling can collapse; for instance, *The Road*'s voice-over's words can be read for ways that they activate imagery in the mind of viewers even when there are no iconic referents for those images onscreen. The voice-over's mention of 'refugee,' armed 'gangs,' and cannibalism can function imagistically and while there is no visual content for the linguistic signs on the screen, the rhythm of the movie is impacted by the father's anxiety.

Overview

My dissertation is comprised of seven chapters. In chapters two and three I establish a framework for two literary and cinematic moulds: chapter two, taking *Fight Club* as object text, defines "psychomachia" as an allegorical mould that can explain internal war, psychological duality, and contending motives of a discontent individual who struggles to recover identity. In chapter three, taking *The Road* as case study, I examine the "quest" mythos within the context of the so-called post-apocalyptic genre. In examining the stories through the two moulds, I study *Fight Club* and *The Road* in connection with the body of myth and contemporary American anxieties. The framework allows me to argue with the existing criticism on *The Road* and *Fight Club*. In the other three analytical chapters, (and followed in turn by a concluding chapter), I explore the argument that narratives of anxiety dominate the audience's consciousness through auditory and visual strategies contrived for desired outcomes. I apply arguments and methodologies to *Fight Club* and *The Road*, each as

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movie and as novel. Chapter four, "Aural Rhetoric," influenced by the auditory turn in humanities, challenges the ocucentric tradition of criticism and argues that sounds and noises generate meanings that can be construed merely through sound studies. To enquire into the auditory dimension of cinematic and prose artifacts, I provide an analytical framework, a practical methodology, I call "Aural Rhetoric" as a general interpretative strategy for the study of persuasiveness of sound, noise, and voice. I advance the interpretive framework through an anatomic strategy I call sonoanalysis, by which I identify sounds and noise for their acoustic properties in detachment from and in combination with other sounds. I define a typology of onscreen, offscreen and onpage sounds through which I investigate the rhetorical difference between seen and unseen sounds. I demonstrate, in my film criticism, that psychomachia and quest narratives appeal to anxiety by utilizing, manipulating and arranging an auditory space within which stories of psychomachia and quests are contrived. As far as prose is concerned, I argue for an auditory imagination, or a sonic experience of the novel that is shaped by various strategies that are essentially linguistic. The chapter argues that *Fight Club* and *The Road* contrive audioscenes, imaginative experiences that are essentially auditory, and the experience of psychomachia and quests and their anxieties are within their respective sonic environments. In sum, the chapter examines how viewers and readers perceive the emotions of characters and how cinema and prose generate the likeness of those emotions in the audience. With these arguments, I arrive at new epistemological understandings of sympathy and co-affection. The findings will shed more light on the

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suasiveness of sounds and explain how culture of fear and anxiety can be explored through the sonic representation of fear and anxiety.

The fifth chapter, "Ocular Rhetoric," develops my rhetorical enquiries in both cinematic and prose narratives of fear and anxiety, in ways that visual handling dominates the audiences' consciousness and makes them aware of fear and anxiety. I explore these strategies in manifestations of psychomachia and quest, and, for this purpose, I distinguish between imagery in two visual domains: the biological eye (image onscreen) and the imaginal eye (image onpage), arguing that a film image is material and directly realized in color and light and spatial positioning; in contrast, a literary image is ideational, signaled only by words with no sensory input. Through a variety of examples and arguments, I demonstrate how *Fight Club*'s psychomachia and *The Road*'s quest utilize visual trajectories, in prose and cinematic representations, deliver the experience of anxiety to viewers and readers. Since both psychomachia and quest contain conflicts, power dynamics, oppression and overcoming, I investigate ways how in film versions, cinematographic strategies (facial verisimilitude, cutting, framing, lighting, tempo, shifts of angles, point of view and gaze) give a visual mimesis of the experience of psychomachia and a quest, and also ways that cinematic tools induce the resemblance of the characters' fear and anxiety in the viewers, establishing co-affection with the characters. In prose versions, I examine linguistic units, language potentials, and stylistic strategies that manage prose to activate visual impressions of the experience of psychomachia and quest. In both *Fight Club* and *The Road*, in cinematic and prose versions, I explore the visual dynamism of empowerment/disempowerment, so

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essential to the concepts of psychomachia and quest for their persuasive appeals to anxiety

realized in the oppressive, obscure, enigmatic, and imminent presence of threats. I explore

how cinematic imagery induces co-affection in spectators through the manipulation of

angles, frames and rhythm of imagery that result in the subjective reduction of spectators'

distance from the visual objects on screen. And in prose, I pursue the cognitive processing of

the impressions of dangers overwhelming characters, often causing readers to mirror those

emotions. My analytical methodology for the literary imagery is impacted by Horace's

formula "As is painting so is poetry." I take imagination as the image-making faculty and the

novel as essentially spectacular, arguing that a literary image is processed "imagistically," by

which I mean visual impressions of entities, events and relations are processed cognitively by

the readers. I borrow several terms from cinematography, establishing a framework of visual

analysis to provide a ground for the examination of ways that prose evokes visual

impressions of fear and anxiety in psychomachia and quests. Under the term scenography, as

the perspectival apparatuses through which a story is imagined, I speak of the visual

potentials of language, replacing saying with seeing, exploring concrete words, directional

phrasing (for implications of gaze and spatial positioning), and vividness for ways that visual

ideas are generated in our mind. I argue that literary imagery is not static; rather, prose

imagery flows in a textual wordshow, a sequential ordering that extends the anxieties of

psychomachia and questing to readers through a phenomenon I call 'textual ocularity.' By

ocularity, I mean the linguistic steering of the eye of the imagination, directing the reader's

eye on to the fearful objects of a character's gaze and consciousness. The purpose of these

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arguments is to support my major argument that prose visuality, like film imagery, can explain much about ways that a culture deals with its anxieties and fears.

Chapter six, "Sequential Rhetoric," looks into *Fight Club* and *The Road*, both as novels and films, for their shared and distinct strategies of sequencing sounds and imagery for persuasive influences on readers and spectators. Through the arguments of making psychomachia and quests, with the centrality of fear and anxiety, I argue that sequence is the logos and the trajectory with which storytelling sets to rhythm a mood intended by the rhetor. Sequences constitute arguments and set to a movement towards desired outcomes. A narrative of psychomachia, *Fight Club* for instance, conjures up by distortion an internal conflict, on external entities contriving its arguments in the order of the character's psychology, winning the audience's identification with the character throughout the narrative. Or in quest mythos, as realized in *The Road*, the mythical anxiety of human extinction is imagined in the tragic experience of families that struggle with other humans who have degenerated to the instinctual level of beasts. I demonstrate that sequence as a progressive form, because of its communicative role, extends the consciousness of the story, its fears and anxieties, to the audience through the arrangement of sinister and apprehensive sounds and imagery. As far as prose is concerned, I examine linguistic-symbolic means (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters) that conjure up sequences of events in the minds of readers. When cinematic narrative is concerned, I examine iconic and indexical means (images and sounds) and their sequential handling, that set the rhythm of a movie to fear and anxiety. I shape the analyses of cinematic and prose sequences around certain

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concepts from narratology, such as narrativity and eventfulness. With "Sequential Rhetoric," as a methodology, I look for ways both cinematic and prose narratives use their individuated potentials to create emotional mimesis and affective synchrony, through a verisimilitude or even an exaggeration of the narrators' experience of psychomachia and the quest. Of special importance to this examination is the fusion of the auditory and visual dimensions of sounds that recreate the fears and anxieties, the enigmatic, ambiguous, obscure and anxious experiences of psychomachia and the quest. In films and novels, I explore cinematographic and linguistic potentials that manipulate perspective, causing identification and sympathy, for ways that persuasive narratives, because of their sequential rhetoric, dominate the consciousness of spectators and readers by making present in their mind the idea of anxiety. Finally, chapter seven gives the implications of my research, its benefits for rhetorical, literary and film studies followed by suggestions for future developments.

<center>**Chapter Two**</center>

<center>**Psychomachia: The Ascent Mould**</center>

Psychomachia: The Dialectic Mould for Discord and Concord

The chapter defines *psychomachia,* its theme and allegorical structure and explores its related anxieties in *Fight Club*.

I introduce *Fight Club* as a modern allegory of a psychomachia. I draw the concept from the eponymous *Psychomachia* written by Aurelius Prudentius Clemens in the early fifth century CE. *Psychomachia* is a prototype for medieval allegory, in the tradition of *Romance of the Rose, Everyman,* and *Piers Plowman,* and relates a bloody battle between the Virtues and Vices in the style of Greek epics with a religious theme. Characterization in *Psychomachia* (Hope, Sobriety, Humility, Fear, Pride, Wrath, and so on) is based on a Manichean duality of good and evil that Prudentius puts to his theme: part of the soul fighting an adversary, using violence, crucifying the body and shedding the blood of evil to ascend to the state of fortitude in faith. C. S. Lewis was one of the first modern critics of *Psychomachia*, but it did not satisfy his Christian project: it was too violent and it was not meditative. In contrast, rather than a moral criticism, my reading of *Psychomachia* is that its storytelling method that can be applied to a universal theme: *Fight Club* realizes the descent/ascent mythos in strategies and themes similar to Prudentius's *Psychmachia* in its biblical handling of humanity's desire to move up, an anagogical desire for which examples might be found in different cultures across history. In both stories there is a psychic split, internal war and resolution. Prudentius utilized psychomachia, as a genre, for religious

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themes. But in a broader scope, psychomachia narrates a human condition of suffering with doubt, anxiety, and fear, a struggle for authenticity against the terror of falseness and failure. The psychomachic subject falls into an abyss of conflicting forces, of fighting motives, and seeks a recovery to an archetypal form, to a state of peace. Psychomachia is quintessentially allegorical in formula and themes. In order to establish *Fight Club's* connections with psychomachia, I shall now turn to a working frame for allegory.

One of the earliest definitions of allegory comes to us from Cicero's *De Oratore*, positing allegory as a semantic duality. For Cicero allegory exists when "something other than what is said has to be understood" (3.41. 166). By "other," Cicero means some sort of displaced referent, an arbitrary and figurative referent that a rhetor uses to mean something at a literal as well as a second order level. It is at the second order of signification that most interpreters of allegory aim to find storytelling principles, its formative ingredients. For C. S. Lewis, allegory utilizes figurative language to "represent the immaterial in picturable terms" (44). Allegory, as Randy Allen Harris and Sarah Tolmie argue, is "a mode of understanding" and it "is deeply cognitive" (109). Harris and Tolmie contend that "the study of figuration … since the advent of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) has been dominated by metaphor" (109). Allegory as a mode of understanding, according to Harris and Tolmie's "Introduction" to the special issue of *Metaphor and Symbol*, involves two formative principles, both of them instantiating our human cognitive disposition for similitude or analogy (109). The first of these principles is the analogic strategy of representation realized with such figures as prosopopoeia, personification, anthropomorphism, deification,

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demonification, reification, and topification. These condensed analogies give inanimate objects and abstractions human traits—emotions, desires, states of mind, even modes of life—or just give them the substantiality of concrete things and places. In simple allegories, there is a one-to-one correspondence, but analogical moves can be mixed and overlaid in complex literature, as we see in *Fight Club*; for instance, *Fight Club* personifies ideas at the global level of the text, while at local levels, the narrator is demonized as a two-headed, two-bodied, two-souled monster. The second formative principle of allegory is "a discursive mode, a genre, predicated on the duality of analogic operations, chiefly in matters of agency (through personification), space (through topification), and time (through narrative—which activates agency, via character and point of view; space, via setting)" (109). Related to the second principle is typification, by which an archetypal form or myth is re-enacted or mirrored in a text. Here it is not the characters who are condensed analogies, but the plot. In the following section, I explore *Fight Club*'s individuation of psychomachia for the ironical meanings at a second order of signification, a desire for change, or ascent, sometimes by struggle and violence.

***Fight Club's* Allegorical Psychomachia: Rise and Sacrifice of the Superhero**

Fight Club represents a desire to recover an archetypal masculinity, a state that Tyler Durden associates with pre-consumerism, pre-feminism, and an ideal freedom from property. This self-emancipation, in the logic of the novel and the film, is attainable only through violence; Tyler, in Giles's words, "equates masculinity with pain, violence, and irrationality" (22). A state of malaise holds men back from freedom, anxiety of something, a theme that

Giles also associates with violence in saying that *Fight Club's* violence resides "at the core of the narrator's anxieties and insecurities" (33). Later in the dissertation, when I get to the analytical methodology (Aural, Ocular, and Sequential), I will explore the implications of such general comments on the deep-seated anxiety that the narrator of *Fight Club* experiences and the novel and the movie use as appeals for persuasiveness of the story. To return to our analysis of the psychomachia, the argument can be made thus: the men of *Fight Club* have a conflict between a desire to follow the social, economic and political norms and a diametrically opposed desire for freedom from these norms. *Fight Club*, therefore, realizes psychomachia. The narrator finds the solution to insecurity and dread by unleashing anger on others, on property, and on his own self. *Fight Club*'s psychological struggle in pursuit of the self is the first formative principle of psychomachia as a genre. While Prudentius communicates 'soul discord' through his Christian terministic screens and therefore introduces it as a malaise that must end in concord, *Fight Club's* subtext of attack is secular, and most precisely, consumerist mode of life. Giles finds this subtext a "Freudian conflict with a simultaneously absent and threatening father," typified in the narrator's boss "who comes to embody [or personify] a patriarchal American capitalism that advocates unchecked consumption" (24). What many critics of *Fight Club* (including Giles) identify as the narrator's "fragmenting consciousness" (24) is a psychomachia, the anguished and tormented subjectivity of a grieving and transgressive subject.

Whether it is the biblical *Psychomachia* or the secular *Fight Club*, the mythos is driven by a belief in a multiplicity of the psyche (predominantly, but not exclusively, dualistic in

Fight Club); it follows that fractions of the psyche claim unified identities and the result is internal conflict or soul discord. The conflict may end up as a psychological state of aggression, anger, and self-loathing; for instance, Giles explains the psychological breakdown of *Fight Club*'s narrator in similar terms, "anger, fear, and self-hatred," which result in the emergence of Tyler Durden and fight club, through which Jack attempts "to control the disintegration of his identity" (32–3). This claim of identity, by the evidence of *Psychomachia* and *Fight Club*, is an ascent motive, which is a major shaping principle of psychomachia: the Virtues in *Psychomachia* slay the Vices and shed their blood to elevate themselves and in fight club the discontented men destroy themselves and Consumerist Superstructures to raise themselves out of passivity, which they trace to sacrificial ancestor fathers, not mothers. At the heart of this fight is a figurative conception of the self and others.

As in all allegory, figured speech (or figured imagery and figured sounds and tones) is a pervasive mechanism of psychomachia: abstractions and inanimate objects are represented as persons, gods, devils, things and places through personification, deification, demonification, reification, and topification. *Psychomachia* and *Fight Club*, commonly, treat the psyche as a person that is intellectually and emotionally divided. By deification and demonification, one fraction is shown divine and the other vulnerable to the Devil, Satan, or a displacement of these. A faction of the psyche glosses itself as divine, though not necessarily religious, and claims identity or enlightenment; another, understands itself as

demonic, and the result is infighting or "soul discord."[4] *Fight Club* and *Psychomachia* both represent material entities by demonification. Finally, psychomachia is characterized by typification: mythical coding, allusive reference, and recurrent patterns that direct us to construe typified meaning. Psychomachia, as a distorted copy, can be traced to an archetypal referent. Having established the outline and terminology of psychomachia and its allegorical formula, I now turn to *Fight Club*'s individuation of psychomachia.

Psychomachia: *Fight Club*'s Mythos of Descent/Ascent

Hell is the allusive reference and mythical coding of the failure trauma that resonates throughout *Fight Club:* "Which is worse, hell or nothing?" is Tyler's expression of male suffering from 'damnation' or 'descent' in men who have lost hope for 'redemption' (141). The descent of *Fight Club* is the guilt and angst of effeminate and consumerist spirituality that disturbs the psyche of the narrator, causing his soul discord, which resembles the biblical mythos of descent/ascent that Prudentius's *Psychmachia* uses to portray sinful human's desire to ascend to an archetypal status. In a metaphor for the fallen man, Tyler protests that "We are God's middle children" (141) and his motive is to ascend to identity: "Only after disaster can we be resurrected," he says (70). The identity to which the narrator desires to ascend is, to use a phrase from Giles, "a super-masculine rebel against the capitalist system" (23). *Fight Club*'s rebellion, its fight to ascent, the bare-knuckle basement battles and "the

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[4] Prudentius presents internal war through his Christian terms and therefore introduces it as a malaise, so to speak, that must end up in concord. But I use the term for the anguished and tormented subjectivity of a grieving and transgressive rebel such *Fight Club*'s narrator. If a concord is achieved in *Fight Club* at all*,* it must be interpreted as a sacrifice of the contending subject for the peace of the collective or the reigning system.

hysterical shouting in tongues like at church" (51), evoke the 'struggle' for which

Prudentius's personified Virtues shed blood, break teeth and crack bones. This is one way

that *Fight Club's* motive for transformation is mapped into the allegorical mythos of

psychomachia. These analogies recall Northrop Frye's (1976) explanation of the mythical

desire to ascend and it is where a 'separation' occurs between the lower world and the

desired one above (97; 137). The motive of ascent is the desire to control one's destiny,

gaining it back through violence from oppressive or evil forces. In *Fight Club,* ascent is a

displacement of the biblical mythos of *Psychomachia*.

Psychomachia, as a dialectical mythos, favors spiritualism over materialism, and its

war is reasoned in figured language. Similar to Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, the inanimate

objects of *Fight Club* are observed as devil entities with enslaving power: "things you used to

own, now they own you" (43). The dialectic of good and evil attached to objects is a product

of *Fight Club*'s (or *Psychomachia*'s) ideological perspective that can be understood through

Kenneth Burke's notion of terministic screens that "direct attention" to one cluster of objects

and interpretations and concepts rather than another (1966: 45). Once inanimate 'objects' are

shown as devilish, other terms follow to advance the thesis: consuming, dramatistically

understood, is serving the devil; and, since the godhead is male, consuming is feminine. In

observing materialism and consumerism as feminine, *Fight Club*'s narrator advances a

typified argument for male subjection to a regime of the mother, from which the gladiatorial

spirit of the father has vanished. Consuming is translatable as the biblical Fall, which brought

about human suffering. In Jack's terministic screen, consumerism is a transgression, a sin, for

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which he feels shameful, an emotion that Laurie Vikroy's reading of *The Road* associates

with "failure" (63). Jack's shame, rather than leading to alienation and submissiveness,

causes an active anxiety that leads him to compensate by violence and sacrifice and, as Jesse

Kavadlo has commented on the novel, *Fight Club* echoes, "the language of religious

martyrdom" (11). Jack's identification with Tyler and his violent ideology is a displacement

of the *Psychomachia*'s Virtues' identification with Abraham; similar to the Virtues in

Psychomachia, who followed the example of the prophet to fiercely fight for the atonement

of the fall, Jack is motivated to violence in the thematic analogy of the atonement for the fall.

Jack's and other fight club members' traumatic pain of failing the ideal of the father, which

Vikroy also recognizes as "the false promise of the American Dream" (66), motivates them

to vandalism and violence. *Fight Club*'s narrator expresses the martyrdom (heroism) solution

in this manner: "only in death we will have our own names since only in death are we no

longer part of the effort. In death we become heroes" (178). In reclaiming one's name and

identity, the narrator speaks of recovery to the origin, which I discuss in two more extended

examples below.

Psychomachia demonstrates the desire to revert to the archetype. Here, the personified

Sobernness "reproaches" the comrade Virtues for their slave morality (also *Fight Club*'s

major theme) brought about by following the Vice Indulgence:

> To whom are you bowing the neck? What bonds are these (for
>
> shame!) you long to bear on arms that were meant for weapons,
>
> these yellow garlands interspersed with bright lilies, these

wreaths blooming with red-hued flowers? Is it to chains like

these you will give up hands trained to war, with these bind

your stout arms, to have your manly hair confined by a gilded

turban with its yellow band. (303)

Soberness appeals to shaming and vanity here, and slave morality is gendered. The

descriptions "bowing neck", "bonds…on arms", "weapons" and so on, vividly demonize

(utilizing figurative speech) ornamental objects that female Virtues use. Ironically, in their

femaleness, the Virtues are compelled to maintain masculine traits. A similar gendered

notion of passivity can be seen in *Fight Club*'s loathing of feminized bodies in the phrase

"beautiful stock body" (48) of "guys [going to gym] trying to look like men" (50), which the

movie handles more vividly when Jack, looking at a Gucci underwear advertisement, says "I

felt sorry for the guys packed into gyms trying to look like how Calvin Klein…told them"

and asks the rhetorical question "is that what a man looks like?" (00:45:12). Most critics have

adopted *Fight Club* narrator's anger at materialism. Henry Giroux, at the forefront of these

critics, reads the movie as a representation of "the misfortunes generated by its obsessive

concern with profits, consumption, and commercial values" (2006: 206). But Giroux reduces

the narrator's psychological angst over high capitalism to emasculation. Giroux's reading is

ideological and Marxist and, as Peter Mathews has recognized, Giroux's and his followers'

criticism of *Fight Club* is "both simplistic and shortsighted" (83). Murray Skees also finds

Giroux's criticism limited to Tyler's misogyny and fascist political vision (18). Giroux and

other Marxist critics miss the narrator's ambivalent anxiety of following and at the same time

fear of Durden. They fail to see the mythos of the story as a whole. They also fail to notice Jack's later apathy towards Durden's fascism and Jack's attempt to murder him. In Skees's Nietzschean reading of *Fight Club,* the narrator's problem is a deeper revealing of a "general existential crisis occurring in religion, economics, and politics" and a "crisis of values" that gives rise to violence to change the existing values (24).

    Fight Club portrays these values in allegorical terms. If the story is an attack on consumerism as a mode of life, it is so through a gendered metaphor of passivity represented in the anthropomorphism of the furnishing objects with the power to enslave men. The novel catalogues in two pages a long list of these objects and the narrator's psychological dependency on them. In the movie, their images are captioned with digital pieces of advertising as the camera goes around the apartment. The movie utilizes the anthropomorphism of furniture far more overtly as a form of propaganda of a feminizing evil that shapes male space, inspiring consumerist desire in men. *Fight Club*'s narrator loathes this allegorized effeminate male identity. But, in attributing a feminized mode of life to a suffering man, consumerism is profaned, not the feminine. The furnishing objects qualify Paul Piehler's concept of "*potentiae animae*," taken from the Greek, as a useful term for understanding the full imaginative conception of the abstract and inanimate objects that gain "active influential powers" that come to a dreamer "in the form of a divinity, personification, or figure of authority" (12). *Fight Club*, then, codes the struggle of the soul in the image of men "trapped" in their utterly feminized (that is, domesticized and maternalized) "lovely [furnished] nest[s]" (43). Jack's destruction of his own apartment is therefore a symbolic

transformation. His apartment, first as Tabernacle of Consumerism, is now set on fire as house of evil, the flames representing a purification rite, burning away the feminine. The overthrow of the values can then be seen in the architecture of "Project Mayhem," the new temple that replaces the furniture advertisements with terroristic plans and demolition projects. The explicit discord in the soul that we find in *Psychomachia*'s religious terms "Indulgence" and "Greed" is handled similarly in *Fight Club*'s description of consumerism as animalistic impulse: "I wasn't the only slave to my nesting instinct" (42). *Psychomachia*'s version of the consuming-as-slavery argument figures negative emotions and desires "Care, Hunger, Fear, Anguish … Terror … and Sleeplessness" as supporting the monster Greed (311). Thus, the mythos of the original fall resonates in displaced terms in *Fight Club*: the original serpent re-appears as advertising tempting humans to consume. Eve reappears here as sensuality and 'care' for body throughout *Fight Club*. Eve represents, synecdochically, the mothers who raise the effeminate men in the absence of their fathers. Femininity is *Fight Club*'s terministic screen for passivity and subjection to consumerism from which men must struggle to recover their male identity. Marla's presence in *Fight Clu*b as "a predator" can be understood in terms of this myth. Marla is visualized as a degenerated and corrupt woman who embraces her own "festering diseased corruption" (65). The emergence of Tyler is not merely the adversarial solution to feminine evil, but, as Mendieta has observed, Tyler represents "the American Ubermensch, born from social outrage" (54).

Having realized the descent of the mythos, the male trauma of failure and suffering, fight club men find violence as salvation; they do not inflict violence just on themselves; but,

as is evident in Project Mayhem's mission ("to save the world" [125]), they extend violence to others as a ritual to heal a degenerate, corrupted, and feminized world. The wounded men of fight club find their recovery in ascending to the status of the gladiatorial man, ready to fight regimes of consumerism, feminism, and capitalism. Cynthia A. Stark, in her reading of *Fight Club* movie, understands Tyler's Nietzschean replacement of values, that is, Tyler's strategy for "self-reclamation, and rejuvenation of masculinity," as a reinforcement of "a familiar patriarchal story: men's sense of worth lies in their joint world-making activities" (53). The ascending motive is most evident in enduring the fist fights in *Fight Club* and it recalls, by typification, *Psychomachia*'s "the renowned David," the manly divine man "who never rested from the troubles of war" (307).

Tyler directs the attention of fight club members to material objects as *potentiae animae*, as enemies, so to persuade them that they are in a "war of the spirit" and that they must go for "a great revolution against culture" (149). *Fight Club*'s psychomachia is first carried in one-on-one, single battles and then in a collective revolution. Tyler's plan is to put all effeminate men in defeminizing "training camps" (149). Tyler, echoing Prudentius's *Psychomachia* yet again, appeals to an argument of waste; in Prudentius's text the personified "mighty Reason" says "We are losing the fight, alas! for want of vigour, our power has lost its wonted drive, our fell strength to hurt is grown feeble" (315). In a scene in the movie, Tyler addresses fight club members as "the strongest and smartest men" whose "potential" is "squandered." While in Prudentius the cause is evil, Tyler figures advertisement as Satanic, having the smartest and strongest men "chas[e] cars and clothes"

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and making them work "jobs [they] hate so [they] can buy shit [they] don't need" (1:10:10–1:10:43). In characterizing fight club members as "the smartest and strongest men," Tyler deifies and elevates them, but reminds them that they are fallen and suffering, grown feeble, because they are consumeristic.

Fight Club's psychomachic search for the ideal of the father is a mimetic desire of looking up to an archetypal ideal, and it is translatable to Psychomachia's characterization of Christian Virtues who look up to Christ. The orphaned men of fight club have failed their ideal fathers, and as Tyler scornfully tells his audience, capitalist gods have replaced fathers: "sometimes you find your father in your career" (186). Mimetic desire in Fight Club is masculine—to emulate, to recover, and to overcome the father. The desire is the result of frustration caused by the eclipsed absence of the father by the mother. Understood in the structure of myth, Fight Club men's guilt over failure is associated with the influence of the mother, with Adam's following Eve's sensual weakness. The temptation is displaced in Fight Club as consumerist vanity; its contempt for consumerism, advertising, and fashion resembles "Vanity Fair" of Pilgrim's Progress, where Beelzebub "sets up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity" (70). In the allegory of masculinity lost in consumerism, Fight Club's America is then a land populated by delusional men whose reality is the simulacra of vanity, consumerism, and advertisement. Fight Club demonizes and downgrades property, working at offices, bosses, furnishing objects, brands, and stock bodies very similar to John Bunyan's vanity glossed as a fair in which people are preoccupied by selling and buying "houses, lands, trades, places, … lusts, pleasures; and

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delights of all sorts, as harlots, wives, husbands, … masters, servants, blood, bodies souls, silver…and what not" (70–71). *Fight Club* also reenacts the theme of the "City of Destruction," in which television and advertising have replaced Beelzebub's propaganda. Advertisement, much like Vanity Fair, gives illusions to people to engage in vanities to look good, dream of being superstars, commanding millions, and so on. *Fight Club*'s narrator and other fight club members eventually go through an emotional frustration much similar to the "Slough of Despond" into which pilgrims "descend" into "the scum and filth" until eventually they awake and recognize they have been "lost" in filth. Upon this recognition, like *Fight Club*'s narrator, the travelers of *Pilgrim's Proress* face "many fears and doubts" (8). To recover from this spiritual malaise, to return to the status of the father, to be worthy as a man, *Fight Club* men must fight and scourge each other's bodies to recover spiritual freedom. The psychomachic key to the recovery of identity is to overcome both desire and fear of fighting. The imagery of support groups and diseased men must be understood again in the structure of myth. Support groups are translatable as infantilizing and feminizing institutions. Rather than the New Age training of men to negate pain and "slide" (20), *Fight Club*'s basement is the displacement of the allegorical "House of the Interpreter" in medieval texts. That is where Tyler delivers his doctrine of violence. *Fight Club*'s alternative to concord with other grieving men is sanctified discord, destroying rather than letting go of the status quo. In the return to the archetypal man, *Psychomachia* presents violence in Manichean religious terms and *Fight Club* in consumerist secular terms. *Fight Club*'s

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"Mischief Committee of Project Mayhem," which glorifies "destroying every scrap of history" (12), recalls the *militia Christi* at war with paganism.

The emotions of anger and outrage, anxiety and depression in *Fight Club* are represented in the most explicitly personified forms. Throughout the novel and carried into the movie, we see a recurrent nominalizing theme, adapted from the allegorical Reader's Digest "I-am-Joe's-X" series: "I am Joe's Prostate" (58), "I am Joe's Raging Bile Duct" (59), "I am Joe's Complete Blood-Boiling Rage" (96) "I am Joe's Shrinking Groin" (170), and "I am Joe's Cold Sweat" (184), and most thematically acutely, "I am Joe's Broken Heart because Tyler dumped me. Because my father dumped me" (134). I have explored these figurative representations in terms of the core characteristic of allegory: that is, meaning one thing in terms of another. For instance, in the movie the image of sweating is a metonymy for what is happening internally, within the spirit.

Fight Club's psychomachic struggle and the desire for transformation is delivered also in reifications that encode a myth to advance the ascent theme. Concrete scenes have clear abstract parallels. For instance, Tyler's plot to make a martyr of Jack on a "highway" is an inversion of the "Highway of Death" and a displacement of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death" conceit (Psalm 23:4), where Jack has anxiety of all evils and has his brush with martyrdom. The highway scene, toward the end of the story, functions as an allegorical symbol of overcoming fear and transformation. The scene is an example of several hidden subtexts in the story that have been overlooked in the criticism of *Fight Club*, specifically in the work of critics who have overlooked Jack's fear of and lack of trust in Tyler. In the

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structure of myth, Jack's failure to overcome anxiety is, therefore, a cynical symbolism of the loss of redemption and resurrection in male suffering.

Psychomachia: Closure as Altar

Concord is the ultimate function of psychomachia. It is only after all the bloodshed at the end of *Psychomachia* that the several Virtues become one: Concordia. As emblematic of cooperation, we notice a barbaric lynching of Discordia by the army of the Virtues. *Fight Club* allegorizes Jack as concordant and Tyler as discordant humans. Drawing on the similar ending of the two texts, we might conclude that psychomachia, as a genre, must resolve the mental struggle, the intellectual disparity, and dissent, by violence: Tyler Durden is a sacrificial victim whose murder is a ritualistic attempt to maintain social cohesion, with which Jack and other American men are at odds. Jack and other fight club men began to fight their desires, their anxieties of master narratives, but the story as psychomachia functions not to overcome the anxiety of death but to resolve conflict. Psychomachia, it may be argued, is the altar where a society sacrifices its demonized hero, the discordant character maturing to concord, but through murdering himself. The beginning of the story shows Jack's dangerous motive through his rebellious personality; the intense close-up of Tyler holding a gun in Jack's mouth is expressive of the American anxiety of domestic terror; at the end, it is Jack who becomes his own executioner: anxiety is resolved by murdering the discordant psyche.

In sum, psychomachia, as a form of allegory, is centered on a psychological/spiritual struggle for self-(dis)recovery. The form is inherently dialectical, serving the individual and society to resolve radical conflicts ritualistically. Prudentius's *Psychomachia* and Palahniuk's

Fight Club show humans in search of home or identity, but the form directs the hero's motive towards "consent." Psychomachia realizes Frye's contention that "the social function of literature" is "true indoctrination," since poets, as Plato also observed, give people "low-level myths without relation to true indoctrination" (1976: 19). I do not claim that literature and movies conspire with dominant myths to strengthen the status quo; rather, it is the re-enactment of myth that shapes stories. The heroes of epics, as Frye notes, paraphrase scriptures and build new civilizations (20). *Fight Club* depicts mob morality, most clearly shown in the attitude and behavior of the members of fight club in the basement, but as a rhetorical form, *Fight Club*'s psychmachia is an allegory that captures the grief of loss, anxiety of psychical division between contending motives, and the desire for utopian life. In terms of Frye's notion of literature as part of the "mythological universe," *Fight Club* gives a "vision of reality in terms of human concerns and hopes and anxieties" (14).

Chapter Three

Quest: Dark Descent

Quest: Mythos of Descent and Loss

In the following, I define the concept of the *quest* and explore *The Road* through the

theories of Northrop Frye and Joseph Campbell to examine anxieties and fears that are

framed in the mythos of quest. Mapping *The Road* in the structure of the mythos of "quest"

can explain how current American fiction, and specifically *The Road*, imagines America and

its future. As part of the scholarly conversation on the "culture of fear" and "culture of

anxiety," and in agreement with Cant's observation that *The Road* challenges American

exceptionalism, I argue that the sounds, imagery and their sequenciality in *The Road* engage

readers with anxieties about the future of America. The mainstream history and politics in

America contains the myth that Americans are saviors of the world. The rhythm and temper

of this myth supports the idea that America fights for the wellness of itself and the world and

that its cause is justice and equality. The American myth, in the structure of the

exceptionalist mindset, valorizes freedom, advancement of science, literature, arts and human

rights. However, within the mythos of the apocalyptic fiction, such as *The Road,* an

imagination of imminent disaster can be discerned that interrogates the dynamism of desire

and loss. In analyzing *The Road* through the structure of quest, I argue that the place of

America within world power is challenged. This challenge within American contemporary

apocalyptic fiction can be traced in interrogations of American exceptionalism within other

disciplines. For instance, Godfrey Hodgson believes that "The uniqueness of the American political tradition has been overstated. … The sheer historical connections between America and the rest of the world had been wiped from the slate" (xvi). I do not intend to suggest that American great values have all proved wrong. Rather, as Hodgson also observes, "[at] their best, [American ideals] have been incontrovertibly noble. The sovereignty of the people, the rule of law, the subordination of political conflict to constitutional jurisprudence and the protection of rights… have protected the United States from many of the worst of the political catastrophes that have plagued other great nations" (xvi). I believe *The Road* novel and film are expressive of an anxiety that doubts American exceptionalism and its beliefs that it is and does remain the higher power of the world. The structure of the quest through which I explain *The Road* examines how a glorified, idyllic, and safe world might be precarious and in danger of destructive forces. The quest for life in *The Road* interrogates and contrasts the successful quest of American Dream and by centralizing anxiety in its structure I intend to examine how contemporary American film and fiction speaks to the realities of America and popular anxieties. Lydia R. Cooper sums up some of the readings of other critics of *The Road* that suggest a "nuclear holocaust" and "meteor hit" as the causes of the disaster in the story (134). Although neither the novel nor the movie does give a clue as for the cause of the world's end, both of these readings are symptomatic of some kind of anxiety. Cooper herself speaks of some certainty of an "inescapable and imminent" end of the world suggested by McCarthy. Through reading *The Road* in the structure of the myth of the Garden and Fall,

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and its differentiation with the quest formula, I argue that *The Road* is symptomatic of a historical pessimism with which McCarthy imagines the future of America.

While Cooper claims that *The Road* "is in many ways … a classical hero story….and the quest narrative structure evokes all the parameters of the mythological hero's journey," my detailed examination reveals that certain elements of the mythos of quest are lacking that are related to McCarthy's pessimistic historical outlook. *The Road* is not as systematically allegorical as *Fight Club*, but like *Fight Club*'s, *The Road*'s structural elements realize established literary patterns of meaning. The novel instantiates the quest narrative pattern; in the father's terms, the journey he undergoes with his son makes them "pilgrims in a fable" (3). But, cultures and authors populate well-worn literary structures with their own anxieties, desires, and ideas: *The Road* chronicles a desperate descent into suffering and a deadly struggle for survival in an apocalyptic world in which, as Susan Kollin has said of the novel, "all recognizable social institutions are in ruin" (157). *The Road* belongs to the category of road novels that, in Katie Mills explanation of the genre, "usually narrate a conflict, some disruption in a preexisting power dynamic, which motivates a character to go on the road" (12). In *The Road*, this disruption is literally apocalyptic. Within this ruin, its characters engage in behaviors and choices that have made critics read the story almost exclusively in ethical terms. Thomas H. Schaub, for instance, sees the novel as a "quest for life's meaning" (153). Schaub is concerned with the religious language of the narrator who reproduces the father's firm belief in the holiness of his son, referring to him as "his warrant" (5), "the word of God" (5), "God's own firedrake" (31), "a Golden chalice, good to house a god" (75), and a

"tabernacle" (273). Donovan Gwinner also finds a religious theme in the journey, wherein the father makes the boy the "source of his claims for truth" (139). While Schaub and Gwinner provide enlightening insights into the ethical aspects of *The Road*, my reading is more concerned with the storytelling and persuasiveness of the story, with the centrality of fear and anxiety, and its relevance to current anxieties. In the following discussion, I chart the quest mythos and, in light of Northrop Frye and Joseph Campbell, provide the standard definition and terminology of quest narrative with which to explore *The Road*.

Quest has been delineated, in the works of Northrop Frye (1969) and Joseph Campbell (1968), as a successful journey in the sequential threefold form. Although the two critics use different terminology, their formulae are similar: Frye names the three structural elements variously as "agon" or "conflict"; "pathos" or "death struggle"; "anagnorisis" or "discovery" (1969: 186–87). Campbell's terms are "departure," "initiation," and "return" (30). The narrative or sequential elements are the same in both formulations. A quest narrative emerges from a motivating situation: a subject is driven by the desire to gain an object, recover a state, or overcome an undesired situation. In *The Road* this pattern is realized by a father who is motivated to save his boy from the deadly and chaotic end of America and to somehow bring him to a new beginning. Every story reenacts the journey's schema of agon, pathos, and anagnorsis differently but the stages can be discerned for these meanings: first, the agon/departure involves a disturbance in the status quo (in *The Road,* the apocalypse), draws people into chaos (in *The Road,* the utter collapse of social and state institutions), hardship or discontent (apocalyptic famine and marauding cannibals); a divine, patriotic, tribalistic, or

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altruistic urge is evoked that calls to action (the father and the boy are figured as carriers of divine fire, which the father seeks to maintain long enough to regenerate worldly goodness); the purpose is either to restore the status quo or escape an evil situation (flight from apocalyptic zone; flight toward preserved nature).

Further, a positive answer to the call or urge to action involves minor and major conflicts or suffering (starvation, cold, loneliness, loss, avoiding and escaping cannibals); the conflict is naturally polarized between absolute good and evil, often appealing to the religious, patriotic, or emotional interests of the audience. And, finally, the return involves the real or metaphorical victory of the hero. Frye's and Campbell's final stage is restrictive, since their formulaic succession of the quest is circular, but *The Road*'s ending in labyrinthine maps "[o]f a thing which could not be put back" does not give in to a mythos of returning. The following section blends Frye's and Campbell's terminology and charts the mythos of the quest in *The Road* for its correlations with (and exceptions from) the structure they outline. The correlations allow for the study of *The Road*'s rendering of American anxiety in terms of the mythologically constituted psyche– in terms of eschatological understanding of human history influenced by myth– and the departures explain the gap between the certainty promised by political discourse and the rhetor's shaking of that certitude, by showing America vulnerable and precarious.

Adventure into the "barren, silent, godless" world

Quest mythos begins with 'departure.' *The Road*, as novel and film, begins *in medias res* with the departure long past (though the movie's initial dream sequence masks this

starting point briefly), but the departure stage is reconstructed in both. This initial stage is when the status quo is disturbed and life is endangered; based on a divine, tribalistic or nationalistic passion, a movement for recovery or a flight from degeneracy is compelled. Campbell terms this stage a "Call to Adventure" and delineates five "subsections" in the mythos. Initially, a whole nation is called to adventure, through "an inner call" or "an outer doctrine" (23). In *The Road,* we notice, the status quo is disrupted, lives of people are endangered, and people drawn into chaos and deprivation. Faced with the challenge, the father of *The Road* takes his son on a journey to save him and preserve the 'fire.' This move realizes, as Schaub has observed, the father's love for his son (153), or his response to the inner call. The father's motive correlates with what Campbell calls the "summons … to live" (51). But, in the father's metaphorical language of carrying the 'fire', an 'outer doctrine' is also reflected. In the quest mythos of *The Road,* a polarization of humans can be noticed: some people respond to the call and some do not, as, for instance, when the mother finds the struggle for survival futile. Seen through the structure of the quest mythos, the mother – that is the feminine – manifests the "Refusal of the Call," which is the negative side of the mythos for Campbell (59). Acceptance or refusal in *The Road* mirrors the ideology of the apocalypse: the mother's refusal to partake in the journey correlates with the sun's and the earth's apocalyptic collaboration in ending life; the darkness, the wasteland, and the mother follow the destructive pattern of the myth. While the mother is not a part of the destructive forces of the apocalypse or the Fall, she refuses to participate in the regeneration or recovery of the origin. Other displacements are also apparent: while in the established mythos of the

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quest, the quester is drawn into "a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground" (Campbell

58), *The Road's* quest is to move away from home. This is one way that every mythos deals

with the concerns and anxieties of its own culture, in this case the anxiety of losing America.

Also, in the mythos of the quest, enemies of the quester (or the *counter-questers*) are

"strangely fluid and polymorphous beings" (Campbell 58). But precisely because *The Road*

responds to current anxieties, the enemies of humans are not monsters *per se*, but rather

humans who have turned monstrous, their teeth "claggy with human flesh" (75). There are,

however, intimations of supernatural evil in the impressionistic monster at the beginning of

the novel and the mysterious turbulences in the forests throughout the movie. Campbell's

third subsection of the "call to adventure" where the quester is aided by "a protective figure"

mostly "a little crone or old man" (Campbell 69), is not realized in *The Road* in the same

scheme that Campbell delineates. *The Road* adapts this element, not in a human or

supernatural being, but a bunker full of food that energizes the father and the son so they can

continue their journey.

The fourth subsection in Campbell's "call to adventure" is "The Crossing of the First

Threshold." Personifications of [the hero's] own destiny to guide and aid him toward "the

zone of magnified power," beyond which is "darkness, the unknown, and danger," where the

hero's journey is made more perilous by "deceitful and dangerous presences" (78). In Frye's

(1976) explanation of "Themes of Descent," quest characters "are fighting a battle against

death" (125). There are no guides or personifications of destiny to aid the questers of *The

Road*; rather, the father and the son personify guides, or purveyors, of civilization. They are

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carriers of the 'fire' through a landscape of deceitful and dangerous cannibals, lurking in the

blasted forests. The gangs of cannibals are displacements of the "monsters" that, in

Campbell's formula, hunt humans in packs (78). The boy is especially redolent of salvation.

Among the many biblical images associated with the boy, the man describes "the child" as

the only possibility of holiness in a chilled and darkened world. "If he is not the word of

God," the man says, "God never spoke" (5). The boy, figured as the Christ child, is light. The

man struggles to protect and guide him.

Campbell's fifth and final subsection of the call is "The Belly of the Whale," in which

"instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold," the hero "is swallowed

into the unknown, and appear[s] to have died" (90). In Frye's terminology this phase is

"agon" or "conflict," which is "the basis or archetypal theme of romance, the radical of

romance being a sequence of marvelous adventures" (1969: 192). The foreboding landscape

of *The Road* is belly-like in its unearthly darkness. The questers are described as having been

"swallowed up and lost among the inward parts of some granitic beast" (3), and they are

under constant threat of death of being put in the literal bellies of the cannibals. But one

episode could almost be scripted by Campbell or Frye: an underground Boschian hell, a

cellar stocked by demons with tormented, starving, and dismembered victims.[5] That

nightmarish scene is one of the most frightening parts of *The Road*, in both the novel and the

movie. The phase, therefore, realizes Campbell's observation of further unknown perils and

[5] In concert with the first encounter with cannibals, when the father and the boy are almost captured, the episode in the cannibals' house is a 'conflict' impeding the quest. The incidents are examples of "minor battle" in Frye's formula, and a part of the whole journey as extreme battle/struggle with counter-quest forces.

Frye's archetypal marvelous adventures. Our questers continue their journey, despite the man's temptation to kill himself and the boy at the cannibal's house, with the hope of recovery or rebirth in an ideal land, perhaps resurrection to the 'garden.'

Pathos: Birth of A "Superior Man"

Frye and Campbell title the "second" stage of the quest mythos differently, but both of them make struggle, conflict and battle central to the stage. In Campbell, it follows the "passage from the threshold." Campbell discusses it under six subsections, first of which is "The Road of Trials." During the stage, the quester faces "a succession of trials" (97) and wins (36). Following the flight from the apocalypse, the father in *The Road* faces compelling challenges in his journey south from America, but questers in *The Road* do not face the "dangerous gods" of Campbell's formula (36); rather, they move in a "godless" barren, which he also identifies among the trials (4). We do not literally see Campbell's "dangerous gods," but the apocalyptic deprivations and hardships (starvation, cold, loneliness, and cannibals) may be considered as the displacement of the quest mythos. In Campbell's account, "initiation" is the psychological phase of the journey, a process of understanding between the quester and his opposites (108). Ethical conduct in the face of horror and deprivation is one of the major themes of *The Road,* since the father tries all the time to teach the boy to remain good. Campbell's question on ego and self-interestedness of the quester is at the heart of *The Road.* People of *The Road* either become egoistic, like cannibals who consume other humans, or they become like the father who prioritizes the son's life over his own and therefore sacrifices himself for a greater good: regeneration.

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The second phase in "initiation," "Meeting with the Goddess", in which the quester unites with a strong female after victory (109), does not fit the mythos of *The Road*. Rather, it is the reverse of this myth that occurs: the man's wife refuses to save her life and thus she represents the "absent, unattainable… punishing mother" (111). The mother is associated with the earth, both of which have ceased to nourish in *The Road*. The mother's choices are contrasted with the father's love for the son whom the father believes is divine and holds him sensing "each precious breath [of his]" (3). The third phase in "initiation," or "Woman as Temptress," is not realized in *The Road*, though the wife's reluctance to go on the journey, if not a counter-quest, can be a reenactment of the "fall" in the form of pessimism and weakness. The mother's decision to die also matches with Campbell's previous question on the death of ego, since she finds no reason for being; she is too fearful— perhaps frightened of brutes, rapists, cannibals; dreading a death by starvation, hypothermia, dehydration; horrified at the prospect of watching her husband and son murdered or dying terribly—or perhaps simply willing to increase their success by leaving. Her chief role in the narrative is of reducing the questers, the pilgrims, to an essential dyad, father and son, and to partially define the home they have left behind.

The fourth subsection of 'initiation' in Campbell's structure of quest narrative is "Atonement with the Father." This is a reinterpretation of Freud's Oedipus complex. A quester, as Campbell notes, may turn against his father because of the latter's "self-contradictory" character (145). *The Road*, enacts this pattern in a nuanced and mediated way. The father loses his ethical balance, conflicting with the pure goodness of the boy in two

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instances. In the first instance, the father is reluctant to help an old man, a fatherly elder with the prophetic name Ely, but the boy talks the father into feeding Ely and warming him by the impromptu domesticity of a fire. That is, the atonement is reversed, father to son, for his lack of compassion, but it is enacted by giving succor—food and a temporary hearth in the blackened forest—to a father figure. In the second instance, the father seeks vengeance on a thief who has stolen their food, shoes and clothing. The father makes the thief take off his clothes to the skin and remove his boots, and they leave him to die in the cold, with the son protesting the wrath of the father. The son later compels the father to return and give the thief back his two pieces of clothing. When they cannot find him, however, they leave the clothes and shoes, a kind of offering, on the road where they last saw him. Again, the father atones for betraying the values he has taught the son by trying to undo the consequences of his anger.

The Oedipal relation is displaced with a moral conflict between the father and the son; against the father's selfishness, the boy claims his moral superiority and tells him "I am the one … who has to worry about everything" (259). Here we notice a fusion of the fourth and fifth phases in Campbell's formulation, which he calls "apotheosis," a phase in which the hero transcends the conflict by enacting "compassion" (149). The phase resembles Frye's final stage in the quest mythos, but Frye explains the phase more in terms of knowledge than compassion, borrowing the word *anagnorisis* from Aristotle, who glosses it as the moment in a drama marking a character's "change from ignorance to knowledge" (*Poetics* 1452a); in *The Road*, it is moral knowledge. As Thomas H. Schaub has noted about the novel, "[t]he

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father has come to recognize that the boy has values that transcend mere survival, and that they are fundamental to the boy's character" (162). While fear sometimes impacts the moral actions of the father, "experience does not change the boy's core beliefs." He "recognize[es] a divinity within himself" that transcends other humans (162). In the moral rivalry of father-boy, the father also transforms and shows compassion toward the thief and the old man.

The sixth phase is "The Ultimate Boon," or the achievement of the goal. *The Road* does not include an unambiguous boon and the ending of the quest remains uncertain. However, the father achieves the position of a "superior man", the status of the hero in Campbell's mythos of the quest (173). *The Road* realizes this achievement for both the father and the son in moral terms. This is best shown when the boy gives food to Ely and the father and Ely are both baffled at the boy's benevolence: "Why did he do it?" Ely asks and the father answers "You wouldn't understand. I'm not sure I do" (173). Fry's anagnorisis is the rhetorical culmination of the quest mythos: as we find in the example of *The Road,* the rhetor reflects a moral message in the image of the quester in coming to terms with the 'other.'

Return: Postapocalyptic Aporia

The third stage in Campbell's quest structure, comprised of six subsections, is "return." Campbell defines the stage as "reintegration with society" (36). *The Road*'s ending is enigmatic. As the father lays dying, he dreams that "the boy would go on and then stop and look back and he would raise his weeping eyes and see him standing there in the road looking back at him from some unimaginable future, glowing in the waste like a tabernacle" (273). While the father, at his deathbed, extends the metaphor of carrying the fire to an image

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of the boy "light all about" him (277), the narrator's reference to "maps and mazes" on the back of trout (286) is ambiguous. The aporia suggests the truthfulness of damnation and leaves open the door of hope. In terms of plot, *The Road* does not offer a recovery of the disaster or a return; the hero has not achieved the grail, simply because the story of apocalypse is the exhaustion of the energy of the world; apocalypse is not circulation of energy and recovery appears impossible. The quester in the post-apocalyptic world is not on a quest for bringing a lost or found object or energy "back into the kingdom of humanity," as Campbell defines return (193). The best one can hope for is the ambiguous potentiality of the fire continuing on with the boy. However, Frye's formulation with the last phase as "anagnorisis" fits the father's role better in *The Road.* For Frye, in this "discovery of recognition" the hero "has proved himself to be a hero even if he does not survive the conflict" (1969: 187).

Rhetorical Observations on The Storytelling Elements of the Quest

Time and place of the quest mythos serve the rhetorical purposes of the storyteller and *The Road,* as survival quest, applies the polarized ideology of the Genesis and Apocalypse to an American anxiety, re-enacting the biblical dualities of 'now' and 'the time to come' and the 'garden' and 'fall.' These storytelling details realize Leonard Lutwack's observation that "conventional stereotypy of place" is an instrument "to advance ...elaborate ideologies" (30). The myth of the primal garden informs *The Road,* polarizing America in the order of the biblical fall: the pre-apocalypse parts of the story represent 'America as Garden' and the post-apocalypse parts represent the theme of 'paradise lost,' imagining homeless Americans

in a desperate quest for life. We notice an anxiety: the biblical myth is projected on contemporary American anxieties of death, shifted to the current concerns about environmental failure or atomic annihilation. *The Road* is the form and the content of a desperate psyche that displaces the traumas of ancient myths to deal with current anxieties, but the uncertain ending of the story negates hope in the discourse of the road and one remains uncertain whether to take *The Road* as a negation or a preaching of the determinism of the apocalypse.

The persuasive strength of a quest mythos is mostly in its polarized world: polarized place, polarized time, and polarized characterization. The three stages that Frye and Campbell find in quest narrative are set in a polarized world in ways that the audience identifies with the hero. Frye notes that in romance quest "subtlety and complexity are not much favored. Characters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it, they are idealized as simply gallant or pure; if they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly" (1969: 195). Frye's formulation cannot be utilized for a rigid identification of all contemporary American fiction. Neither can be claimed that Americans are more in anxiety than any other country. Other cultures also manifest their fears and anxieties of Americans and other countries. In its own way, American culture is characterized by a myriad of specific fears and a generalized pervasive anxiety. The villains of *The Road* realize Frye's delineation of quest characters in terms of stereotypes. The characters of *The Road* are little more than obstructive caricatures, and its heroic questers are steadfast in their pilgrimage to escape ruin and find renewal. The father is perhaps complex,

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but only because he offers another order of obstruction (along with his guidance) to the Galahadian purity of the son.

Characters of *The Road* quest are questers (the man and the boy), counter-quest forces, and those who enable a re-energizing of the quest, as the old man and thief provide opportunities for the son to validate his holiness by bringing compassion and mercy into the journey. I use *counter-quest* for, in addition to human and animal, any kind of natural or supernatural barriers on the questers' path to their goals. In *The Road* the quester is identified in the character(s) attached to the divine, biblical, and godly; within this paradigm, the father and the boy may be the main questers, since they are central to the story, though the family that rescues the boy at the end of the story partakes of the virtues of the quest. It is important to read characters under quester and counter-quest forces for rhetorical purposes of the quest mythos: it is a mythic strategy in *The Road* to empower the counter-quest forces—for example, cannibals gang up and they have weapons—to appeal to the anxieties of the audience and also to mould the heroic character of questers to remain humane despite the hardships and perils of their quest. The presence of the boy serves the disempowerment of the questers.

Through my methodologies of 'Aural Rhetoric,' 'Ocular Rhetoric,' and 'Sequential Rhetoric,' I deal with the implications of the fear and anxiety that are generated in the power dynamism between the quester and counter-quest forces, in the struggles for surviving these challenges. Similar to Frye's reading of "the enemy and evil" in a romance quest as "winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, [and] moribund life" (1969: 187), I look for the animate and

inanimate elements of stories to identify the implications of a quest challenge. Therefore, for instance, the dead environment of *The Road*—characterized by deprivation, snow, cold and sterility—also qualifies as an active counter-quest force, which shows itself in the auditory and visual dimensions, exemplified by thunder and earthquakes. The brutish survivors, the cannibals, and the environmental deprivation together give sublimity to the post-apocalyptic quest of *The Road*. It is in the antagonism of the questers and counter-questers that the rhetor advances an ideology, and as Frye also notes, through the focus on the "conflict between the hero and his enemy" the audience's "values are bound up with the hero" (187).

By way of an overview, I argue that a quest narrative is constructed by a formulaic mythos, in which a copy can be read in the trace of archetypes. *The Road*'s quest re-enacts the mythos of "creation" and "apocalypse," displaced to a contemporary anxiety, reproducing the myth of "paradise lost," taking America as a garden. The survival quest realizes the principles of the quest mythos, though, in the order of the myth of apocalypse, it deviates from the standard 'circular' structure of separation to return: by its equivocal ending, *The Road* contributes to the body of the myth, although its alarming message for environmental care is timely.

Psychomachia and Quest: Connections

Fight Club and *The Road*, both contemporary American novels and movies, do not belong to a particular genre; one is a cult story, the other post-apocalyptic; one an allegory of mental breakdown, the other a gloomy romance. The generic differences, though, do not dissociate the two from more fundamental commonalities. I have brought the two together

through arguments of psychomachia and the quest mythos, for both provide an exploration of human condition: anxiety of death and obliteration, and the manifold and diffuse patterns of threatening death and obliteration. *Fight Club* is symptomatic of anxiety of grieving men who might turn against America. *The Road* is symptomatic of the anxiety that America might perish in an atomic or environmental catastrophe. My rhetorical approach brings psychomachia and the quest together for an anatomical explanation of storytelling as a way that humans deal with their uncertainties. Psychomachia and quest narratives both reveal the structure of myth in a psyche in crisis, in the connection between imaginative disasters and real tragedies in America. *Fight Club* appeared two years before the World Trade Center was targeted by terrorists and *The Road* was published a year after Hurricane Katrina engulfed New Orleans. Based on real disasters that Americans have experienced and what narratives of anxiety portray, one could argue that a shared subjectivity exists between the audiences and characters of cinematic and prose narratives of anxiety.

I bring the two vectors, psychomachia and the quest narrative, together for my three modes of rhetorical enquiry: how aural, ocular, and sequential rhetoric give mimetic representations of fantasies of disasters. Throughout this dissertation, I argue that rhetorical enquiry can provide explanations for how American fiction and film responds to the reign of anxiety; *Fight Club*'s psychomachia and *The Road*'s quest also come together as different responses to American crises. Psychomachia seems to suggest a recovery of spiritual freedom by material reductionism in a meaningless destruction of social life and in its anxious apocalyptic imagination of division, *The Road* celebrates social bonding.

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Chapter Four

Aural Rhetoric: Audioscenes of Anxiety

Argument for the Chapter

This chapter is an inquiry into the rhetorical dimensions of sound in the themes of anxiety and fear in *Fight Club* and *The Road* as movies and as novels. I formulate a framework called *aural rhetoric* as a method for the study of the sonic qualities of both prose and film. My general thesis is that sound, in language and in film, is an element in the production of meaning but while film sound is an object of biological hearing, sound in fiction is both imaginal and linguistic. For the study of the manifestation of fear and anxiety in the movies, I apply concepts from sound studies and examine sounds and noises individually and in sequence. In novels I look for *imaginal* and implied sounds that are experienced symbolically in the reading process. In *Fight Club*, both the novel and movie, I argue that there exists a modern psychomachia, a battle of the psyche, which manifests partly through sounds. In *The Road,* novel and movie, I explore a survival quest in which fears and anxieties are partially framed in sounds. However, I do not use exclusively homogeneous concepts for all of these works; rather, due to the nature of genres and their differently portrayed worlds, *Fight Club's* movie soundscape uses different sound design than *The Road's* movie soundscape and the novels of the same titles use distinct textual styles from one another and from the movies.

Introduction

"We are condemned to listen."

Murray Schafer, "Open Ears"

While humanity has increasingly been surrounded by sounds and noises, humanities scholars, oddly, have traditionally surrounded themselves with quieter pursuits. Recurrent expressions such as "the eye of the soul" in Plato's *Republic* VII are symptomatic of a history of thought that holds the eye as the organ of consciousness that arrives at truth with the "mind's eye" (VI, 510a) through "light" gained from the "sun" (VI, 507b–509c). Aristotle, too, in the *Metaphysics*, favored the eye more directly: "above all others [senses] sight…. The reason for this is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know things" (980a25). But this ignorance of sounds, in Jacques Attali's sharp opinion, leads to the castration of meaning (3). Attali uses "castrate" in conjunction with "abstraction" of meaning to suggest that non-hearing criticism deprives texts of the vitality and vigor with which texts reflect cultures. He contends that Western knowledge, and specifically science, is ignorant of the life and vitality of experience, since in his opinion "life is full of noise and … death is silent" (3). For Attali sounds and noises, more than "reading," have become sources of meaning for people (3). Attali calls for thinking of "new theoretical forms in order to speak to new realities" (4). There has occurred an auditory turn in the humanities, however, with a "deliberate decentering of a dominant tradition," in Don Ihde's terms, which pursues "what may be missing" because of the emphasis on vision (13). Studying sounds opens up new doors of

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perception for criticism; "knowing the world through sound," as Bruce R. Smith has pointed out, "is fundamentally different from knowing the world through vision" (129). In the last few decades, there has been increasing interest in Sound Studies in all of literary criticism, film studies, philosophy, anthropology and music. It has opened up the sorts of questions I address in this chapter: "Who hears?" "What kinds of sounds do fictional and film characters hear?" "What is the audience hearing?" "Who is listening to whom?" "Can we hear texts?" "How do sounds collaborate?" "How should we study sounds?" Some of these questions address identification of sounds as sounds, as objects-in-themselves; some address sounds in their individuality and some in their combination; others deal with ways that characters and audiences listen to these sounds and respond to them.

Aural rhetoric

Aural rhetoric as a methodology in sound studies has not yet been established, though a few critics have used similar terms. Lars Nyre gives the title "Auditory Rhetoric" to a chapter, which is influenced by Lloyd Bitzer's notion that rhetoric is "a response to a situation" (3). Nyre's discussion, centered on technological manipulation of sound to appeal to the ear of the public, is poorly synthetized with rhetorical criticism; it is devoid of any strategy to study sound as sound or voice as voice; his chapter also lacks rhetorical terminology and ignores the medium of print. Katherine Fargo Ahern's dissertation develops an "auditory rhetoric" based on the role of sounds in rhetorical situations (1). Her research analyzes "'complex compositions' (made of written text, sound, and images)" and suggests that such study should be extended to "all types of verbal and non-verbal sounds," but she

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does not deal with sound in text; nor does she provide a method for the examination of sounds as separate entities on their own and in association with a whole context. Aural rhetoric is knowledge of the intellectual and emotional meaning of sounds, their arrangement and impact as a symbolic system. In the same manner that visual rhetoric fearlessly bespeaks the objects of the biological and imaginal eye, aural rhetoric should speak of hearing by the biological ear as well as the imaginal ear, applying to both audio media and the book. I deploy aural rhetoric as the critical framework for the study of the suasiveness of sounds and *sonoanalysis* as its specific investigative and anatomical method for close reading of sounds onscreen, offscreen, and *onpage* through the recognition of individual sounds and noises detaching them, identifying their sources, and acoustic qualities.

Aural rhetoric: Sound Onscreen, Offscreen and Onpage

For film, I largely ignore music. It's not that music has no rhetorical dimensions; quite the opposite, as Kenneth Burke convincingly argues in "Psychology and Form" (1968: 36). But music is a specialized sort of sound, and one that has had considerable attention paid to it in film criticism. I apply an anatomical examination of sounds individually and in sequential compounds. This investigation entails identifying diegetic and nondiegetic sounds and inquiring into their acoustic qualities (pitch, pace, and amplitude) to explain how they cue a motion in the story or in the characters' psyche, and how these sounds and their acoustic alteration induce emotions in the audience. More precisely, I argue that sounds shape 'audioscenes,' complete audiovisual impressions of situations shaped largely by sounds. It is essential that we make a distinction between sounds with visible sources and acousmatic

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sounds; the latter is, in Pierre Schaeffer's words, "a sound that is heard without its cause or source being seen" (qtd. in Chion 18). I import the term to include unseen sounds in novels that characters hear without image tied to the sounds they hear. I explain acoustic qualities of sounds, voices, noises and non-musical sounds, individually as well as in sequences, to construe a total meaning gained from them. When profitable, I make reference to the general tone of the musical sounds for their collaboration with the non-musical sounds that together form a general mood.

In the domain of prose, I take reading as a sonic mode of thinking, since thinking is in many ways aural. As Don Ihde puts it, 'linguistic thinking' is an inner speech and a part of the auditory dimension of experience (134). An understanding of sound in prose depends on a distinction, to use Ihde's words for our purpose, between "imaginative and perceptual modes of experience" (131). With the term onpage sound I wish to emphasize the auditory dimension in prose, a part of which is the sounds that we produce, in our vocal system or in our brain as we cognitively enunciate the words when we read. Cognitive research backs up some of our claims about hearing sound and voice onpage, as we shall see below. Sound is present onpage in two ways: the first category of these sounds are the ones that belong to the world of the story. They are diegetic sounds and voices, which occur as events in the story. These sounds include ambient sounds, sounds of actions, events, and character's voices, which are heard by, and sometimes caused by, the characters. Inquiry into the diegetic sounds entails recognizing the acoustic qualities of ambient sounds and vocal characteristics of the characters, such as their accents, tones, and intentions; second, sounds are present,

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according to Benjamin Hrushovski, in four "sound patterns": a) "Onomatopoeia," in "the iconic relation between the signifier and the signified" (45); b) "Expressive Sounds" that carry "a certain quality, tone or mood" connected to the "whole situation" (48); c) "Focusing Sound Patterns," such as in "word-Word-world-whirled," in which "neither the specific quality of these sounds nor any tone or mood associated with them plays any semantic role" (51). The interpretation of this class of sound patterns is left to the readers, indicated by a "rhythmical parallelism or semantic and stylistic prominence" (52); and d) "Neutral Sound Patterns," in which there is no relation between the sounds and the meanings of immediate words, but the whole set functions towards the message (53). I borrow the term "auditory imagination" from T. S. Eliot (1933), who used it to explain the sonic sensitivity in "the syllable and rhythm" that invigorates each word of a poem (118). However, I modify Eliot's limited use of the term to broaden the scope of the "auditory imagination" beyond syllable and rhythm to conceptualize the cognitive as well as the imaginative experience of aural emotions framed in novelistic language. I also borrow I. A. Richard's notion of the "imaginal" sound, which he found in onomatopoeia, that the reader imagines in the literary text (117). I extend the term imaginal sound to include all sounds received from and produced by linguistic elements.

Now to illustrate the methodology, the task of the aural rhetorician is first to apply a sonoanalysis, the anatomical investigation, examining the textual sounding machinery in schemas of repetition (patterned sounds, speech sounds, expressive sounds), rhythmic phrases, and formal strategies such as modes of discourse (direct and indirect discourse)

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punctuation, typography, syntax and spelling. Then, the aural rhetorician must synthetize the implications of the lexical sound with the diegetic sounds (ambient, human, etc.) and find the rhetorical meaning in the collaboration. For the rhetorical meaning of sounds, one could argue that sounds affect the inner eye. I argue that euphonious, cacophonous, nervous, or startling sounds shape our impression of entities by imposing on us the intended emotion. The term audioscene, which I just presented, also implies exactly the reader's imaginal experience or impression caused by the generative potential of sound.

Aural rhetoric: Voice in Film and Fiction

Voice is normally synonymous with the "vocal sound" that is "uttered through the mouth or nose" considered as "a means of human utterance or expression" (*OED*, branch II, 7). This meaning of voice applies to film voice, which attends to the biological ear. For the movie *Fight Club,* I explore voice for the acoustic qualities manifest in Brad Pitt's performance of a confident, leading and strong person in contrast with Jack, who is weak and has a questioning tone; I examine this contrast for the implications of descent/ascent themes of Jack's psychomachic motive for transformation, and his desire to recover the archetypal form of manhood, to what he perceives as identity. In *The Road* I extend Chion's concept of 'vococentrism' by which he argues that in any audio-mix where there is "human voice"' a "hierarchy of perception" is set up (5). He suggests that the human voice dominates every other sound by its presence (5). I stretch this thesis to 'voice-in-extremis' (shouting, crying out, and screaming) by which *The Road* represents life at extinction and by doing so it mirrors the protagonists' precarious life.

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I also extend voice to text. Reading cannot be comprehended without a sense of voice, since it is through voice that we divide characters, and cognitive science shows that the brain processes the auditory information it takes through reading. Jeanne Fahnestock argues that the "rhetorical" and "interactional" capacities of language can be supported by cognitive science, and she quotes the cognitive research of Robert Zatorre and his colleagues that finds "different areas of the brain" are involved in "responding to features of speech" such as "loudness, pitch, duration, and direction of origin" (Fahnestock 162–66).[6] Silent reading, according to Christopher I. Petkov and Pascal Belin's research, "engages voice-sensitive and affective regions of the brain" and "human brain neuroimaging and neuronal recording" reveals that in reading "the inner processes of the brain involve experiencing voices" (R155). This research finds that "direct discourse" creates in the brain a "more vivid experience than free indirect discourse" (R155). But this observation restricts direct discourse to a quote framed in 'subject + quote verb + a statement' inside quotation marks. Novels, however, include extended dialogues that imply the same dramatized presence without having the structural markers of a direct discourse. I argue that at the basis of the inner-voice

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[6] Fahnestock summarizes that the brain imaging in Zatorre's experiments showed "different areas of the brain" were active when subjects were asked "to press a button when they recognized first noises, then separate syllables, then pairs of syllables ending with the same phoneme, then pitch differences in a pair." She adds that "The primary auditory cortex registered noise, the right and left temporal gyrus were involved in the 'passive' recognition of a syllable, Broca's area in the left hemisphere, usually associated with speech production, became active when finer phonetic discriminations were made, showing that subjects had to 'access an articulatory representation' when noticing the similar endings on syllables such as 'big' and 'bag'" (166).

activation—which also generates co-affection— there is personification, as a cognitive tool of making interlocutors present in the consciousness of the reader.

Outline of the Chapter

Following this introduction, in a section titled "Movies," I explain the major concepts that I apply to the two movies, *Fight Club* and *The Road*. Through acoustic terminology, I explore the implications of sound, noise and voice to discuss manifestations of fear and anxiety. Then, in two succeeding sections, I examine each movie separately. I first interpret *Fight Club* for rhetorical implications of psychomachia in voice. Then, I discuss the ironical soundscape of the movie in its creation of a subjective sonic space that reveals Jack's internal anxiety, his psychomachic soul discord, and ascent motive. In a following section I explore *The Road* for its use of 'voice-in-extremis' (shouting, crying out, and screaming) and representation of terror and death in acousmatic voice. In a transitional section that follows the movie analysis, titled "Reading with the Aural Eye: Sound in Novels," I outline my major analytical concepts for the study of sound in novels; specifically, I introduce *textual sounding machinery,* such as expressive sounds and forms of repetition, and aural verbs with implication of amplitude, such as "shouting" and "whispering." Then, in two separate sections, I will apply these terms to each of the novels. In a section that follows, "Beyond the Auricle: Sound in Film and Fiction," I bring up shared and different ways that each of these movies and novels shape their audioscenes and meaning through sound. A "Conclusion" will sum up my analysis.

Movies

In the following I examine diegetic and nondiegetic sounds, acousmaticlly or visually tied with a source, in the two movies *Fight Club* and *The Road* through *sonoanalysis* for rhetorical meaning. I study the acoustic properties of sounds, alteration in acoustic qualities, and sequential arrangement for rhetorical intent. In identifying, detaching and juxtaposing sounds in sequential sets, I examine the sound rhythm of the movies and ways that each advances a theme, shaping the audience's perception of what-goes-on. In my analysis of the combination of voice, sound, and noise, diegetic or nondiegetic, I argue that the totality of the audio-mix makes the characters' anxiety and fear present to the audience's consciousness through the potential of sound in unifying perceptions of the audience and characters. In *The Road*, as a post-apocalyptic quest narrative, I examine the movie's sonic structure that dramatizes the challenges, anxieties and fears of the survival quest, representing its deadly challenges mostly in an ambiguous progression of sound rhythm. I will advance the thesis that the enigmatic and nervous progression of sounds guides the viewers' imagination and their emotional response from anticipation to realization of an encounter with a deadly threat to escape from it. In *Fight Club*, as a psychomachia with dark humor of anxiety and aggression in frustrated American men, I explore sounds and noise in climactic situations that reveal the narrator's psychological "conflict" and his conflicting motives. I treat voice in each of the movies from different perspectives: in *Fight Club* I discuss hierarchy of power in relation to the theme of descent/ascent in psychomachic struggle, showing, also implications

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of domination by voice. In *The Road,* I study the uncanniness of voice, its use as pathos in the manifestation of voice-in-extremis as representation of terror, horror and death.

Fight Club: Voice as Instrument

Fight Club sonifies Jack's psychomachia, the motions of his psyche, in voice, sound, and noise. We might begin with voice as encounter. Jack finds himself (his alter ego) first by the eye,[7] but the real contact with himself is by voice, in hearing his Tyler: after exposure to a few images of crashes, in the middle of anxious hallucinations of airplane crashes, when he prays to die in "a mid-air collision" (00:21:37), Jack finds Tyler "the most interesting friend" (00:23:37–54). We hear Tyler's voice before he appears visually and his voice and image are fused (00:21:57–59). Mark Kerins applies Michel Chion's concept of *acousmêtre* to Tyler's dominance over Jack by voice (268). But Tyler's control over Jack is not visually enigmatic for the audience, since the split of the body/voice in *Fight Club* is very short, about two seconds. What other critics understand as Tyler's dominance over Jack can be interpreted as Jack's psychomachic meeting with his stronger self who enlightens him regarding the "illusion of safety" (00:22:23), an appeal by which people support capitalism, because of anxiety. Similar to Prudentiuce's *Psychomachia* in which the character Fear is an associate and attendant of the monster Greed, in *Fight Club* anxiety of death is criticized as serving capitalism in *Fight Club*. Greed, from the religious domain, is displaced to the domain of the

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[7] Jack perceived his other initially first through eyes, in six immature flash appearances and an 'extracampine' hallucination (from the back of the head, outside of the sensory field) on an electric escalator (00:19:44). For the term 'extracampine' see Jan Dirk Blom "Visual Hallucination" in *A Dictionary of Hallucinations*.

secular. In the religious story, fear serves greed and in the secular story, people's anxiety strengthens capitalism, as we draw the meaning from Tyler's hatred of capitalism. The discussion sounds enlightening to Jack and in seeming "interesting" for Jack, Tyler becomes the allegorical realization of Jack's desire for a fearless self.

Tyler's voice contrasts and compensates Jack's uncertain voice. Tyler makes eight rules to provoke the weakened men to fight; Tyler's voice qualifies Quintilian's, in Institutes of Oratory, characterization of an evocative "good voice" with "largeness and cleanness" (Book 11, Ch. 3. par 3). Voice, as Clifton Ware postulates, is "a complete, unified instrument for human expression and communication" (66–67). Brad Pitt's performance of Tyler's speeches possesses the good sound of a revolutionary, a certain and strong leader that can stir a crowd by the "ethos" shaped by qualities of his voice, its pitch, pace and embodiment of internal strength. Consider one of Tyler's orations at 1:10:10–43 to which I make my references in the following discussion. Tyler's voice is low-pitched and descending, which gives him an assured and certain tone; he speaks in a rhythmic staccato progression, placing pauses between parallel phrases, accentuating the content of the phrases; this enables him to keep the emotional connection with words, all of which appeals to an "argument of waste:" Tyler taps into his audience's guilt about weakness, failure and descent, which he intends to transform to anger and fighting passion. In his vocal 'stress' on the words "potential" and "squandered," Tyler plays out emotions of loss and oppression; then he expresses anger in "Goddamit." By handling vocal pitch on the rhythmic consonance of "cars and clothes," Tyler induces the guilt of being fooled by advertising that builds the desire in men to chase

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material possession, as if they are sinners who help their own fall. As we see Tyler's

"argument of waste"[8] is tuned to a voice that advances an argument for "spiritual war,"

arousing anger in place of anxiety. Fight Club members' collective 'hysterical yelling' in

listening to Tyler's orations and the spectacle of brutal fights qualifies for Quintilian's

formula of voices that are "raised to express violent emotion" by a "good sound" (Book 11,

Ch. 3. par 3).

Listening is hierarchical, for Murray Schafer (in Bull and Back 21). The louder the

voice gets, the higher the authority ascends; speaking louder is to surround the subject. In a

scene Tyler puts Fight Club members to manual work while speaking to them through a

megaphone to humiliate and indoctrinate them: "Listen up, maggots! You are not special . . .

You are the same decaying matter as everything else" (1:30:31–41). If voice dominates,

liberation from it is to avoid listening to it; Jack's final liberation becomes possible when he

shuts out Tyler's charismatic voice: "I'm not listening to you" (2:06:35). The hierarchy of the

sound of voice may be seen, also, at the human sacrifice scene (1:21:28–27:37). Tyler speaks

from above as he holds the gun on Raymond's head; Raymond cowers and hears from below,

crying, sobbing, and stuttering. Due to the tyranny of the visual, with Raymond's crying in

close-up, the emotional distance between the audience and the oppressed Raymond is

minimized, but the audience is fascinated by the power of the oppressor, since fascination is

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[8] In *The New Rhetoric,* Perelaman and Olbrecht-Tyteca argue that "as soon as the conviction of missing something is established, it reinforces the value of effort that is squandered in this way" (280). They consider an argument of waste as "an encouragement" to different purposes (280). Tyler's strategy is to make the Space Monkeys feel guilty, regretful and angry, for their potential has been "squandered." Tyler urges his listeners to action in this way.

a combination of anxiety and attraction, and this anxiety driven fascination is in large part due to Tyler's calm resonant voice, sometimes rising to a shout.[9] We are in Jack's point of audition and his questioning tone, in anxiety of murdering Raymond (this anxiety is cued in other sounds explained separately below). We identify with Raymond because of the combination of the moody tonal noises and sounds that set the rhythm of suspense (explained more fully bellow).

Acousmatic Psychomachia

Fight Club deploys a variety of sounds to mirror Jack's existential anxiety and his exaggerative imagination of imminent disasters. Anne Radcliffe, influenced by Edmund Burke's notion of terror, notes that the confusion of terror "blur[s] one image into another, leaves only a chaos in the mind" (316). Such confusion is true even more fully in sounds, which 'blur' much more comprehensively—masking each other, augmenting and diminishing each other, agreeing with and squabbling with each other, in a chaotic auditory modality wholly unavailable to the visual (though, of course, at the same time working *with* the visual). Consider the crash-theme sequence again. A scene, accompanied by an intensified and upbeat tonal noise, shows Jack is half asleep on a plane; the upbeat noise transitions to the following scene where Jack is at his work, inspecting a crashed car. A screeching tonal noise that perturbs on the background noise catches our attention (00:19:23–25). The enigmatic electronic screeching with strong swells on the car inspection is obscure,

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[9] There are, of course, visual factors at play here as well: occasional cuts to mid-shots of Tyler of Jack, a close up of the gun cocking, and so on, but the vocal dimension is in synch with the visual in a way that would be missed without aural rhetoric.

but in fusion with the imagery it signals Jack's anxiety of watching the bodies of the people burned and dead in the crashes (00:19:23–24). In a following scene Jack verbalizes this anxiety at an airport: "This is your life and it's ending one minute at a time" (00:19:35). The recurrence of the imagery of flights and collisions, including car crashes, locates Jack's psychomachia partly in the menacing villainy of technology, ill-disposed to Jack's anti-consumerist spiritualism.

Unseen sounds have more 'dramatic' influence due to the invisibility of the source, as Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis Petrie explain (262). In constructing subjectivity, unseen sounds get the spectator "intensely involved, either emotionally or physically [I would argue both; they are not exclusive], in the happenings on the screen" (264). Imagination is docile to the dynamics of psychoacoustics: sourceless sounds, gained by the ear in obscurity, generate 'audioscenes' in the inner ear. We might elucidate this generative potential of sounds in four scenes beginning with "human sacrifice" with five notable sounds: the shrill sound of a shell case dropping, crickets' stridulating, horns, level crossing bells, and artificial noises (1:21:28–27:37). As Tyler and Jack enter the convenience store, the shrill acousmatic sound of a shell case dropping primes the audience's anticipation of murder. All through the sacrifice scene we hear crickets stridulating, which may or may not be diegetic– neither the scene itself nor the aural rhetoric of the movie give a strong enough indication one way or the other– but the inclusion of the crickets' sound in the darkness accentuates the desolate setting of the harassment, also slyly signaling Jack's schizophrenia, in a muted suggestion that there is no Tyler involved. More precisely, Jack's psychomachia is hidden. But the primary

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function of the crickets' noise is to serve as a steady ground for other aural impressions, which thereby become figures (in the Gestalt sense of figure). When Tyler forces Raymond to his knees and places the gun to his head, we hear acousmatic sounds against the ground of the stridulating: a train horn and the shrill sound of a level crossing bell, both of them indexically warning signals (1:22:09–33). Mechanical horn sounds, which unlike the crickets, are artificial and almost always communicative noises, activate a sense of alarm,[10] correlate with anger and anxiety, especially the longest horn sound preceding Tyler's loudly saying, "Raymond you are going to die" (1:22: 50–53). With its acoustic properties— suddenness, randomness and loudness– the horn sound becomes emphatic of the terror, foregrounding Raymond's fear, but it also mirrors Jack's internal anxiety of committing murder. We may construe that in their generative potential, acousmatic sounds shape a subjective audioscene of terror by affecting the inner eye, since every sound directs the listener's attention to a meaning in context. Our second example is Marla's presence in support groups, tied with leitmotifs of sirens and thunder. In a scene where Jack is in peace in Big Bob's arms, Marla's entrance is sonified as a sinister entrance: she enters first, not visually, but in her high heels click-clicking into the ritualistic joy of 'crying' (the vocal signal of intimacy with an-other, perhaps a function of sympathy) (00:11:31– 40); in a previous scene, at the meditation, we hear the disquieting sound of ambulance or police

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[10] The exception, of course, is with musical horns, which carry their 'messages' much more diffusely, perhaps even affectively iconic rather than indexically. My discussion here is of mechanical horns. The two types of horns are related by frequency spectrum and history, since mechanical horns evolved out of musical horns, which were often used in martial circumstances to signal alarm or cue an attack.

sirens, continuing for over thirteen seconds (00:10:30–43), until, in the following scene, Jack

finds Marla as his power animal, as if he was anticipating her. Sirens are normally high-

pitched with high-amplitude, but in this scene the amplitude is low, as it often is in the

movie, to signal distance and remoteness, as if they are heard through an aural fog. We hear a

second leitmotif of anxiety when Marla's lighting her cigarette is accompanied by thunder

(00:12:10). A generalization can be made here: in sounds tied with Marla's presence, Jack's

psychomachic malaise is revealed, which he verbalizes much later: "She invaded my support

groups, now she's invaded my home" (00:53:04–10).

Part of Jack's psychomachia, the struggle to overcome his anxious weaker self, is

delivered in fascination with violence whose aural rhetoric has remained underappreciated.

Violence in *Fight Club* is ritualistic and two separate allusions must be recognized for a

combined meaning: the joyous shouts of fighters are described in the simile of Pentecostal

'speaking in tongues' (00:43:04–06) and at the chemical burn scene Tyler describes himself

and Jack as "god's unwanted children" (1:03:34). In displacing the biblical myth that

violence of the Holy Spirit on the flesh is redemptive, fight club members vocalize with joy

the pains of self-crucifixion with the motivation of resurrection as strong men. The amplified

shouting becomes the vocal mark of struggle to ascend to manhood: shouting is uttered

violence, the discharge of force; when magnified in the vocal mirror of others, it gains more

potential to overcome fear. The sounds of punches and fighters' grunts are sonified in an

exultation of violence, celebrated in the loud yelling of the members as other fighters destroy

one another. Kenneth Burke speaks of "molding" the psyche of the audience as a

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consequence of form. Burke's molding, in the specifics I analyze here, is realized in the 'dramatic' enthrallment of yelling: the fighters' yelling of joy, symptomatic of a visceral and emotional infection, extends to the audience through the medium of sound by contagion. The voice-over then becomes the surrogate of the fighters' exultation in violence, telling us explicitly how the object of their celebration (violent smashing of flesh on flesh) is becoming figure against the ground of celebration: "Sometimes, all you could hear were the flat, hard packing sounds over the yelling" (00:44:00); and then, in case we missed it, telling us the meaning, "You weren't alive anywhere like you were there" (00:44:14). There is yet a deeper grounding as well: the sounds of violence and its sonic undergirding of celebration are both layered over an active low-frequency rumbling that represents the mental noise that distracts the flow and duration of thought processes. A following scene shows this in the transition to another scene: the noise at the background of a fight becomes transitional to Jack's work place but in bridging the two scenes, the noise intensifies and turns into a shriller and more ominous noise when the voiceover speaks of fight club's restricted duration. In this latter scene, where the anxious noise is heard we see that members of fight club greet only stealthily and not with the same fascination the earlier meetings at fight club (0044:13–19).

Concluding Remarks

Voice criticism can reveal rhetorical meanings both from the perspective of character/narrator and the audience. In *Fight Club's* soundscape, I studied the whole audio-mix as mirroring Jack's psychomachic desires and motives that also molds the psychology of the audience. Tyler's ethos as a strong and free person is imagined, for Jack, partly in Tyler's

certain and persuasive voice and his delivery: this potential could compensate Jack's

smallness, weakness and limitations to struggle for his desires. Listening is hierarchical and

dominance is achieved partly by enthralling sounds. *Fight Club's* aural structure represents

Jack's psychomachic discontent and rage. Jack's fascination with self-destruction in brutal

fights and Tyler's humiliation of citizens have fascinated a large audience, because Jack's

rhetorical argumentation of failure and his motive for change is powerfully delivered in

sounds. In the following section, I will examine the movie *The Road* for the aural rhetoric of

apocalyptic dread.

The Road: The Tuning of the World On Dread

Apocalypse is as much auditory as it is visual in *The Road*. Good and evil are revealed

to the ear in a bipolar sonority, mirroring the eschatological division "this age" and "the age

coming" of the apocalypse, signaled by a door slamming, emblematic of transition:

euphonious utopia and cacophonous dystopia sonify two ontologies with distinct

soundscapes; the brief euphony of the utopia at the beginning echoes a healthy environment

accompanied by the lyrical instrumental music. Soon the evil will be revealed in noise:

leitmotifs of thunder terrify, earth rumbles, trees squeak and collapse, and fire is audible in

the crackling of burning wood; people of the apocalypse will scream in terror; death, in many

incarnations, becomes an audible experience. *The Road* traffics in such sounds to dramatize

dread and anxiety.

With the slamming of the emblematic door, a sonic polarity is staged: an oblique

rhythm begins to mirror the motion of energy in acousmatic noise; an enigmatic, nondiegetic

rumbling begins this motion (an equivalent of the novel's "a series of concussions" that begin

the apocalypse [52]); an electronic noise grows parallel to the rumbling; the latter ascends in

intensity (higher pitched and louder) and dominates the rumbling. The noise focusses on a

major event that is dramatized in sound: humans shouting and crying out, especially a

woman's cry, reaching an extreme emotional level (00:1:09–45). The episode ends at this

sound and there is a transition to some years later inside the apocalypse. I pause on the

ending of this initial episode and outline similar representations of voice-in-extremis in three

other instance. The examples, with the exception of the one just described, construct sonic

spaces in which the vocal expression of terror signals termination of life, but all of them

centralize voice-in-extremis at the threshold of terror. By voice-in-extremis I mean a vocal

behavior at the point of death, when the distance between death and the generation of voice

there is minimum little.[11] Screams of murder victims are the best cases of voice-in-extremis,

when the victim's extermination and his or her scream are almost simultaneous and

synchronous. But I expand the term to cases where there is a suggestion of any other tragic

moment when other vocal behaviors may be heard. When the couple wakes up in distress and

nervousness, they are shown to be agitated by a dreadful roar and desperate call out for help;

this event is enigmatic and disturbing for viewers, since it indicates a disruption in the

diegetic status quo, an indication of things gone wrong. In the second instance, in the

cannibals' basement, we hear an eerie mix of a human voice-in-extremis: a collective roar of

harvested captives that shout, scream and moan; the hysterical scream of a woman, among

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[11] The coinage mixes English and Latin and while "vox-in-extremis" might be a more
consistent coinage, the existence of voice might help to naturalize the term for further use.

the foreboding roar of gibbering men is utterly rough and disturbing, reminiscent of a descent into hell; a man's scream is bestial; the boy's scream from the din penetrates hearing (00:37:11–26). The third instance of sound-in-extremis is a scene in the dark of the night, following the protagonists' escape from the cannibals' house, where a female scream, juxtaposed with electronic noise, is heard acousmatically, juxtaposed by the sound of an axe cutting (00:40:58–41:12). The fourth instance is when a gang of cannibals chases, while barbarically yelling, a mother and her child; when they are caught we hear her scream offscreen, immediately discontinued by the sound of an axe (1:12:02–04). For the four examples, I argue that voices-in-extremis are heard in a figure-ground dynamism in which the sufferer becomes the object of our dread and sympathy. Chion argues that in any audio-mix, when there is "voice," a "hierarchy of perception" is set up (5). He calls this phenomenon "vococentrism," to suggest that "human voice" dominates every other sound by its presence (5). If it is true that the human voice shapes the whole sonic space, then it is the subject of violence as well as its objects (victims' suffering) that should be under scrutiny. The portrayal of voice-in-extremis is a strategy of establishing rhetorical presence, in the sense that the dread of death is made vivid in the consciousness of the hearer. Screaming qualifies Aristotle's definition of pathos, as "destructive or painful action" as represented by "deaths on stage" (*Poetics* 1452b11). While Aristotle speaks of visual observation as a painful experience, this does not appear to be always the case: auditory experiences of painful or tragic events, also, cause pain and anxiety. Aristotle's phrase 'death on stage' is ocularcentric; this voice-in-extremis (antecedent to death) is also a realization of pathos.

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Sounds and voices intrude the human consciousness much closer than a visual rendition of the same events. Our protagonists experience horror because they are in the same precarious situation as the screaming victim (the father even tries to shield his boy by holding his hands over his ears). The protagonists experience first-hand what Aristotle, in *Poetics*, described as the impact a tragic event has upon us when it "concern[s] someone similar" to us (1453a4–7). Similarity, in our examples, is the protagonists' cognitive understanding of their own existence in analogy with the screamer-victims. For the audience, voice-in-extremis generates mood first in the mirror effect of the protagonists, second in the relatively similar result of acoustic qualities of horror. Rough sounds, such as screaming and crying out, impact our hearing sensorium, bringing the danger so close to us to be understood viscerally. Death on stage, that is in the open, which arrives in our consciousness in the medium of the voice also evokes our empathy, since in every scream there is a moral challenge issued to the audience. Every scream or violent crying always indicates an oppression or a violence, and within the context of *The Road* we identify with the screamer as it echoes our own existential dread, though issued from the mouth of another.

The centrality of horror is also evident in non-human sounds. Here, I outline two episodes that have a progression from anticipation to climactic intensity. Consider the fearful scene in which the father and the boy encounter cannibals at the tunnel. The scene can be divided into two stages: pre-flight and post-flight, in both of which anxiety and fear are framed in sounds that indicate proximity of threat to our protagonist. The pre-flight stage constitutes six phases: anticipatory, priming, wake-up, detection (or awareness), revealing,

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and fright. In the anticipatory phase, as the camera moves from the right to the left from behind an ashen station van, an instrumental noise (eerie piano notes) are heard as the ground on which acousmatic, low-pitched footsteps, as figure, are heard (00:11:59). The two sounds form an obscure compound suggesting a threat approaching the protagonists. Such obscure sounds, to recall Edmund Burke's notion of sublime, evoke the imagination of a sinister occurrence, an omen or ill-tiding. The second phase, the priming, contains a nebulous 'humming' that enhances our speculation of threat in the previous phase; this effect is strong because of the conspiracy of the close-up on the sleeping boy (00:12:04). The third phase, begins when the father wakes up to an increasingly loud hum from a truck (00:12:04–11). The fourth phase is detection, that moment we become aware of the presence of a threat (00:12:11–14); the fifth phase is revealing the source by deacousmatization of the truck: its sound and image are fused (00:12:14–19); the sixth phase is fear (00:12:19–24). The second stage, post-flight, is one of the noisiest scenes in *The Road* and can be divided into two phases: threat-awareness and escaping (00:12:24–47). The threat-awareness begins by an intense and ascending electronic noise accompanied by the diegetic high-pitched rumbling of the truck; the escape phase begins with the man's voice (guiding the boy to get up and run) on the ground of the ascending electronic noise; after the truck is deacousmatized, epic drums are played on the ground of the ascending noise and this continues until they have escaped. The second episode is when the father and the boy run into an uncanny image of several skulls on sticks. The episode is formed by a similar sound rhythm as the tunnel scene: in an anticipatory phase the peaceful conversation of the protagonists is disrupted by a

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succession of low-pitched percussive drums (1:12:08). The sound echoes the father's dread as he stares at the skulls, his anxiety being signaled in a squeak fused by percussive drums (1:12:18–24). Here the combination of the artificial drums and diegetic squeak from trees constructs a sinister mood which is conveyed to the audience, especially because the father indicates (facially) awareness of sinister presence. This scene works perfectly well with this enigma as moments later an ascending and anxious electronic noise will dominate the sonic space with the sight of blood and the sudden emergence of a yelling gang of cannibals who are chasing a woman and her child (1:12:33–1:13:04). When the protagonists enter the cannibals' house, a less audible electronic rumble comes to our attention and then it intensifies as the father and the boy go further inside, echoing the boy's anxiety (00:34:36–45); pseudo-diegetic squeaks (since we are not sure what their source is) mirror the boy's anxiety as he stares at the boiling, butchering, and barbequing tools in the backyard (00:34:47); and, inside the basement, following the sight of blood that drops from a pole, a continuous rumble is accompanied by anxious electronic noise (00:36:54–37:02); finally, the foreboding milieu around the father and the boy's exploration of the basement is broken by the violent gibbering, screaming, moaning, and crying out of the captives, all of which on the ground of a nervous electronic noise (00:36:52–37:30). The episodes, as outlined above, deploy sounds in a progression from anxiety to fear: they first use acousmatic, nondiegetic sounds that are enigmatic and, by this obscurity, they guide the imagination to anticipate threat; then these progressive sounds generate a more intense sound rhythm that both mirrors the protagonists' dread, especially the father's, and convey a similar mood to the audience. In

their sequential arrangement, these sounds also generate suspense. Such suspensefulness

realizes Kenneth Burke's notion of the "psychology of form"; The obscurity of these

sequential sounds, also, molds sympathy in the sense that Edmund Burke defined as "a sort

of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many

respects as he is affected" (34). Throughout the whole scene, we are almost as attentive to the

surrounding sounds as the father is; we are startled when the father's focus is disrupted by a

sudden sound at the tunnel when this disruption gives the cannibal opportunity to take the

boy captive. Similarly, we identify, at a sensual level, with the father's protective ethos at the

skulls scene when he senses danger, and at the basement, when the captives' roar becomes

our major tie with the scene when their unrest becomes muddled and extremely suspenseful.

Sympathy, in the ocularcentric tradition of epistemology, has been defined in visual

terms, as sharing an "attitude" or "outlook"; no one has defined it, say, as *outhearing*, to take

sympathy as, also, an outcome of sharing aural-points with others. Sympathy is an outcome

of being aurally linked with others, since sounds make us contemporaneous with a situation

and each sound links every ear in its ear-shot circumference, but of course with differences in

intensity. A shared aural point is ubiquitous in movies, much more common and pervasive

than a character's point of *view*. We rarely see what the character sees, in the way the

character sees it (that is, rarely does the camera assume a character's visual position). But

whenever a character is present onscreen, we hear what (s)he hears, frequently with the

addition of sound (s)he can't hear—namely, the score—which often conveys that character's

emotional response to a situation. We share the characters' auditory (and, far more partially,

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visual) perspective and we share the characters' fear and anxiety because of the synchronicity of our perception. Arrangement of obscure sounds and noises before and during climactic events help mold audience psychology. Antecedent sounds trigger the audience's anticipation of some threat or disaster; in shaping psychological temporality such sounds mold the appetite for sinister or horror. In addition to the tunnel and the cannibals' house scenes, the electronic noise at the seashore, when the father runs to the sea, sets to motion an anxious mood, which is then made more disturbing by the use of oppressive and sudden sounds (drumbeats and percussive sounds) when a man holding a knife approaches the boy (1:20:57–58). These collaborative sounds (in a figure and ground dynamic) shape mental processes by arousing attention from one thing to another based on contiguity and suddenness.

Concluding Remarks

The Road advances its post-apocalyptic survival quest partly in sounds that dramatize its anxiety and fear. Analysis of sonic structure in several episodes shows that a progressive sound rhythm is shaped persuasively by arrangement of acousmatic and sudden sounds that suggest a sinister motion. The soundscape deploys generative potential of acousmatic, oppressive, and percussive sounds to suggest sinister motions. Alteration of acoustic qualities plays an important role in evoking an imagination of terror in *The Road* to mold spectators' sympathetic response. *The Road's* sonic structure appeals to constant ambiguity and obscurity of the plot progression. It also uses 'voice-in-extremis' (shouting, screaming, and moaning) to represent the terror and horror of survival quest at the end of the world. In the

next section I continue my interpretation of sound and voice of fear and anxiety in novels, presenting prose fiction as a sonorous space.

Reading with the Aural Eye: Sonic Experience of the Novel

In the following, I bring together my arguments on sound in the domain of cinema and prose. We turn now to the literary ear. Criticism of sound in the novel is a study of hearing to reveal meanings and emotions in sounds. In our ocularcentrist critical history, we have often spoken of *imagery* in literature but not of *sonery*. In the following I examine the novels *Fight Club* and *The Road* for the (cognitively) aural qualities with which they shape audioscenes of fear and anxiety. I use the concept of 'audioscene' as an impression of the story situations shaped by aural structure, which imposes itself on the consciousness of the readers. In *Fight Club* I study rhythmic phrases and patterns, onomatopoeia, and typography as the embodiment of voice, in ways that domination, indoctrination and psychomachia are represented. *Fight Club's* psychomachia can be explained in the aurality of the novel that mimics the narrator's anxiety but hides the psychomachia. *The Road* is a sound-conscious novel; it foregrounds listening and hearing in its use of linguistic potentials for sounding. I explore the novel's aural representation of survival as a sublime adventure, partly delivered in living with terror caused by sounds. Then, by examining patterned sounds I reveal how expressive sounds contribute to the quest and its anxieties and fears; also it can be noticed that the novel uses aurality to impose sound-consciousness on the readers. I extend sound criticism to certain aural verbs, such as *whisper,* that give auditory information about situations. This function shapes readers' aural reading experience. In this analysis, I wish to

argue that texts deliver their stories largely in sounds, noises and voice and that sound criticism reveals meanings missing in interpretations that abandon the auditory dimension.

Fight Club: **Novel**

In an episode, Chloe, Jack's hallucinated friend at a support group, dies and he imagines her last moments in an uncanny acoustic hallucination; the audioscene contains the metaphor "[H]er pulse a siren overhead" which announces Chloe's death rhythmically:

> Prepare to evacuate soul in ten, in nine, eight.
>
> Chloe's splashing through the ankle-deep back-up of renal fluid
>
> from her failed kidneys.
>
> Death will commence in five.
>
> Five, four.
>
> Around her, a parasitic life spray paints her heart.
>
> Four, three.
>
> Three, two.
>
> Chloe climbs hand-over-hand up the curled lining of her own
>
> throat.
>
> Death to commence in three, two.
>
> Moonlight shines in through the open mouth.
>
> Prepare for the last breath, now.
>
> Evacuate.
>
> Now.

Soul clear of body.

Death commences.

Now. (36–7)

Jack projects his own anxiety of death on Chloe, an anxiety that he verbalizes a few moments earlier: "one day you're thinking and hauling yourself around, and the next, you're cold fertilizer, worm buffet" (35). In an auditory hallucination of this kind there is no external hearing stimulus other than the illusory acoustic "sonic overhead," which sets the nervous and anxious rhythm of the scene with the urgency of sirens, shaping the reader's consciousness of Jack's hallucination of death approaching in nervous tones. The sound rhythm of the hallucination can be seen in rhythmic patterns, onomatopoeia and sonic iconicity of time: the use of a rhythmic pattern of monosyllabic numerals in parallel structures, many of which are followed by "in" that gives flow to the rhythm; the countdown, in its semi-iconicity of a clock-siren, makes the readers voice the countdown with the narrator;[12] the use of onomatopoeic sound image in the repetition of "now," echoing sirens, gives sonic resonance to the anxiety. This is true, especially, of *Fight Club*'s narrator's consciousness of time as a movement toward disaster. A good example occurs in the beginning chapter, in the countdown-to-death theme, when a gun is held in Jack's mouth and the countdown is supposed to end in a terroristic explosion of several buildings (11–15). The

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[12] The same time-consciousness, echoed in the novel's rhythmic phrases, can be noticed in the movie's amplification of the clock sound on Jack's uneasy encounter with Marla. The same sound becomes transitional to relate the hallucinated scene to Jack's insomnia. In the movie, when Marla steps into the support group, Jack's anxiety is shown in the fast tempo of a clock (00:12:21), which continues to the bed scene (00:12:42).

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same theme of imminent death, marked in rhythmic image of time can be also heard in Jack's hallucinated airplane crashes. He states this anxiety in a repeated motif "life…ending one minute at a time" (29). A similar pattern of the repetition of "now" in the highway scene frames Jack's anticipation and anxiety of death. In the Chloe-passage the narrator's constant insecurity is rhythmically patterned in prosodic progression that gives sound to the anxiety of death. This aspect of the novel is a function of textual sounding machinery.

Another aspect of the textual sounding machinery is to regulate the auditory gaze on the typography of the text, which I call voicing by typography, such as in all-UPPERCASING that attends to the aural eye of the imagination. The following is a scene in which the narrator imagines himself walking among his colleagues at his work place. The scene occurs after he is dismissed from his job and he has burned his house. As he is walking with a wounded face among his co-workers, he claims that he has been "enlightened," by which he means he is now free of obedience and materialism. Jack's hallucination of resistance is expressive of his psychomachia, which can be noticed in the typography:

> Until today, it really pissed me off that I'd become this totally
> centered Zen Master and nobody had noticed … When I pass
> people in the hall at work, I get totally ZEN right in everyone's
> hostile little FACE.
>
> Just by contrast, this makes me the calm center of the
> world. Me, with my punched-out eyes and dried blood in big
> black crusty stains on my pants, In other words, to everybody

at work. Hello! Look at me. Hello! I am so ZEN. This is

BLOOD. This is NOTHING. Hello. Everything is nothing, and

it's so cool to be ENLIGHTENED. Like me.

Sigh. (63–4)

Typography, beyond mere arrangement of 'visual' language, is also the embodiment of

voice; as the body is the mold of the voice, typography also molds voice. But as the

biological voice can reach vocal mimesis by altering the acoustics of voice, typography can

transfigure intonation, tone, and amplitude to the page. The Jack-enlightened extract imposes

an embodied voice (in mimesis of Jack's stronger self), with a higher amplitude ('Z' is taller

and more muscular than 'z') that suggests Jack's-Tyler's bellicosity and aggression (it is

important after all for Jack to deliver a fighter spirit in Tyler's voice: "Tyler gives the rules

he and I decided," [54]). The loudness of all-capitals is mirrored and signaled in the very

shape of the uppercase characters: they stand higher than the rest of the words, hence

imposing a higher pitch –even if imaginally—in reading. In pronouncing the uppercase

words louder, we are more cognitively engaged, because of our awareness of the protrusion

of the Tyler-consciousness, in the very act of sounding the words louder. In actual voice, we

pick up emotions embodied in words in ways that words are articulated in higher or lower

pitch; in typography, we also discern emotion and attitude in uppercased words. The

uppercasing stands out against the quieter ground of the lower case text and makes the

accented word resonate by the pause it causes in reading, since in the pause the mind finds

more time to sound the letter by the very cognitive delay that is involved in the recognition

and assembling a word. In the mixed-case text above, the uppercase words get disproportionately larger allocations of attention because they are cued visually to sound emphatically. However, the typography of the excerpt functions almost like a situational irony, revealing Jack's misunderstanding of himself: the shouting of *ZEN* is almost antithetical to being zen. The loudness of the word is doing to the reader what the character is doing to others when he gets "zen up in their face." The shouting in BLOOD and NOTHING mirrors his Tylerite self-destruction philosophy, being aggressive to others, while *ENLIGHTENED* mirrors his own sense of liberation, with the irony again revealing a hostility that does not attend a state of enlightenment. The paradox is typographically foregrounded, in the way that we voice the word *ENGLIGHTENED* contrasted and reduced in the visual "Like me." We virtually hear the deflation and the slumped shoulders. This scene uses "little" three times, mirroring Jack's desperate attitude of himself: his loneliness, isolation and lack of affirmation. The word *means* the quality of smallness and insignificance, but the sonorants and the lax vowels also *sound* small and insignificant. I argue that typographical emphasis gives auditory meaning: the very voice is meaning.

To bring the implications of my analysis of sound into the rhetorical framework of psychomachia we must now connect the auditory to the cultural meanings of *Fight Club*. The narrator uses violence for rhetorical purposes, namely in looking dangerous among his colleagues he claims manliness and masculinity. Similar to Harrison (18), Ronald S. Green finds *Fight Club* a commentary on "the role of man in post-industrial capitalism," a context in which men are not "hunters and worriers" of the past eras (14). In the context of the 1990s,

as these commentators believe, "[t]he traditional male role is now obsolete" and violence in such a context is "heinous," and therefore the "female role has become dominant" (14). Men of *Fight Club*, representative of the 1990s are compelled to "display traditionally female civility" (14). The extract above demonstrates the narrator's trouble with a passive position and he claims his agency through a wounded warrior, but the auditory dimension of the text uses uppercasing as a way of sounding louder, foregrounding masculinity through the medium of the voice.

The extract implies an uncanny meaning: Tyler's voice coming out of Jack's mouth. Language is the embodiment of thought. In Jack being the speaking mouth for Tyler, he, in truth, loses logos to Tyler. Jack becomes the verbal organ of Tyler's revolution. Tyler's enlightenment results, in several ways, in a repressive hierarchy of voice that either surfaces as parroting Tyler (members reciting Tyler's rules) or a loss of speech (Raymond's stuttering under Tyler's gun). Jack, also, at the very beginning of the novel expresses his loss of speech: "With a gun stuck in your mouth and the barrel of the gun between your teeth, you can only talk in vowels" (13). Although Jack cannot speak because of the gun in his mouth, we can understand Jack's subjection in the allusion to speaking through the barrel of the gun: Tyler speaks the gun into Jack's mouth. Terror, Edmund Burke said, "robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning" (57). Raymond K. Hessel's stuttering on his own name K.K.K.K.K.K under Tyler's sacrifice gun (152–53), also exemplifies the loss of cognitive control over speech, in a different way that Jack's vocal system minimizes to "vowels": in showing Raymond's "jerking backward and backward" under the terror of the gun, *Fight*

Club imposes on our reading Raymond's affected 'breath' in stuttering on "K"; the disruption of breath, as vocal medium, impairs verbal duration. As another instance of *textual sounding machinery*, the repetition scheme of the plosive /k/ forces on the reader the mimicking of the character's fear-caused iteration, which functions as a kind of ploche (since the initials are all enunciated), as well as, simultaneously, a kind of hyper-consonance (since the letters all make a consonant sound). The iterated "K," an abbreviation as well as a sound, mimetically reproduces the kind of stuttering response one in a state of terror might give, sneeringly suggesting Raymond is a scaredy-cat, and, like alliteration (or isocolon or rhyme) in poetry, engages the reader's active involvement.

Lars Svendsen, speaking of the movie *Fight Club*, reads Raymond's submission to Tyler's terrorism as interest in "self-preservation," gaining a "more authentic perspective on life" (90). He appreciates Edmund Burke's open-minded notion of the Sublime that goes beyond interpretation of the Sublime merely by sight. Svendsen finds that Burke has included "physicality in his account of the Sublime" (89–90). But Svendsen fails to notice Burke's chapter on "sound" of the sublime. If we ignore a question such as 'Whose voice is being heard?' then we make a wrong claim such as Svendsen's admiration of enlightenment under terror as authentic. Voice criticism tells us that Raymond's submission to Tyler is in fact subjection to the schizophrenic's logos that claims to hold access to rationality. The sonic sublime that surrounds Jack, each and every sound of it, shapes Jack's muddled sense of reality: "[W]hen I wake up…it's not clear if reality slipped into my dream or if my dream is slopping over into reality" (137). Notice the inverse, symmetrical repetition of the

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antimetabole here and the virtual repetition in "slipping" and "slopping" (only one vowel is different), which gives onomatopoeic (and metaphorical) liquidity to the expression of unreason (there is also a partial synonymia as well, since both slipping and slopping suggest both a looseness and a transference). Jack's consciousness is noisy. In the middle of his anxiety of the dangers of Project Mayhem "[a] telephone was ringing" in his dream (137) and "[a] vacuum cleaner hums somewhere" (138). Such noises, rather than aural mimesis of reality, accommodate Jack's internal contending desires. He hears these noises when, in his own impression, he "[has] been behaving miserably" (138). Here, the phone ring becomes uncanny: a call from Tyler guiding him to martyrdom on a highway (137–47). It would be repetitive to anatomize the acoustic psychomachia of the highway; but, another rhythmic 'countdown' to death, in fear of oncoming cars "screaming" their horns, iterates Jack's anxiety (144–47).

In a broader scale, voice in *Fight Club* reveals Jack's psychomachia playing out in muddled voices. The arrangement of lines only gives the illusion of different voices; the use of "we," right from the beginning pages through other scenes such as Jack's self-beating at his boss's office, imitates Jack's auditory hallucination, which merges with Jack's illusory memory of Tyler's fighting his manager.[13] As Jack is sitting in his boss's office, requiring a check every week in return for keeping the secrets of the company's irresponsibility for the

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[13] David Fincher's simulation of auditory hallucination is not as successful as the novel's merging of multiple voices as acoustic hallucination. The following link, testified by numerous comments from people with similar experiences as Jack's gives an idea of how auditory hallucination functions: < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vvU-Ajwbok>. Accessed May 27, 2016.

lives of people, he says "I am Joe's Smirking Revenge" (114). The sentence is part of a sequence of Jack's "I am Joe's-x" expression of psychotic conflict, emerging as the voice of his stronger self: "Tyler's words coming out of my mouth" (114). The iterant "I am Joe's-x" makes us voice it simply because it is a variation on a repeated mood. In signaling that he "used to be a nice person" he marks the surfacing of Tyler-consciousness, with voice central to the scene. Jack's repetition of Tyler's laugh generates an uncanny audioscene, since Tyler is laughing through Jack's mouth: he "had laughed after the union president punched him…. The one punch knocked Tyler out of his chair, and Tyler sat against the wall, laughing. Go ahead, you can't kill me," Tyler was laughing (114). Jack expresses his relation with Tyler in the analogy of "Tony Perkin's mother in *Psycho*" (173) and "the movie *Sybil*" (196). In allusion to Tony's subjection to the voice of his mother leading him to crime in *Psycho* and *Sybil*'s schizophrenic breakdown and transformation to the speaking organ of a little girl in *Sybil*, Jack becomes subjected to an uncanny hierarchy of voice, which qualifies Chion's concept of *acousmêtre*, or the controlling voice. While Žižek (2004) reads the violence of the movie as liberation (153–55), he does not comment on Jack's subjection to Tyler's tyranny, specifically in Jack's mimicking Tyler aurally, in speaking out bubbles of blood, shouting, laughing, gurgling, giggling, crying and voicing Tyler's words, which he remembers from Tyler's fighting his manager. Demonization, such as it is aurally represented here, is a major function of psychomachic soul discord. The way that Jack maneuvers his uncanny fight can be listened to in the novel's maneuvering on the word "please," used eleven times in the scene, three times italicized: "The first word I'm going to say is *please*. So I keep my lips

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shut …. Please. I smile big enough to split my lips" (116–17). The way that Jack pronounces it makes it plosive and noisy, foregrounding Jack's appeal to victimhood. As a mania of ploche, the word is articulated in blood, with a flurry of bilabial plosives and liquids: "Please comes out in a bubble of blood …. And the bubble pops blood all over" (117). The arrangement of "please" as a single word in successive lines, two times italicized, signals the sound of the word by the signalness of the form, regulating our auditory gaze on the uncanny use of the voice. I argue that, similar to our previous examples of the hierarchy of voice, in the very emergence of Tyler in Jack's vocal instrument, his mouth, we have an instance of despotic vocal unification. A major question in aural rhetoric is "Who is listening to Whom?" Murray Schafer, in "Open Ears," states, "We Listen; therefore we obey" (in Bull and Back 25). The narrator's statements, "This is what Tyler wants me to do" and "I am Tyler's mouth" (155) are, beyond voluntary listening, the emergence of Tyler as acousmêtre. The emergence of Tyler as voice is the aural aspect of psychomachia: he is Jack's compensation for the traumatic guilt of falling from his ideal manhood. Laurie Vickroy states this compensation in this manner: "Tyler articulates what the protagonist cannot: his uncertainties, unfiltered, unsocialized rage, with violent consequences that the narrator cannot own" (69).

Concluding Remarks

In the examination of sound, noise and voice in *Fight Club* novel, I extended my inquiry into prose acoustics in a variety of examples to argue that fictional prose is sonic and that *Fight Club's* text deploys language possibilities to both carry certain themes and scenes

in aural representation and impose on the readers to engage sonically with those aurally significant elements. I specifically demonstrated that sound rhythm of *Fight Club* adopts a rhythmic movement that echoes Jack's hallucinations and his psychomachia. I pushed my notion of textual sounding machinery further to include prosodic progression through linguistic rhythmic patterns, speech sounds as well as 'voicing-by-typography'. Finally, I imported the notion of acousmêtre to the novel to explore psychomachia. In the next section I continue my examination of sound in the novel *The Road*.

The Road: **Novel**

A "granitic beast" whose "beating heart" reverberates in a "soundless darkness" and its "brain pulse[s] in a dull glass bell" is the audioscene of a dream in which an apocalyptic survivalist is wandering to save his son (3–4). Henceforth, we hear, with the ear of the survivalists, of a dreadful journey inside a noisy monster, inside which our protagonists arrange their safe proxemics according to what they hear and what they do not. Within the deafening silence of *The Road,* the father is always conscious of movements, constantly alert to sounds, always expecting the worst. Any impulsive or striking sound, such as 'thunder,' the collapse of trees, and squeaks, disrupts the father's sleep and scares the boy. For instance, early in the novel we read "[the father] woke up to the sound of distant thunder and sat up" (15). Acoustically understood, impulsive and sudden sounds disrupt soundlessness. The phenomenon is an encounter between two acoustic extremes and it is terrifying. These sounds realize Edmund Burke's notion of the Sublime generated by the sounds when a sudden loud sound breaks on a silent background and evokes the terrible (46). Aristotle, in

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Problemata, similarly observed that "greater disturbance" and "violent impact" is caused by loud sounds, since they cause "some alteration within us" (886b17–21). Such sublimity in *The Road's* soundscape can be found in earthquakes that overwhelm our protagonists. Similar to the sound design of the movie version that generates anticipation of the sinister by acousmatic sounds, the novel uses enigmatic sounds that disturb the father; in a scene he wakes "in the darkness to hear *something* coming" (27). The boy verbalizes his fear of this aural "something" and the father appeases him by holding him. The enigmatic "something" comes to the ear of the characters overwhelmingly and to our imagination acousmatically. The indefinite pronoun "something" in reference to the sounding phenomenon acousmatizes the sound, giving it a sinister mood. Then the sound is set in motion: it "was coming toward them…growing louder" causing everything to tremble (27–8). Rhetorically understood, the acousmatic being is only indicated, not known. It realizes Aristotle's definition of "danger" coming to a subject in "indication" (1382a20–35). A similar use of acousmatic "something" is at the encounter with cannibals scene, when the father wakes up to unclear sounds: "Something woke him. He turned on his side and lay listening" (60). "Something" the compound of an indefinite quantifier and an indiscriminately capacious noun, is inconclusive and its indication can be only enigmatic, and in this context foreboding and suspenseful, which is made more strained in its further approaching in the deictic "them": "when he looked back toward the road the first of them were already coming into view" (61). Due to its visual absence, the father's object of fear keeps us more intensely engaged to know our

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protagonists survive the tension. With this general understanding of how reading *The Road* with the ear can be fascinating, I now turn to more complex textual sounding machinery.

Reading the Ear in Patterned Sounds

Aural experience can be mediated and re-enacted in a variety of ways. Schemes of repetition, for instance, give sonority to texts either through iteration of consonants, vowels, or semivowels. As instances of acoustic mimesis, speech sounds, as Herushevski observes, convey a tone or mood connected to the whole context. In a few examples I examine ways that such sound patterns make manifest character's, narrator's, or a situation's mood to engage the reader in the very act of reading. Consider the audioscene in the following section when the father wakes up in a cave to the dripping of water, and the narrator uses the analogy of pilgrims lost in the internals of a noisy beast. Note the repetition of the semivowel "ɯ"[14] in the successive words "which," "wakened," "wandered," "where" and "the wet flowstone walls":

> In the dream from which he'd wakened he had wandered in a
> cave where the child led him by the hand. Their light playing
> over the wet flowstone walls. …Deep stone flues where the
> water dripped and sang. Tolling in the silence the minutes of
> the earth and the hours and the days of it and the years without
> cease. (3)

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[14] I use the sound symbols as assigned by the "International Phonetic Alphabet" cited at <http://www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/ipa-sounds/ipa-chart-with-sounds/>

The repetition of "ɯ" mirrors the modulating heavy background that is disturbed by the rhythm of the abstract torturing impression of time "The brain that pulsed in a glass bell" (4) sounded in the consonants "d," "t," and "ch." The patterned clusters with similar patterns serve to create a generalized mood; they progress the intended semantic content partly through sounds. Sometimes diegetic sounds such as recurrent "sharp crack[s] from somewhere on the mountain" that scares the boy (35) reinforce a local form of expressive sounds: in "He *w*oke *w*himpering in the night and the man held him (36), the repetition of "ɯ" accentuates the boy's fear from the oppressive sound of falling trees.

The Road makes readers conscious of reading sonically. At the scene that our protagonists encounter the cannibals, when the father wakes up to some acousmatic sound ("Something woke him up"), the novel makes the reader conscious of sound patterns simply because it makes the father's listening so central to the scene: "[H]e ... lay listening… "they came shuffling through the ash casting their hooded heads from side to side" (60). Some sound patterns such as the repetition of 'ʂ' adjacent to 's' in this context serve an acoustic mimesis: the repetition of "ʂ" mimics the approach of the gang of cannibals, by the sounds of their ragged procession, before they come to view. The pattern of the fricative sibilants "ʂ" and "s" accentuates the father's aural perception and his sensitivity to sounds at this vital situation, and in doing so the tone of fear is transposed from the father's mind to the words and transferred to the readers. Some sound patterns do not serve acoustic mimesis of such kind; rather, as we notice in the repetition of 'h,' we do not mimic any diegetic sounds, but the pattern empowers the cannibals visually, showing them dominant as a militia. Sometimes

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sound patterns are brought to the reader's consciousness because of other auditory information. For instance, at the same scene when sound and silence are so vital, the narrator's sentence that the man "had a cough in his throat that never left" (67), subsequent expressive sound patterns reproduce a certain sonic aspect in the diegesis: the repetition of 's' is reinforced in "the unseen sun cast no shadow… he…listened. No wind. Dead silence" (69). What Hrushovski calls "Focusing Sound Patterns" as sounds [that] are not associated with semantics of the text in their sound quality or mood" (51) might be extended to textual strategies that aim to keep the reader attentive to the auditory dimension of the novels or poems.

Patterned sounds, therefore, both echo the aural dimension of the text and shape the auditory imagination of the readers in subtle schemes of speech sound repetition. However, other tools of textual sounding machinery can be found; for instance, in reference to a gang of armed cruising cannibals, we read "they clanked past" (91). Here, the sonic-verb, "clank," is used only one time but it contains the complete progression of the gang in one word. Other words and verbs also show this movement aurally: "the ground [was] shuddering lightly. Tramping" (92). We notice a sequence of sonic-verbs that do not shape a rhythmic prosody, but they simply convey events in their individual aural nature: 'shuddering' and 'tramping' both imply events that are essentially sounding and they contain part of that sound in their linguistic signification. Without making the rigid claim that "ʂ" in 'shuddering' necessarily represents trembling, we can think of an impression of that tremble if we agree that in, for instance, 'shaking,' 'shivering' and 'shuddering' the "ʂ" sound has some suggestion of

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vibration. In light of I. A. Richards's notion of onomatopoeia's capacity in "call[ing] up free auditory images of the sounds" (117) and Hrushovski's expansion of the scope of onomatopoeia from a single word to "abstracting sounds from several words" (47), we notice that a total mood of fear is manifest in the collaboration between patterned and non-patterned sounds that all together focus our attention to the aural dimension of experience. To return to our first example of time tolling in the cave, in the speech sounds "ɯ" and "m" the aural quality of its phonology reinforces the valence and denotation of the words; the speech sounds imitate the noises in the void of the cave, explained somewhere else as "a series of concussions" (52) that begins the apocalypse itself, an allusion to the biblical noises of the apocalypse in 'rumbling' (Revelation, 4:5 and 8:5); the "s" mirrors a hushing noise and the sibilance of aerated water movement and the stark coldness of the cave. In the variety of examples discussed here, a whole sonority can be detected that echoes the father's anxiety and fear, gained by his auditory experience. The benefit of such a hearing criticism is to provide specific instances from the auditory dimension of novels that other forms of criticism can only get close. For instance, Cooper's reading of *The Road* merely points out the feature of "narrative" in the novel that "remains close to the father's perspective and frequently moves inside his mind" (137). While a non-hearing criticism as Cooper's is able to reach at some general understanding of how the mind of a character is brought to the attention of the readers, a hearing criticism has a stronger potential to account for the general effect of a text to make the protagonists' emotional experience aurally present to the reader's consciousness.

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***Voice*: Acoustics and Presence**

In this section I argue that literary texts also sound by language strategies of framing voice to generate audioscenes; first, any form of direct or indirect discourse (quoting the speech and thoughts of characters) deautomatize the habituated flow of the text; and second, the aural quality of the voice can always help shape audioscenes. A quotation is always a change in the currently speaking voice, replaced by characters. While Petkov and Belin's cognitive research explains that reading direct and indirect discourse generates a more vivid experience than indirect discourse, they reduce direct discourse to a structure of subject + quote verb + quotation marks. But direct discourse also includes dialogues such as the following that lacks direct quotation signals. Consider the intense dialogue between the father and a cannibal:

> Just keep coming. […]
>
> Don't look back there. [implies the gang members that he may
>
> call out to]. If you call out you're dead.
>
> You ain't got but two shells. Maybe just one. And they'll hear
>
> the shot.
>
> Yes they will. But you won't.
>
> Why are you looking at him?
>
> I can look where I want to. (63–65)

The dialogue contains dramatized presence: we are able to dissociate each of the speakers in an imaginary persona. The text activates readers' inner voices, dramatizing the situation in

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similar ways that Petkov and Belin find about a direct discourse. I argue that at the basis of inner-voice activation is the rhetorical figure of personification, as a cognitive process that helps create presence. In light of Perelman and Olberecht-Tyteca, we can conclude that through the medium of voice, the emotional state of characters becomes present in the consciousness of the reader. This presence induces sympathy: when the auditory referent is tied with an emotional situation, say fear, the counterpart emotion must be activated in the reader. When the boy gives verbal expression to his fear in "I'm scared…I'm so scared" (27–8), this sympathy is more directly guided. Fictional dialogue manufactures a voicing position to which the reader assimilates, becoming the medium of sounding the voice of the character, conceptualizing the emotional state of the characters. In the extended dialogue above, two voices, not one, are present to the reader, including their individuated accents, through subtleties of pronunciation, dialect, and verbal tics, for instance in the way that the cannibal's accent is signaled: "I aint goin nowheres" (5). Based on this separation of voices, we hear different speakers and, therefore, give different inner-voice to each as we personify the speakers in our brains.

Voice can also be read for acoustic qualities in verbs such as shouting, whispering, whistling, sobbing, and screaming: they frame our understanding of the amplitude of and attitude in voice and they always give aural information about characters' moods, their proxemics and impressions in contexts of enunciation. When the father uses the minimalist onomatopoeic "shh" (ş) to quiet the boy, the reader assimilates the father's mood and knows that the father doesn't want the boy to give linguistic sound, material form, to his worries and

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make them audible. The worry that is in "shh" makes present in the reader's consciousness the characters' terror. Readers do not just read the abstract words on a page; they give voice, either internally or by subvocalizing, to the words of characters; readers, of course do not scream or shout in this inner-voicing, but they create the imaginal audioscene in their minds. However, with quieter voices, such as the father's direct discourse of whispering to the boy, "Quick...Quick" (61) to guide him away from the cannibals, the reader might read a breathy, aspirated pronunciation of those words.

Concluding Remarks

Aural Rhetoric (criticism of sound, noise, and voice) always offer a richer understanding of a story. Inquiry into 'what sounds and with what acoustic qualities the characters hear,' 'where, in what context, they hear the sounds' and 'how they are impacted by the sounds they hear' shows the aspects of the sublimity of *The Road's* journey that can remain underappreciated in the visual (ocular) and narrative interpretation. A hearing criticism, one that centralizes its reading on the sonic aspects of a text, brings fuller and more precise meanings out of a text. While critics of *The Road*, such as Cooper, might be able to explore quest in *The Road* and make general claims about how a novel may be mapped into the mythos of quest, their unhearing criticism leaves out the implications of fear and anxiety that are specifically framed in sounds, noises and voice as parts of the experience of quest. I offered an aural criticism of the novel in that can be summarized in these strategies: through scenic description I demonstrated that characters are aware of sounds and they use auditory information to survive in the deadly world of the apocalypse, setting their safe proxemics.

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Through inquiry into "sound patterns" I illustrated that sounds convey meaning at the same time that they shape the acoustic dimension of the story and the readers' sensory experience of reading; and finally, through two strategies I demonstrated that voice, like sound in general, helps shape a story's *audioscene*. In *The Road* sound-in-extremis typifies a sort of vocal appeal to represent horror. *The Road,* uses sounds to represent the sublimity of its survival quest and in doing so it keeps suspense and tension always present.

Beyond the Auricle: Sound in Film and Fiction

While a film attends to the biological ear, a book does not. In this section I bring sound criticism in the mediums of film and novel as close together as possible. We might begin with 'hearing' and the question "Who hears?" In film we either *hear-with* the character/narrator (e.g., we hear-with the father the rumbling of the cannibals' truck in *The Road* and we hear-with Jack Marla's click-clicking footsteps into a support group in *Fight Club*) or we 'hear-without' characters (we hear-without characters all artificial and nondiegetic noises in *The Road* and *Fight Club*). In novels we only hear-with characters/narrators (we hear-with the father a gang of cannibals "clanked past" in *The Road* and in *Fight Club* we adopt Jack's auditory hallucination in which he hallucinates that "[Chloe's] pulse [like] a siren overhead" says "[D]eath will commence in five. Five, four"). In the novel *Fight Club,* the viewer's hearing sensorium is completely tied to Jack's schizophrenic ears and the novel achieves the same effect as the movie. Movies impose on viewers the characters' heard diegetic sounds as well as nondiegetic sounds and by doing so

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films gain aural domination over the viewers' auditory sensorium. This results in more effective and imposed sympathy and identification.

Sound is normally judged by its acoustic qualities. Movies have endless potential for the alteration and manipulation of frequency, duration, and the sequence of sounds to generate and enhance the desired rhythm and meaning. *The Road* movie, for instance, alters electronic noise at climactic scenes to generate anticipation of disaster, and in the rhythm of sounds suggests approaching threats. *Fight Club's* nervous and intensified electronic noise imposes Jack's emotional motions, conflicts and struggle on viewers; the rhythm of the fights, the pounding of punches at high amplitude mimic Jack's fascination with violence as a cure for anxiety and as a ritualistic joy with taking pain and giving pain for transcendence from fallenness and weakness. *Fight Club's* nervous and upbeat rhythm with which Jack's malaise and ascent motive are delivered becomes the consciousness of the viewers as well. The novel, as genre, has its own acoustic properties and can achieve its own aural mimesis. Compare the rhythm of *The Road's* nervous rhythm at the tunnel scene with the rhythm of the novel in the same scene; in the novel, the father's fearful struggle to save the boy is sounded in minimal sentences that drop quotation marks, the paced up short directive sentences, and the amplitude with which he speaks to the boy: "Run, he whispered. Run. He looked back. The truck had rumbled into view" (60). In words such as 'whisper' we find acoustic information, since it suggests a low amplitudes and high frication necessary to remain unnoticed. Or consider the novel's use of the unusual number of auditory words at the cannibals' house: "shh" (three times); "hearts pounding;" had to "stifle the cough"; "he lay

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listening, holding the voice"; "whispered" (two times); "heard them in the dry leaves" (110–13). The aggregate of these aural words delivers the episode mostly in the auditory dimension of experience and the rhetorical outcome is what we might call aural prominence. We notice a mood in sounds that foregrounds the characters' fear and the father's intention to handle the situation quietly. Evidently, prose has the potential to generate its own rhythm through sounds, noises and voices; but, while the novel has a more deeply cognitive method, film sound dominates over the viewer's hearing, simply because hearing is not voluntary.

An aural rhetoric of film and fiction calls for answers to the question "What do sounds do?" It is well established in film criticism to identify two kinds of sounds, which I argue should be imported to sound criticism in fiction: 1. if a sound is generated by a being inside the story and is heard by the viewer, it is diegetic. For instance, in *The Road* movie, the rumbling of the cannibals' truck is elemental in the story. The acousmatic presence of the truck helps shape the nervousness that the director intends to deliver. The novel, similarly, shapes the anxiety of the scene by indication of this sound. The gang of cannibals comes acousmatically; rather than naming the gang directly, the novel delivers the event in the enigma of a sound that moves toward the protagonists. Then this enigmatic sound, the acousmatic presence, keeps the readers in a suspenseful pursuit of the sound source. A similar argument can be made for *Fight Club*'s diegetic sounds at the 'human sacrifice' scene in the film and the novel; 2. If a sound is not generated by some being inside the story and is heard by the viewer, it is nondiegetic (e.g., a timer in *Fight Club*'s initial episode at the high rise (00:3:04) and, in *The Road*, the footsteps just before the appearance of cannibals' truck

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[0011:51–57]). Moreover, diegetic sounds can be either acousmatic or visible: the pounding punches of *Fight Club* and the roaring of the captives in *The Road* at the cannibals' basement have a visual match; the sirens, horns, and level crossing bells in *Fight Club* and footsteps, squeaks and the artificial noise in *The Road* are acousmatic. No sound in a novel can be nondiegetic, but sounds in novel can be acousmatic, for instance the truck sound, described above, or "footsteps" and "hideous shrieks" coming from the cannibals' house in *The Road*. This sort of distinction between diegetic/nondiegetic sounds is significant in aural rhetoric: in film, only the diegetic sounds (acousmatic or not) can be interpreted from the perspective of film characters; nondiegetic sounds can be judged only from the perspective of viewers, and not characters. But in novels sounds can be interpreted from the perspective of the character as well as the readers. While the aural dimension in a novel is cognitive and imaginal, it is involuntary in film: the bleak and enigmatic rhythm of *Fight Club*'s "human sacrifice" scene, for example, is physically imposed on our ears and the whole audio-mix ties the viewer's auditory sensorium with the character's. However, it is true that a novels' rhythm (in sound patterns and all the textual sounding machinery) engages the readers cognitively, the reader's subjection to sound is voluntary and dependent on reader's immersion. Novels, in contrast with films, do not have the potential to give a sound that did not happen in the story; but, readers experience sounds (e.g., patterned sounds, prosodic sounds) generated by prose, beyond character's consciousness; 3. both film and novel use their individuated potential to use voice for the presentation of an idea. In film an actor performs on his/her voice by alteration in pitch, duration of syllables, and gives words intonations to convey emotions and

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attitudes through the physical instrument of the voice; Tyler's orations or Raymond's desperate crying and sobbing in *Fight Club* and the use of voice-in-extremis in the form of screaming, moaning, and shrieking in *The Road* are examples. The novel, as genre, also has capacities to use voice as voice; for instance, typographical formation, rhythmic phrasing, and expressive sounds in *Fight Club* and patterned and expressive sounds, verbs that mark amplitude, such as whisper, moan, shout and onomatopoeic words such as 'shh' in *The Road* help shape the desired audioscenes.

Concluding Remarks

Sound criticism finds meanings that might remain missing in other forms of criticism. Both film and fiction can be examined for ways that they use acoustic possibilities to advance a meaning or theme. The film and novel of *Fight Club* both deliver Jack's psychomachic anxiety, discontent and struggle to ascend, partly, in sounds whose acoustic arrangement and rhythm both mimic Jack's psychology and mold the audience's psychology to identify with Jack. *The Road,* film and novel, is more sound-conscious than *Fight Club,* since it is a survival story in which characters must use sounds to set their safe zones and carry on their quest. For this difference, sounds and voices in *The Road* are different: more startling, oppressive, and impulsive sounds are used in *The Road.* In the following I give a conclusion to the chapter.

Conclusion

We normally use expressions such as 'watch movies' and not 'listen to movies.' Neither do we think of hearing novels. Of course we hear movies as much as we see them, but sight is the privileged sense in our discourse, and it takes precedence when we attend to the artifacts and write about them. That should not mislead us into thinking that sound is insignificant: audiences have had little patience for silent movies once "talkies" were invented, and the fact that visually impaired people attend movies makes it clear how sound carries a lot of the story. I attempted to develop a hybrid method for the examination of sound, specifically of fear and anxiety, in two important novels and their cinematic adaptations: *Fight Club* and *The Road*. I began with defining the general term *aural rhetoric* as a theory that uses an anatomical method called sonoanalysis to examine sounds for their rhetorical intent. My thesis is that sound is an element in the production of meaning and ignoring it sacrifices a massive body of meaning in film and fiction that is built in sounds. Throughout the chapter, I have argued that applying sound criticism to the novel opens new horizons to look for rhetorical intent and meaning in general. Aural rhetoric celebrates hearing, biological or imaginative, against ocularcentrism. In contrast with Henry James's theory that the novel is spectacular, I presented that the novel is unignorably acoustic. With terminology such as textual sounding machinery, sound *onpage* and a variety of other terms, I attempted to show the potentials of prose in representation by sound, noise and voice. This sort of enquiry looks at reading as a sensory as well as imaginal and cognitive experience. I put in practice a methodology of sound studies that examines soundscapes of film and fiction

for sounds, diegetic or nondiegetic, in their individuality and in sequential arrangement for their affective meaning in context. Once we must identify genres, then pursuit of sounds starts to make and unfold meaning. For instance, I have identified *The Road*, movie and novel, as a survival quest with challenges in a deadly world in which the father uses sounds and noises as information to map his quest and keep his son safe. I have listened, in the novel and the film, with the father and the boy and examined what sounds they hear, how those sounds shape the context for the reader and film viewer. *Fight Club,* as an allegorical psychomachia, uses sounds to represent motions in Jack's psychomachia, or battle of the soul. Its soundscape is ironic, both mimicking Jack's anxiety, rage and motive for ascent as well as revealing that Jack is hallucinating in his fights and hazardous travels.

Sound criticism needs acoustic terminology that allow the identification of sounds as sounds: ways that they sound; I have borrowed from film studies and coined sound concepts to find strategies with which to criticize sound; I have imported some of these terms to sound criticism in the novel, but I have also borrowed terms from the domain of poetry and coined some other terms that are appropriate to talk about sound in language and prose; some of these concepts are patterned and expressive sounds, rhythmic sequencing, typography, manipulation of syntax, words with acoustic specification (verbs such as *whisper*). With the latter term, I have argued that verbs such as "whisper" and "scream" give acoustic information and help shape audioscenes, for instance the idea of a dangerous situation is given that demands quietness. But I have treated voice for a variety of other acoustic and rhetorical individuations that generate a sense of presence, power, sensual contact, and

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pursuit of a desired other. Throughout my criticism of voice, I have attempted to analyze ways that film and fiction perform on physical and linguistic potentials of voice.

With the awareness of generic differences and the nature of medium, I used similar and different strategies and concepts for each of the movies and novels. For instance, *Fight Club* gains much of its aural impact in acousmatic sounds, diegetic or nondiegetic, whose recurrence in patterns that sometimes collaborate with the visuals, enhancing their effect, echoing Jack's anxiety and mental motions; they also sometimes reveal the hallucinatory nature of episodes. But, in *The Road* acousmatic sounds and the sequences of these sounds not only represent the father's anxiety and fear; they also unsettle the audience. I have argued that such manipulated soundscapes, impose on the audience a certain 'point of audition,' like point of view, to sympathize and identify with the characters adapting to their fears and anxieties. To understand the psychological impact of sound in film and fiction we might consider a major difference: film imposes sound on us and the ear is involuntarily open to it; in the novel, the eye (or the fingers for a braille reader) is the auricle, so to speak, of the sound. Consider how in confronting *The Road* movie the nondiegetic rumbling (signaling the ominous motion of the apocalypse at the threshold of dominance upon the world) at the beginning comes to us without our option. But, in the novel's representation of the same motion in "a series of concussions" remains to the readers' cognitive processing of the sound (52).

To wrap up this argument: Sounds are meaning, generate meaning, and reinforce meaning. With aural rhetoric, as a theory for the interpretation of sound, I attended to

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questions such as "What is heard?" "What kinds of sounds are occurring in the diegetic worlds of artifacts?" "What acoustic properties do sounds have?" "How do sounds collaborate?" "Who hears?" "Who is listening to whom?" With aural rhetoric I studied sound from the perspective of characters and the audience, but with the aim of explaining ways that the audiences are fascinated and persuaded by sounds.

Chapter Five

Ocular Rhetoric

Argument for the Chapter

This chapter examines imagery in both film and fiction. Imagery is normally held to belong to a first-order, seen merely by the biological eye; the film image belongs to this category. But images also exist in a second-order: in the literary text. I provide a framework with which to read imagery onscreen and onpage in cinematographic and scenographic terms. I argue that *Fight Club,* the film and novel, gives a mimesis of a psychomachia and *The Road,* film and novel, a survival quest. Critics of post-apocalyptic literature and commentators of *The Road* have approached McCarthy's pessimistic eschatology of America. For instance, Cooper's criticism might give a general vision of McCarthy's anxiety in such comments: "the flora and fauna of … the central and southern United States are ash… few human inhabitants now devour each other" (134). My approach to McCarthy's visual rhetoric scrutinizes "the grim picture" and "hellish world" that, according to Cooper, in which the father goes on his journey to save the boy and shore up remains of goodness (133–34). While the movies show their themes more directly, the novel's mimesis is imagistic, more fused and complex, due to the nature of language. Both the film imagery and novelistic imagery manage fear and anxiety by manipulation of frames, cuts and rhythm, but while film imagery is mainly imposed, the novelistic imagery is cognitive and only to a certain degree controlled by the reader.

Introduction: Film Image and Literary Image

As a first order, we see with the eyes; but we see with the mind too, both in our cognitive processing of visual input and in our imaginative construction of imagery that we get through language. I do not equate image in the word and film: film image is material and it is directly realized in color, light and scope and through visual input. In contrast, a literary image is ideational, only signalled in words; it lacks materiality and visual input; it is not sensory at all; a literary image is thought in conscious interaction with some text, aural or written. To illustrate this first/second-order of imagery, we might look at the beginning of *Fight Club*. In the film version, the imagery of an oppression is received directly in the close-up: we have a terror image; a man holds a gun in another's mouth. While there might be interpretive and cognitive processes involved, the images of the major participants are visually imposed on the eye: an aggressor, a gun, and an oppressed subject. Let's consider the novel now, which begins with this sentence: "Tyler's pushing a gun in my mouth" (11). In making this comparison, I aim to argue that a novel is impossible to conceive without imagining it imagistically. Of course, the literary image, in contrast with the film image, requires more mental engagement with the concrete words. Readers pick up the signified image above with four visual participants in a sequential unfolding: a Tyler, a gun, the action of pushing the gun, and a mouth, synecdochically standing for the victim of an aggression. Although a film image is directly received by the eye, it uses numerous visual means to convey meaning; a literary image is formed and decoded by the readers in complex processes. While film studies is rich with visual terminologies and critical strategies that

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inform my film criticism, literary criticism and rhetorical theory have discussed imagery in

merely abstract terms, not in ways that we speak of pictorial imagery.

The theory of novelistic imagery can be traced to a group of writers, who in David

Bordwell's words, misunderstood Horace's formula, "As is painting so is poetry" (Bordwell

7).[15] Modern theory of imagery in the novel began with Henry James's mimetic theory of

narration and Percy Lubbock's conception of the novel as spectacle (Bordwell 7). But they

never gave a method to examine novelistic imagery in a close reading for a visual structure of

fictional images. Percy Lubbock speaks of a novel "as a picture" (9) and the reading of a

novel as exposure to "a new world" through "imagination" (6). He understands a novel as a

"landscape [that] opens out and surrounds us" and reading a novel as "choosing a little of the

story here and there, to form a durable image" (7). He further explains that a reader can

"create … the idea of a human being, a figure and a character, from a series of glimpses and

anecdote" (7). Lubbock believes that in reading a novel, "a succession of moments are [sic]

visualized" by the reader (8). While Lubbock is concerned with how readers bring "faculties"

that "enable [the readers] to complete, in [their] minds, the people and the scenes which the

novelist describes–to give them dimensions, to see round them, to make them 'real'," his

theory fails to provide a visual strategy for the criticism of imagery in a novel. However,

Lubbock's observation on the visuality of a novel as a production of "[f]orm, design, [and]

composition" allows us to speak of a dynamic visuality, "a train of ideas in the head of the

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[15] Some of these writers and their statements that Bordwell quotes are: Smollett: "A novel is a large diffused picture"; George Eliot describes narration as "the superior mastery of images and pictures in grasping the attention"; Charles Dickens: "Every writer of fiction … writes, in effect, for the stage". See David Bordwell 1985, P. 7.

reader" (11). The notion of the novel as spectacle first and foremost needs to be philosophically brought to the level of signification, which explains the visual content of language. For this we look at two philosophers to arrive at an imagistic understanding of the word. Locke believed that words are "sensible signs" and "marks of the ideas … immediate" to the hearer (405). This means that words become stimuli for visual, auditory, tactile or olfactory evocations in the imagination. Hume, similarly, said ideas are images and that "imagination" is "the image-making faculty… reproduce[ing] impressions so that we can think about things in their absence." Both philosophers imply that in the absence of the material image, an idea is immediately present in a word. While they do not speak of imagistic signification, I argue, in light of their theory, that words activate visual impressions of things in our brain. C. Day Lewis's notion of the poetic image is enlightening here: "a picture made out of words," constructed by metaphor, simile, and descriptive phrases (17–18). A literary image extends from single objects to the totality of beings and events in a diegetic world. When we speak of imagery in a film and novel, a major problem that might come to mind is visual *likeness*: in a sense, for film, we have images-as-ideas and in language, we have ideas-as-images, which can then sponsor other ideas. This problem of likeness is expressed in Robert Hopkins's terms in this manner: film image "depends on resemblance" (iconicity), a word image does not (because of symbolicity) (10). A film image may attain resemblance by facial expressions (resembling the expressions of happy, scared, or sad people) lighting (resembling the effect of the sun, a light, or a candle), framing (resembling an individual's perspective), and tempo (resembling the duration of an

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experience or the heightened perceptions of time). Although imagery from language must be constructed in the imagination itself, imagistic likeness of the signified beings and events to the reproduced impressions in the imagination of the reader depends on linguistic style, phrasing, kinds of words and so on. Likeness in film imagery also depends on cinematographic strategies: film imagery enters the imagination with manipulations of attention by framing, cutting, lighting, etc. To treat such complexities, I shall now move on to discuss several visual tools that shape the visual structure of film and fiction, such as tempo, framing, lighting, and cutting.

Tempo, as the rhythm attained by cuts and shifts of angles, is well known in film studies. But novels also arrange imagery in abstract frames that unfold in sequence. I call the temporal unfolding of imagery *wordshow*, as a cognitive process in which image after image builds up scenes, episodes and eventually a complete story through individual words, phrases, descriptions, figures of speech and thought. My notion of the *wordshow* is related to Percy Lubbock's observation that a novel is not "an immobile form" (15), but "a moving stream of impressions" that shapes as "we turn the pages" (14). Lubbock even conceives the visual experience of reading a novel in terms of *watching*. He states that a novel is "a procession that passes before us as we sit to watch" (15). Lubbock presents a "sequence of figures and scenes" at work in reading a novel (15). I argue that Lubbock's notion of *flow* and sequence is comparable to the mobility of imagery in film, only in the latter the motion is involuntary and forced. A novelistic camera can be conceived that I call *textual ocularity*, by which I mean the linguistic means that handles our imaginal eye. While in the movie *The*

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Road, for instance, a shaky camera frames a frightened gaze at a pool of guts, the novel iterates sight-verbs, sometimes with adverbs of direction to guide the reader's eye on the character's fear object, for instance in "watched…and looked". Action verbs, also, can both direct the eye as well as give impression of pace; at the scene, in *The Road*, a cannibal's attack on the boy is expressed with the words "dove and grabbed the boy" (66).

Framing is another visual tool; it is a strategy to set borders around a subject to foreground either the internal moods (e.g., close-up) or to put a subject in relation to other participants; in the latter case, it empowers or disempowers protagonists and their rivals. Prose fiction, like film, sets images in frames. For example, in the movie version of *The Road*, a cannibal, in the tunnel scene, is shown mostly in a low angle (empowered as tall and dominant) and close ups that empower him as barbaric with his damaged face and bad teeth, the novel makes reference to the cannibal's teeth and his agile bodily traits in words. Or at the highway scene in *Fight Club* movie, the domination of Jack's visual field by headlights of oncoming cars has novelistic equivalent in an indefinite pronoun such as "everything" in reference to an oncoming truck. As pronoun or even noun, 'everything' is usually an exaggerative indication of unspecified referents, but as indication of the 'truck,' it describes the largeness of the danger. In this function, 'everything' comes close to adjectives as one of the "linguistic categories" that, according to Perelman's notion of presence, "enable" the rhetor "to stress the main elements" and therefore create presence of an idea in the mind of an audience (1979:18). Also, the adjective "big" in reference to the hallucination of blown-up windows in an explosion at the beginning of the novel both recreate the narrator's vivid

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imagination of the event and the use of the adjective gives visual detail and dramatic effect to the impression. In cinematographic terms, lighting establishes a hierarchy of visibility by foregrounding certain elements while de-emphasizing others. Several shots at the initial close up and the "human sacrifice" episodes in the movie *Fight Club* make anxiety more present and the situation more foreboding by lighting. *Fight Club* uses lighting to visualize Jack's anxiety and Tyler's certainty and *The Road* uses lighting to create an all foreboding claustrophobic situation from which escaping seems compelling. But lighting can be used in the analysis of cognitive perception of a novel. While literary text lacks any actual lighting, I extend analysis of lighting to the literary imagery to explore ways that literary text gives impression of dark and light situations within which characters interact with their surrounding and their moods changes because of lighting.

Our final term of analysis is gaze as a filter through which an audience's perception of an object is regulated through the perspective of the filmic or textual camera. Film criticism is rich with terminology to discuss the visual structure of the gaze, or the relation between a subject and object; but gaze can be imported to prose fiction, especially through what I call textual ocularity, as the capacity of language to manage abstract angles from which we conceive subjects and objects of a gaze, proxemics patterning (defined below), power relations, and distance. Kress and Leeuwen's concepts of "vector" and "reactional phenomenon" are also related to the gaze. They use "vector" to explain an abstract line drawn from the eye of an observer to an object of looking (46–59). A vector is therefore like a compass directing the eyes of the audience. Vectors may be formed, in Kress and

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Leeuwen's observation, by "bodies or limbs or tools" and "eyeline" from which our look is directed on an object (67). Vectors must be studied within what Kress and Leeuwen call "reactional phenomena." These are "processes" by which we read facial expressions on a participant as reaction to something or some of event (67). For instance, in *The Road*, from the eye of the boy on the gang of cannibals a process of empowerment/disempowerment can be discerned. I import both of the concepts to critical study of prose imagery to explain the protagonists' visual relations with their objects of fear. For instance, through the father's gaze on "[d]ried blood dark in the leaves" (70) we sense his fear. Or in the *Fight Club* movie, an intense terror can be discerned in Jack's fearful struggle to diffuse a bomb.

Ocular Rhetoric

I call my rhetorical framework of the study of imagery in film and fiction "Ocular Rhetoric" as the study of the suasiveness of imagery. The framework uses a formalistic, close reading of imagery as framed in iconic or symbolic means. Simultaneously, this close reading serves drawing rhetorical meanings. My study of image is influenced by Aristotle's observation, in *Rhetoric,* of fear as proximity of danger, which I will explain through its realization and framing in imagery. Aristotle goes into detailed examples in which nearness and remoteness of danger can be indicated to make an audience see itself in danger (1382a30–32 and 1383a5–10). But it is through the mental picture gained by visual signs and the sympathetic response that this indication evokes that I am using Aristotle's theory. Secondly, I make a connection between Aristotle's definition of fear and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's idea of rhetorical presence. Proximity bestows presence. I shall examine

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visual strategies that threats are shown to be proximate to characters with whom film viewers and fiction readers respond through identification. Then I will describe how these visual techniques mould the readers' emotional response. This approach includes borrowing and deploying film terminology for ways that texts bring to mind an idea or an object in its visualness, and also deploying textual strategies that, like a camera, turn the reader's imaginative eye in different directions, and focus it on different elements of the setting.

Outline of The Chapter

Following this introduction, in a section called "Movies" I discuss the major concepts that I apply to each film; in a following section I examine *Fight Club*'s imagery of psychomachia in the visual structure of the movie. In *The Road* section, I examine the movie for visual strategies of showing a survival quest. Following the film section, in another transitional section called "Novels," I explain my major examination concepts for each novel. In two succeeding sections, I will examine the novels separately for mimetic and imagistic potentials of language, sometimes by borrowing terms and notions from cinematography for the implications of framing and cutting as well as ways that the tempo, gaze, and distance are handled. After the examination of the novels, I give a synthesis of my whole analysis to arrive at a hybrid understanding of image and affect. The chapter closes with a conclusion that explains my findings in relation to the imagery of psychomachia and the survival quest.

Movies

In this section, I examine the cinematic visual mimesis of fear and anxiety in the movies *Fight Club* and *The Road.* I explore for the shared and distinct ways that the movies visualize the two emotions and generate the resemblance of the emotions in the audience. In *The Road,* I explore the visual representation of the survival quest and the fear and anxieties that characters experience in conflicts, struggles, and encounters with threats. The movie portrays the challenges of quest in a nervous rhythm of the imagery, which I discuss in particular examples of anticipation and encounter with cannibals. Cinematic features such as framing, cutting, angles and the manipulation of distance establish and enhance the viewers' emotional engagement through proxemics patterns that foreground the imminence of threats on characters. These visual strategies evoke the viewers to sympathize with characters. *The Road* uses camera work to manipulate distance and imminence of threats, especially by appealing to the obscurity of consequences, in a dynamic of anticipation, encounter, and unfulfilment of the expectation of catastrophe. Power and oppression are managed by the camera work, cuts, tempo, and shifts of angles that induce audience sympathy and identification. In *Fight Club* the psychomachia is portrayed mostly through framing, cutting and lighting in Jack's visual hallucinations of either the dangers happening to him or in the imagination of other people endangered by Tyler. The close-ups encourage viewers to identify with Jack, especially in fist fights and the hallucinations of crashes. I attempt to show how the psychomachia is hidden and how the imagery of violence shows Jack's ambivalent anxiety of emancipation by domination over other people. Some of these

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observations are discussed through the terms vector and reactional phenomenon that reveal Jack's internal struggle. Taking facial expressions as equivalent to telling statements, I explore, in both movies, the metonymical implications of emotion markers. Throughout the analysis I shall also explore how the movies fascinate the audience with horror and violence.

Fight Club

Fight Club's cinematic mimesis of Jack's psychomachia, the transformation of the latent to the manifest content of the mind, begins with a camera moving from Jack's brain to the outside; the camera stops at a close-up in which Tyler holds a gun in Jack's mouth. A close-up, formally has two elements. First, a frame that restricts our visual field to the face to reveal the subject's internal state. The close-up of the gun in Jack's mouth foregrounds his terrified and brutally damaged face. Jack's eyes are wide open with the eye-white around the pupil fully visible; his forehead and face are wet with sweat, which indicates exertion and signifies, figuratively as an indexical sign, the internal terror. And second, lighting, as the expressive tool of close-up, emphasizes certain facial elements while de-emphasizing the other parts through darkening. A slant lighting accentuates the sweat on Jack's forehead, his bruised eyes, the gun trigger and Tyler's finger on it. The outcome of these strategies is to make violence fully visible and their function is the prominence of terror. As a formal instrument, the close-up serves rhetorical purposes: the facial expressions function as signifiers, or external manifestations, sometimes as metonymies, of internal states. The close-up of Jack's face is therefore a foregrounding mould that makes the viewers aware of Jack's internal terror. Film viewers always understand these indications cognitively. In other words,

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the viewers process translations for expressions; for instance, they form a verbal translation of the metonymy "There is sweat on Jack's face and forehead" as "Jack dreads." In terms of visual rhetoric, these meanings are generated and enhanced by cinematographic potentials of persuasion. The presence of the aggressor–victim, a gun-in-mouth, and the subject's expression of fear brings murder to the center of the viewer's consciousness. With this visual understanding, we can now make a rhetorical generalization: in the collaboration of framing and lighting, murder is made to seem imminent, especially with the image of the gun so accentuated in focus. This beginning of *Fight Club* generates a suspenseful moment that evokes sympathy and identification. As Thomas M. Sipos explains, close-ups induce identification and sympathy because the strategy sets the borders of the frame so close to the subject and therefore the frames draw film viewers "closer to the character" (75). Jack's fear, in this reduction of distance, is transferred to the audience's consciousness. In the most vivid way, the audience is aware of Jack's terror. This close-up is merely the transposed ending of a psychological battle of the self, which can be understood in the whole context of Jack's psychomachia to which I attend to in the following.

Fascination with Violence: Overthrowing Regimes of Happiness

Violence is valorized as a fascination in *Fight Club*. The fights are psychic compensations for rejection, loneliness, anxiety of death and unmanliness. "[A]fter fighting" in the narrator's words, "everything else in life got the volume turned down" (00:39:12) and

fighters feel "alive" (00:44:12).[16] Through the visual analysis, I now explore this fascination.

When two fighters battle, other members show their enthrallment in their bodily gestures:

their yelling mouths and hands held in tight fists represent the members' co-affection (e.g.,

1:19–15–20). And when a fight is over, the crowd is shown, in long and wide shots, to come

to surround the fighters, touch them, and look at them in admiration and joy (e.g., 1:19:28).

For a fuller demonstration of this fascination, let's examine Jack's own fight with Angel

Face, which is a set-piece of the movie with profound psychological motive and meaning.

After noticing that Tyler ruffled Angel Face's hair, Jack burns with anger and jealousy

(1:35:16–28) and expresses his rage in this way: "I am Jack's inflamed sense of rejection"

(1:35:28). Jack's encounter with this character is psychologically deep and the visual

strategies foreground Jack's psychomachic sense of threat that he feels in the relationship

between Tyler and the Angel Face. Jack's motive for domination is jeopardized. At the

beginning of the fight, after receiving two punches in the face, Jack knocks out Angel Face

and as the latter is falling, Jack punches him on the back of the head so he collapses harder

(1:36:03). Jack's struggle is marked in the emotional force he put in hitting Angel Face. In

the tradition of fight club[17], when a fighter shows a sign to "stop," the fight is over. But Jack

ignores this rule and demoralizes the fight and keeps hitting Angel Face when he is down on

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[16] It is worth noting how the voiceover, as a sound component, denies the visual violence—
the fighters' destroyed faces and their facial expression of pain–or explains the visual
violence as an emancipatory psychological trance that deepens understanding: "We all
started seeing things differently. Everywhere we went we were sizing things up" (00:44:57).
It is on the bus, when they encounter the Gucci ad, that Jack looks at the two fashion icons
with disgust rather than with desire.

[17] Whenever I use "fight club" in lower case, I refer to the club rather than the titles of movie
or the novel.

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the ground (1:36:06–08). Jack's unacceptable anger creates a milieu of disgust and the movie demonstrates this loathing in several close-ups and wide shots of other members. The ritualistic fascination and hysterical shouting of the members, which we see in other fights, disappear from the faces: the facial joy gives place to frustration (1:36:10–18). In medium frames of Jack, as he keeps striking Angel Face ferociously, Jack's madness, fierce determination and savagery are shown in his forceful punches. The energy that Jack puts in his punches become iconic and visual markers of his psychomachic struggle to destroy his object of anxiety. Jack is shown to lift his hand as high as he can stretch and hits Angel Face as hard as he can strike. The framing strategies that capture Jack's struggle give visual mimesis to Jack's latent psyche and in this manner the audience is made aware of Jack's internal mood: his anger is brought to the attention of the viewers. The medium shots give prominence to the strong masculinity that Jack is struggling to achieve. Lighting and framing make Jack's facial and neck muscles fully visible (1:36:09; 1:36:13–15). Jack's internal rage is therefore pictured by the metonymy of his body. Although close-ups are known to give a more intimate representation of internal states, medium shots are also powerful in psychic mimesis: in a medium shot, Jack holds up his bloody fist and stares at it (1:36:13). Through the direction of the gaze on his fist, Jack's enthrallment with the blood is made the viewer's visual object. As a function of the gaze, the image of the blood translates Jack's sinister valorization of violence as a manly confrontation with weakness that he tries to overcome.

In the visual track of Jack's fight, *Fight Club* shows him more dangerous and ruthless than Tyler whom Jack unreliably understands as a tyrant. It is Jack who brings hatred and

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jealousy (of losing his centrality to Tyler's authority) to the fights and ruins the healing

power that fighters find in fierce fistfights. Now we see two renditions of violence: Jack's

new violence is different from the sympathetic joy that other fighters show in their happily-

pulled-up foreheads, open mouths of hysterical-yelling, held up fists that mimic other fighters

(1:19:17–19). In general, the imagery of blood, bruises and wounds, and the fighters'

intimate touch of one another's bodies shedding each other's blood, in the analogy of erotic

bodily connection, are salvation in *Fight Club.* Rhetorically understood, the fascination with

violence, gained by sympathy, is a function of the tone of the movie and the role of the

voiceover that induces admiration rather than fear. But, while the movie takes an individual's

angst at the center, it turns into a collectivist project.

Vectors: Complexities of the Visuals and Psychomachic Violence

Tyler uses a form of altruistic violence to advance his ideology. In what follows, I

examine Jack's psychic complexities as represented in the visual structure of the episode

called "human sacrifice," with these participants: Raymond, the object of the sacrifice; Tyler,

the actor of sacrifice; and Jack as the nervous and curious observer (1:21:28 to 1:24:14). An

analysis of the structure of the frames and lighting shows Jack's psychomachia: his motive

for violence is realized in Tyler's fascination and immersion in the sacrifice; but, Jack

himself is ambivalent and worried. The various frames and lighting of this scene serve the

visual management of fear. I examine three separate close-ups of the participants, a medium

shot of Tyler-and-Raymond, a medium shot of Tyler-Jack, and two long shots of Raymond-

Tyler-Jack: First, in Raymond's close-up, we find him hierarchically/spatially dominated. As

the object of the sacrifice, he is on the knees and under Tyler's gun (1:21:54). Multiple close-ups foreground Raymond's terror, bringing the facial marks of internal terror to the viewer's attention.

Lighting is a selective and directional strategy that can foreground aspects that are normally, due to the automatization of perception, less noticed. But while lighting makes certain features visible, darkening collaborates to give prominence to those parts of the face that signal internal terror. Lightening emphasizes and de-emphasizes. Consider how the left side of Raymond's face is deemphasized by darkening, which foregrounds his lightened cheeks, margins around the mouth, the eyes and his eyebrows. Given the context of psychomachia, Raymond is actually in Jack's visual hallucination, in his subjective point of view. Vectors, like compass needles, re-orient the viewers' direction of looking. The appearance of Raymond, as object of terror, and Tyler, as subject of terror, come to the viewers through subjective vectors that shape the whole experience of the terror. But in Jack's gaze at Raymond a vector is shaped that foregrounds Raymond's terror. Less tutored viewers may not pick up Raymond's terror in the eyes of Jack; but a more careful view finds that Raymond is an object of a psychological motive for violence that the movie shows in the vector drawn from Jack's eyes. Many viewers may identify with Raymond as a loser who has given up on his dreams, because the viewers adapt Tyler's logic that Raymond needs to be educated by a greater and specified fear to overcome his smaller anxieties. Jack advances his altruistic violence by this logic that American men fear to fight for their desires and dreams. Second, Tyler is the actor or agent of the sacrifice. He, hierarchically, stands taller, larger and

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dominant, since he is positioned at the center of the screen. Because of these visual

manipulations, Tyler is empowered and the gun that he holds on Raymond's head strengthens

this authority. Lighting also empowers him: he is lit in slanted lines from sides,

foregrounding his muscular and strong-boned face, with one side of the face and an eye

darkened to make him ruthless and unsympathetic (1:21:55). Tyler's empowered image is, in

terms of gaze, the result of the vector emanated from Jack's eye. In Jack-Tyler's vector

relation, two impressions can be construed: first, Tyler is a ruthless dominant figure in one

set of long shots. This psychological trait is inferred from his domination over Raymond.

Second, in another set he is an inspirational and emancipatory leader. This trait is moulded in

the intense domination that, because of the medium shots and close-up, he is shown to have

over Raymond, a domination that later turns out to be only pedagogic for the better fate of

the character that Tyler harasses. Tyler's eyes and gun also shape two vectors directed

toward Raymond; it is through these vectors that viewers pick up the meaning of domination.

While film viewers may identify with Tyler's altruistic violence, in Jack's worried eyes an

aggressor and a victim can be seen, since his facial expressions signal uncertainty and doubt

that Tyler may murder Raymond. Tyler's mouth and the barrel of his gun have a similar

function: they both inject fear, precisely, inspiring Tyler's anti-consumerist aspirations. We

can now see *Fight Club's* representation of the emancipator and the emancipated through

Jack's vectors; Third, all Jack's close-ups picture him in either curiosity or worry; consider

the scene after Tyler gets Jack's wallet and starts interrogating him (1:21:57–59). The

lighting from the right side of Jack's face and another from behind obscure his eyes and

mouth, making them look as dark holes, but the same lightings foreground facial markers of worry and fear cued in the mouth (open) eyebrows (raised and pulled closer together) and the dropped chin. Jack's nervousness is expressed in turning his head around in fear of a possible observer. Jack shows himself, not as agent of sacrifice, but spatially removed from Raymond. Jack's two vectors, explained above, can now be examined in a medium shot of the Tyler-Jack vector, the contrast between Tyler's fascination and Jack's anxiety (1:21:55): Tyler's eyebrows, forehead and mouth picture him as doubtless, convinced and indisputable (he does not care about Jack's questions or verbalizations of anxiety). In contrast, Jack displays the unease and agitation that the close-ups make more vivid. We must now examine the participants in two long shots for Jack's two contending motives. When Tyler just finishes reading Raymond's ID, Jack displays a facial expression of curiosity, and this is before Tyler frightens Raymond with death (1:22:02). In a following shot, immediately after Tyler raises his voice "Raymond what did you want to be?," Jack fears and intervenes, showing a sympathetic gesture to Raymond, begging him to answer Tyler's questions (1:22:52). This is one side of Jack, which contains a humane gaze: he is reluctant and anxious to engage in terror. Jack's gaze is, in this frame held, rapt by Tyler and inquisitive of his decision.

The whole visual rhetoric of the "human sacrifice" scene, because of vectors and spatial configurations, makes Jack less visible and his presence minor; it makes Tyler authoritative, ruthless and dangerous. But vectors also tell us that Tyler and Raymond are Jack's projections, objects of his desire. The phenomenon realizes Kress and Leeuwen's concept of "reactional phenomenon": Raymond and Tyler are the objects of Jack's looking as

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a reactor. Vectors always convey an impression, or perhaps an ideology. To sum up: if we translate Jack's two vectors as "Tyler is ruthlessly fascist and a despot" and "Jack is sympathetic," Jack's two contending personalities, his psychomachia, is revealed.

The Return of Anxiety: Undoing Project Mayhem

With the transformation of fight club to Project Mayhem and the rise of Angel Face in Tyler's attention (1:34:09 and 1:35:16–19), Jack's jealousy and anxiety of abandonment surfaces and his psychomachic motives are challenged. Whether Jack is in anxiety that Project Mayhem may end up in countrywide terrorism or Angel Face has homosexual attraction for Tyler is an aporia open to debate. Immediately after his brutal wrecking of Angel Face's beauty, Jack's psychic discord surfaces in the highway episode that we may call 'Highway of Trial' or even 'Highway of Punishment,' the function of which is to overcome anxiety (1:37:22–1:39:07). The episode begins by Tyler taking the driver's seat, metaphorically leading Jack to death, but after the crash Jack is the one who comes out of the driver's door (1:41:12). This change in places is significant in revealing both Jack's unreliable narration and his psychomachia. The change is of course subtle and is a part of the film's strategy to hide Jack's psychomachia as much as possible, but it is a careful technique to reveal the narrator's struggle to overcome his anxious Jack-personality, uplifting him to the desired agency of Tyler. The event also reveals that it is actually Jack who plans to kill Tyler, because by this time Jack has grown fearful and suspicious of Tyler. The camerawork manages fear in this episode and the lighting collaborates with the auditory track (including the dialogue) to present, visually, Jack's helpless terror in a vehicle that entraps Jack,

subjecting him to Tyler's decision to murder Jack. Due to the function of the shifts in angles between Tyler's vicious determination to finish Jack's martyrdom and Jack's frightened reactions, Jack's mood is stretched to the audience. Jack's feeling of being entrapped and his lack of control over the situation make his death seem imminent. Jack's facial expressions and protective gestures, in reaction to Tyler's swinging the car straight into the way of oncoming traffic make Jack's experience of fear the content of the viewer's consciousness. His fear is intensely present to viewers' visual perception (e.g., 1:38:23). Fear is also managed in the headlights of the oncoming cars that appear suddenly. This suddenness generates an expectation of imminent collisions. The alternation between frames also manipulates the viewers' mood: the shift between angles on the highway and Jack's facial expression of fear in the close-ups, synchs our perception with Jack's consciousness of fear. A similar perception of an imminent crash is transferred to the audience. In other words, the rapid shifts of angles and the manipulation of the distance of oncoming cars impacts the audience's perception, since the audience adopts the character's sense of vulnerability.

In Jack's psychomachic experience, the struggle is a process of overcoming. Jack must grow in this intense terror and the audience expects relief: taunted as "pathetic," Jack overcomes his fear, in the same psychological philosophy that he passes to citizens through fear (1:40:12–41:20). When the car crashes and falls down a hill, neither Tyler nor Jack is dead. The incidence is a transformation in *Fight Club*. While Tyler is not shown to be dead he is gone and his disappearance marks a drastic sinister change in *Fight Club*. The implication of the incidence, in both the movie and the novel, is that confronting the anxiety

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of death is not redemptive for Jack. He does not overcome anxiety; rather, he is enlightened, and more anxious, of the nature of Project Mayhem. His "near-life experience" is an epiphany for the protection of the community. The hidden meaning of this scene is connected with the final turn of the plot, which I will explain below in terms of communal sacrifice. This understanding can be construed in the scene where Jack goes around the basement of his house that seems uncannily as a "living thing"; Tyler's followers are not any longer those who fought for their own healing. They have terroristic projects. Jack finds himself "trapped" in a "clockwork of space monkeys" handling their terror plots (1:42:55–43:23). Jack goes through a reversal and begins to undo the Project Mayhem; Jack's new adventure involves struggling to disarm bombs; he must overcome himself from within and ascend to a higher humane goal. The camerawork in the struggle between Tyler and Jack, Jack's facial expressions while focusing to disarm the bomb, and Tyler's temptations to stop him make the episode intensely dramatic and suspenseful. A low angle close-up, for instance, foregrounds Jack's fear displayed in his face and eyes against the urgency metonymized in the timer digits and its sounds that suggest imminent explosion (2:06:42). When Jack succeeds here, he engages in a fierce fight with Tyler; the fight synecdochically represents Jack's psychomachia: the latent conflict is transformed as an external fight.

Concluding Remarks

Fight Club's cinematic mimesis of psychomachia is achieved through cinematographic tools that make explicit the latent content of the psyche. Jack's psychomachia remains concealed, to inattentive eyes, in many scenes if frames are not studied for Jack's relation to

his sight objects. I have argued, through multiple examples, that *Fight Club's* visual structure both frames Jack's contending motives and induces the viewers' identification with him. The image track of the movie synchs the audience's perception with Jack's experience of fear and anxiety. Viewers identify with Jack's argument of waste, fighting for ascent, and then his humane undoing of violence. In the next section, I continue my examination of fear and anxiety in the different context of survival quest in *The Road.*

The Road

> "BEHOLD THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER. JERemIAH"
>
> (On a billboard in *The Road*, 00:4:58)

Precarious Life: Visual Dynamism of Empowerment/Disempowerment

The movie version of *The Road* is as powerful as the novel's representation of the "vacuum of the universe" (110), in which cities are burned, cars are caked with ash, and corpses are hanging on doorways (13). The movie attempts to give more emphasis to *The Road*'s big fear, cannibalism, and show the suffering of the few humans who are witness to the monstrous gangs of cannibals. The movie chooses to show the imagery of roasted infants, harvested people in undergrounds, the blood of the murdered on snow and bodies of those who have committed suicide before they become victims of such horrors. *The Road's* visual mimesis of a survival quest against the challenges of the apocalypse induces a sense of the imminence of threat and catastrophe. Early in the movie, as the father stops to read the graffiti on a billboard, we pick the allusion to the *Old Testament*, Jeremiah 19:6: "BEHOLD

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THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER. JEReMIAH" (00:4:58). The voiceover's commentary

strengthens our impression and expectation of disaster: "there's been cannibalism.

Cannibalism is the great fear" (5:04–06). The anticipation is soon realized when our

protagonists encounter the cannibals first at the opening of a tunnel (00:11:50 to 00:17:00).

The whole scene can be divided in five parts to capture central themes of the quest, such as

conflict, fear, and struggle for survival: the anticipation of an obscure threat, the realization

of this threat, the escape from the scene, the murderous encounter with a cannibal, and

eventually the return to the scene. In the anticipatory phase, a sinister mood is generated by

the movement of the camera from left to right of the road in a slow-paced low angle, tracking

the road and abandoned cars, going around the van in which the father and the boy are

sleeping, suggesting a sneaking look (00:11:58). "Unnaturally low" POV, in Sipos's words,

is a strategy of suggesting threat (78). Here, the low angle movement of the camera gives an

obscure and menacing mood to the scene, since it alters our usual perception and estranges

the way that we normally look at things. The angle also obscures the situation, and obscurity,

in Edmund Burke's formulation of terror and the Sublime, evokes apprehension and

imagination of terror. For film viewers, the enigmatic motion of the camera evokes the

impression of a stealthy presence, implying the proximity of danger. The obscure situation

evokes the imagination and expectation of a threat present on the characters. This cinematic

strategy achieves rhetorical impact by moulding the enigmatic information in a suspenseful

movement towards possible disaster (if the characters are found by cannibals). The obscure

movement of the camera, signalling enigmatic information, generates an enigmatic

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expectation of disaster in the mind of the audience. Part of this enigma is marked in the shaky

movement of the camera that enhances the impression of an approaching threat. Clifton

characterizes this type of "jolting uneven motion" of "a handheld camera" with the rhetorical

term, *ethopoeia*, which suggests that the perspective of the camera is "that of a person" (278).

Following this anticipatory phase, a close-up takes the father's facial expression of worry as

he wakes up, displaying a listening gesture when he looks at something not yet seen (12:07 –

12:24). Therefore, his eyes shape an empty vector for which we are prompted to find an

object. But for a persuasive representation of anxiety, continuous suspenseful expectations

must be generated: immediately, a reverse long shot brings to view the cannibals on a truck

(00:12:18). Several suspenseful rapid cuts capture the father's terror as he struggles to rush

the boy out of the van into the forest, quickly and stealthily (00:12:20).

From now on, we notice a visual strategy of empowering the cannibals and

disempowering the protagonists. This visual signalling of the power dynamics is mostly

achieved through frames, rhythm, gaze and vectors. Power, oppression and victimhood may

be portrayed in traits of the object on screen (and, therefore, objects of the audience's gaze).

When the father hides with the boy, he gains a standpoint, a gaze, from which we also

stealthily watch the cannibals; this involves a visual characterization of the cannibals as

perceived by the father and the boy as an armed militia; in this imbalance of rivals, the

cannibals are empowered. Long and wide shots display a wide range of visual information

about the objects of the gaze: the cannibals' oppressive power comes into view through their

number, masks, weapons, and bodily behaviors, and their misshapen, blood-smeared faces,

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bad teeth, masks, guns, searching eyes and turning heads all empower them as oppressors (00:12:48–13: 18–30). The shifts of angles between the protagonists and the cannibals, along with the change in frames between close-ups and long shots, empower the cannibals and disempower the protagonists. The protagonists' hiding gestures and facial expression of fear in close ups accentuate this oppression. This strategy of empowering/disempowering induces sympathy in the audience. In the long shots another meaning is construed: we notice that cannibals tend to form groups, while "good guys" are on their own or in small and vestigial family units, which makes them weaker against the cannibals. This part of the quest, which realizes the questers' encounter with the zone of power in Frye and Campbell's formula, is represented visually through framing, cutting, and shifts of angles that manage fear. Because the viewers see the imbalance of the power through the protagonists' perspective, gaze and vectors are the two devices that make the protagonists' fear the audience's consciousness. The close-up frames, for instance, decrease the distance between the viewers and the father and the boy. The close ups engage the audience because the father's vigilant examination of the cannibals' intentions becomes the viewers' curiosity. The questers situation at "the zone of magnified power", due to the domination of the visuals, is made suspenseful. These intense moments exemplify Kenneth Burke's observation that one part leads the audience to anticipate another part (1968: 124). But the curiosity includes sympathy with the endangered questers.

Movies manage sympathy by manipulating distance, and the decrease in the visual distance results in the viewers' more sensitivity and more illusory impact. Aristotle and

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Adam Smith have talked about sympathy gained through visual perception based on the mental and physical mimetic responses. In *Problems,* Aristotle wonders "[w]hy is it that when we see anyone cut or burned or tortured or suffering from pain from any other cause, we also suffer in mind?" (VII.7) He does not provide an answer for the questions, but he wonders that the emotion may be evoked because of human common nature (VII.7). Smith, similarly, explains sympathy as "changing places in fancy with the sufferer"; he gives a visual example, for example, in seeing a stroke just about "to fall upon the leg or arm of another person…. [we] draw back our own leg or our own arm and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer" (3). Aristotle's and Smith's observation can be applied to film events in which the observer's perception synchronizes with that of a character through the sense of sight; films can generate such sympathy by the manipulation of perception through the imagery and sounds that reduce distance. To establish an intense sympathetic connection, films can use frames and angles to manage distance and generate an illusion of unified experience. Two more instances of co-affection can be seen in *The Road*. The first one occurs after the escape from the zone of power when the father goes back to pick up his cart and in his gaze at the entrails of a consumed man we feel the same fear and disgust that the father displays on his face (00:20:10–12). The second and more intense example is at the cannibals' basement, when the captives struggle to catch the father as he rushes up the stairs (00:37:24–26). The incident is a realization of conflict and struggle at the zone of power and we see its metaphoric rendering in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator gives a glimpse of the father's anxiety and his impression that he and

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the boy are "swallowed up and lost among the inward parts of some granitic beast" (3). The

event is also a realization of descent into the "belly of the whale," in Campbell's delineation

of the quest *mythos*. The visuals situate the characters in a dark basement in which the

uncanny imagery of naked and half-consumed victims suddenly give a tone of horror to the

movie. The movement of the camera on the wounded, attenuated, and zombie-like bodies

generates a foreboding atmosphere from which the protagonists immediately struggle to

escape. The victim hostages turn into a threat to the protagonists and the father must struggle

to save the boy. But *The Road* keeps the struggle intense and suspenseful because of the

alternating frames and cuts that generate enigma in the conflict between the protagonists and

the hostages. However, in obscure situations, it is the frenzied actions and emotional states of

the struggling subject and the visual management of this conflict into which filmmakers mark

fear. Fear is a consequence of the hierarchy of power, and when the imagery establishes an

imbalance of power, subjecting the heroes to threat, form moulds the viewers' psychological

response: the shifts of angles between the captives and the protagonists in the dark setting of

a basement and the protagonists struggle to escape from their danger make *descent* into the

zone of danger an appeal in the structure of the quest.

In the fourth part of this scene, suspense is maximized in the encounter between a

roaming cannibal and the protagonists through shifts of angles made by several cuts between

the father, the cannibal and the gang, establishing a continuous state of suspense (00:14:14–

00:16:08). When we see the father and the boy from the cannibal's side, they are

disempowered and vulnerable, since in the spatial hierarchy they are lying down. The boy's

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facial and bodily displays of fear, lowering his head and covering his face with his arms, enhance our sympathetic sensitivity especially when the father hushes him to keep quiet (00:13:40). This frontal take characterizes an up-down gaze that is, to use Clifton's general observations, formative of dominance (274). The father's gaze generates a menacing mood in the facial features of the cannibal–his sinister smile shows his bad teeth as he looks at the boy. Every gesture from eyes, head, hands, and legs is now under our vigilance because we have adapted to the father's gaze: when the cannibal turns his head to get the attention of the gang, takes his hand to his pocket, and moves his eyes, the suspense goes on. Still the power/oppression of the gaze is intense: the father's nervous and watchful face enhances our anxiety in contrast with the cannibal's relatively calm eyes, suggestive of planning an abrupt attack. This display of facial engagement realizes what David Bordwell calls "affective mimicry," which can "[arouse] emotion" (116). Affective mimicry may be achieved in different ways. One way is to startle the audience in sympathy with the character. An example is when the cannibal, taken in a long shot, jumps at the boy, catches him and puts a knife on his throat. In co-affection with the father, we are also startled, expecting a catastrophe (00:16:08).

Affective mimicry may also be achieved through gaze: when the father goes back to the van to grab his cart, we experience his anxiety when he looks at the remains of a consumed body. The father's gaze is returned, in a technique similar to Kress and Leeuwen's notion of reactional phenomena, with the edits cutting between the reacting father and the phenomenal remains of the body on the ground. The father's emotional reaction is framed in

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the movement of the camera in a close-up that displays his apprehensive look, which then is

returned, in a shaky long take that represents his anxiety, to the partially eaten corpse

(00:20:06–19). The jostling and erratic movements of the camera mimic the father's

"frenzied POV [Point of View]," to use Sipos's terms, which "encourage[s] audience

identification with the character whose POV we share" (83). Such subjective points of view

are powerful tools for establishing identification.

The presence of threats, which I explained through the dynamism of empowerment and

disempowerment, may be managed through either metonymies of things or through objects

of vectors when both of these are shown to represent the protagonists' perception of anxiety

and fear. At the scene with the basement captives, metonymy is used to generate suspense

and the anticipation of a threat. In the words of Clifton, metonymy can "bring to mind a web

of connected ideas" (163). When the boy notices a pile of shoes taken in a close-up, his fear

is displayed in his facial gestures (00:34:57). He clings to his father's hand and verbalizes his

fear. The boy's fear is extended to the audience, through sympathy, as an effect of the

reaction-phenomenon structure. The boy associates the shoes with death and cannibalism,

thereby the reactional phenomenon evokes not just the victims but the vicious people who

victimized them (00:39:58). Other objects in the following shots, such as dishes in and

around the kitchen, cooking, boiling, and butchering tools as well as fire wood in the back

yard, seen through the boy's POV scare him and enforce a terrified identification in the

audience (00:35:12–51). When the protagonists are inside the basement, the father's vigilant

gaze in the darkness, as he struggles to investigate the surroundings, is suddenly directed at

the image of blood that drops from a hanging body part (00:36:47). The father's terrified eyes as he looks at the blood function as vector, the trajectory of a gaze; vectors make the audience conscious of a relationship between the subject and object of his/her gaze. Here the father's gaze at the blood directs our attention at the threat and disgust that he senses in the object. The bleeding body becomes a dreadful synecdoche of one victim and haunts the audience. Once the audience is primed to the disgusting threat in this image, suddenly a foreboding situation surrounds the protagonists: several people come to view chained, mutilated, and wounded who pitifully cry for help (00:37:00). Here we have a more intense example of reactional structure that shapes the audience's response in perceptual synch with the characters' response. Medium close-ups of the bodies and the rapid camera shifts between the man, the boy and the imprisoned people further agitate the audience, because the protagonists are agitated (00:37:24). Because of the protagonists' near-panic behaviour, the whole basement scene becomes a vivid example of the proximity of danger; fear has a total grip on the characters, especially intensified by the uncanny roar of the hostages. In the above examples, the viewers experience an empowerment of the rivals of the protagonists. In the following we shall attend to threats that characters have not seen, but the viewers do.

The Road's camera often becomes an omniscient focalizer to steer the audience's emotional engagement. An example occurs just before the beach scene, late in the movie, where the father is away from the sleeping boy, we notice the function of gaze and omniscient focalizer together. The camera suggests a sinister movement towards the sleeping boy, but this moving creature is something that is known only by the consciousness of the

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camera. The unseen threat is part of *The Road's* reproduction of the father's constant anxiety and the movie sonifies these indicated threats as an affective appeal. The camera uses obscurity, the appeal to the present unknown, to amplify nervousness. The sinister being that moves towards the boy is captured in a low-angle frame that later brings a man to focus carrying a knife, with most of the emphasis put on the knife (1:20:56–21:11). In terms of persuasion, the enigmatic motion of the camera and then the approaching man holding the knife manage to bring the anxiety which the movie tries to extend to the viewers. A similar effect can be seen at the tunnel scene when a shaky camera in low angle moves towards the van in which the protagonists are sleeping (00:11:47–0012:03).

Concluding Remarks

The Road gives a visual mimesis of the challenges of survival quest. Several cinematographic strategies make the protagonists' anxiety the content of the viewers' awareness. *The Road's* camera often uses omniscient focalization, with a wide awareness of the context of the quest to centralize anxiety and obscurity in most of the quest situations. This anxious omniscience is attained through cinematographic techniques that infiltrate the presence of sinister around the characters. Of special use are the manipulation of angles, frames and the movement of the camera that generate suspense. *The Road's* cinematographic use of angles and frames shapes a visual structure in which cannibals are constantly empowered against the protagonists. Their random appearance in gangs is sometimes marked in mysterious gazes of the camera and this aggravates the sinister presence of anxiety. *The Road* manages anxiety and fear in a dreaded rhythm also through a shaky camera, disrupted

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continuity, rapid cuts, long and wide shots that position the protagonists in a hierarchically

lower stance compared to the cannibals. All these visual strategies manipulate the audience's

awareness of the characters' fear and reduce the perceptual distance from the objects of sight

to make danger and oppression central throughout the film. In the next section, I move on to

the imagistic analysis of the novels, importing several film concepts to examine how prose

imagery portrays anxiety.

Novels

Image in fiction is palimpsestic, only giving glimpses of what is lying under. The

visual capacity of literary texts traces back to Horace' famous formula: "As is painting so is

poetry." While critics like Hill argue that "the photograph is much more likely to prompt a

visceral, emotional response" to "a suffering child" (30), neither he nor Perlman and

Olbtechts-Tyteca deny the visual capacity of textual imagery in evoking emotion. Verbal

depiction is more 'personal' than film imagery because the reader must co-create it in a deep

cognitive process. I use the phrase *machinery of showing* to provide a ground for the

examination of ways that prose evokes a visual impression of beings and events. Under the

term *scenography*, as the perspectival apparatuses through which a story is imagined, I speak

of the visual potentials of language, replacing saying with seeing, and centralize the image in

the word. This study includes exploring concrete words, stylized phrasing, and vividness for

ways that an idea comes to our mind visually. Also, the implications of angles through which

an object, character, or event is processed cognitively. In my scenographical criticism, I

consider a fictional camera that Elizabeth Bowen calls "camera eye" through which objects,

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characters and events are imagined from different angles, frames and sizes with implications

for lighting; I study this camera for ways that it directs the imaginary eye of the readers and

fuses readers' eyes with that of characters.

Fight Club

Each word enacts an image in the mind and the larger linguistic structures (phrases and

sentences) add up more imagery or more details to fictional imagery in the ways that Percy

Lubbock believed reading a novel is a dynamic visual processing. In reading word after

word, phrase after phrase, sentence after sentence, not necessarily in linear progress, shape a

train of ideas in the readers' mind. Take the very beginning sentence of *Fight Club*: "Tyler's

pushing a gun in my mouth" (11). We cannot but agree that any understanding of this

sentences is essentially imagistic, an outcome of the linguistic sign turning into a visual

impression of the signified: the image of a man holding a gun in another person's mouth

comes to the mind of every reader. The reader processes the sentence, cognitively, as

constituting a terror with two persons on the two sides of a gun. It is profitable to compare

the imagery in the quotation and the same scene in the close-up at the beginning of the

movie. I argue that readers process an image of the terror, although it would be absurd to

believe in equal visual specification. The imagined figures, people, positions, and magnitudes

form in abstractions, although readers' visual memory from real or cinematic situations may

impact their vision of scenes. Imagery in the novel is not static. Prose imagery has movement

and it flows in a cognitive phenomenon that I have called wordshow. If we agree with this

sequential configuration of imagery, then it follows that *Fight Club* builds a visual

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understanding of psychomachia in our mind by transferring the latent conflict to the outside, signified in words. Like the movie, the novel also makes picturable a discontent with *status quo* and a motive for ascent to an ideal state, either in the form of material freedom or return to an archetypal manhood. Movies may use numerous forms of framing, cutting and lighting in order to visualize an idea or set of connected ideas. For instance, films compose meaning by a combination of frames, positioning of things and characters, and lighting certain areas against others. Films use close-ups to give an enhanced understanding of a character's internal state when engaged in an emotional situation. But novels do so in their own way through linguistic capacities and readers' imagistic processing of language. Once we get the initial image given in the beginning lines of *Fight Club*, we move on envisioning ideationally the narrator's following descriptions. In reading a novel, we grasp ideas very similar to the validity we give to the oral report of an event. We pick up the imagistic idea of the "Tyler's pushing a gun in my mouth" in a way much similar to an oral testimony of a victim with whom we sympathize as he/she speaks of a bodily experience.

Rhetorical figures are a category of potentials that Perelman believed create presence. The image of a gun held in mouth, as a metonymy for aggression, without ever needing to be analyzed as a technique, makes the visceral experience of the gun in mouth present in the mind of the reader, in an abstract tactile perception. The metonymy becomes an action image, especially with the additional concrete information: "The barrel of the gun pressed against the back of my throat" (11). The concrete details of the experience, in the first person, enhance the tactile perception. Each verbal image is molded by words that give it a

spatiotemporal information: modal verbs and deixis, for instance, can make an event or an idea seem imminent; in the following sentence, 'the building,' 'here,' and 'in ten minutes' show the narrator vulnerable to immediate terror: "The building we're standing on won't be here in ten minutes" (12). Suspense is generated in these sequential images. The visual achievement is particularly a potent example of what language can do that movies can't, imagistically: it simultaneously evokes both a building and its absence, and suggests an explosion as well– other simultaneous images. Movies are limited to one image at a time, or to a comparatively clumsy split-screen presentation.

More vividness, especially if enhanced by auditory imagery, causes more reader's engagement with the story, because of the presence in vividness. The example below shows how in the middle of the imminence that Jack hallucinates his death in a countdown, the sound of a breaking glass makes the blowing out of the window more visually picturable, an event that synecdochally represents an explosion:

> A window blows out the side of the building, and then comes a
>
> file cabinet big as a black refrigerator, right below us a six-
>
> drawer filing cabinet drops right out of the cliff face of the
>
> building, and drops turning slowly, and drops getting smaller,
>
> and drops disappearing into the packed crowd. (12)

The explosion of the window, its outburst, is marked in the verb "blows out," which has visual connotations of a rapid disintegration of pieces into the air. The readers do not necessarily need to process the physical force, movement, and impact of an explosive to

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shatter a window, since the impression is re-activated from mental faculties and memories of such motion. The visual adjectives, those that imply size, extent, and intensity of an object or an event, must be studied carefully for imagistic frames signaled in the literary imagery. Adjectives can show the perspectival impression of objects, events and situations. The adjective "big," for instance, can suggest the perceptual field and scope that the impression of an explosion brings to the mind and a close-up would obscure its impact. A similar function can be construed in some pronouns such as "everything," which I have shown below to express Jack's fear of oncoming trucks into which he thinks the car may crash. Furthermore, visual adjectives of immensity must be seen in light of the rhetorical figure of hyperbole, here in the impression of the largeness of falling objects that appear smaller as they get closer to the ground, giving the image a visual capacity close to a falling object taken by camera.

As a modern psychomachia, set in a topography of anxiety, *Fight Club* creates a mood of imminent and omnipresent danger. Jack inhabits that topography. His experiences are defined by that mood. This can be seen in Jack's returning focalization on himself, again showing himself under the gun, as if a cinematic edit switches from a medium shot of the falling objects to a close-up of his face. It is sometimes in the dynamism of these shifts of frames that suspense is generated in the novel. In the following extract, while an impression of terror is discerned, the passage provides the reader with both a close image of Jack with the gun in his mouth, scared of explosion, and an overall image of the impacted surrounding; the description is given an exigent rhythm by centrality of time in concrete imagery:

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Up on top of the Parker-Morris Building with Tyler's gun in

my mouth. While desks and filing cabinets and computers

meteor down on the crowd around the building and smoke

funnels up from the broken windows and three blocks down the

street the demolition team watches the clock. (14)

Fear is proximity, either spatial or temporal, of danger. The extract shows the spatial

proximity by positioning Jack inside a building that is, in the narrator's words, going to be

demolished. The temporal proximity is marked in an explosive's timer that counts down:

"The Parker-Morris Building won't be here in nine minutes" (13). The countdown theme

happens in several other places and generally signals Jack's anxiety of death and by doing so

the story becomes the spectacle of Jack's mind: an insomniac brain generative of hazardous

situations, for instance in airplane crashes with vivid imagination of people panicking, "eyes

… wide open" (27). The scene is one in a series of hallucinated life threatening situations the

theme of which is expressed in this manner: "This is your life, and it's ending one minute at a

time" (29). In some of these hallucinations, Jack's internal terror, can be seen imagistically.

Generally, the descriptions of the body, e.g., the changes on the skin and face, suggest a close

look and readers re-enact a visual image from personal experience or memories from real,

filmic, or pictorial memories. Here for instance descriptions of the internal heat in terror are

given: "I melt and swell at the moment of landing when one wheel thuds on the runway"

(31). The image creates mental presence of terror by utilizing the metaphorical verbs "melt

and swell" to signify, visually, Jack's anxiety. Now we must make a generalization about

Jack's recurrent hallucinations: in vivid imagery of Jack's hallucination, we construe that Jack's interest in violence and self-destruction is a coping with anxiety and suffering of a "loser" life when he says, "Maybe self-destruction is the answer" (49). This "enlightenment" is the beginning of Jack's psychomachic battle, realized in fight club, which involves deconstruction of ideas and words: he makes *disaster* and *self-destruction* causes of self-worth and freedom against the deceptions of advertising that enslaves people to material possession and bodily perfection; according to Tyler one should run "from self-improvement … toward disaster" (70). Jack's compensation of his internal struggle is externalized as violence, which we shall discuss in terms of imagistic representation for language's potential in visualizing fights. The scene involves Jack's expression of his violent fight with a strong guy in vivid vocabulary from wrestling: "This guy… got both my arms behind my head in a full nelson and rammed my face into the concrete floor until my teeth bit open the inside of my cheek" and "my eye was swollen shut and was bleeding," "a print of half my face in blood on the floor" (51). Perhaps the best way to examine this image is to compare the use of "full nelson" to the movie's iconic representation of the violent action. The image of the full nelson in the movie does not need a name or description; it is received iconically through the visual input of a whole bodily behaviors that form a full nelson technique (00:46:08–13). The film image, a medium long frame, is visually present to our eyes: every sighted person can see how Jack's opponent grapples him from behind, holds him face down, arms encircled backward around the neck, dominates him and strikes his face to the floor repeatedly. The novel's image, though, works in a more mediated, 'semantic' and symbolic way. It provides

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a technical name for the maneuver, that readers may be familiar with from other environments (mass-market or Olympic wrestling or even the schoolyard). But, if they don't know the term, there's a gloss by Palahniuk ("got both my arms behind my head"). Either way, he implicates his reader, either through evocation or indoctrination, in a vocabulary of strategic violence that is anchored in an image of dominance and incapacitation.

Vivid and concrete language, including technical vocabularies of action, has the capacity of, to use Hill's words, "enhance[ing] persuasiveness" (32). Jack's experience of his injury is uncanny, most importantly in seeing himself as two persons, as expressed in the use of the plural pronoun "us" that shows his schizoid consciousness: "Tyler stood next to me, both of us looking down at the big O of my mouth with blood all around it and the little slit of my eye staring up at us from the floor, and Tyler says, Cool'" (51). The use of "looking down at" is one of those textual potentials that I have termed textual ocularity; the verb even gives a direction to the look. And "the big O" uses both an adjective and a typographical thick 'o' to make the trace imagistically understood. Here we also notice a complex vector: Jack looks at the trace of blood in the shape of his mouth in a fusion of his two personalities: "both of us looking down," he says. In other words, in Jack's personality, the blood is scary, but in Tyler's personality, this is redemption. The impression on the floor shows a kind of unity of the two in splotches of blood iconically representing the mouth and eyes, indexically signaling the violence that defines their relationship. Psychomachia is a spiritual enthrallment with violence and a text must utilize all forms of expression to make picturable and audible the psychological implications of engaging in the war. The metonymization of Jack's

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astonishment with the fight, typified in O, as a mouth standing out so vividly, offers an uncanny image of Jack's "spiritual war" (76). Jack's perception of violence is uncannily striking also in describing his anger at a victim-opponent whose face he likens to "a baby or a football" that he is holding "in the crook of [his] arm and bash[ing] him with [his] knuckles, bash[ing] him until his teeth broke through his lips" (124). The impression of the victim as a baby (utterly helpless) or a football (the inert, definitional metonym of a violent sport), signaling total dominance and power, the psychological joy of watching oneself crumpling another human is eerie and monstrous. But while Jack gives us such impressions of coping with anxiety, his psychomachia, his struggles between two modes of existence, can be noticed on the highway scene to which I shall turn now.

The highway scene is notable for Jack's two competing mental states: Jack's psychomachia is represented in Tyler's reckless philosophy that death comes anyway and that it is pointless to fear versus Jack's anxiety of death. While Tyler embraces oncoming traffic, as symbolic causes of fear of death, Jack's fearful impression is shown in ways that he sees the threat imminent, big, massive, and tremendous: "The truck is everything in front of us, blinding bright and roaring" (145). The demonstrator "everything" is a visual exaggeration, characteristic of terror and panic. The exaggeration captures the overwhelming presence of fear in Jack's mind and it disempowers Jack against the truck, which is empowered in its enormous impression. Sometimes the visual description of a danger implies its proximity, for instance in the phrase "blinding bright" an impression of the distance of the oncoming truck is given, signaling the imminence of collision. The choice of the word

"everything" expresses Jack's helplessness, where it is so close that it has dominated Jack's field of vision. To link these visual observations to the experience of psychomachia, we must remember that hallucination of this life-threatening situation, as a psychomachic struggle, is delivered to the readers in visual terms. The overwhelming experience of coping with anxiety of death can be further seen in the way that direction words give visual information about the motion of things in Jack's mind; direction words are those that the text steers the readers' imaginative eye on the diegetic events; for instance, as "the mechanic" [by which Jack means Tyler] swings the car around on the highway, the rhythm and the movement of the imagery is molded in directional words: "This time, the car coming head-on swerves in time to save us. Another car…. The mechanic doesn't swerve…. This time, the oncoming car swerves, but the mechanic swerves back into its path. The car swerves, and the mechanic matches it, head-on, again" (143). The use of sequence markers and enumerations, such as "This time" (repeated) and "another," also verbs that are naturally kinetic and therefore envisioning-dependent (such as the repeated use of "swerve"), animate the sequentiality of the story.

Film image shows the characters' confrontation and engagement on the screen. The characters' behaviors in these encounters are captured by the camera, in close-ups, medium shots and other frames. But textual camera just does so by description and readers always read those descriptions imagistically. Consider the following sentence: "Raymond Hessel closed both eyes so I pressed the gun hard against his temple so he would always feel it pressing right there and I was beside him and it was his life and he could be dead at any moment" (151). The abstract facial view is then broadened to a double frame that includes

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both the aggressor and the victim. While a reader might imagine "closed both eyes" in any frame, the narrator's descriptions "I was beside him" and "pressed the gun against his [Raymond's] temple" brings the characters closer. A movie, as we see in the same scene in *Fight Club*, shows the victim's reacted terror in close up of the face, but in prose, the reader picks the victim's terror in the narrator's impression as he observes him: "it was his life and he could be dead at any moment." We see the victim through the narrator's eye and this is one way that, in novels, words of the narrator function as a fictional camera for the readers. But the last sentence, also, and this is a great example of Jack's psychomachia, reveals Jack's motive for violence and his sympathy, more possible because of anxiety. Compared to the same scene in the movie, the novel has difficulty showing the narrator's psychomachia: while in the movie both Jack and and Jack's Tyler are in the frame, setting Jack to the background as an observer, the novel is not capable of this showing. The following sentence shows Jack's insanity in his enigmatic tone: "you started crying, tears rolling down the barrel of my gun pressed to your temple" (152). While Jack is aware of Raymond's terror, he enjoys humiliating Raymond's fear by kinetic imagery of "jerking backward and backward," specially in the repetition of 'backward,' both animates the image and reveals Jack's joy with his domination (152). Jack compensates his existential angst and grief of failure by violence against others. By doing so, he acts his motive for ascendance. Jack's reactionary violence, which he understands as enlightenment, is expressed in variants of "I am Joe's-x," for instance in "I am Joe's Cold Sweat" (184). The expression is actually post-reversal in Jack's psychomachia after he says, "Fight club is cancelled! Project Mayhem is cancelled" (179).

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By now, once we see his uncanny, uncontrolled and contending motives, Jack has our sympathy, especially toward the novel's return to the initial gun-in-mouth scene where he was captive to Tyler's gun "on top of Parker-Morris building," when bombs are set to a countdown (203). In the psychomachia of the two personalities, Jack has convinced the readers that his motive for change was a danger to society. In Kenneth Burke's light, the psychology of the audience is molded now to agree with Jack's moral thesis to "pull the trigger" (205). Now the line between evil and martyrdom depends on the motion of the trigger: Jack must shoot himself. His hope that he will be receiving thanking letters from people (207) is exactly expressive of *Fight Club*'s rhetoric: in form of psychomachia, Jack copes with a conflict that has been rendered an irrational threat to society; sacrifice is the solution here but any reader who has identified with Jack throughout is also killed symbolically.

Concluding Remarks

Words bring ideas as images to the mind and readers process sentences cognitively grasping a visual impression of words and larger structures. I discussed how reading is essentially imagistic and prose strategies such as *textual ocularity*, *wordshow*, and gaze shape the readers' visual impression of the relations between a character and his/her internal states. Furthermore, I discussed how words and linguistic structures give visual impressions of the movements and rhythm: adjectives, verbs, and directional words animate mental imagery and give visual information about sizes of things, character's actions, and their response (fear for instance) to events and situations with which they engage. These potentials also shape

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readers' identification with characters, for instance in *Fight Club* they experience Jack's psychomachia because of languages' visual domination on the mind. In the next section, I examine *The Road's* survival quest as visualized in language.

*The Road***'s Ocular Rhetoric**

"Barren, silent, godless."

The Road (4).

"The ash, the dust, the ubiquity of death of nature," in the words of John Cant, contribute to the central image in *The Road*: "the wasted country'" (269). Cant finds a relationship between Eliot's line "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" and McCarthy's passages that bring to the readers' visual imagination the imagery of burned cities, ashen street, corpses hanging on doorways all of which create an "inner rhythm" that engages the readers (267-69). My reading of McCarthy's visual rhetoric is an exploration of the literary text with a curiosity about the imagistic nature of the written word and for that purpose I will centralize such words as "show" "fear" and objective words that Eliot claimed can utilize to speak of a wasteland. In scrutinizing the mental processes in which readers engage with the visual dimensions of texts, I argue that an interpretation that is centralized on the imagistic reading of literary texts is able to explain the suasiveness of post-apocalyptic fiction. Such an analytical strategy, which reads imagery in scenographic terms, is capable of probing into the psychological and cognitive processes with which writers deal with anxiety of a society. Cant's and Manjikian both have read *The Road* as manifestation of American anxiety and an interrogation of American exceptionalism.

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Lock's opinion that words are "sensible signs" for ideas implies that they become

symbolic stimulus for visual, auditory, tactile or olfactory evocations or, not the *senses,* but

the *imagination,* with its *representational* connection to the senses. A novel is a world

unknown to us until read, when it starts to unfold in a *wordshow* and every linguistic unit

becomes a visual detail. Consider the lines that open *The Road:* "When he woke up in the

woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside

him" (3). Without agreeing with signifiers that a man wakes up among the woods and in

darkness and touches a sleeping child, there would be no story. Normally, in novels, the

images of persons come to our consciousness in figures, unspecified with any physical

specification. This is even true of the context. It takes more information for the reader to

understand the mood of waking up in the dark and touching the boy. But as the reader moves

on along the lines, the implication of the words such as "night" (temporal and visual), "the

woods" (spatial and visual)—and the father's protective gestures, even the non- or anti-

visuality of "dark," all become elements in constructing what the narrator later describes as

"Barren, silent, godless" (4). Soon we find that these images visualize a quest of a man and a

boy struggling to survive on a deadly road that runs "among dead trees" (4), "dead reeds," (6)

"limbless trunks of trees [that stretch] away on every side" (8). The images of pervasive

death in American landscape realizes Manjikian's observation that McCarthy's novel

challenges American exceptionalism, showing it as vulnerable to the point of extinction.

McCarthy, as Clark notes, "sustains a sense of foreboding by implying the emotional state of

his characters" in images of "standing dead trees" are "objective correlatives that speak to the

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lifelessness of the land and the physical decay" (123). We also see through their eyes cities that are "mostly burned" (12) as "charcoal drawing[s]," (8) appearing in a "nameless dark" (9). What we have in our imaginal eye is a visual mimesis of a deathscape.

Deathscape: Scenes of Terror

I use *deathscape* for the visual presence of death, characterized by dying or dead humans, but also of decaying environment, all of which cause anxiety in the characters. In one scene when the father looks at the "wasted country," his gaze on the landscape foregrounds death: "The city was mostly burned. No sign of life … everything covered with ash and dust … A corpse in a doorway dried to leather" (11). Cant describes this visual characteristic in *The Road* as eidetic (267). This style, in Cant's phrasing, "creates an inner rhythm that carries the reader forward" (267). In other words, an emotional tie between the reader and a character is established. Cant does not define *eidetic style*, but he uses it to signal a visual mode of writing, a form of picture writing so to speak, that functions through visual processing—in other words, it is effectively synonymous with the stylistic aspects of what I am calling *ocular rhetoric*, and I am comfortable absorbing his observations into my analysis without further commentary. In the concrete words that McCarthy arranges in the above example, a whole idea of the post-apocalyptic non-life is generated that is originated in the idea of the apocalypse as an archetypal form of destruction. It is in this way that rhetor taps into the psychic anxieties of the readers based on their familiarity with myth. The result is this: readers adopt the characters' eye and share their visual sphere and in this way myths are activated by the readers' participation.

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McCarthy's imagistic rhetoric is capable of making his readers watch through the eyes of the characters what Edmund Burke defines as sublime, whatever "fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger" (39). Showing, a novelistic strategy of mimesis that is opposed to telling, is the general strategy of visual mimesis; but a mixture of showing and telling is characteristic of efficient persuasion, for instance in making the pains, anxieties, and fears of a character present to the mind of the readers. In novels, *indication* can also give powerful imagistic impressions. Indication is what Locke implies in his notion of words as 'sensible signs' and Hume's notion of impression of ideas in their absence. To illustrate the notion of imagistic impression in words we might consider a scene at the beginning of the novel, where the father's vigilant, always protective mood, is indicated in the image of a mirror that he has installed on his cart: "Clamped to the handle of the cart was a chrome motorcycle mirror that he used to watch the road behind" (6). Through the image of the mirror, without a narration of the father's internal terror, the reader interprets the father's anxiety that threats may be imminent and appear any moment. This is one way that *The Road* makes the act of looking, like listening, a sensual awareness for the reader such that each verb related to the sense of sight primes readers' attention to what is going to happen.

Textual Ocularity: Steering the Eye of the Imagination

With the imaginal sense of sight being recurrently primed, we can now speak of a textual camera that controls readers' engagement with the story by steering their imaginal eye on the character's (or the narrator's) impression of his/her surrounding. I examine this notion of textual camera through the related terms gaze, vector, and reactional phenomenon

in instances when a novel makes the visual content of the character's gaze the visual content of the reader's imaginal eye. Consider the end of the truck scene when the father goes back from hiding to take his cart and sees "[d]ried blood dark in the leaves" and "bones and the skin piled together with rocks cover them. A pool of guts" (70–1). It is not important whether the description gives or denies any explicit linguistic signifier to tell the reader on the observer's internal reaction, since the general context of the novel makes the anxiety impression the message: the imagery relates to the father's anxiety. The imagery of blood and guts is filtered through the man's frightened experience. His gaze displays, by metonymy, another image of cannibalism, about which he is always frightened, sleepless and watchful. The image, also, because of its concrete signifiers, has the capacity of evoking the reader's imagination of horror. My argument is that the textual gaze, like film gaze, directs the reader's eye on an object both to reveal the character's affect and to transfer a similar emotion to the reader either by sympathy or by tapping into the reader's existential dread. In the movie we *see* the father's facial reaction, because simultaneous or immediate presence of the subject and the object of the gaze in a single (or subsequent) frame matches the viewer's reaction with that of the character. In fiction, however, the character's reaction is processed more cognitively. In imagistic terms, readers see two participants on two sides of an abstract line: a seer and the object in the direction of the glance. What the readers read (or imaginally see) is the returned object of the father's gaze, a process similar to reactional phenomenon that Kress and Leeuwen define in pictures (64–67). The 'blood', 'guts' and 'skin' come to the reader from a vector, functioning like a semantic compass indicating to the reader to see

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that which is in the father's gaze. In reactional process, readers construe emotional meaning. While the movie uses a close-up to show how the father feels, the book's strategy is only a matter of temporal unfolding and cognitive processing: the novel indicates the man's internal terror in the expression "Dark was coming" (71), which we decode to mean he is in dread. For another instance of gaze and textual ocularity, we can look at the basement scene, where we see through the father's gaze, bodies of "naked people, male and female, all trying to hide, shielding their faces with their hands" (110). As the father's eye turns around, new frames, new images come to the reader's attention: "On the mattress lay a man with his legs gone to the hip and stumps of them blackened and burnt" (110). The linguistic flow of images arranged in these concrete words, both follows the father's eye-turns and shapes the reader's visual experience of them temporally, since there is minimal redundancy in the way of the mind's processing of the imagery. A more vivid example of textual gaze and vector is after the protagonists escape the basement and the boy is shown in "his little dance of terror" as he "[points] out the window" and turns our attention to the cannibals who are walking toward the house (111–12).

Another way that literary texts steer readers' eye is through directional phrasing, when ocular terminology, the chain of perception-verbs, mimics a character's visual behaviour, as in, for instance, the father's watchfulness of his surrounding is mirrored here in a chain of verbs that foreground his viewing behavior: "He watched the boy and he looked through the trees toward the road" (5). The iterated actions of the eye are given special valence: watch here signals a protective intentness, where look through suggests the father is scanning for

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danger. The emotional content of "watched…and looked," may become known to readers in following sentences, as we notice here: "This was not a safe place. They could be seen from the road now it was day" (5). Textual ocularity, then, is the strategy of adopting words from the sight domain to give a visual mimesis of characters' eye engagement with their surroundings, through which the reader's consciousness is regulated by imagistic handling, that is linguistic tools, of the story. We get close to Perelman's notion of presence. Certain elements that are seated in the mind of readers are given prominence. Textual ocularity handles attention of the readers. The directional phrasing of perceptual verbs can be also understood as a literal instantiation of Kenneth Burke's (1966) notion of terministic screens as linguistic tools that "[turn] our attention in one direction rather than in other directions" (57). While Burke meant direction in a metaphorical sense, because he was dealing with ideational frames, perceptual verbs in the domain of sight are directive of the readers' attention towards events that a rhetor intends. In the example of *The Road*, the reader's attention is directed at the boy and through the woods, with the overlay of the father's emotions.

The appearance of the objects of sight is dependent on the viewer's relative position. This is even more the case with the emotional engagement. The visual perception of a focalizer character brings into frames the reader's visual impression of what characters see. For example, through the father's binoculars we see "the shape of the city…in the grayness like a charcoal drawing sketched across the waste" (6). The telling phrase, "sketched across waste," superimposes the visual impression of 'greyness' over the symbolically received

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wasteland. For the implication of anxiety, readers associate the image of wasteland with the father's expression of "Nothing to see" (6), which is an emotional response to deprivation, a feature of sublime and terror of starvation: he is looking for possibilities of scavenging, but there is nothing to see. In my argument that each image in novel is formative of a larger web of imagery, I mean to say that micro-imagery across the novel collaborate to make a form of existence, e.g., survival quest, a spectacle of human condition based on which readers' emotions are molded for an intellectual judgment. As the novel goes on, imagery generated by anxiety begin to shape the reader's visual engagement. In the following, I analyze an important scene of encounter with cannibals.

The truck scene can be read for several imagistic strategies that give mimesis to fear and challenges of survival. When the man wakes up by some sound, his nervousness is delivered such that readers become aware of his visual vigilance in a chain of viewing words with a frightened rhythm: he "looks" at the boy, then at the road, and then, suddenly cannibals come to view (60). The imagery generates suspense, since our imaginative eye is fused with the man and we continue to mimic, cognitively, the man's visual behavior when he "look[s] back toward the road" and he sees "the first of them [cannibals] were already coming into view" (60). This is one way that novels shift reader's imaginal viewing points to maintain suspense. Once we find the man in this intense moment of terror, our mind adopts the man's visual awareness, for instance when he looks towards the gang, we process the father's and the boy's fear of the "truck people" portrayed as an organized paramilitary gang in masks, with weapons, hoods and biohazard suits holding "clubs in their hands" (60). The

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imagery empowers the cannibals as dominant and dangerous. Our protagonists fear because the threat is, in Aristotelian terms, proximate. The visual result is similar to "proxemics patterning," a phenomenon that David Blakesley introduces as a "visual element" that details the "spatial relationships among characters and between the viewer and the visual material" (in Blakesley 114).[18] Novels and movies sometimes manage anxiety and fear by the tempo or rhythm of their imagery. Consider the following four frames when the father "grab[s] the boy by the hand" who is "frozen with fear" and then "pull[s] him up" (61). A combination of showing and telling gives a persuasive visual mimesis of the characters' anxieties and fears. Consider these sentences for how fast we process first the image of the father turning his head, and immediately his sight objects become ours in the second and third sentences: "He looked back. The truck had rumbled into view. Men standing in the bed looking out" (61). "Looked" and "rumbled" also provide examples of proxemics patterning moving between visual and aural perception. In the following scene, when the protagonists "froze" (62) as a roaming cannibal finds them, we notice the effect of proxemics patterning and become aware of the exchange of eyes movements to make sense what they decide to do in that intensity; for instance, when the cannibal "looked at the gun and he looked at the boy" (63), the text has already made us adopt the eye of the father (or the narrator) and our visual imagination

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[18] Blakesley borrows the term from anthropologist E.T. Hall, who used the term in the study of the human use of space within the context of culture. Hall argued that human perception of space is derived from sensory apparatus and that the use of space is shapes in communication is internalized unconsciously but it is patterned by culture (see Edward T. Hall, 1966). Blakesely adopts the term to argue that film is a language in which camera-movement, color, proxemics patterning, etc. shape a predictable visual generative grammar that gives rise to a variety of meanings. See David Blakesely in Charles A. Hill and Marguerite H. Helmers, 2004. pp.111–133.

follows to generate imagery based on the text's strategy to impose on us what and how to see. Readers always make connection between such spectacles and characters' response to them; for instance, the boy's bodily display of fear, as if in front of us on the visual scale of a filmic medium shot, "[hanging] on to his father's coat" (49), is an example of how a character's fear becomes present to the reader's consciousness and their presence can be animated by managing tempo, for instance in action verbs. When the cannibal attacks the boy, action verbs represent his quick moves: he "dove and grabbed the boy and rolled and came up holding him against his chest with his knife at his throat" (66). While we have the scene from the father's perspective, sharing his fear for the boy with knife on the throat, when he "level[s] the pistol and fire[s] from a two-hand position balanced on both knees at a distance of six feet" (66), the point of view is automatically changed in our cognitive process, bringing in the father into a long view on the other side of which are the cannibal and the boy.

Concluding Remarks

In examining *The Road,* I attempted to explore reading as an inherently imagistic experience. I developed this reading through the notion that words become stimuli for evocation of visual ideas in the imagination. *The Road,* as a survival quest, uses numerous language strategies that give a visual mimesis to the challenges of survival quest, with anxiety central to it. Language brings the story to us as a deadly and frightening deathscape. Through the concepts and terms such as textual ocularity, fictional camera, wordshow, and showing strategies, I explored several terms related to gaze and linguistic units and structures

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that visualize the father and the boy's experience of the hardships of quest. I examined ways that reader engagement and identification is achieved through rhythm and ways that language direct readers' imaginal eye on events. In the following section, I give a hybrid analysis of imagery in film and fiction.

Image Onscreen and Onpage

Film imagery attends to the biological eye and fiction to the imaginal eye. While the material differences between film and fictional image cannot be overlooked, the novel has not been studied in visual terms to explain image as image the way we speak of pictorial imagery. In this section, I briefly generalize on the idea that films and novels both deliver their thesis partly through imagery and by doing so they induce identification in our minds. Certain terms, traditionally used in film criticism, can be imported to the study of a novel as spectacular, as a cognitive experience of image as image. Some of these terms are: a) frame (borders within which meaning is marked); b) cut (discontinuities that manage rhythm of imagery); c) light (composing meaning by making certain parts more visible); and d) gaze (an abstract line on sides of which some relation is established between the subject and object of the look). Reading novel is an imagistic, intellectual work that is experienced through similar trajectories that we view a film by the biological eye: although film image is on screen and exists materially independent of the viewers, it takes interpretation on the part of the viewers; but also, readers necessarily process cognitive imagery in the brain. Film viewers interpret each detail under the imposition of frames, lighting and rhythm; they also process some cognitive, linguistic translation of the imagery received by the eye. For

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instance, viewers may interpret *Fight Club's* close up of the gun-in-mouth in a cognitive

phrase such as "a man is holding a gun in another's mouth." Then they interpret the literal

meaning for intentions and emotions, a terror for instance. All this process happens fast. The

claim gets us closer to my notion of imagistic of novels. In novels, words are not pictorial,

equivalent to one we see on a screen; they are the reverse of what we just explained for the

cognitive-linguistic processing of film imagery. In the beginning sentence of the novel *Fight*

Club we are able to imagine a terror situation imagistically, even if there is no recognized

face put on the fictional Tyler: "Tyler's pushing a gun in my mouth" (11). This is how a

prose equivalent of film close-up shapes; medium and long shots and lighting also take form

through linguistic details about directions, distances and sizes (these are all explained fully in

my novel sections above). Film imagery is criticized also by 'tempo' and 'rhythm' formed by

cuts and shifts of angles. For instance, in movies, *Fight Club's* 'chemical burn' and *The*

Road's truck scene use numerous cuts to shape a rhythm of fear to represent psychomachia

and survival struggle respectively. But novels also arrange imagery in a temporal sequence,

which I have called wordshow as a cognitive process in which scenes, episodes and complete

stories shape from linguistic units. For instance, in *Fight Club,* Jack's impression that life is

ending any moment finds imagistic mimesis in a bomb on countdown or hallucination of

explosions. Jack's hallucination of his captivity in a terror situation is picturable in the vivid

and concrete words such as windows, desks and glasses that Jack imagines blow out from the

high rise in which he is kept captive by Tyler. The notion of gaze (and its related terms) is

fundamental in the study of image. At the tunnel scene of *The Road*, I discussed how the

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father's visual experience of the innards of a consumed man becomes the viewer's experience, and in the novel of the same title, I explored a similar cognitive experience that is achieved by linguistic means. In *Fight Club* novel, I have discussed how a fusion of Jack's two personalities, when "looking down on the big O of [his] mouth", is discernable in relation to his self-destructive anger and ascent motive. While I claimed that both film and novel deliver ideas partly in imagery, each novel and film is unique in imagistic persuasion.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I took *image* beyond the object of the biological eye to include the mental image as perceived from the word. For literary image, my argument is in line with Horace's famous motto "as is painting so is poetry," which implies that words convey the impression of reality with the same mimetic potential of painting. I have not equated the film image with the fictional image; rather, I argued that film is perceived, iconically, through visual input, but that literary imagery lacks material visual input, and therefore is not sensory at all; it is thought and created in a conscious interaction with some text. One of the challenges that a visual critic may face is related to the murkiness of the definitions of seeing and image. For example, image is sometimes used for auditory ideas, and there are few analyses of the visual structure of novelistic imagery. This confusion is rooted in the philosophical tradition (for example in Hume) that takes idea and image as being one without really explaining ideational imagery in ways that they are processed in the mind as pictorial images. To arrive at a consistent terminology, I exclude objects and events in the auditory dimension of film and novel and limit it to screened object and the counterpart ideational

perception of events and objects that only appeal to the sense of sight, whether imaginal or literal. Another challenge for the visual critic is the magnitude of image, which I have treated in frames (singular and sequential): we always have an understanding of the magnitude and shape of imagery in film and novel. The literary image, by analogy with film image, is an ideational frame of a being or event that is characterized by adjectives, action verbs, and many other linguistic possibilities. A sentence such as "Tyler's pushing a gun in my mouth" has three participants and an action to activate in the mind of the audience an image of a terror; it also gives the impression of distance and frame. Subsequent imagery in film unfold without viewers' control, but novels also have different ways to handle the flow and rhythm of imagery although the reader decides and handles the reading and the rhythm. While film image takes on visual properties by cutting, framing, lighting and editing and is received by given qualitied, the literary image essentially involves cognitive interpretation.

Literary image as a concept has a long history, but, to my knowledge, there has not been developed a theory that reads word-image in terminology we use to explain film imagery. I have associated Percy Lubbock's conception of the novel as spectacle to C. Day Lewis's Horatian account of poetic image as "a picture made out of words" (17–18). While visual rhetoricians have multiple tools to examine film image, based on straightforward resemblances (facial expression, lighting, framing, tempo, etc.), critiquing word-image depends on importing such terminology into the domain of the imagination. In *Fight Club* (novel), for instance, visual criticism of Jack's hitting a fighter's head against the ground is tied to the language in highly imagistic terms such as "full nelson" that appeals to the

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readers' visual memory or the word's capacity of visualizing the event. In such an example, I have attempted to argue that the choice of vocabulary and concrete language can make image of beings, events and situations immediate to readers and convey emotions of characters. For the affect in imagery, I centralized Aristotle's definition of fear, in *Rhetoric*, as proximity of danger to examine the visual potentials that portray a character in danger. For example, in *The Road*, I examined the role of framing, in long shots and close-ups, that manipulate distance and shape the audience's sympathy; or in *Fight Club* I examined how Jack's psychomachia can be understood in vectors, lighting and framing where his moods are displayed in relation with Raymond and Tyler. I have furthered the argument that audience involvement is enhanced through making ideas of fear and anxiety proximate and present through visual structure. This argument was a development of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's idea of rhetorical "presence" that is effectively attained through enhancing the presence of elements in the consciousness of an audience. I analyzed cinematographic strategies of cutting, framing, lighting and their rhythm for ways that these techniques synch the viewers' perception with that of characters and frame the viewers' emotional response.

For fictional imagery, I looked for ways that language is capable of making ideas and situations visually present to the readers through several concepts, such as textual ocularity, textual machinery of showing, wordshow and so on to examine textual strategies that manage readers' visual perception of fictional events and situations. With the term machinery of showing, I adopted cinematographic concepts to find ways to examine for scenography, for instance, lighting has traditionally been specific to screened imagery, but readers of novels

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are always able to understand the implications of light and dark in fiction. The claim is not to ignore the nuances of lighting, say in the "human sacrifice" in *Fight Club* where meaning is deeply contrived in the contrast between dark and lighted spots of faces. Such pictorial configuration is absent in the novel, though guiding the imagination of dark and light depends on imagistic composition and a writer's skill and choice of giving or not giving such details. Other concepts such as distance, angles of vision, point of view and framing are straightforward in film image, but I have explored how these visual concepts could be examined along the concept of gaze, for example in ways that textual ocularity and chain-verbs-of-perception, in directing the audience's imaginal eyes at the source of fear. Even frames are possible in instances that language describes the face in an emotional state, such as in *Fight Club* when Jack hallucinates himself in an airplane collision where "a woman [is] float[ing] in the ocean…eyes…wide open" (27). This image and the following example with a metaphorical rendering, "[I] melt and swell" have almost the visual capacity of film close-ups in foregrounding facial expressions of fear.

Rhetors—whether filmmakers or novelists—employ their distinct visual methodologies to visualize a thesis. *The Road* for example, as novel and movie, centralizes fears and anxieties of survival quest in an apocalyptic world, as symptomatic of a culture of anxiety, and becomes symptomatic of our current uncertainties and fear of great catastrophes. And *Fight Club*'s visual techniques such as framing close-ups, directional lighting, rhythm, and violent imagery deliver a psychomachia and internal struggle for change. Through analyzing the film frames and the notion of vector I have argued that Jack's psychomachia is concealed

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from inattentive viewers but through an attentive analysis, his fear of Tyler can be noticed in scenes such as the human sacrifice scene.

On a final note, both filmic and literary images have visual capacities to represent characters' anxiety and impact the readers' mood through identification and sympathy. While filmic imagery represents anxiety by iconic signs fixed on screen, literary imagery is coded in the word, which exists in two ontologies extended from the virtual ontology of signification to the imaginative intersubjectivity of the reader.

Chapter Six

Sequential Rhetoric

Argument for the Chapter

This chapter examines the 'narratives' of *Fight Club* and *The Road*, in both their book and film versions. I first arrive at the foundational concepts of 'sequentiality' and 'sequence' based on the existing theories of narrative, then develop the terms for the specific analysis of prose and cinematic stories. I explore *The Road*, book and movie, as a shifted quest narrative because it is an escape from horror as well as pursuit of redemption, and also because it involves taking the holy artifact (the fire) to a place where it can flourish, rather than searching for the artifact. I also apply an argument for *Fight Club*, book and movie, as a post-modern psychomachia, given a particular contemporary turn because it "literally" implicates mental illness, not just abstract faculties, emotions, and moralities. Throughout the analyses, I argue for how the representation and inducement of anxiety, terror, and horror in the four artifacts give, in the minds of viewers and readers, presence to *The Road's* quest narrative and *Fight Club's* psychomachia.

Sequential Rhetoric of Anxiety

Stories use intended sequences, or arrangements of arguments, that induce persuasion. A fundamental question for a hybrid analysis of the cinematic and prose narratives concerns the nature of narrative itself. I approach narrative as a *sequencing machine*, its working material being events and states marked in sounds and imagery that are selected, arranged,

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and connected for a desired meaning. Crucially, narrative–and for our purpose, *sequentiality*–implicates time and causal linkages among story existents and constituents. While prose narrative is formed mainly by sequencing of the symbolic means (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters) to conjure up sequences of events in the minds of readers, cinematic narrative advances an argument or a story mainly by sequencing the iconic means, images and sounds, that represent sequences of events.[19] Narrative, beyond any generic specification, is any form of discourse in which the viewer or reader senses a progressive form, driven by causality, in which a transformation or change of some sort is the outcome. This progression is the feature of prose and cinematic stories that we approach hereafter through the concept of *sequentiality*, which both characterizes the arrangement of the story elements as well as it defines each story element's connection with other elements that are structured in a contrived sequence. The crucial function of sequentiality is to guide the audience towards a change through the motion of the aural and ocular components. For instance, the procedural sequence of the sounds and imagery in a scene (such as the tunnel scene in *The Road*) suggests that a threat (and therefore, a change in the fate of the characters) is near. Transformation has been discussed in narratology, for instance by Gerald Prince who believes that it makes a narrative persuasive and interesting because of a conflict, opposition, and struggle (147). Consider the protagonists' encounter with cannibals in *The Road* or the highway scene in *Fight Club*. Both of them generate anxiety that is the result of the audience's desire to see the protagonists overcome the situation. This tension can shape

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[19] I have explained extensively in two chapters the implications of imagery and sounds in words as well as the implications of imagery and sounds in cinema.

an enigmatic and suspenseful causality. Prince observes in this relation that "narrative should be non-obvious," something that is "unusual and problematic" and something that "matters to its receiver" (159). Prince's opinion can be interpreted for two implications that I find relevant in the aural and ocular sequences of *Fight Club's* psychomachia and *The Road's* quest. First, sequentiality must be a progression toward knowledge, which is constantly inflicted by enigma and uncertainty in narratives of anxiety. Both of these qualities can be utilized to explain the anxiety that torments *The* Road's characters and the readers. Cooper makes a comment about the uncertainty in *The Road* novel that is central to McCarthy's sequential rhetoric. In her opinion, the direction in which the characters "trek south, their telos [is] not a precise location but only an indistinctive determination to survive the coming winter" (135). It is within this obscure telos that *The Road* centralizes anxiety and fear caused by the presence of evil, cold, famine and death on the protagonists' quest. When sequence gives a suggestion of a fundamental change, there is a stronger audience response. Consider Jack's conflicting motives in the episodes "human sacrifice," the "highway scene," and "chemical burn" in *Fight Club* as well as "the basement scene," "the tunnel" or "the truck" scene in *The Road*. All of these scenes suggest a crucial change in the fate of the protagonists because the sequential rhythm of the story contains heightened anxiety and fear.

Extending the characters' psychology to the audience is the result of the "communication" role of narrative, in which, as Wolf Schmid explains, "a mediating authority" or the narrator controls the representation of events (1). I connect this kind of domination to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's notion of rhetorical presence for methods

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that both film and fiction use to fill the consciousness of the reader with the idea of anxiety.

As Schmid observes, the narrator's mediation creates an "immediate presentation of reality"

(1), the effect of which is that the emotions of suffering characters – for instance their fear –

fascinate the audience. The beginning of *Fight Club* – both the movie and the novel –

realizes this function when Jack speaks of plotted terrors by Project Mayhem. Narratives also

engage the audience not because of the impact of the "discourse or communication," as

Schmid would argue, but because of the "changes of state" in "what is narrated" (2). Both the

quest narrative of *The Road* and the psychomachia of *Fight Club* are based on conflicts that

entail changes of states. Change is formative of sequential suasiveness and sequential

suasiveness is formative of change. Furthermore, change is the result of opposing states in

which a character is involved and one of which the audience desires for the character,

because of identification. For instance, *Fight Club*'s psychomachia, the internal struggle of

the protagonist, always constitutes overcoming a condition, an airplane crash, a car collision,

a reversal of Project Mayhem and so on; and *The Road*, quest constitutes overcoming hunger,

cold, and the roaming cannibals. Changes are the results of causalities, and because the

audience adopts this causal perspective, due to the domination of sequential rhythm over

audience's consciousness, the result is a synchronization of emotions – audience with

character. More precisely, identification is a result of the turns and changes that a sequence

contrives by disposition, or 'arrangement'. In other words, plot is logos. By the notion of

plot-as-logos I mean the emotional effect of the sequential rhythm that is mainly a function

of the structural design of the story. Cant's observation that *The Road* is characterized by "a

continuous sequence of discrete paragraphs, some only a few lines in length, none occupying much more than a single page," explains the intentional rhythm that that McCarthy tries to engage the readers with the text emotionally (267). As Cant observes "[t]he movement of the travelers and the movement of the text are one" in *The Road* (267), by which Cant means the internal rhythm of the mind of the characters is stretched to the readers through the sequential structure of the novel. McCarthy's handling of the story through short descriptive paragraphs that set the stage, then continued in dialogues fused with free indirect discourse generate a nervous rhythm that brings the struggles of quest to the readers' suspenseful engagement with the story. Take as an example the scene when the father and the boy are walking through a small town and the father decides to enter the house and search for food; the scene foregrounds the father's fear through the showing narration and the boy's fear through dialogue and telling narration (130-36). The passage is long and I try to capture the essence of the scene: "They scrabbled through the charred ruins of houses … A corpse floating in the black water of a basement among trash" (130). As the father and the boy enter the broken syntax paces up the tempo: "Everything damp. Rotting. In a drawer he found a candle. No way to light it. He put it in his pocket" (130). The anxious sequence is then fused with indirect discourse to mirror the mind of the father: "Darkness implacable. The blind dogs of the sun in their running. The crushing black vaccum of the universe" (130). This stage of the quest must be seen as a phase in quest mythos in which the hero descends into the underground of dangers. McCarthy renders this experience metaphorically to frame the minds of the readers, to reveal the characters' experience of terror: "And somewhere two

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hunted animals trembling like groundfoxes in their cover" (130). McCarthy uses the metaphor of "dogs" dragging the "sun" blindly to imply an absurd journey, but then the metaphysical metaphor transforms into a signifier for anxiety through the simile of the two animals (the father and the son) who are in terror of being exposed to the predators that are omnipresent and in search of them. As the characters continue to walk "through the streets wrapped in the filthy blankets," the sequential delivery of the scene displays the father's anxiety through a showing narration: "He held the pistol and held the boy by the hand" (131). The sequential rhythm or motion is, as we notice, ascending towards more intense anxiety and this is achieved through dialogue when the characters arrive at another house. The father is afraid to take the boy inside and the boy is in anxiety to stay outside: "I want you to wait here," to which the boy answers "I want to go with you" (132). This mixture of different modes of narration are recurrent in *The Road* and, I argue, the fuller examination of the quest, the characters' journey, their adventures for survival, and their emotional state along the journey proves more fruitful if we bring together the whole constituents of the artifact. While sequential rhetoric explains the general, temporal handling of the emotions, its meaning seeking depends on the sequence of the aural and ocular components of a story. In other words, sequential rhetoric explains the simultaneous management of, and therefore the reader's engagement with, the auditory and visual constituents. The effect of such sequential management of attention is what I have implied in the concept of logos as the mould of pathos, the directing of attention on an intended emotion.

It is a function of the arrangement of the story material in sequence that induces

emotions by directing the story towards a desired outcome. Kenneth Burke's arguments on

the psychology of form is profitable for ways that sequential rhetoric, specifically the

psychological rhythm, shapes audience response based on form and psychology of

characters. A similar opinion is presented by Rick Altman in his notion of "following," as a

function of narrative by which the audiences follow a character "from action to action and

scene to scene" (16). Burke's and Altman's explanations are actually similar to the concept

of "logos," which Seymour Chatman describes as the "sequential composite" of a narrative

that frames the argument of the plot (19). I argue that logos, or the argument of narrative in a

sequential ordering, shapes pathos; for our purpose in this study, I argue that *Fight Club*'s

psychomachia and *The Road*'s quest centralize anxiety and fear in a sequential rhythm of the

events of struggle and strife. *Fight Club*'s internal struggle is to ascend to a desired status,

and *The Road*'s struggle is to flee the zone of danger and death to re-generate life in another

place. These struggles are shown in many forms of anxiety, realized in the events that show

the lives of the characters precarious.

We must resolve another problem: is it the event that evokes affect or is it the

sequential arrangement that brings about persuasion by affective engagement? It is actually

both. No event is conceivable in a vacuum and every event is part of a causality. Sometimes

an event itself is the change and sometimes it is a cause or an effect of a change. Rimmon-

Kenan understands an event as "a change from one state of affairs to another" (15). Her

assertion implies both causality and transformation in state of affairs. This causation and

transformation is at the heart of any narrative of anxiety, which I study in light of Schmid's formulation of "eventfulness" with five characteristics: 1) relevance: an event must be "an essential [and not trivial] part of the storyworld" and emotive effect is central in relevance (9); 2) unpredictability: "the extent of deviation from the doxa of the story or what is expected" (10); 3) persistence: "eventfulness of a change of state is in direct proportion to its consequences for the thought and action of the affected subject in the framework of the story" (11); 4) irreversibility: "the more improbable the original condition can be restored, the greater the level of eventfulness" (11); 5) non-iterativity: non-repeated and different changes that affect more characters, have a high level of eventfulness (12). Schmid contends that an "event" characterizes an "unprecedented incident" (8). If we accept that the event is a climactic, drastic and essential happening, film and fiction may contrive a sequential handling of the story to reach that point for rhetorical persuasion. Rhetorically, narrative arranges the story in a sequence of shifts and turns that induce, postpone, and satisfy or frustrate the desires of the audience. Brooks's Burkean observation that "[d]esire is the wish for the end, for fulfillment, but fulfillment must be delayed so that we can understand it in relation to origin and desire itself" explains this rhetorical arrangement (111). The notion of eventfulness can be further pushed to its psychological implication through Burke's formulation of "suspense" and its role in "the psychology of information". He argues that suspense "is the concern over the possible outcome of some specific detail of plot rather than for general qualities" (1968: 38). Stories of anxiety are largely dominated by eventfulness, though causality may sometimes be implied rather than presented straightforwardly. In his

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definition of form as "the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite" (31), Kenneth Burke stressed this temporal handling of a story for a rhetorical purpose: the rhetor's purpose. Influenced by Freud, Brooks finds that the motor force of "the movement of the plot" is "human desire" (91) and that the key figure in narrative is metonymy or the figure of contiguity (91). In fact figures of contiguity characterize sequential rhetoric, which utilizes causality to generate a rhythm of anxiety. In Brooks we find how a single event leads to another, a causality in the chain of events where "metonymy" is "the figure of linkage in the signifying chain: precedence and consequence, the movement from one detail to another, the movement toward totalization under the mandate of desire" (91). The contiguity of cause and effect may create suspense through anticipation and deferral, through such moves as chapter or scene breaks, digressions, and shifts in point of view (literally in cinema, figuratively in prose). By reduction, each component in a sequence stands for an array of causes and effects along the continuum of the narrative. In addition, the basic "strategy" in metonymy, Burke (1941) notes, is "reduction", the attempt "to convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible" (425). A sentence in prose or a facial expression of terror in film are both an amalgam of cause and effects.

There are other ways that sequential rhetoric in film and fiction shapes affective response. The long-known "showing" and "telling" methods of narration are two strategies across a continuum by which cinema orients at the showing end of the continuum while prose orients at the telling end; but both forms involve both dimensions and the difference is

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in proportionalities, differing also internally, in any given movie or book, as a function of technique. Wayne C. Booth explains telling as "the trick of going beneath the surface of a character's mind and heart" way of a "clarification of motives" (4). While telling manipulates the readers, making them receptive to framed ideas, showing allows the audience to draw its own inferences based on characters' speeches and actions. However, a mixture of the two narrative modes steers our "sympathetic involvement" with the protagonists' concerns and actions (5). According to Booth, such authorial narration "matches up the audience's judgments with those of the narrator" because we experience the protagonists' thoughts and feelings first hand (11). But this can be challenged. The showing/telling dichotomy is mostly used in the analysis of narrative in fiction rather than film, because film is so overwhelmingly at the extreme side of the continuum telling/showing. Aspects of telling can be found in movies –for instance in the use of voice-over – which functions as an equivalent to description in prose fiction. This will be discussed further below. Kozloff discusses voice-over under "Showing" versus "Telling," introducing voice-over as a method of narration in which "information is told to us by a narrator" who shapes our consciousness of the story (13). Kozloff adds that "it is words that anchor the viewer's identification and interpretation of the image's free and neutral signifiers" (15).

Outline of the Chapter

Following this introduction, I give an explanation of the major concepts for sequential analysis, using terms from narrative theory, to apply on the psychomachia of *Fight Club* and quest in *The Road*, both of which are centered on anxiety. In a transitional section that

follows, I explain the concepts that I will be using in the analysis of prose, stressing the

linguistic strategies of narration. In two separate sections I examine the novels for sequential

strategies specific to each of the novels. After the examination of the novels, I give a hybrid

analysis of the two novels and two movies to explain the distinct and shared ways that these

case studies narrate themes of psychomachia and quest with centrality of anxiety. I shall

show how novels dramatizes a story versus how the movies dramatizes that narrative. The

chapter ends by a conclusion and wraps up my arguments on sequential rhetoric in portraying

of emotions.

Films of Anxiety

In the following section, I examine the two films *Fight Club* and *The Road* for the

arguments of psychomachia and quest respectively, both based around anxiety. In my

sequential rhetoric analysis of film, I take narrative as the general strategy of sequencing

sounds and imagery set in a rhythm toward an outcome. I make central how the concepts of

narrativity and eventfulness meld with cinematic tools (cutting, framing, and tempo) to mark

changes in the status quo and suggest a transformation in the fate of characters. My rhetorical

exploration of narrative is centered on emotional mimesis and affective synchrony – by

which I mean a movie's sequential persuasion is an effect of two modes of expression: aural

sequence and ocular sequence, in a whole artifact in which sounds and imagery are

sequenced such that their motion dominates the viewer's consciousness. Both *Fight Club's*

psychomachia and *The Road's* quest are representative of anxiety; their narratives adopt a

rhythm of anticipation of some disastrous change as it nears realization. These strategies are

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sometimes based on the motion suggested in the sounds and camera work, and sometimes

effects of ambiguity and obscurity. *Fight Club* hides its psychomachia because of the

perceived external nature the narrator's internal war. This gives verisimilitude to the

narrator's hallucinations of disaster. *The Road* frames a mood of imminence that mimics the

character's anxiety and fear of cannibals. In both movies, I examine cinematic manipulation

of the viewer's senses in ways that they handle duration-and-movement of events. Both

movies induce identification through the progression of narrative towards its desired

outcomes. In *Fight Club,* it is the repression of an ascent motive and in *The Road* an appeal

to and strengthening of popular apocalyptic anxiety.

Fight Club, Movie

Fight Club advances an allegorical psychomachia (battle of the soul): one half of the

narrator's personality sticks a gun in the mouth of the other half and one bombs symbols of

greed and consumerism that the other half desires and represents. Jack's character is

consumed by guilt and anxiety of failure and fear of Tyler; on the other hand, his reverence

and anxiety of matching up with his desired Tyler represent an objectification of anger,

aggression, a will to power, and violence, realized in fist fights, self-beating at his boss's

office, vandalism, and human sacrifice. I argue that *Fight Club* hides a psychomachia by

externalizing the narrator's motives in the persona of two characters. The epitome of this

psychomachic malaise are at several scenes: the initial gun-in-mouth scene, which stages a

terroristic situation; the narrator's ambiguous relationship with Marla, with whom he has a

loveless sexual relationship in the Tyler-personality and he loathes in the Jack-personality;

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the bombing-disarming-the bomb conflict at the end. In this last example, the narrator

engages the most complex moment in his experience of the psychomachia. In collaboration

with his Tyler-personality, Jack bombs high-rises, but because of his care for society, he goes

through a transformation that is desire of the plot. At this stage of the psychomachia, we

witness the epitome of the internal war materialized in an external fight between the narrator

and his double. At the initial gun-in-mouth scene, the audience does not see an internal

battle; rather they believe they are witnessing an inter-personal terror. *Fight Club* advances

its rhythm by arranging a narrative that repeatedly suggests eventfulness, the promise of

disaster. Following the gun-in-mouth scene, in the fusion of voice-over and dialogue, the

audience is led to anticipate a larger demolition plot. Through the two language components,

viewers are informed that the high-rise on which the two characters are located will be

"Ground zero" in "Three minutes" (00:2:11). The outcome is imminence as a function of

arrangement that is implied in Schmid and Prince's notion of narrativity, since the narrative

makes us conscious of an imminent drastic change in the status quo. The subtlety is this: the

narrator's psychomachic desire for violence is made a anxiety fascination in the viewers'

consciousness in the sense that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca speak of rhetorical presence.

Fight Club hides its psychomachia through its strategy of choosing two actors for two

personalities. Viewers are denied knowledge of the internal fight of the self-with-self for the

majority of the movie. The rhetorical result is *affective synchrony*: the viewers experience

Jack's anxiety by sharing his anticipation of explosions. As such, the rhythm of the movie

becomes the rhythm of the viewers' mind. Consider when the voice-over informs the

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audience that Project Mayhem has planned to demolish a dozen buildings and that they going to explode (00:2:44). One way that Jack's anxiety is reproduced is the spectral camera that surpasses physical limitations and penetrates through the walls to where the hallucinated threat is located. The fast camera moves from the high-rise toward a vacant street, to the basement garage then towards a van with a bullet hole in the front windshield and eventually stops at a bomb timer (00:2:43). The rapid movement of the camera also prevents focus and keeps the visual object obscure and in motion, even if only temporally. This strategy of obscuring perceptions is reminiscent of Edmund Burke's formulation of the Sublime, wherein obscurity evokes an imagined terror more than objective observation. The phenomenon is attentional handling, a mimetic manipulation of the mind, a duration-and-movement-unreality that projects the narrator's anxiety in the camera; as a result, the audience perception is controlled by the temporality of the sequence; for example, the longer focus of the camera on the explosives in the van elevates its meaningfulness. Eventfulness, the speculation "Will Tyler Kill Jack?' is the essence of suspense, which is achieved by what Burke called "the psychology of information" (1968: 37). Here, the arrangement of suspenseful events moulds viewers' desire for outcome.

Fight Club draws heavily upon identification. Once the audience feels compelled to follow the fate of the narrator, the expectation of catastrophe is postponed and the argument of the movie is shifted toward the narrator's psychic malaise related to consumerism; in other words, a psychic problem is associated with a political economy, making it an enslaving system from which the narrator desires to liberate himself and others. As Robert L. Heath

explains, Burke's understanding of form "draws heavily upon identification" (61). *Fight Club* induces identification through "progressive form," which is one of the four methods that, Burke believed, arouse audience's appetite for knowing the outcome of a plot (1968: 124) and to evoke "the audience to anticipate or desire certain developments" (1966: 54). *Fight Club*'s horror-like gun-in-mouth scene and Project Mayhem's terror plots evoke this knowing desire by synching the audience's perception with that of the characters, through the impact of the close-up, the conflict between Tyler and Jack and the rapid camera movements that take the viewers to the sight of the bombs. Branigan's observation is profitable here: "In fashioning diegetic and nondiegetic worlds we are constantly required to keep track of the ways in which our perceptions are related to the perceptions of characters within the story" (50). Several other scenes in *Fight Club* illustrate this sensory identification, for instance at the highway scene in which camera work and audio manipulation generate a perceptual simultaneity by making the audience sense the narrator's vulnerability. The shifts of angles between Jack and the front windshield, the blinding headlights of the oncoming cars disturb us like they do Jack; the effect is similar to what Branigan describes as putting the audience "at immediate angles" (51). The perceptual synchronization is strengthened through both visual and auditory techniques: multiple shifts of angles captured in rapid cuts recreate the intensity of Jack's hallucination of his life that Tyler puts in danger by swinging his car into oncoming traffic. Furthermore, the blasting horns and the shrill sound of squealing tires on asphalt give more intensity to the visuals of imminent collision (1:38:26). The whole phenomenon can be called sensory proximity: splicing the viewer's perspective with the

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character's perception by minimizing distance through closer frames, rapid cuts, and audio amplification. We are placed "'inside the 'action'" to use Branigan's terms for our observation (52). When distance is decreased, presence is increased. This is a function of point-of-view, the relation of the audience with respect to the story. In *Fight Club* and *The Road*, point-of-view is impacted by their narrators and while in film the camera controls point of view far more than the words of a narrator, in *Fight Club* the cinematography supports the narrator's delusions and in *The Road* the narrator helps identification and frames some of the audience's perception. The cinematography controls point of view, but that control, particularly in *Fight Club*, is nuanced by the narrator.

Cinematographic tools shape points of view that in turn frame our perception of events. In the highway scene, the auditory component (the squealing tires as oncoming cars scramble to avoid crashing into Tyler's car) unifies the audience's perception with that of the character; but the viewers can enjoy the visual information that Jack cannot have realistically: the audience is drawn closer to the danger that Jack feels because of the sound and the close shot of the tires. We can take this added perceptual dimension, the visual, as the movie's recreation of Jack's psychomachic hallucination (1:38:25–39:20). The manipulation of perspective, an omniscient observation by which viewers see things beyond Jack's real visual perception, (the medium shots and close-ups on Jack's fearful expression at the oncoming cars) focalizes the audience's perspective on Jack's sense of captivity to Tyler, who seems to be engineering his martyrdom. This creates identification. A similar phenomenon occurs in the bomb-disarmament scene; camera movements between Jack's

hands on the cords, the close-ups on his face and the focus on the timer minimize the distance

between the viewer and Jack by reducing his life to the imminence of the explosion; the

scene works as a metonymy for Jack's terror. The two examples demonstrate that

synchronization of emotions is a function of focalization, the perception through the senses

that can enhance or reduce identification. The more the perceptions are fused, the more

identification is achieved. Inducing identification is more achievable through the reduction of

distance. When events are narrated through the perception of the "experiencing self," to use a

term from Rimmon-Kenan (91), sequential rhetoric induces more intense identification and

sympathy and *Fight Club* gives a mimetic representation of Jack's mental struggle in an

allegorical depiction of personified concepts. One strategy that a cinematic treatment can

affect viewers' perception is in ways that different film media deliver the character's

experiences. Consider Jack's fight with his boss, where the soundscape bridges two scenes in

a complex way. When Jack is at his office, the voice of the boss talking to him is masked and

barely audible because of overlapping noise from a previous scene and when he throws a

report on the table, water drop is heard in the background for a few seconds; then with the

change to a bath scene, the voice of the boss is transposed where Jack and Tyler have a

dialogue on who they desire to fight (00:39:14–30). In this series of transposed sounds and

voices a space is created in which meaning is generated, which the audience decodes. The

transition of the sound becomes an analytical moment in our mind to understand that Jack's

anger and frustration is linked with his aggression towards a selected opponent. In this

innovative strategy, a psychic conflict, representative of an office-worker's anxiety, is

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converted to a master/slave hostility. Before an actual fight between Jack and the boss, Jack overcomes his anxiety with bare-knuckle fights when Tyler's personality comes in.

Fight Club's fist fights are culminations of Jack's psychomachia and metaphorical renderings of his belief that suffering is emancipatory. Focalization and the voice-over render the fights interesting, not terrifying. Consider the voice-over's assertion here: "Fight club wasn't about winning or losing. It wasn't about words. The hysterical shouting was in the tongues, like at a Pentecostal Church" (46:08). The voice-over transforms our response to the disturbing imagery, because the narrator's interpretation negates violence from the images of damages. More precisely, the voiceover rules over the imagery and makes the audience adopt Jack's psychomachia. In a scene, we see self-violence from Jack's two subjectivities: when Tyler points at Jack's blood on the floor, Jack's facial expression marks surprise, fear and awe, but Tyler is indifferent to it. The audio, a nervous noise on the scene, and the visual contradict the voiceover's feeling of salvation: "Afterwards we all felt saved" (00: 46:26). The noise signals the non-verbal, less cognitive, more subconscious anxiety of the damages of the fight, but the more cognitively-aware, verbal component mitigates the unease from the pain and the injuries. The narrator is telling us to perceive the event as salvation, but the soundscape and the visuals are telling us to perceive it as senseless brutality. Jack thinks the event should generate calmness and understanding, but the imagery and audio suggest that anxiety are more appropriate responses. This juxtaposition illustrates how totality of arrangement imposes meaning on events. Jack is a quintessentially unreliable narrator: the sound and imagery give us the 'true' moral interpretation, Jack the false one. The scene is,

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therefore, an illustration of a psychomachic fear and a yearning for overcoming subjugation to systems that Jack thinks have weakened him.

The convenience-store scene is another illustration of Jack's psychomachia in terms of the deep-seated anxiety that shape *Fight Club* (and Raymond's fear), in this case through the management of suspense and suggestion of murder, as an example of eventfulness. Tyler, as the narrator tries to show us, gets Jack to intimidate an innocent bystander to try to 'awaken' him and force him to fight for his dreams. The scene begins with a conflict between Jack and Tyler. While Jack engages his "homework" with a questioning tone, Tyler takes the gun and breaks into the store. The questioning tone is representative of the two clashing desires in Jack: the desire to use violence against others to compensate for his insecurities and his anxieties to do so. The action, audio, and the fast pace all contribute to give a mimetic representation to Jack's conflicting motives. The camera work (more fully explained in the "Image" chapter), Jack's nervous and frenetic activity, the editing and framing of imagery that put the victim in the foreground, and the rapid shifts between the terrified sales clerk and worried Jack generate an anxious mood. The audio, with its combination of shrill sounds and high frequency sounds (more explained in the "Sound" chapter), generates an intense and uncontrolled rhythm to which the viewers surrender, because the penetration of sounds into our consciousness is more unconstrained and independent of our choice than visuals. The rhythm of the auditory in combination with the visuals, in spite of the conflict and discord between Jack and Tyler, reinforces Tyler's total reign over the situation and empowers him, especially because of his altruistic claim that he wants to liberate Raymond (the sales clerk)

from slavery. Jack's later admiration for Tyler at the end of the episode, seeing him as a

Sublime man, also realizes *Fight Club*'s strategy to make Jack's psychomachia for the

advancement of a political rebellion: Tyler, the revolutionary, is placed front-and-center

while Jack is relegated to the background, blurry and out-of-focus.

Fight Club's psychomachia is later reversed. When Project Mayhem becomes secretly

terroristic and abandons Jack (e.g., when members avoid talking about their terror projects

when Jack approaches them), Jack is shocked and restless; his response to a TV report on

their destructive actions is noticeable here: "What the fuck did you guys do?" (1:32:33). This

reversal in Jack mirrors his psychomachia, impacted by anxiety. The plot generates a

suspenseful desire in the audience to dismantle Project Mayhem. In terms of allegory, Jack,

who had sunk low in his violent psyche, is now a citizen who has civilian concerns, and cares

for the wellbeing of others. Once the dark and destructive nature of both Tyler and Project

Mayhem are revealed, the audience identifies with the narrator and agrees with him to stop

the Project Mayhem. Hereafter, we notice a heightened narrative with deadly fight between

the two personalities of the narrator. With numerous camera angles (explained fully in image

chapter), Jack's victory over Tyler is rendered a compelling, heroic endeavor, since Tyler is

supernaturally superior to Jack. The fight is made suspenseful, Tyler invulnerable and

empowered. As a function of the psychology of form, viewers side with Jack. *Fight Club*

uses allegorical psychomachia as an allegory with ironic intent. It moulds the audience's

agreement throughout, forcing them to no longer identify with Tyler and instead instilling in

them a desire to kill him. Psychomachia of *Fight Club* is therefore a healing of the audience's

discontent with their lives, but it uses the collective motive of peace to overcome the individualistic malaise.

Concluding Remarks

Fight Club's narration of psychomachia begins from the external manifestation of an internal conflict. It stages a deadly scene in which one man sticks a gun in another's mouth; the narrative of the psychomachia, in actuality, sequences events to create a murderer who will be also shown as a threat to the collective. Narrative is constitutive and it provides an explanation of why and how a certain state of affairs evolved. To do so, *Fight Club* reveals the narrator's malaise, his guilt and perception of himself as subjugated, weakened and abused. A rival motive, against this submissive motive, is materialized in another person who educates the weaker self to engage in violence against himself and others. The narrator's self-deprecation and, in contrast, aggrandizement of his stronger personality fascinates the viewers to agree with him in his fight against the master narrative of consumerism. This altruistic argument turns violent and vandalistic. The psychology of the form, its handling of discontent and violence, sways the viewers all along the narrative sequence. The turn of the narrative to demonize fight club as terroristic, wins the audience's agreement that Jack's strong personality be overthrown. In the next section, I explore cinematic implications of quest in the movie *The Road.*

The Road, Movie

> Whenever an evil chance—a sudden storm or a crop
>
> failure or a plague—strikes a community, the suspicion
>
> is aroused that custom has been offended in some way
>
> or that new practices have to be devised to participate a
>
> new demonic power and caprice. –Friedrich Nietzsche
>
> *Daybreak*

Early in *The Road* we find a father and a son on a survival quest. The very idea of an apocalypse in which people have to survive against other human beings and against starvation is an anxiety that is rooted in religion. *The Road* has biblical references warning of humans' degeneration early in the movie on a billboard. *The Road* represents a plague on humanity for which it does not give a cause, but the survival that is presented realizes that demonic power to which Nietzsche's quote above refers. It is Manichean. The bad guys shape an evil community that survives on the flesh of the good ones. It is this anxiety that *The Road* realizes in the survival quest by a father who believes firmly in God and struggles until his death to save his son as the carrier of the fire and the source of regeneration. In this section, I argue that *The Road's* quest realizes the themes of a traditional quest by arrangement of a dangerous adventure against demonic powers for the holy grail of life. The quest's most evident features are foreboding situations, uncertainty, and the imminence of threats in a fearful world. But here, rather than a hero who goes to fight, we have our protagonists already surrounded by death from which heroism is required to escape.

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A movie advances its theme through all its means of expression. Cinematic narrative is a composite of language, sounds and visuals that are manipulated for the maximum audience perception. *The Road* arranges a rhythm that is mostly characterized by imminence and obscurity. That is to say, the psychology of the form functions efficiently to mirror the father's anxiety all along the road of the quest, of his fears of threats that may show up at any moment. Let's consider the coming of the apocalypse itself as an example of a disastrous eventfulness that is so deeply seated in humanity's consciousness, of a time that may transform to the world of monsters, famine and the walking dead.

The beginning of the movie is characterized by a sudden transformation of human life from happiness to misery, using a technique that is as old as the biblical story of the Fall of humanity to suffering. As any quest narrative, *The Road* polarizes its time and space. *The Road* uses its sound and image tracks to stage the quest struggles in the context of environmental hardships and cannibals' dangers. The movie begins with sounds and images that portray an idyllic utopian Eden to be soon destroyed ambiguously and a barren wasteland from which one must escape. A brief pastoral life, a synecdoche of the pre-catastrophe utopia, that is lost becomes the viewers' object of desire. Now while the transformation, ambiguous as it is, becomes a suspenseful evocation of the audience's causal curiosity, it is the adventures and their involved dangers that mould the audience's appetite to follow the sequence. Consider the collaboration of language, sounds and imagery here in a sequence: following the collapse of the protagonists in the loneliness of the apocalypse, imagery of a dead environment (rotten trees, gray land, and barren fields) are displayed and

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then the voice-over adds, in a prophetic tone, "soon all the trees in the world will fall" (00:3:34–00:4:07). The anxiety of the apocalypse is reproduced in an anticipatory rhythm of a disaster: the verbal foreshadowing expresses the current anxiety of environmental failure. The apocalyptic context, its idea as deprivation and horror, is pictured and sonified. The worry is realized immediately as trees fall around the father and the boy. In the example given above, there is a sequential pairing between anticipation and realization for which we find other examples below. In other words, the language component, the voiceover, intervenes and serves two functions: one, it gives information about the past situation, that people have become "refugees" and victims of "gangs carrying weapons" (00:4:27); second, it anticipates more horrifying struggles. For instance, the linguistic signs "refugee" and armed "gangs" bring to the mind a status of oppression and they serve a 'telling' method in collaboration with the imagery that serve a 'showing' strategy, both of which help the audience conceive the story-world, in this case the quest. Film is a phenomenon in which the language component can function imagistically, for instance the signs "refugee" and "gangs" as well as the following Biblical references, on a billboard, which is a subtle form of telling, make us aware of the apocalyptic dread without even seeing a visual referent of any horror. The biblical allusion that reads "BEHOLD THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER" (00:5:01), both activates the prophecy of the apocalypse and pairs up with the voice-over's description of a past event: "There has been cannibalism" (00:5:03). The allusion is a forceful reference that imposes itself in the viewers' mind, activating the already-held beliefs about apocalypse and cannibalism. The references are also drawn to the theme of the quest to generate anxiety

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and dread. We notice that the language component of film can function ideationally and imagistically, signifiers bringing the impression of events in the absence of the actual events or their iconic representation on the screen. The mental processing of these ideas serves an anticipatory function, driving the plot towards expectation of disaster, by merely suggesting ideas, rather than imagery, of certain apocalyptic disasters. The whole combination of language components and visuals functions as a narrative foreshadowing and generates suspense as a function of psychology of information, which creates the expectation of cannibalism.

Quest narrative must necessarily constitute a form of battle with some adversary and in the idea of cannibalism, *The Road* reduces people to Manichean types of good guys and bad guys; any human beings on the path of survival will seem a potential danger. Sequential rhythm depends partly on whether or not humans meet one another and if there are any encounters between people, they cause anxiety. The movie utilizes this appeal of anxiety to fascinate the viewers with the progression of the plot. This anxiety is realized in the tunnel scene, where a gang of cannibals appears and the whole event is delivered through all means of expression (beginning at 00:11:47). The auditory component (mechanical noise and sounds of footsteps) in collaboration with visual manipulation (an unusually low angle that suggests a sneaking person) generate anticipation, because they both suggest eventful temporality and because they suggest a sinister, enigmatic presence, which elevate the viewers' anxiety. The dynamism of anticipation/realization goes on: when the father wakes up and hears a truck pass, most of the tension is generated by the shifting camera angles held

between the father's eye and the gate of a tunnel. The camera functions omnisciently, driving

viewers' curiosity and again elevating the suggestion of threat. Here sequentiality is directed

towards the hero's entry into the zone of power. The father must involve in a structural quest

action – of dealing with the threat – which fascinates the audience more intensely. When the

truck comes to the view, a nervous situation is created as the father struggles fearfully to

escape with his son. Multiple angles, shifts between close-ups, medium shots, and the long

shots recreate the father's fear in the audience.[20] Dialogue, as a narrative component, also

enhances the tension: the father's rapid imperative sentences to make the boy run with him,

intensify the camera work: "Quick! Get up! We got to run. Go. Stay low. Go, go" (12:33).

Consequently, because of the sequence of the auditory, verbal, and camera work, the

audience identifies with the characters. The arrangement of all the auditory, visual and

sequential components generates a precarious situation from which the audience desires the

protagonists escape.

The combination of the cinematic tools minimizes audience distance, making the threat

to the characters feel closer: the father's internal terror is made the viewers' emotional state

because the viewers' perceptions are synched with the father's. Due to this reduction of the

distance, the scene typifies Aristotle's definition of fear as the proximity of danger and

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's notion of rhetorical presence. The characters' vulnerable

situation is made audiovisually present of the viewers. The viewers are placed inside the

man's emotive situation and while the camera has an omniscient consciousness, parts of the

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[20] See my chapters on sound and image for the detailed examination of this scene for the
framing of fear in sound and images.

sounds give a mimesis of the father's internal mood and part of them serve the discourse of the film, intensifying the rhythm. In other words, the sequence is contrived to an intense rhythm by manipulating the viewers' perception and pint of view, as Rimmon-Kenan states, "is determined by two main coordinates: space and time" (78).

To magnify the presence of anxiety in the viewers' mind, distance and time must enhance the proximity of the threat. In *The Road* the viewers perceive the threat near because of the collaboration between the audio and the visual, which make the threat seem imminent to the characters, and their survival compelling. The visuals, the camera work and the sounds all empower the cannibals, because of their weaponry, their numbers, their facial dispositions, and their aggressive pursuit. In contrast, the protagonists are disempowered, because they are displayed as weak, vulnerable and afraid, displayed metonymically in their fear, especially in the boy's facial and bodily expression of panic (00:16:00). Kenneth Burke (1968) believed that form causes anticipation, "to be gratified by the sequence" (124) and that form is "an arousing and fulfillment of expectations" (217). *The Road* exactly does this: a cannibal finds the protagonists. Several cinematic techniques intensify the menace: the camera's spatial positioning of the rivals (the cannibal standing on a higher position, while the father and the boy are lying on the ground); empowerment of the cannibal through close ups on his damaged face, bad teeth, menacing looks, etc.; and finally the cannibal's jump at the boy when he grabs him and puts a knife on his throat and the father shoots him (00:16:16). A variety of other cinematic tools disempower the protagonists in this scene. The effect is achieved especially through the shifts of angles on the gang from the father's POV

that show the armed cannibals turn their heads in search of victims.[21] As this near-disaster

situation is staged and the audience is highly emotionally engaged with saving the

protagonists, the father shoots the cannibal.

It would be excessive to explain every turn in the plot of *The Road*. A couple more

examples of the hazardous situations they encounter should be enough to generalize about

the movie's narrative strategies of sequencing the quest motive and its challenges and fears.

When the protagonists enter the cannibals' house, an anxious rhythm is set to the auditory

and visual components: the soundtrack (an ongoing rumbling), the camera (close up on shoes

and the boy's exclamation of fear when he cries out "Papa!") (34:35–57), and the close focus

of dishes, boiling and butchery tools all signal, indexically, the presence of the cannibals

(00:35:50–00:36:00). The sound and the image components have already given the

expectation of an undesirable outcome which the audience now anticipates. In the following

scenes, when our protagonists enter the dark basement, the fear visually expressed by the boy

(clinging to his father's arm, his facial expressions and his whimpering and sobbing in fear)

and the auditory component collaborate to generate a suspenseful rhythm (00:36:18–46). All

through this walk, the camera guides our consciousness of anxiety and anticipation of a

threat: the close ups of the father's vigilant facial expressions focus our attention, in a dimly

lit space, towards dripping blood from a butcher hook and a hanging chain (0036:47). This is

a skillful strategy to keep the viewers anticipating a threat through the vigilant gaze of a

character. The anxiety becomes more intense when the father, as his open mouth and

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[21] See a more fully explanation of the visual and audio characteristic of this
empowerment/disempowerment in my sound and image chapters.

sweating face show, starts to fear intensified for the viewer by a noise (00:37:00). Suddenly horror becomes the object of our eyes: in a rapid shift of angle, uncanny imagery comes to view of the naked and skinny bodies of the starved captives, who are wounded, mutilated and destined to be harvested as food. Some of these images are horrifying, for instance the cut pieces of skin on the ground (00:37:02–11), and they evoke disgust and an uncanny fear. Many shifts of angles (between the profane and disturbing imagery of the captives, some of whom run after the protagonists) and the audio effects (the captives' roar for help, and the father's scared verbal behavioor to guide the boy out of the basement) shape the rhythm of the scene to an intense suspense in the darkness (00:37:16–25). The uncanny scene of the harvested people is disturbing and scares the protagonists, since the victims struggle to capture the father and the boy and the latter's fear of them generates a sense of entrapment in a dangerous, claustrophobic situation. The captives' barbaric behaviour makes them seem a threat to the father and the boy, especially because of their moaning and gibberish after the protagonists. The mechanical ascending noise and the tight medium shots manipulate our consciousness and our perception, making the audience believe that the proxemics pattern of survival chance has diminished beyond the father's control over it. *The Road*'s quest argument is to render threat imminent at any moment. When our protagonists manage to escape the basement, they notice the cannibals walking toward the house, just steps away (the scene is explored for the representations of anxiety and fear more fully in the image and sound chapters). The rest of *The Road* follows a similar pattern of anticipation of threat, appearance of the threat, and the challenges of dealing with it.

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Concluding Remarks

The Road's uses cinematic potentials to magnify the viewers' perceptual experience of the anxieties and fears of a father's survival quest. To achieve this identification, cinematic strategies are utilized to manipulate the proximity of threats and generate imminence and eventfulness. The resulting rhythm makes the viewer adopt the emotional state of the father. A composite of language, sounds and visuals are set to a rhythm that controls viewers' engagement with the progression of the story, in a phenomenon that I have called *emotional synchrony*, between the viewers and characters. The outcome of the collaboration of language, sounds and imagery in sequences is to mimic an end-of-the-world experience of absolute insecurity and chaos, enhanced by a narration with cinema's essential feature of 'showing' mixed with a 'telling' method, in the voice-over, that evoke a reign of terror. The father's struggles to keep the boy safe from roaming cannibals is rendered compelling by the rhythm and sequence of events that are empowered by cinematic strategies. In the next section, I examine prose narratives of psychomachia and quest.

Sequential Rhetoric of Anxiety in Prose

In the following section, I examine the prose narratives of *Fight Club* and *The Road* for methods that language is employed to arrange story states and events in the succession of linguistic components. I look for methods that language evokes the readers to 'follow' the sequences of events towards expected outcomes that the narrative gives the audience. In examining the arrangement of the words, phrases, sentences (their visual and auditory ideas) and episodes, I explore the strategies in emotional mimesis (mirroring the emotions of

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characters and inducing reader's co-affection). I study *Fight Club*'s handling of

psychomachia, the narrator's contending motives, that is hidden from the narrative in most of

the narration. *Fight Club's* narrative dominates the voice of the narrator in a muddled

narrative that confuses the voices of the two personalities, one that speaks anxiety, the other

rebellion. I examine *The Road's* quest for the implications of struggles and anxieties for

survival against environmental hardship and cannibalism*,* as framed in a language that sets a

sinister rhythm and a constant mood of menace. *The Road's* combination of showing and

telling methods, its use of free indirect discourse and metonymy give a rhetorical mimesis of

the characters' states of mind, which reduces the reader's distance from the character's

objects of fear in searching for food or finding a shelter, or escape from cannibals. Other uses

of language in narrative include the use of strong action verbs, verbs of sight perception,

dialogue, and auditory words that regulate the tempo of suspense.

Fight Club, Novel

Fight Club hides its psychomachia because it drags the reader immediately into an

eventful suspense right from the beginning. A murder is suggested*:* "Tyler's pushing a gun in

my mouth and saying, the first step to eternal life is you have to die" (11). In suggesting

murder, like in the movie, the novel imposes Jack's hallucination on the audience. Jack's

psychomachia is hidden because his split personalities are given as two separate persons, the

Tyler-personality dominant over the narrator-Jack personality. Jack's anxieties are dispersed

in a schizoid narrative in mimesis of his consciousness. The narrative dominates the voice of

the narrator unfolding his mind with awareness of imminent dangers. This separation and

framing of the Tyler personality outside the narrator's voice, makes Jack's illusion of terror

seem a mimesis of reality: the use of the pronoun "we" and "best friends" (11) are two of the

most obvious linguistic means that are employed to externalize Jack's latent internal conflict.

However, they function to make Jack's experience, not a malaise, but rather an external

experience of terror. *Fight Club* arranges an exigent situation for which the reader expects a

resolution, but actually only offers another complication when through the dialogue the

narrator speaks of master plots to destroy superstructures of consumerism. We are still

experiencing the latent content of Jack's mind into which he has sunk in a battle with

himself. It takes much longer for the reader to find out Jack's sentences of this kind are

actually referring to his fight with his other personality of whom he is in anxiety: "that old

saying, how you always kill the one you love" (13, 184). This is one of the examples of

Jack's internal battle between two personalities that speak of murdering one another. Note

how the Tyler-personality also tempts Jack to sacrifice himself: "Tyler says, 'The last thing

we have to do is your martyrdom thing'" (203). Upon realizing Tyler's plot for Jack, the

latter decides to "take care of Tyler" (197). I gave the peak of Jack's psychomachia that is

dispersed throughout the novel and it is symptomatic of recurrent anxieties that surface in

different situations: "On a long enough time line, the survival rate for everyone drops to

zero" (17 and 176).

With this idea of Jack's psychomachia, I shall return now to the strategies of treating

Jack's malaise in a narrative that appeals to the fears and anxieties of the readers. Following

the initial suggestion of Jack's murder, the arrangement of events serves to shape imminence:

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"The building we're standing on won't be here in ten minutes" (12). The arrangement of murder and then an explosion is the temporal strategy of adding up information to mould the psychology of the readers; but notice how Jack's malaise and mental war is concealed. The narrative sets into a suspenseful sequence the events that Jack hallucinates, externalizing the latent content of Jack's psychomachia. When the novel places Jack's murder at the center of our attention, the narrative shows him in the middle of a bigger disaster: "So Tyler and I are on top of the Parker-Morris Building with the gun stuck in my mouth, and we hear glass breaking" (12). Jack's mental theatre of an internal fight seems a mimesis of reality when the terror is extended to other citizens:

> the street below is mottled with a shag carpet of people,
>
> standing, looking up…A window blows out the side of the
>
> building, and then comes a file cabinet big as a black
>
> refrigerator, right below us a six-drawer filing cabinet drops
>
> right out of the cliff face of the building, and drops turning
>
> slowly, and drops getting smaller, and drops disappearing into
>
> the packed crowd. (12)

The description is minimalist, but it is full of concrete words and phrases that activate imagistic idea of things and have the power of rapid editing in a movie. Suspense is at the center of this narration and it is handled by the countdown to catastrophe. The countdown is the most obvious strategy of handling the rhythm of the narrative, which is in fact Jack's own psychomachic desire to destroy manifestations of consumerism: "We are down to our last ten

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minutes" (13). The countdown functions as an instrument of telos, driving the audience's expectation to know about the fate of the narrator and others, hence the anxious content of the character's mind becomes the story information, shaping the psychology of the audience in a rhythm towards a catastrophic outcome: "Eight minutes…Three minutes" (14). I argue that this rhythm suggests eventfulness in *Fight Club* and both enhances readers' engagement as well as arguing against Jack's irrationality, which must be controlled. We will delve into the causalities of Jack's malaise and its consequences now.

Sequential rhetoric shape a causality that can be traced on two levels: on a local level any action and episode has its own cause and effect; on a global level, a more complex causality is contrived. *Fight Club* muddles the global causality of Jack's motives and decisions. Readers follow units of story that sequentially mould their consciousness of terror and their judgements of Jack's psychological turns. In the terror of the initial gun-in-mouth scene, we first follow the suspense (whether or not Tyler kills Jack), and then we follow Project Mayhem's terror plot. *Fight Club* does not let any of the suggested events happen. Rather, through the chapter and episodic structures, it reveals Jack's psychomachia: a tormented and weakened psyche that suffers with guilt and anxiety of failure with its associated pangs of anxiety and insomnia, and a motive to ascend to a manhood with liberated agency over one's life and soul. Following the heightened rhythm of the first chapter and the narrated anxieties, Jack joins support groups for cancer patients and he comes to a new realization that "everything" that people can achieve "will end up as trash" (17). This argument is perhaps the most convincing for the readers who agree on the transient

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nature of life. Jack's guilt-and-anxiety-driven psyche makes the argument that fighting is the cure and the salvation. Jack's exposure to people at the support groups enlightens him that "life…[is] ending one minute at a time" (29) and his exposure to the disastrous deaths of the crashed cars he examines in his daily work all contribute to his anxiety of death: "Everywhere I go, there's the burned-up wadded-up shells of a car waiting for me" (31). Several times Jack tries to distract himself from anxiety with imaginative distractions in one of which he meets Tyler Durden on a beach (32). Tyler becomes Jack's Mr. Hyde and remains hidden from the reader for a long time. Part of Jack's anxiety develops because he is suspicious, and scared, of Tyler: "I had to know what Tyler was doing while I was asleep" (32). The battle goes on. Jack makes Tyler his own mouthpiece for aphoristic comments on consumerism and rebellion against it throughout the novel: "Then you're trapped in your lovely nest, and the things you used to own, now they own you" (44). These emancipatory assertions engage Jack to commit violence and they are appealing to the audience's own economic frustrations. In showing himself as pathetic, weakened, and abused, Jack empowers Tyler, giving him charisma and agency over his desires. And since violence is his salvation from weakness (against which 'he' has no resisting power, while Tyler does), so too is it a form of self-destruction: "self-destruction is the answer" (49).

Violence at the club is a compensation for anxiety; the narrator says, "Most guys are at fight club because of something they're too scared to fight. After a few fights, you're afraid a lot less" (54). The members use violence against themselves psychomachically as a purification from desires that entraps men with consumerism. It is about substance: "fight

club isn't about looking good" (51). The internal war is externalized and it allows the members to find agency over their souls by violence on the body: "I felt finally I could get my hands on everything in the world that didn't work" (53). This "enlightenment" (70) is then extended to other citizens altruistically. Jack calls these acts of violence sacrifice and martyrdom: "If I don't fall all the way, I can't be saved. Jesus did it with his crucifixion thing. I shouldn't just abandon money and property and knowledge" (70). We notice the displacement of a religious theme: the novel's metaphor for purgation by enduring physical pain, unlike Jesus, transforms to inflicting physical pain on others. It is through the appeal to heroism that fight club attracts its members. Chapter nine of the novel puts together Tyler's reference to ancestral sacrifice, "monkeys shot into space," and Jack's chemical burn in a deep connection that appeals to heroism, most clearly expressed in this sentence about monkeys shot into space: "Without their death, their pain, without their sacrifice, Tyler says, 'we would have nothing'" (78). In his fascistic ideology of emancipation, Tyler must convince fight club members – "space monkeys" – and Jack to lose their ego by zoomorphism (de-anthropomorphization) into simians. Tyler's fascism is based on enthymematic argument that may be summarized in this manner: self-devaluation results in liberation of the self. This anti-logical and collectivist self-destruction is a compensation for the pangs of the trauma of socio-political humiliation, since the members see themselves as victimized by consumerist ideologies. It is only through physical violence that one can retrieve that part of one's own existence that consumerist ideology subjugates and for this resistance, in Tyler's ideology, one must be rid of anxiety.

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Tyler transforms self-destruction to mean "evolution" (110) to claim identity through violence and a rhetorical analogy of a slave-master power relations. This slave-master dialectic is evident in Jack's fight with his boss, to which he gives a political tone: "You have too much to lose. I have nothing…I am trash, Tyler said. I am trash and shit and crazy to you and this whole fucking world...My protest is over the exploitation of workers in the service industry" (114–15). Jack's psychomachic motive for ascendance appeals to many: "Tyler was free to start a fight club every night of the week" (117). It is at this point that *Fight Club* reveals the anxiety that lies in the logic of its plot. With the spread of Tyler's revolutionary ideology, the plot moves towards dismantling it by showing it as ultimately destructive to society. This anxiety, the shift in the plot, mimics Jack's anxiety and the beginning of his remorse.

When fight club transforms to Project Mayhem and the media begins to cover their vandalism, it causes a social panic over which "people cried with their heads thrown back" (119). Jack is shown to share this fear. The sequence takes a strategic turn toward radicalizing Project Mayhem with "organized Chaos" (119) such that readers begin to empathize with Jack's own anxiety of the project. The project engages in strategies of involving people in violence by inflicting violence against them: members are assigned harassment homework to go to the streets and "take some Joe on the street who's never been in a fight and recruit him" (120). While presented as an act of altruism and self-liberation, the actual purpose of the assignment is to demoralize people, debase them and test their sense of honour. In Tyler's philosophy, Americans are submissive because of anxiety but the antidote

of bringing aggression to them is to use a stronger emotion against their anxiety, so they must

be humiliated and strategically given the chance to win the fight by exercising violence to

"remind these guys what kind of power they still have" (120). Project Mayhem is shown as

an anti-social movement in which self-emancipation turns into harassment and murder:

members must "go out and buy a gun" and then find advertisements and take the contacts

from yellow-pages randomly and shoot the advertisers (121). I argue that radicalizing fight

club is the novel's symptomatic anxiety of the right of the possession of guns, that "Tyler

didn't care if other people got hurt or not" (122), and it mirrors Jack's rising awareness of the

consequences of his malaise. Jack's decision to stop Project Mayhem from now on is *Fight*

Club's new direction of suspense, but this time Jack puts his life under threat for a great

cause with which readers agree: to stop the destruction of American civilization. In light of

Brook's conception of the logic of the plot, I argue that *Fight Club's* psychomachic narrative

arranges a plot with a beginning towards a desired outcome: it begins with frustration, moves

to rebellion and finally to repentance. The plot becomes a critique of self-liberation,

portraying the narrator as an irrational "monster" with "its bloody claw" and "bloody hands"

when he fights his manager (117). The hero is sacrificed, with the agreement of the readers,

since they are convinced of Tyler's danger to society.

Concluding Remarks

  Fight Club's narrative externalizes the latent content of Jack's mind, his psychomachia

or internal war, in the person and voice of two characters. This gives verisimilitude to the

representation and intensifies reader's engagement with the violence of the story. *Fight*

Club's language shapes a sequential rhetoric that mimics Jack's hallucinations of imminent disaster. The narrative, in mimesis of Jack's consciousness, dominates the voice of the narrator, confusing the voice of two personalities, and arranges events in a rhythm that generates imminence, a critical change in status quo, for which the reader expects a resolution. The sequence induces the reader's fascination with Jack's violence and then with a turn in his psychology, the audience agrees with solution to the rebellious Tyler. In the next section, I explore the sequential rhetoric of quest narrative, for ways that it frames anxiety and fear as imagined in quest narrative.

The Road, Novel

The Road is quest narrative in a "Barren, silent, godless" apocalyptic world (4). The beginning of *The Road* captures, in the style of a medieval and ancient romantic structures, the anxiety of a man who takes an uncertain quest for survival in a world overwhelmed with danger. The man sees his son and himself as "pilgrims in a fable swallowed up and lost among the inward parts of some granitic beast" (3). By reference to the beast, the novel, in its quest narrative frame, evokes dragons, Scylla, Cyclops, etc.; but here the monster is replaced by starvation, cannibalism and environmental destruction. *The Road* uses impressionistic imagery to an enigmatic end, sometimes to give a sinister rhythm to an overwhelming threat. For instance, an earthquake is narrated with deictic "everything" in the following sentence to recreate the sublime magnitude of the terror of the earthquake: "Everything trembling…The boy clung to him crying, his head buried against his chest. Shh… I'm scared" (28). Readers most automatically recreate the overwhelming impact of the earthquake, its domination, on

the consciousness of the boy. Once the idea and the context of a depraved and frightening world are given substance, the terror is gradually applied to greater narrative events. This generates an extended suspense for the fate of the characters because of the father's anxiety, shown in his vigilance to his surroundings in fear of roaming cannibals in the woods. For instance, the reader construes a sense of insecurity here: "he took the pistol from his belt and laid it on the cloth… He watched the boy and he looked out through the trees toward the road" (5). An anxious rhythm works better if the consciousness of the impacted character is narrated in free indirect discourse to display the man's mental state: "This was not a safe place. They could be seen from the road now it was day" (5). The father's impression of near threats stretches to the reader, the latter adopting the father's expectation of imminent dangers. In narrative terms, free indirect thought is the verbalization of our mental discourse, and in rhetorical terms, the communication of the chain of these internal states, readers adopt the psychology of the character, form moulding the psychology of the audience.

The Road generates this emotional synchrony by a rhythm of uncertainty, sometimes by rhetorical figures, for instance in reference to a mirror that functions metonymically as an index to the father's watchfulness, anxiety, and foreboding: "Clamped to the handle of the cart was a chrome motorcycle mirror that he used to watch the road behind them" (6). In terms of narrative technique, this metonymy exemplifies the showing method that makes present to the readers' consciousness the father's fearful quest. Once this foreboding context is further established, death and cannibalism become more present; this is an example: "In the morning they went on. Desolate country. A boarhide to a barndoor. Wisp of a tail. Inside

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the barn three bodies hanging from the rafters, dried and dusty among the wan slats of light"
(17). Rhetorically, such narrative method exemplifies Perelman's notion of presence
achieved through *enargia, hypotyposis* or *demostratio* (1979: 17). Perelman describes
demostratio as a rhetorical figure that sets "things out in such a way that the matter seems to
unfold, and the thing to happen, before our very eyes". *Demostratio* makes reading function
as seeing, with the impression that the words signify states and events rather than describe
them. The intensification of perception is enhanced by reducing the perceptual distance
between the reader and object, since the narrator is out of the picture and the idea closer to
the reader; hence, showing is a rhetorical tool with cognitive basis, turning reading into a
form of witnessing at a closer distance than telling.[22]

Now I turn to the bigger fear: cannibalism. It is cannibalism for which all the above
discussion and examples provide a context and is the major counter-quest. Anxiety of the
presence of cannibals always keeps the protagonists vigilant of the surrounding environment,
which the narrative makes to always seem enigmatic; auditory events for instance, alarm the
father and give a tension to the rhythm of the story; consider, for example, how recurrent
"crashing in the woods" (96) generate a rhythm of some unknown motion that evokes the
father's vigilance to listen more attentively and then remove the boy from the scene to save
him from a possible danger: "The long dry crack of shearing limbs. Then another crash…He
reached and shook the boy. Wake up, he said. We have to go" (96). Appeal to obscurity of
the auditory event suggests a change in status quo, a transformation that evokes the readers'

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[22] On this physical closeness of the senses see my chapter on sound and the notions such as
onomatopoeia and expressive sounds.

imagination of terror. The example is one of many instances through which the novel uses environmental anxiety to enhance and keep present fear of cannibalism, which is first shown at the tunnel scene. An obscure rhythm is generated in an auditory event that suggests the approach of an unknown being; notice the indefinite pronoun that marks this motion of a threat: "Something woke him. He turned on his side and lay listening. He raised his head slowly, the pistol in his hand" (60). The use of "something" as a category of "the demonstrative" is a rhetorical device that, especially at a suspenseful moment, gives sinister presence to an enigmatic being. Here the syntactical unit impacts the semantic. While the sequence makes present an obscure, sinister presence through linguistic means, the film (as I showed further in the sound and image chapter) employs cinematic features such as camera angles, framing and the auditory suggestion of an approaching person; the outcome is to show the characters as vulnerable to the cannibals. Linguistic tools make fear visually and auditorily present, e.g., by using a chain-of-perception-verbs (the sight) through which the man's gaze is made ours and our imaginative eye is directed toward his object of fear: "He looked down at the boy and when he looked back toward the road the first of them were coming into view. God, he whispered"(60). The obscurity of the threat, because of the text's denial of showing it, is the very source of threat, hence its sinister presence is more evocative of suspense. When the threat is detected, the pace of the sequence is handled by action verbs in minimal sentences that read fast: "He pulled the boy down and they crouched under the bank listening, gasping for breath…He sank down and put his hand on top of his head. God, he said. …He had the pistol in his hand" (61–2). This showing, the demonstriato, focalizes

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on the protagonists' fear, but the narration makes sure to foreground this through a telling narration in case the idea of fear is missing in our consciousness: "The boy was frozen with fear" (61). Fascinating the readers with anxiety and fear works best when protagonists are shown dominated by an overwhelming rival, for instance in the following lines that show the cannibals as a savage gang: "They passed two hundred feet away, the ground shuddering lightly. Tramping. Behind them came wagons drawn by slaves in harness and piled with goods of war" (93).

The recurrent encounter with cannibals make the protagonists' anxiety always present in the readers' minds. The protagonists' anxiety becomes the readers' anxiety when the protagonists search places for food; notice, for instance, when they enter a house to find some nourishment and their anxiety is narrated in this way: "They stood in the doorway [to study the situation]. Piled in a window in one corner of the room was a great heap of clothing. Clothes and shoes. Belts. Coats. Blankets and old sleeping bags" (107). Evidently, the narrated objects seem odd, both because of the punctuation and their plural forms, as well as their presence in one house. This alarms the boy, since the objects function as metonymies for people, victims or cannibals and readers perceive the situations in co-affection with the narrator; we construe anxiety as the boy clings to his father when he notices "a lamp that hung from a long chain" (106). Again, the telling method always strengthens readers' impressions; the author explicitly states that the boy "Was terrified" (107). By now, the sequential rhythm is intense and dialogues, such as "Shh, he [the father] said" (107) convey the characters' anxiety to us in form of suspense. The description of metonymical objects

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"blackened pots" (108) and "the ashes of fire and blackened billets of wood" (109), which make the boy give verbal expressions to his dread (107 and 110) prime our attention to the rhythm of anxiety, which suggests eventfulness and expectancy of encountering the cannibals. But our protagonists face a horror scene of mutilated captives (110) and language has the potential to heighten the fear by the father's whispering expression of shock "Jesus" (110) and the captives' cry for help: "Please help us" (110). The captives become a threat and the man's panic and struggles intensifies the rhythm: "He'd dropped the lighter. No time to look…he grabbed the boy by the hand. Christ, he said. Run. Run" (111). *The Road*'s sequential rhetoric is to maintain a logic of suspense and surprise: at this climactic moment the father notices the cannibals, who "were partly screened by the ruins of the privet" (111). Fear is always a matter of spatial and temporal proximity of a threat and McCarthy uses free indirect discourse to demonstrate the father's fear: "he knew they had minutes at most and maybe no minutes at all" (111). The use of strong action verbs, bits of dialogue, and the auditory dimension regulate tempo of the suspense: "He redoubled his grip on the boy's wrist. Run, he whispered. We have to run" (111). Our protagonists manage to escape the danger. I turn now to the motif of hunger, which is a major cause shaping force in the sequence of the story towards a desired end, the overcoming of the characters' misery.

Starvation is a sublime anxiety in *The Road* and it is treated as a basis of moral judgement. The father is "worried about … food. Always food" (17); our protagonists are "hungry all the time" (32) and this causes the boy to ask his father: "Are we going to die now?" (87). It is also hunger that causes many people to degenerate into the cannibals who

impede and threaten their quest. In Burkean terms, the cannibal's motives are only of animalistic agency, mere survival. The father's motive, though, is purposive: to preserve, protect, and perpetuate the fire of civilization in the soul of the boy. Mullins interprets cannibalistic fulfilment of hunger in *The Road* as "emphasizing the failures of modernity, most notably its glorification of rampant individualism and instrumental reason" (76). Mullins' argument on instrumental reason is based on Charles Taylor's critique of modernity that a society deprived of "sacred structure" where "social arrangements and modes of action are no longer grounded in the order of things or the will of God, they are in a sense up for grabs" (Taylor 2004, 5). In such a chaotic world, Taylor continues, "The yardstick" would be "instrumental reason" with "the creatures that surround us los[ing] the significance that accrued to their place in the chain of being, they are open to being treated as raw materials or instruments for our projects (5). While Taylor's last sentence applies well to cannibalism – the cannibals having lost the sense that people are all at the same level in the chain of being, and useful only as raw material or food – apocalypse is not a modern ideological system. In McCarthy's imagination of cannibalism, hunger is a biological need whose gratification does not surpass the bare life; in other words, fulfilling hunger does not serve any ideological system, including humanistic or transcendentalist. The cannibals are choosing only between life and "unlife"– or even more literally, between eating and being eaten. One could argue that McCarthy's quest theme, rather than a critique of modernity, is symptomatic of environmental and atomic anxiety and therefore a preventive and liberal position that McCarthy projects. *The Road* is a countermodern world in which politics and morality are

secondary to survival at the level of bare life, and this collapse of civilization is precisely the anxiety of which *The Road* is uncannily attractive. By the uncanny in *The Road* I intend to argue that good and bad guys are driven by anxiety, either of starving to death, being eaten, or degenerating into cannibalism.

While *The Road* fascinates us mostly by the quest of the good guys, as divinely-driven and motivated towards moral life, it does not venture into explaining the quest of the bad guys; the narrative suggests the cannibals quest for survival as degenerative, responsive to passion, and animalistic, and this perhaps is an outcome of the good guy's anxiety who are always on the run from them, defensive and protective of their own families. It is this anxiety that deters the formation of good guys' community against the cannibals who gang up to survive. In a dialogue the father tells the boy that there are good guys but "They're hiding … From each other. (184). The dialogue supports my earlier argument that the survival quest of the end of the world is a post-politics form of struggle, in which, according to *The Road*, only the evil ones can cooperate and that the good guys' reasoning is so dominated by fear of one another that they cannot create a protective polity in chaos. Towards the ending, after the death of the father, the narrative appeals to our anxiety in the event that "Someone was coming" toward the boy (281), but while it suggests hope in the incident that the stranger's wife puts "her arms around him" (286), the ending is cynical with the image of the world, on the back of a fish, as "a thing which could not be put back" (287). The quest of *The Road* offers the ending that is already in the beginning; it does not resolve the anxiety of the apocalypse, but is rather an anxious hope, not a solution but a warning.

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Concluding Remarks

The Road's quest narrative strategies generate a rhythm of eventfulness, imminence and an unrelenting and precarious struggle for survival. The pattern of anxiety is maintained throughout the story by the auditory and visual words, phrases, description, enigmatic use of deictic words, and dialogue. These language elements suggest a change in the state of affairs and give the readers anticipation of threat in obscure motions. Sometimes words and expressions function as metonymy for presence of danger and free indirect discourse gives mimesis to the father's mental state, when he looks for shelter, food, or notices roaming cannibals. *Enargia* or *demostratio* is sometimes achieved by the manipulation of language, for instance punctuation, broken grammar, arrangement of omniscient narration, and dialogue to demonstrate the father's struggles against counter-quests. A combination of showing and telling narrative methods reduces distance between reader and character and this makes the experience of the quest more vivid in the reader's consciousness. In the next section I give a hybrid analysis of film and prose narratives of anxiety.

Narrative: The Sequential Mould of Pathos

Narrative is commonly used for both prose and cinema, but prose and film use different methods and materials to convey stories: while prose is mainly linguistic and symbolic, film is mainly audiovisual and indexical. However, the two different media can be studied comparatively together for some shared and different features. My first concern here was to deal with the nature of narrative itself, as a sequencing machine, its working material being events and states, marked in the sounds and imagery that are arranged and connected for a

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desired meaning. I have made the distinction in this manner: prose arranges the symbolic (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters) to conjure up the sequences of events in the minds of readers, and cinematic narrative advances a story both by iconic means (images and sounds) and language (e.g., voiceover and dialogue). Secondly, through this sequential notion of narrative I have centralized narrativity, as opposed to narrative, for ways that film and prose narrative induce an audience's affective response. For this purpose, I have examined narrative as any form of discourse with a progressive form that is driven by causality, in which a transformation or change of some sort appeals to the audience. Furthermore, for this hybrid analysis, I have examined the arrangement of the auditory and visual dimensions for the psychological effects that are generated because of the arrangement. Thirdly, I have applied sequential rhetoric analyses with special attention to eventfulness, which always suggests a significant transformation in the course of the story that effects the fate of the characters which can bring the study of the two media (film and prose) together. These terminologies allow us to study the emotions. For instance, in any of the incidents of the protagonists' encounters with the cannibals in *The Road* or hallucinations of a crash, collision, or death in *Fight Club*, an anxious situation is generated which the audience desires to see the protagonists overcome. Both cinematic and prose narratives have the potential to shape rhythms with tension of an enigmatic, hazardous and suspenseful causality that might bring about a disaster for the characters. However, my purpose is not to deny medium-specific features of narrative. Film narrative is a sequence of events and states expressed in the visual and auditory components that appeal, directly, to the two biological

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senses of sight and hearing, while prose narrative is a sequence of events and states expressed in linguistic means that appeal to the imaginal and cognitive faculties. Consider *The Road* film, at the tunnel scene where the threat of the cannibals is handled by a variety of cutting, framing, shifts of angles and auditory techniques that cooperatively dominate our control over the flow of the events and generate menace, empowering the cannibals as dominant and barbaric (e.g., carrying guns, looking around for victims, their facial features, their bad teeth, blood on their faces and so on) and disempowering the protagonists as vulnerable (in their hiding, facial expressions of fear, the boy's whimpering, and so on). Prose narrative cannot impose an equivalent rhythm, since reading is a voluntary, intellectual process that is managed by the reader, although linguistic features can impact our cognitive processes. Compare the linguistic treatment of the same scene in the novel, where eventfulness is marked in the perception verbs, such as seeing-verbs, rapid continuity in the conjunction "and," words that shape cognitive process of direction, such as in "back" and "toward", and the obscure deictic "them" as the object of fear, the man's verbal expression of fear in "God" and the auditory control in auditory verbs such as "whisper": "He looked down at the boy and when he looked back toward the road the first of them were coming into view. God, he whispered (60). In *Fight Club,* novel, temporality and eventfulness are also handled by the text's adoption of Jack's consciousness and anxieties in a sequence that first Jack speaks of a gun held in his mouth, then he gradually reveals a terroristic plot that is going to explode in ten-minutes the same high-rise in which Jack is held captive (11–14). The film version handles the same imminence by directly attending to our visual and auditory senses in the

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image of Tyler holding a gun in Jack's mouth. The arrangement of these events through the testimony of first-person, the use of the pronoun "we", pieces of dialogue, and free-indirect discourse (of speech and thought), create the movie's equivalent in hiding Jack's psychomachia. The most obvious difference in cinematic and prose narratives is the camera movements through walls, which defies any spatial limitation. The camera's rapid and free movement across spaces in the high rise alters the viewer's perception. This perceptual manipulation, gained by the free movement of the camera eye, is a potential that film possesses and prose lacks.

Affective response and identification then depends significantly on the sensory connection with the text (film or novel). The outcome is caused by the manipulation of presence and distance, in ways that a subject is shown vulnerable to and dominated by threats. In film, the cinematic tools (auditory, including verbal, and visual) make imminence present to our consciousness by manipulating distance. This manipulation is attained through auditory and visual strategies. For instance, in the *Fight Club* film, the viewer's expectancy of some disaster is kept intensified by the rapid, spectral camera movements, mimicking Jack's own disjointed, hallucinatory consciousness, through the walls to a basement where a bomb is about to explode. This must be called *sensory proximity,* which is imposed on the film viewers. The highway scene has a similar function: the audience is placed closer to Jack's object of fear because of the framing (close ups and medium shots and lighting) and the auditory manipulation (sounds of tires squealing, for instance). In *The Road* film, at the basement scene, the father's foreboding is made the audience's mood through lighting,

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medium shots and close-ups that accentuate the man's anxiety, enhanced by the mechanical

nervous noise, as well as the boy's verbalization of his fear and his panicking behavior. The

outcome of this collaboration between the auditory and the visual is to make the film's

intended menace highly sensible to the viewers. Prose lacks the equal sensory proximity of

film. So, in the two media of prose and film narrative, there can be seen different cinematic

or prose instruments with similar functions at different perception levels. Prose is more fully

(but still partially) controlled by the reader, in their reading competence, pace of reading,

associative capacities and so on. But film exercises more control over viewers' perception,

because there is much less of a symbolic interface: the sounds and images are presented

directly to the audience's senses, not reconstructed after symbolic interpretation. Even the

unfolding of time is largely out of the audience's control. A reader can daydream for a

moment and return to the text where she left off. A viewer daydreams and she misses part of

the movie. Cinematic movement (auditory or visual) is out of the viewers' control. We come

to the notion of distance and narrative here. Prose cannot shape eventfulness so close, as film

can by reducing the audience's distance from the protagonists' object of fear and therefore it

does not have the same power of proxemics patterning.

Conclusion

    Rather than equalizing prose and cinematic narratives, I have studied the medium-

specific differences, their different holds on audience attention, and different routes to the

audience perception. In general, narrative constitutes an argument to shape readers' and

viewers' minds about a subject and while prose narrative does so through the sequence of the

symbolic means (the arrangement of linguistic potentials), cinematic narrative presents its argument mainly by iconic means (in the sequence of images and sounds). Put differently, narrative is the logos, or the sequential structure, in which an argument is advanced and pathos is moulded for that argument. This means that narratives – whether prose or cinematic – drive the audience in the directions that lead to the desired meaning by psychological manipulation, mainly through strategies of identification.

I have examined four artifacts for the implications of anxiety and fear through the arguments of psychomachia and quest. I have argued that *Fight Club*, prose and film, is a mimesis of a psychomachia, an internal war, that is hidden from the narrative for some time. The protagonist's hallucinations of terror, the latent content of his psyche, are arranged to seem an external fight against consumerism and unmanliness. The narrator's internal conflict is presented in two personalities, one as the guide for the other to demolish manifestations of consumerism, but the narrator's double proves to be a threat to him and others and he decides to overthrow his strong alter-ego. *The Road* is symptomatic of another popular anxiety: the apocalypse, existing in popular consciousness for ages. In *The Road*, the book and the movie, I have argued for the quest of a father who struggles to save his boy as a symbolic (and real) regeneration of life despite deadly adversaries such as hunger, cold and cannibals. The cinematic and prose narratives of *The Road* both stage an apocalyptic world in which the quest of a father to save his boy appeals to our anxieties in emotional identification. Both media arrange events and states in ways that they keep sinister menaces and threats ever-present on the path of the quest.

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My narrative study serves a rhetorical enquiry. I have taken insights from Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's notion of rhetorical presence and Aristotle's definition of fear as the proximity of danger, for ways that arrangement of imagery and sounds makes the ideas of anxiety and fear central to the consciousness of the audience. Presence of ideas, such as ideas of anxiety and fear, is an outcome of sense data and, for that matter, in novels it is not perceived through mediation, but through cognitive processes. Prose and cinematic narratives have their distinct strategies to make the experience of anxiety the content of the audience consciousness. Both media share the formative elements of narrative: narrativity, arrangement, temporality, eventfulness, and causality. These are central narrative trajectories that carry a story from a starting point to an ending. In separate sections, I have examined these core formative elements separately in prose and in film for a common purpose: that these narrative strategies drive the audience towards a desired outcome. It is in the function of these formative elements of narrative that readers and viewers' psychology is moulded to agree with the arguments. This means that the consciousness of the readers and viewers must be dominated by an idea in question and there must be strategies that bring the events of the story as close as possible to the audience. In film, this erasure of distance is achieved by cinematic techniques, which transform viewers' perception of distance by the manipulation of sensory data, and in prose by linguistic potentials that engage viewers and readers intensely. Enquiry about emotion in narrative is an examination of form and the desires of the text. In light of Peter Brooks and Kenneth Burke, I have examined the motives of narrative as

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a linkage system, precisely in metonymical association that drives the plot toward a totalizing meaning.

On a final note, narrative is constitutive: it is a collection of strategies that organizes an argument to reach a desired agreement with the audience. The study of narrative involves examination of singular elements of narrative, verbal, visual, and auditory, for a broader scope of meaning. A study of narrative draws fuller meaning if it is studied in terms of the aural and ocular sequences. Narrative is rhetorical. It presents a problem, sets it in a causal association, and provides explanation of what happened to the beings and people in a story. A narrative analysis gives a broader range of meaning than a mere auditory or visual examination, since the latter merely gives local explanations. But a narrative analysis is essentially an analysis of both the auditory and the visual analysis of elements whose rhythm, direction, and movement are determined by what we call narrative. For instance, the sounds and the images of *Fight Club*'s psychomachia, or the auditory and visual representations of *The Road*'s quest are subjected to an intentional motion that drives the images and sounds in a direction than other.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

America is not the only country that lives with anxiety. In fact, there are other countries such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Lybia, and several countries in Europe that live with more intense anxiety. We are not perhaps living in the most anxious and fearful age in history, but we live at a time when the media bring much more anxiety and fear to our attention than ever before; perhaps, therefore, we live in the most anxious age in history.[23]

While my dissertation contributes to studies of the "culture of fear" (Furedi 1997, 2005, 2006, 2007; Glassner 1999) and the "culture of anxiety" (Epstein 1994; Kobialka 2007), particularly to studies of film and fiction before and after 9/11 in America, it establishes a rhetorical framework that can be applied to any topic, and any critical reading. The pragmatic approach that I formulate possesses a rhetorical orientation that is workable in prose and cinema, an approach that centralizes perception by hearing and sight as transferred in the passage of time sequentially. I have constantly focused this ambitious study on two stories: one told in Chuck Palahniuk's novel, *Fight Club,* and David Fincher's movie adaptation, *Fight Club*; the other told in Cormac McCarthy's novel, *The Road*, and John Hillcoat's movie adaptation, *The Road*. The analytical regimes that I have brought together to shape a hybrid

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[23] While it was beyond the scope of my research to investigate the Internet itself as the climate of anxiety in many ways, it is worth noting that both *The Road* and especially *Fight Club*, overwhelmingly in their cinematic versions, have very substantial presences on the Internet. The search term "fight club" gets almost two million hits on YouTube alone, "the road" over eight million.

study of quest and psychomachia in American literature and cinema, are not restricted to a particular time or geography

American fiction and cinema of the last three decades has produced a wealth of themes and forms, and I do not claim to provide an exhaustive analytical base for reading fiction and cinema through the vectors of psychomachia and quest. But it is remarkable how potent these vectors are for prolong the anxiety and fear so manifest in large numbers of American cinematic and prose artifacts. The mythoi of psychomachia and quest are capable of explaining much of the emotional atmosphere that shapes the contemporary American cinema and fiction. Before and after 9/11, some cultural outcroppings have started to interrogate American exceptionalism, speculating about dangers that America might face. Within the context of such cinematic and prose artifacts, a group of works represent the American people's discontent with its socioeconomic structure.

I argue that psychomachia as a dialectic mould centered on a psychological-spiritual struggle for self-dis/re-covery is capable of explaining the affective state of such artifacts. Dramatistically understood, the fallen subject in *Fight Club* — a weak, sentimental, subjugated, and anxious consumerist — whom the strong, rising man evokes to control his destiny, gaining it back by violence from oppressive forces, is one example of such interrogations of the American socio-economic system. Although I focused on white masculinist anxiety, psychomachia can probe the struggles of female protagonists, or of any other identity, in terms of racial, ethnic, sexual, and mental or bodily challenges.

Psychomachia, in the ways that I have formulated, uses the structure of myth to chart the shift of values, often with the intent of overthrowing a dominant regime or a mode of life.

My formulation of psychomacha suggests that a subject struggles to overcome anxiety and fear to ascend to the desired identity. *Fight Clu*b uses the mythos of psychomachia to resolve the existing conflicts in American society and the struggle fails in a cynical symbolism of the loss of redemption and resurrection. The other instantiations of psychomachia might offer any other possible ending, based on the intentions of the rhetor and the constraining forces of ideology.

With quest narratives, I deal with a different mode of American existence, namely the manifestations of anxiety and fear in *The Road* as a dark descent into a struggle for survival in a post-apocalyptic world, deprived of social institutions, order and the necessities of life (food, water, shelter). Quest as a genre has been utilized to draw different meanings. It is mainly a mythos of progress, a path to victory, rebirth, and overcoming, improvement and dominance. For the purpose of this dissertation and due to the nature of McCarthy's challenge to the American myth of superiority, I mapped *The Road* into the mythos of quest with the three stages of "departure," "initiation," and "return" for similarities and deviations of the mould. The traumatic narrative of *The Road* realizes the archetypal theme of romance with its sequence of marvelous adventures; however, in applying the form to the theme of apocalypse, the story interrogates American exceptionalism. *The Road* shifts the structure of quest to the American anxiety consequential of such disasters as 9/11. The uncertain darkness of danger through which a father decides to save his boy against some other Americans who

have degenerated into cannibals, touches the roots of a paranoiac psyche that has lost trust in a stable state that can protect people. The application of the mythos of quest allows the reading of similar novels and movies for how the potentials of sound, imagery, and narrative can foreground an imbalance of power between the questers and counter-questers, in the context of polarized place (displacement of the mythical pastoral "garden" and the "fall" into a ruined America), polarized time (the shifting of the biblical "now" and "the time to come" to America pre-and-post destruction), and polarized characterization (cannibals and carriers of divine fire). These features allow the rhetor to centralize anxiety in order to externalize the content of the popular imagination.

The critical literature on *Fight Club* and *The Road* have offered profound interpretations of these artifacts. However, throughout this dissertation, I demonstrate that implementing a three-mode analytical regime (aural, ocular, and sequential) can draw richer meanings, precisely because each mode draws attention to a dimension in texts that requires its own terms, concepts and methodologies, and collectively they triangulate readings. The strategies complement one another by bringing together the visual, aural and sequential dimensions into amalgam of soundscapes, cinematography, and the sequential arrangement of events to convey the emotional moods that characters experience. For instance, Cooper's reading of *The Road* finds that the narrator's and the protagonist's "interior world[s]" are "interwoven … to the extent that two viewpoints merge" (138). She analyzes a scene where the father and the son hide from the "cannibalistic blood cult," but because her analytical approach is unhearing, it fails to incorporate the sonic scenography of the novel. Here is the

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fragment that she chooses for her analysis: "They lay listening. Can you do it? When Time comes?" (96). A hearing criticism sharply matches up the ears of imagination with the character with a question of this nature: "Why listening?," "How is listening related to the quest?," and "How can fear be interpreted with concepts from sound studies?" Cooper is sharp to pick the father's engagement with a temptation to kill the boy before he is taken alive by the cannibals, but her criticism fails to consider the father's glimpse of hope that depends on his sense of hearing and how he can still make a wise decision based on the input of hearing. Even beyond such an interpretation, a hearing criticism takes into account how readers' sensations are tied with the hearing of the narrator, waiting to discover what the consequences of "listening" are in the flow of the plot. With such enquiries, literary and rhetorical criticism can utilize Aural Rhetoric as an interpretive approach, to study the suasiveness of sound, noise, and voice for endless enquiries. This example does not wrap up the implications of how my methodology of Aural Rhetoric can explore texts. The variety of examples I have provided open up avenues for various aspects of sound in texts; for instance, in ways that patterned sounds, prosody, and textual sounding machinery create a sonic experience of reading. I also centralize voice, as another aspect of sound, for its acoustic qualities and performative strategies that deliver an intended meaning in the context of psychomachia and quest. Rather than homogenizing the implications of voice, I argue that due to the nature of genre, psychomachia and quest utilize voice to frame meaning within their own codes. While voice in *The Road*, both the novel and the film, contributes to the

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soundscape to foreground the reign of anxiety and fear in the apocalypse, *Fight Club* utilizes voice to support the motive for recovering identity.

My second approach to the study of anxiety and fear explores the visual strategies through which writers and filmmakers mark anxiety in psychomachia and quest, and induce semblances of those emotions in readers and film viewers. The benefit of a hybrid visual analysis is that it bridges prose and cinema when insights in one can enrich the other. I enrich my analytical framework by importing cinematographic concepts to the analysis of scenography in prose, and in what I have called imagistic reading of the novel, the whole methodology is a supplementary meaning-enquiry strategy that brings to light meanings that may be absent in, or manipulated by sounds. Put differently, imagery may be sometimes enhanced, exaggerated, or amplified by sounds and the sequential manipulations by narrative. This methodology proves profitable especially in the context of the culture of anxiety, in ways that novels and movies challenge the American myths of safety and superiority. *Fight Club,* for instance, challenges the role of the state in providing a safe milieu for the Americans. Similar to the protagonist's strategy to look dangerous as an appeal for dominance, the novel and the movie bring to our awareness imagery of violence, which symbolically treats the deep-seated anxiety of the American society and functions as a sinister warning. It is through such scrutinizing of imagery in the minds of readers and viewers that we can get the fuller meanings that readers and viewers absorb.

With my third critical regime, "Narrative," I examine the arguments of psychomachia and quest in ways that sequence and arrangement of events generate anxiety and fear. While

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prose narrative arranges the symbolic (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters) to conjure up sequences of events in the minds of readers, cinematic narrative arranges the iconic (images and sounds). For narrative and rhetorical analyses, such methodology uses the import of the visual and the auditory to emphasize the role of logos in constituting pathos: a contrived sequence generates desired affective responses. The benefit of this analytical strategy is that it uses the mythoi of quest and psychomachia to interpret literature and film through human motives in relation with myths of a society. With psychomachia, critics are able to map the anxieties and discontents of a story's characters through the myths with which a particular society lives. *Psychomachic narrative* refers to archetypes that individuals understand their desired identity and barriers to their flourishing. In the context of American fiction and film, psychomachia explains the anxiety of failure, anxiety of death, and human motive for overcoming such unpleasant conditions. As far as narrative is concerned, psychomachia reflects American anxieties that shape the foundations of conflicting attitudes about the American socio-economic system. The benefit of this analytical strategy is that it is not limited to the criticism of masculinity or femininity. Although I have dealt with masculine discontents and desires for a transformation, the analytical framework explains identity problems related to the body, race, ethnicity, and the diaspora. With terminology of the quest narrative, I deal with yet another form of human psyche, suffering from anxiety of death, safety, and mortality. While I have mapped the narrative structure of *The Road* into Frye's and Campbell's formulations, my analyses, rather than homogenizing all American quest in one single formula, attempt to explain anxiety after the 9/11 as experienced from a

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White male perspective. While I mapped the quest into the structure of the Garden and the Fall to reveal the storytelling principles that both the novel and the movie show in sounds, imagery and narrative, the rhetorical output of the methodology is to explain the American psyche in a crisis and anxiety plagued by anxieties of atomic and environmental disasters. It is important to read *The Road* in terms of quest, since, as I have suggested, it challenges the power of America by imagining its devastation because of some power superior to the American state. In working with the quest mythos, I probed the suasiveness of cinematic and prose narratives and their *attentional handling* strategy to wind a framework that pushes the possibilities of quest interpretation beyond the formalist-structuralist delineations restricted to plot analysis. By bringing a systematic and methodological scrutiny of sounds and imagery into the structuralist phases of quest, I accounted for dynamic and vital ways that American post-apocalyptic fiction and film engage their audiences. It is within such an inclusive analytical framework that rhetoric, literary criticism and film study can engage in explaining the culture of anxiety, uncertainty, and their related topics such as American exceptionalism and its relations with the rest of the world.

In the following, I suggest the implications of my work for further literary and rhetorical studies, and suggest future developments that can advance with the approach I have developed; I also suggest possible ways in which my rhetorical approach can be used in the analysis of other texts.

Future Developments

My approach can be deployed in the study of other forms of popular culture artifacts, including digital media, musical clips, forms of propaganda, advertising, documentaries, and memoirs; in principle, any representational artifact that implicates narrative. While I have developed my theoretical methodology through psychomachia and quest mythos, the tripartite strategy can be utilized for any other generic, thematic, or stylistic research. Similarly, while I have made anxiety and fear the central themes in my rhetorical study, the methodology serves all forms of sensual and affective interpretation. My strategies can be used to explore suasiveness of other emotions, in stories with focus on love, hatred, disgust, ennui, shame, mourning, *saudade*, nostalgia and *déjà vu* for ways that the 'already seen,' and already heard become the rhetorical desires of an artifact. The enquiry questions can be "How and through which aural and visual strategies is a past experience made a strong sensation in the present?" Or "In what aural and visual ways is a prophetic or precognition rhetoric delivered?"

Quest and psychomachia are not specific to any culture, but their realization is informed by the socio-economic, religious, and political factors. While I have treated the embodiment of archetypes that evoke emotive responses from the audience in the mythos of quest and psychomachia only in their American realization, further research can deploy my tripartite methodology to a comparative study of similar realizations in other cultures. In a Western culture, the archetypes of origin and fall may be seen through the biblical mythos, but other critical research in other cultures may find their own master narratives re-enacted in

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the stories of quest and psychomachia. Because of the limits of my research I could not deal with adaptation theories, but further research can use my methodology of sounds, imagery and narrative for adaptation of songs and video games produced from fairy tales, movies produced from novels, and stories retold in digital media based on their literary sources. This kind of research can replace objective observations on similar/different audiovisual experience of printed texts with subjective criticism that considers cinematic and digital media adaptations inferior to the originals.

Other forms of criticism can benefit from my methodology too. Psychomachia and quest, as universal themes of anxiety and survival, can be further explored, in their cinematic and prose versions, for female realizations of the two mythoi. A feminist research on the aural and visual experience of female identity may offer more insights into how patriarchal sonory or visuality construct female identity—for instance, as passive, sentimental, or 'Other" to male identity. My criticism of psychomachia offers several instances of an aggressive and anxious sonic impression of guilt-and-anxiety-driven male subjectivity with a female character. Similarly, a *gendered acoustics* can be explored for ways that patriarchal systems of signification define female/male relationships. The mythos of quest and psychomachia are especially important for such enquiries, since they usually identify feminine as passive, timid, sentimental and weak in contrast with a desiring, active and ascending male identity; in the quest, especially, they are left behind in domesticity.

Parts of my argument deal with power dynamics moulded in the aural and visual strategies of empowermenst/disempowerment. The framework can be put in to the analysis

of power dynamics in postcolonial studies, race studies, Marxist criticism, and new historicism for ways that a dominant ideology materializes in the aural, visual and narrative moulds. Such research can explore how cultural artifacts as reflections of the worldview of a dominant ideology in a period propagates in the tonality generated in the sonic and visual realizations. Examination of the contrived arguments embedded in in the arrangement of sounds and imagery, which I have argued shape the consciousness of readers and film viewers, can be further developed for an analysis of 'affective hegemony' by which a dominant ideology, mode of life, or theology achieves a pervasive controlling influence, not overtly, but by infiltrating its ideas in the sonic and visual strategies of subjugation.

My study can also be profitable for further exploration of styles and modes in literature and cinema. For instance, further research can examine the difference between modernism and its precedent cultural products through the aural rhetoric, ocular methods, and sequential managements of them in modernist art and literature that questioned the traditional certainties: "How is uncertainty framed in sounds and imagery?" Scholars can explore the aural and visual implications of this shaken faith in security, moral basis, and durability of Western civilization. Further research can explore in a comparative study the implications of postmodern American morale impacted by the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb and the progressive devastation of the natural environment or the anxiety of domestic terror.

Other genres than quest and psychomachia, with centrality of anxiety and fear, can be explored through my methodology. The typical Gothic novel or gothic romance, for example, foregrounds the sufferings imposed on women by a villain and includes ghosts and

sensational and supernatural occurrences. Or the cinematic genre known as "Found Footage" mainly achieves its persuasiveness through the manipulation of sounds and imagery that mystify horror. This last genre and a whole variety of horror and zombie movies can be studied through the mysterious tonality that sounds, imagery and their sequential ordering propagate anxiety in popular culture based on already held superstitions. Such instances of horror and terror can be examined for ways that, as I have shown in my study of novels and films, readers and viewers are provoked into anxiety by the visual and aural management of attention, handling of perspective (aural and visual) that generate a brooding atmosphere of horror, enigma, gloom and terror. Similarly, in examining baroque style, the critic should enquire the elaborate, grandiose, and energetic effects, not just in narrative, but in the aural and visual components.

A culture of anxiety, which I merely explored in novels and movies, can be explored for representations of horror and uncertainty in games too. A number of games show people are turning into psychos, much like *Fight Club* men who turn into terrorists, and people of *The Road* who degenerate as cannibals. Game scholars may use the approach to the rhetorical study of games for an agglomeration of sounds, imagery and narrative that as a whole shape the experience of playing a game with a theme of psychomachia, personality split, and similar traumatic internal conflicts. However, engaging in a tripartite method of games criticism needs to account for a more engaged form of anxiety and fear, since in games the player is himself or herself an agent of violence.

Finally, the reader-response critics, who argue that readers produce the meaning of a text, can further explore the implications of sounds, imagery and the sequential ordering of story elements to find out the extent to which a text controls or constrains an audience's responses. The research can be specifically developed in light of 'affective stylistics' for ways that the very act of reading generates the *audioscenes* and ocular experiences of which I have spoken above. I have not implemented a survey-based, lab-based, or neurological-based research in this dissertation. But further research with such orientations, with insights from the reception-theory, that focusses not on a single reader's or viewer's response at a given time, but on various responses of the general reading public over the course of time, may offer observations on how cinema and literature, as modes of communication, use all elements and all modes of expression to effect the rhetors' desired responses in the audience. This kind of enquiry is most important, especially in the context of scholarship that holds that our time is dominated by cultural artifacts with a high awareness of anxiety.

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