Are We Terribly Different?
- A case-study of male and female fiction-writing in English
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Abstract

The aim of this study is to find similarities and differences between male and female fiction-writing. The data has been collected from pupils at an upper secondary school in Central Sweden. They were given an extract from a novel by Bernard MacLaverty and from that they were supposed to continue the story.

Theories that have evolved during the last centuries claim that the language use between men and women differ in many aspects. Women, it is said, use a more emotional language than men do, while men use more expletives than women. Likewise, the language is said to differ in the use of adverbs, verbs and adjectives. It has also been claimed that men and women have different topic developments and that women write longer sentences than men.

The results of the current study show that most of these claims are false, or at least not true in this specific context. In most cases there is little or no difference between the male writing and the female writing. There are also cases where the opposite is true – for example, the female participants write shorter sentences than the male participants. A general conclusion of the study is that the writing between the two groups are quite similar – or at least that similarities are present to a larger extent than differences.
1. Introduction

A multitude of linguists working within the field of language and gender allude to Jespersen’s study from 1922 entitled *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* as one of the first books that (wrongfully) depicts women’s language as inferior to men’s – or as Jespersen puts it himself, women’s language is “languid and insipid” (1922: 246). However, some of Jespersen’s thoughts can be traced back as far as to Cicero, who explained that most women used a more elegant and pure language because they were not allowed to leave the house, hence they were not exposed to the abominable language that was spoken by the everyday citizens. Similar thoughts existed among many later authors and intellectuals, such as Thomas de Quincey, James Fenimore Cooper, Thomas Wilson, James Harris and Goold Brown; many of them believing that the home was woman’s natural habitat (Baron 1986). Jespersen’s account is particularly interesting though, since it is written closer to our time. More recent work challenges these assumptions.

Working with gender within linguistics is crucial because language reflects society. It is not only the actual use of language that tells us something about gender equality in society, but also general assumptions about language use. Thus, it is of great importance to examine both parts. Studying these questions in this context is essential since it is in schools that people engender their view of society. The importance of this is reinforced in The Swedish Education Act, which clearly states that “[p]ersons active in the school system shall in particular . . . promote equality between the genders” (Skolverket 1985).

This study examines how written language of male and female students are similar and/or different stylistically in a given context. Similarities and differences in vocabulary as well as grammar will be considered mainly based on theories that have emerged over the last decades.
1.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to find stylistic differences and similarities between male and female participants in 16 upper secondary level pupils’ written use of English, and how these correspond to existing theories. Characteristics that will be taken into consideration are sentence lengths and topic development as well as use of adverbs, adjectives, verbs and expletives.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Concepts

2.1.1 Sex and Gender

The notion between gender and sex has been discussed within many fields of science over recent decades. Sex on the one hand denotes a person’s biological belonging to one or another group – be it male or female. Gender on the other hand refers to an individual’s belonging in a cultural and social context, often referred to as the socially constructed sex. The American anthropologist Rubin (1975) is usually considered to be the originator of this categorisation, introduced in an article called “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” in 1975 (Gothlin 2000). Some scholars take it so far as to say that even the biological differences between men and women are culturally constructed (Butler 1990).

Throughout this study it is implicitly stated that any differences or similarities between males and females, as far as writing is concerned, are due to social and cultural constructions – not to anything biologically given. However, this might not always be a view shared by authors referred to in this study.

2.1.2 Discourse

There are multiple ways of defining the term discourse. One reason for this is that it is used within many different fields and circumstances (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002 & Gee 1999). This study will focus on the concept’s notion within linguistics. Especially interesting in this study is the case of gender discourse in a school context.
A basic understanding of discourse in linguistic studies is that “it is language beyond the sentence” (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002: 9) or “text in context” (van Dijk 1990: 164). A distinction can be made between text and discourse, even though there are scholars who use them as synonyms. Nevertheless, it is a distinction worthy of notice here. Fairclough (1992), identifies text as something that exists physically in relation to discursive practices. The latter being something “profoundly amorphous, necessarily unconstrained by boundaries of space and time” (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002: 12). Or, as stated in Verdonk (2002):

“. . . [T]he meaning of a text does not come into being until it is actively employed in a context of use. This process of activation of a text by relating it to a context of use is what we call discourse. To put it differently, this contextualization of a text is actually the reader’s (and in the case of spoken text, the hearer’s) reconstruction of the writer’s (or speaker’s) intended message, that is, his or her communicative act or discourse. In these terms, the text is the observable product of the writer’s or speaker’s discourse, which in turn must be seen as the process that has created it.”

(Verdonk 2002: 18)

2.1.3 ESL – English as a Second Language

English has different status in different countries, and the case in Sweden is not obvious. English will however be considered a second language (ESL) in Sweden in this study, not as a foreign language (EFL). The distinction between the two is that speakers of ESL live in a country where English performs functions within the country, while it does not for speakers of EFL (Jenkins 2003). One example of how English serves country-internal functions in Sweden is higher education. Without at least a basic knowledge of English one probably can neither get into nor graduate from a Swedish university. As a matter of fact, the formal training of Swedish begins at the same time as it does for English.

2.1.4 Adverbs

In order to obtain information about how emotional a text is the adverbs that are used can be examined. However, not all adverbs denote some sort of emotion. There are three types of adverbs that can be distinguished, namely adverbs of pace, adverbs of emotion and “neutral”
adverbs (Hiatt 1977). An adverb of pace would be ‘suddenly’ while an example of an adverb of emotion is ‘bitterly’. A “neutral” adverb that is used often is ‘probably’.

2.2 Stylistic Similarities and Differences

2.2.1 Sentence Lengths

It is often argued that women talk more than men, an assumption shown to be dubious time and time again by linguists (Coates 2004, Fishman 1980, Spender 1980b and Swann 1989 to name a few). This assumption can also be tested in written language by looking at terseness in material written by men and women, something that can be done by looking at sentence length. Hiatt (1977) examines sentence length and describes that men depict women as “excessive talkers who go on and on” (1977: 21) and that men themselves often are considered strong, silent and terse. However, Hiatt’s study shows this assumption to be wrong. Women do not write longer sentences than men in the books she examines, and the sentences that the women write are not as “extreme” either. By “extreme” she means that men use sentences fixed in types of complexity to a greater extent than women, and also that men’s sentences have a wider range in length (1977).

2.2.2 Topic Development

Wareing claims that women and men tend to “vary . . . in the topics they choose to discuss.” (Wareing 2004: 89). Judging from this quote it is somewhat unclear if Wareing agrees or if she just states general assumptions when she writes further that “[w]omen, it is said, select more personal topics: their family, their emotions and their friendships. Men, on the other hand, are said to prefer more impersonal topics, often based on factual or technical knowledge, such as football, cars or home improvements.” (2004: 89, present author’s italics). This is also stated by Coates (2004), who concludes from her research about same-sex talk that “men avoid self-disclosure and prefer to talk about more impersonal topics such as current affairs, modern technology, cars or
sport” (2004: 133) and that “women typically choose to talk about people and feelings” (2004: 128).

2.2.3 Adverbs

There are numerous accounts where people, linguists among them, claim that women use adverbs excessively. Jespersen (1922) is only one example of this, although more recent researchers criticise his findings.

“Jespersen, however, does not back his statement with objective findings. Thus it is only a matter of his opinion or belief. Because he is a noted linguist, however, his beliefs take on the quality of authority, particularly since they coincide with stereotyped notions of women’s speech. It is women who are reputed to overuse the hyperbolic adverb, as in ‘utterly divine,’ ‘simply great,’ etc.” (Hiatt 1977: 90)

Hiatt (1977) reaches the conclusion that the men and women in her study use adverbs to the same extent, but that the quality of the adverbs differ. The women in her study tend to use more adverbs of emotion while the men use more adverbs of pace. However, the women are more balanced in their use of adverbs – using almost the same number of adverbs of emotion as adverbs of pace. The men, on the other hand, use far more adverbs of pace (Hiatt 1977). As far as frequency is concerned, the same result has been shown in other studies on sex-linked differences in adverb usage as well (Kramer 1973).

2.2.4 Adjectives

Another common thought is that there exists a difference in the use of adjectives between men and women. Lakoff (1975) lists some adjectives which she considers to be used by “women only” and some that are “neutral” (i.e. used by both men and women) – e.g. ‘adorable,’ ‘charming’ and ‘divine’ are used by women only, while ‘great,’ ‘cool’ and ‘neat’ are considered more neutral (1975). However she does not list any adjectives used by “men only,” a fact that has been questioned by some scholars, Hiatt being one of them. Hiatt concludes that “[i]t is apparent that
the stereotypes for a minority group – in this case, women – are always easier to perceive than those for a majority group” (Hiatt 1977: 109).

Hiatt (1977) too examines the case of “feminine” and “neutral” (as well as “masculine”) adjectives that Lakoff (1975) has studied. Hiatt concludes, after expanding Lakoff’s list, that the “masculine” adjectives are commoner than the “feminine” in both groups, but also that the women use more “feminine” adjectives than men. However, this is not true for what she calls the “most stereotypically ‘feminine’” (1977: 119) adjectives – they are used equally between the groups, if used at all. A few examples of these stereotyped adjectives would be ‘cute,’ ‘lovely,’ and ‘sweet’ (Hiatt 1977).

Furthermore, analysis shows that this type of adjective is generally attributed to women by men in one way or another – sometimes in dialogues where women utter them, or dialogues where men utter them in reference to a supposed womanly thought (Hiatt 1977). An example of the latter would be where one author uses ‘cute’ when addressing a woman: “Don’t give me any of your cute repartee . . . .” (Carter Brown, cited in Hiatt 1977: 111). It is further noted that “the men use the word [cute] occasionally in the speech of female characters as it is that the women fiction writers do not themselves use it in the speech of their female characters” (1977: 112, original author’s italics). The results also show that women tend to use “masculine” adjectives to a greater extent than men use “feminine” ones; it is easier for women to enter the “masculine” than it is for men to enter the “feminine” (1977), a result that stands in line with what Lakoff (1975) concludes. This fact is explained by a theory claiming that it is more appropriate to copy the majority, which in this case is the men, than it is to copy the minority, that is, the women (Hiatt 1977). Spender (1980a), and other feminist linguists, expand these thoughts by explaining that it is men who have designed the stereotyped “feminine” language. Spender also claims that it is men who keep that stereotype alive today.
2.2.5 Verbs

In addition to “masculine” and “feminine” adjectives, there exists a view that a similar distinction can be found with the use of verbs. Hiatt divides a number of different verbs into two lists based on the assumption that men are “more rational and reasonable than women and [that] women are . . . more intuitive and perceptive than men” (Hiatt 1977: 117). After reaching the finding that the women in her study use more “feminine” verbs than the men, Hiatt concludes that “there is evidence that the women do ‘sense’ or ‘perceive’ persons/objects/events/meanings more often than do the men, and that they ‘reason’ only slightly less often than the men” (1977: 119).

2.2.6 Expletives

A different assumption is that women do not use swear-words, or expletives, under any circumstances. This theory is expressed by Lakoff, who concludes that “it is a truism to state that the ‘stronger’ expletives are reserved for men, and the ‘weaker’ ones for women” (1975: 10). She further explains that “strong” expletives (e.g. ‘shit’ and ‘damn’) are examples of how people (men in this case) allow themselves to feel strongly about something, while “weak” expletives (e.g. ‘oh dear’ and ‘goodness’) are examples of how people (women in this case) do not allow themselves to feel strongly about something (Lakoff 1975). This idea has been referred to as “odd” because it presents swear-words as something positive, and non-swearing as something negative (Talbot 1998).

Jespersen (1922) claims – just like Lakoff – that women’s use of expletives is limited. “Among the things women object to in language must be specially mentioned anything that smacks of swearing” (1922: 246). Before Jespersen entered the field of linguistics, the same thoughts existed in different parts of the world. A thorough historical account of attitudes towards and thoughts about women’s use of expletives can be found in Coates (2004).
2.3 Gender Identity

Some researchers are sceptical towards the methods used when examining the language use of men and women. It is claimed that looking at language use only from a gender perspective is binary, and that there are many other aspects of identity which are relevant as well, e.g. social status, ethnicity and sexuality (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002).

It is true that there is more to a person than gender that affects his or her language use (if gender affects it at all) – something that can also make the aim of this study problematic. However, the intention of this study is not to once and for all solve the question about how men and women use English. Even trying to make such a general conclusion from a study of this magnitude would be futile. Instead, this research aims to examine how different attitudes and assumptions about language can be applied to the writing of the analysed group.

3. Methodology & Data

This study is based on the analysis of 16 essays written by students at an upper secondary school in Central Sweden. Eight essays were written by male participants and eight by female participants. The essay assignment was part of the course English B, which is the equivalent of step six in English teaching in the Swedish school system. Thus, all the participants use English as a second language (ESL).

All students were assigned, by the present author, to write an essay containing a minimum of 250 words. The theme was to continue an excerpt from the novel Cal by Bernard MacLaverty (1983) (see Appendix 2). Based on this extract the students were supposed to write whatever they thought would happen next and how the story would end. The nature of the extract may affect the outcome of the study. Had it been a text about sports or something else it is possible that the language use would be different. Instead, this is a scene where a murder is about to be committed.
The writing took place in a classroom at the school where the current participators are pupils. They had a maximum time limit of 90 minutes, but were allowed to leave as soon as they were done. Present in the room were 24 pupils and the author, responsible for the assignment.

The group writing the paper consisted of 24 pupils, 15 male and nine female. 19 of these managed to write 250 words or more. The five who wrote under that limit, four males and one female, were omitted from this study. Since it is of importance to have an equal amount of data between the sexes another three male participants’ essays were excluded randomly.

In most of the material dealing with how the two groups’ writing relate to each other the male writing is the norm, or is at least seen as the general norm. This can be seen in how ideas are presented about how women write rather than how men write. Symptomatic as this is for today’s society, what men do is the normal version while women are deviant in different ways, e.g. it is women’s language that, not seldom, is depicted as excessively emotional, not men’s language that is explained as lacking in emotion. Thus, there might exist more explanations for how women use language than how men do in this study. This, however, reflects the literature as well as historical and current ideas rather than the present author’s view.

4. Data Analysis & Result

4.1 Sentence Lengths

Before the presentation of the results in this section it is important to point a few things out about how the data was analysed. All the participants, except one male, had conversation(s) included in their texts. Sentences in conversations are generally shorter than in other types of writing – thus, this affects the outcome of the results (Hiatt 1977). However, since almost every participant used it, this fact does not make the analysis dubious. Furthermore, when counting words in a dialogue sentence, the final words outside the quotation marks were included. Hence, the following text is considered as one sentence with nine words: “- ‘Oh yes, you have’, Crilly answered [sic] with a smile.’ (Appendix 1, F4 (Female No. 4)).
The average sentence length for the male participants is slightly longer than the female participants’. The female average is 11 words per sentence, while the male average reaches as high as 13. Looking at the essays individually the male average ranges between nine words per sentence up to 24, and the female average range is smaller with eight to 18 words per sentence. Thus, the word range is five words more in the male participants’ essays; something that stands in line with Hiatt’s (1977) results. However, this fact does not reveal everything. In order to find out who is more terse, the length of each sentence must be considered.

**TABLE 1**

*Sentence Lengths in the Essays*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Words</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Male)</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above is a table that divides sentences up according to their length. The list shows that the females use sentences with 1-25 words more often than the males – this is true for all the instances within that range. The females write 267 sentences ranging from 1-25 words, which is
111 (or 42 per cent) more than the males. After that, the table changes and the number of instances with sentences ranging from 26 words up to 55 is dominated by the males – except for sentences with 41-45 words. The total amount of sentences within the range 26-55 words is 23 for the males, and ten for the females.

4.2 Topic Development

The notion that women choose to discuss matters concerned with family and friendship can be examined by looking at the use of words on these topics. The words linked to these two subjects found in the participants’ essays are listed in Table 2.

The total amount of instances is seven for the males, with a range from zero to two per essay, while the females use words in relation to family and friendship in eight instances, ranging from zero to three cases per participant. Moreover, there were four participants from each group that used at least one of the words from the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Male)</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wife</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wareing’s (2004) suggestion that men more willingly discuss football, cars and home improvement is not possible to analyse to the same extent in this discourse because they are
subjects that are not much related to the text that the participants were given. It can however be concluded that the females used the word ‘car’ in 43 instances, while the males only used it 21 times. All participants used the word at least once – the females ranging between one and 11 times and the males between one and four. The car was one of the settings in the story though, rather than something the participants wrote about per se.

4.3 Adverbs

As stated above there exists a presumption that women tend to use more adverbs in their communication, be it in speech or in writing. If we briefly count the –ly adverbs used by the pupils, the similarity between the males and females is obvious. The latter participants use 12 types 27 times and the former use an equal amount of types in 25 instances. This result does by itself suggest that the given assumption is wrong, and this is the same conclusion that Hiatt (1977) reaches in her analysis. However, in order to give the use of adverbs a wider perspective, more aspects have to be analysed.

Together the participants use 20 different adverbs, which means that there are four types that both groups used. This could make one believe that their choice of adverbs is rather different from each other – this is, however, something that is not entirely true, a result that will be covered below. First, focus will be put on the adverbs used by both groups. These are found in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Male)</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>instantly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>really</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slowly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suddenly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3**

*Adverbs Used by Both Groups*
Three of these adverbs denote pace and do not need to be covered any further here. The one that is not an adverb of pace, however, deserves some extra attention, namely ‘really’. Further examining of the use of the word is necessary since it can denote different meanings. Below are the instances where the word is used by the male participants:

... are you really that conscienceless [sic] ... (Appendix 1, M1 (Male No. 1))

... a good friend as cal [sic] is really good ... (Appendix 1, M3)

... he can't really remember where ... (Appendix 1, M3)

... you could really see in his face ... (Appendix 1, M4)

And here are the female participants’ use of the same adverb:

... walked really slowly ... (Appendix 1, F3)

... I was really getting into trouble [sic] ... (Appendix 1, F4)

I had really helped him kill somebody. (Appendix 1, F4)

... I tried to steer, I really did. (Appendix 1, F4)

... starts to drive really fast. (Appendix 1, F7)

The adverb ‘really’ often denotes a sense of doubt, “doubt that the audience/reader will accept a statement, not doubt on the part of the speaker/writer” (Hiatt 1977: 103). This is true for three out of four instances on behalf of the males and three out of five for the females. Participants M3, F3 and F7 use ‘really’ as intensifiers – but both groups use the adverb predominantly to express doubt.

Moreover, it is evident from Table 3 above that the adverbs the groups have in common are used almost exactly the same number of times by both groups. If the number of tokens are summarised the amount is 34 for these four words, which is no less than 65 per cent of all the –ly
adverbs used in the essays. Thus, the remaining 16 types only make up for 35 per cent of the total use of such adverbs. The fact is that 14 of these 16 types are only used once, and the remaining two are used twice. Thus, the males and females have a lot in common when it comes to the use of adverbs. Analysing the remaining adverbs is still interesting, albeit that they are not used frequently. It is noticeable from Table 4 that the males use four adverbs of emotion (i.e. ‘calmly’, ‘meaningly’, ‘rudely’ and ‘sadly’) while the females use none.

**TABLE 4**

*Adverbs Used Group Exclusively*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Instances</th>
<th>Male Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actually</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>apparently* 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approximately</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>badly 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>calmly 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extremely*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>finally* 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardly*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>meaningly 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>rudely 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quickly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>sadly 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quietly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>totally 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These words are spelled *extremly*, *harldly*, *apparantly* and *finelly* in the data, the liberty of using the correct spelling has been taken by the present author.

Further, the case of *-ly* adverbs modifying another adverb or an adjective is relevant. There are three instances in the essays where this is visible, all of them in contributions written by female participants. Although the use of this type of adverb is anything but excessive, it is a fact that the females in this study use them to a greater extent than the males.
Finally, the range of adverbs used will be considered. This is also a part of the writing which is quite similar between the females and the males – the former ranging from two adverbs to five, and the latter with a range between zero and six. Hence, the male participants have a slightly higher range. This is also true when counting types instead of tokens, where the males range between zero and four, while the females write between one and four different –ly adverbs per essay.

4.4 Adjectives

Lakoff’s (1975) idea about “feminine” and “neutral” adjectives has been covered above, but she also makes a list of adjectives that belong to the different categories (1975). Her list has been extended with some 44 additional adjectives that are categorised as “feminine” and “masculine” by a group of linguistics students (presented in Hiatt 1977). Examples of “feminine” adjectives would be ‘adorable’ and ‘sweet’, while ‘great’ is neutral and ‘strong’ is masculine. Listing all the words here is not necessary since few of them are visible in the pupils’ essays.

The “feminine” adjectives used in the essays are ‘nice’, ‘horrible’ and ‘afraid’. The two former words are used one time each by two different female participants, while the latter is used once by a male participant.

The man had stodd [sic] there nice and quietly until now . . . (Appendix 1, F8)

It was horrible. (Appendix 1, F3)

. . . be was to [sic] afraid to speak earlier. (Appendix 1, M6)
An equal amount of “masculine” adjectives are used, i.e. ‘strong’, ‘powerful’ and ‘bad’. The latter is used one time each by two females, ‘strong’ is used once by a female and ‘powerful’ once by a male.

. . . but he was to [sic] strong. (Appendix 1, F4)

*In the powerful power in [sic] the gun . . .* (Appendix 1, M3)

. . . to see who was the real bad guy. (Appendix 1, F3)

*He felt very bad . . .* (Appendix 1, F5)

In conclusion, a “feminine” adjective is used twice by females and once by a male, while a “masculine” adjective is used three times by females and once by a male. Thus, the females use “masculine” adjectives more than the males use “feminine” ones. Actually, the female participants use more “masculine” adjectives than the male participants do.

Hiatt (1977) might want to explain the lack of feminine adjectives by claiming that there are very few female characters in the texts and that they are not part of the dialogues. However, neither of the seven instances, including both “feminine” and “masculine” adjectives, are part of a dialogue.

4.5 Verbs

The list of adjectives in Hiatt’s (1977) book is followed by a list of “masculine” and “feminine” verbs. This list is recognised as a problem by the author herself because she realises that verbs such as ‘think’ may “indicate a reasoning process or it may indicate conjecture and/or belief” (1977: 118, original author’s italics). Again, the whole list will not be copied here because far from all of the words are used in the material this study is concerned with. However, the verbs from the list that are used can be found in Table 5.
### Table 5

*Use of “Feminine” and “Masculine” Verbs (Hiatt 1977)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Male)</th>
<th>No. of Instances (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Feminine”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seem</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scare</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Masculine”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decide</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solve</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list shows that the “feminine” verbs are more usual than the “masculine” ones, something that can be explained by the fact that the “masculine” verbs “tend to be more Latinate and more formal” (Hiatt 1977: 118), which means that they are used less in everyday writing and that the participants in this study might not be familiar with them. This is not visible here, but in the original list words like ‘comprehend’ and ‘rationalize’ appear – but such words are not used by either males or females in this study. In any case, as Hiatt (1977) points out, all words are equally available to both groups. In addition, it is noteworthy that neither of the rather obvious words denoting intuitiveness and perceptiveness – ‘sense’ and ‘perceive’ – are used by any of the participants in the present study.
From Table 5 it can be concluded that the females use “feminine” verbs in 39 instances, this with a range from one to 15 times per essay. The males use them less than half as many times, only in 19 instances, with a zero to five range. The “masculine” verbs are sparsely used – ‘decide’ is used once by a female and ‘solve’ is used once by a male.

4.6 Expletives

As far as the number of expletives used are concerned, the supposed “pureness” of female language use as opposed to the males’ is hard to find in the results of this study. Half of the eight male participants use strong expletives somewhere in their texts while five of the females do. In total, however, the males use them six times and the women five. Thus, there are slightly more females using swear-words, but the males that do use them tend to do so more often than the females. Hence, it is obvious that the males’ range of expletives used per essay is bigger than the females’ – zero to three per individual essay, compared to the females’ zero to one. The use of strong expletives can be seen in Table 6 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Instances</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fuck</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>bastard</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>fuck</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>hell</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the strong expletives in the females’ essays are uttered by the same character, namely Crilly. In the males’ essays they are also said by a character, but just one from Crilly. The remaining five come from Cal. This fact is interesting because in the text that the participants were given, Crilly expresses four strong expletives while Cal gives none. It seems the females only continue the swearing pattern as it is presented in the original story, while the males tend to make Cal the
more cursing person of the two. It could be argued that the strong expletives are ascribed to Crilly because it is expected from him, in the same way certain adjectives are ascribed to female characters by male authors in other contexts (see p. 6). However, there are no conversations including female characters in the essays, so no conclusions can be drawn as to how male and female characters use strong expletives respectively.

What is more, there are instances in the texts where expletives are implied in different ways, as well as phrases that serve the same use as expletives – what Lakoff (1975) referred to as “weaker expletives”. The list below summarises them in their contexts.

*Crilly rattled off a long jingle of swearings.* (Appendix 1, F5)

*‘What the...?’ the man began with a shocked expression on his face.* (Appendix 1, F6)

*‘Jesus christ! [sic],’ Cal whispered.* (Appendix 1, F6)

*- You what?! oh [sic] my god [sic]. . .* (Appendix 1, M1)

From this we can see that one male as well as one female use weak expletives (i.e. M1 and F6), this too implying that the females do not try to keep a “pureness” in their language to a greater extent than the males. “What the...?” is not considered a weak expletive here because it is not really an expletive at all – it is rather a case of a hidden or undermined expletive, either strong or weak. It can be concluded from the four extracts above that there are two cases where females censor swearing (i.e. F5 and F6), while there are no such cases in the male participants’ essays.

Finally, a certain instance of strong expletive use will be considered here. In one essay the following sentence is found: -“*You drive like a fucking woman!*” (Appendix 1, F4). Here, one of the female participants ascribes Crilly a derogatory phrase about women as bad drivers. This could imply that the author sees such as part of male language use, or at least as part of the character’s personality. Nothing that can be compared with this sexist reference is to be found in either the males’ writing or the remaining part of the females’ essays.
5. Conclusion

It can be seen from the results that many presented assumptions about a certain “women’s language” or “men’s language” are not supported in this study. My conclusions cannot falsify a stereotype nor can they substantiate them as such. However, they, together with other researchers’ conclusions, clearly show that generalisations are problematic – if not to create, at least to prove.

First, the idea of women being excessive in their writing finds no support in the material. On the contrary, the male participants write longer sentences than the females. The males have a higher average value and the females write sentences containing 1-25 words almost twice as many times as the males, while the opposite is true for sentences with 26 or more words. These results are in line with what Hiatt (1977) concluded, namely that the women in the study are the more terse – something that does not fit in with what she presents as the general stereotype. A stereotype contested by other researchers who have concluded the same results in their studies.

Second, there is no evidence of female participators connecting more to subjects of family and friendship. One half of each group add at least one of the subjects to their writing, even though the females use words related to them with a slightly higher frequency. The topics that are introduced as common for men are not visible in the material – this is probably because they were inapplicable in the given discourse. Even though research done within this field is different from that of this study, it is interesting to see that the conclusion here is very different from what Coates (2004) and other linguists have found when examining topic development.

Moreover, adverbs are another aspect of writing which is similar between the males and females, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The groups use the same number of types and the commonest of them are used equally between them. A difference, however, can be seen in the fact that the males use four adverbs of emotion while the females use none. These results do not coincide with the given stereotype about women’s excessive use of adverbs. Neither does it correspond to Hiatt’s (1977) results which show that the men use considerably less adverbs of
emotion. Nevertheless, both Hiatt (1977) and Kramer (1973) show that the use of adverbs is similar between the men and women quantitatively, a result similar to that of this study. Furthermore, Jespersen’s (1922) idea that women use more adverbs that modify adjectives and adverbs does match the results of the present study – there are three such instances in the females’ essays, while there are none in the males’. On the other hand, the use of such adverbs can be said to be anything but excessive.

The results when it comes to the use of “masculine” and “feminine” adjectives find support in both Lakoff (1975), Hiatt (1977) and Spender (1980) when it comes to the notion of entering the other group’s domain or stereotype. The female participants use more “masculine” adjectives than the males use “feminine,” hence it seems, in this case, to be easier for the females to enter the realm which is considered “masculine” than the other way around – this may however depend on the specific text the participants were given. The notion that this might be the case because it is more “appropriate” to copy the majority than to copy the minority is questionable though since this presupposes that there actually exists “masculine” and “feminine” adjectives, which is a conclusion out of reach of this study.

As with the adjectives, the females use more “feminine” verbs than the males, while the somewhat more complicated “masculine” verbs were barely used at all. According to these results, which are in line with what Hiatt (1977) concluded, the idea that women are more intuitive is valid in this context too. However, the verbs that can be reasoned to most obviously denote intuition – ‘sense’ and ‘perceive’ – were not used once by either group. The males do not reason more than the females here though, which goes against both presented stereotypes and Hiatt’s (1977) results. The “masculine” adjectives were not usual at all, but they were used an equal amount of times by both groups.

Furthermore, another case that does not coincide with general assumptions is the use of expletives. There are slightly more females using strong expletives than males in the study, even though there are a few more occurrences in the males’ writing. This does not give any support to
the supposed “pure” language that Lakoff (1975) and Jespersen (1922), among others, claim women use. What can be said from the results, however, is that the females tend to use censored swearing to a greater extent than the males. If the strong expletives are divided equally between the groups, the same can be said about the weak ones which have one occurrence in the males’ essays and one in the females’.

During the last 35 or so years a lot of work has been made within the field of language and gender. Even though focus has been put on erasing people’s prejudices about how (mainly) women use English, there still exists thoughts that can be claimed sexist. That is why it is important to keep on studying questions about language and gender in articles, papers and theses like the one you are currently reading, albeit one with a limited magnitude. Much remains to be done.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Participants’ Essays

F = Female  M = Male

F1 (385 words)

Cal saw that Chrilly had the gun right infront of the man now and he get very nervous. The man trembled and said with tears in his eyes; ‘please don’t shoot me, what have I done to you?’ Chrilly heard Cal shout:

- ‘Shoot him now!’ Chrilly started to trembled too and get very angry on Cal who shouted from the car and all the dogs who are barking. Now the man had started to cry and Chrilly said to him
- ‘Now you’re going to die and I hope you enjoy it your bastard!’ He shot the man and he fell down on the floor. Chrilly stood still without breathing for a few seconds, he was very shocked that he made it, he didn’t know what to do so he shot two of the dogs too...

Cal started to shout very loud that Chrilly had to come to the car now and that he was sick who shot two of the dogs to! But Chrilly still stood still on the staircase and just looked on the dead man and the two dead dogs.

Cal turned of the car and walked out to Chrilly.
- ‘What are you doing?! We have to leave now before the cops are coming!’ Chrilly turned around and looked into Cals eyes without saying a word.

Then suddenly Chrilly hit Cal right in his face and he hit him in his stomach too, and he does it over and over again. Call fall down in the staircase and hit his head in the steps, he didn’t breath... Chrilly run to the car and started it and drowe away very quickly!

His heart was bumping very fast and he didn’t know what he was doing. Now he was driving very fast and he drive on the wrong side, but he didn’t know that, he was so lost.

It came a big truck in high speed, who was driving right against Chrilly but Chrilly didn’t see it and the man who drove the truck had so high speed so he couldn’t stop in time...

It was a big car crash, and the car that Chrilly was in started to burn, but the truck driver came out of his truck without any problems or injurys. But Chrilly never came out of the car he was driving...
Cal noticed that Crilly and the policeman were shouting at each other. Then Crilly pointed the gun at the man and they walked inside. The dogs were barking and Cal started to get nervous. Then suddenly a light switched on on the second floor and someone stood by the window. Cal got more nervous and thought that he had to go into the house and help Crilly. He turned off the car and walked out. The dogs ran to him and started to smell at him and barking at him. Then suddenly Cal heard a gun shot and someone was screaming and running in the house. Then he heard a second gun shot and Cal ran to the door to see what had happened. Cal opened the door and saw Crilly standing there with the gun in his hand and looked at the bodies that was drowned in blood.

- ‘What should we do with the bodies?’ asked Cal Crilly quietly.
- ‘We could take them out to the woods and bury them in the ground or we could try to feed the dogs with them’, said Crilly while he walked into the kitchen.
- ‘But I got so hungry by killing so I want to eat something before we get rid of the bodies’, said Crilly when he opened the door to the fridge. He took out the milk and started to drink out of the packet. Then he found a sandwich.
- ‘Aren’t you hungry Cal?’ asked Crilly and took the whole sandwich to the mouth.
- ‘No, I can’t believe that you shot the cop and his wife! You could have just talked with him about it!’ said Cal and then he heard one more gun shot. He took his hand to the stomach and the hand was full of blood. He looked at Crilly and started to cry, then he fell to the ground...
Cal could feel his heart stop beating for a second. He had never seen a person die before. It was horrible. Even though the policeman might have deserved it. Or had he? Sure, he had arrested to innocent guys, but maybe he had a reason. Isn’t there always a reason to the things we do? Maybe the policeman knew the two men were guilty of another crime, but he hadn’t got any proof. Then he felt he had to nail them some other way. Create a crime and then arrest them for that was maybe the only solution. The policeman’s revenge...

Cal had to find out. He just had to. Who was guilty and who was innocent in this dangerous game? Suddenly the fear came back. What if he would be arrested for helping Crilly! He actually did help a murderer... No, he couldn’t stay there in the car. What if some one had already seen them? What if some one had seen him. Cal, sitting in the car. Sure, he would leave the car somewhere, remove every evidence of crime, but still. What if they were put in jail for this! Maybe he should get away, right now, Cal thought. He could see Crilly running back towards the car. There were no signs of fear in Crilly’s face, but anger. Yes, Crilly did look very evil, very terrifying. Was he Cal’s friend? A murderer. No, Cal thought, this was not what he wanted to do. He just wanted to get away, not being part of a crime.

His mind was spinning fast. No, he couldn’t let this happen. He should have said no from the beginning, but say no to Crilly is not very easy... Without thinking, Cal pushed the pedal and drove away. Crilly runs after, shouting.

“What the hell are you doing?!”

Cal was back on the road. What should he do now? He had to drive far from here. Leave everything, or well, he hadn’t got much to leave. No wife, no job, nothing.

Cal drove all night. When the sun was about to rise, he stopped. He had to leave the car before day light. No one could see him in the car.

There was just one problem. He was in the middle of the desert. But Cal stopped and stepped out of the car. He started to walk along the road, but he walked really slowly, tired as he was. The sky was still dark, but far away behind the mountains Cal could see the sun rise. He stumbled over a stone and fell headlong. He lied on the ground, to dizzy and tired to get up.

When Cal woke up the sun burned as fire. A man with a truck had stopped to see if he was alive.

‘Is it your car over there?’, the man said and pointed at the car some mile away.

‘No’, Cal answered.

The man with the truck didn’t ask anything more, but he let Cal have a ride back to civilization. Cal had no idea where he was. He asked.

‘We’re in Arizona’, the man said. ‘I'll drop you of in Phoenix’.

‘Oh, okay. Thanks’.

When Cal got to Phoenix, he took the train to California. He had always wanted to go to the west coast. He would go to Los Angeles and start over. Get a job, and a new life, and hope that Crilly wouldn’t go after him. After a while Cal would try to do a secret investigation, to see who was the real bad guy. Cal knew one thing. He was a good guy, maybe a coward, but he knew what he wanted. Justice.
Cal couldn’t breath. The pane was a bit down so he could hear the policeman screaming to Crilly to calm down. The dogs barked even more than before. Cal’s heart beat faster and faster for every minute.
Crilly didn’t say anything. He just stood there, waiting. Maybe for the right time, just to scare him a little bit more, I don’t know.
Then I saw something moving in a window upstairs. A woman, I think. She stared straight into my eyes. Her look told me that I was really getting into trouble. Why couldn’t Crilly just hurry up?
Of course the woman would call the police and everything would just get messed up.
The policeman tried to get Crilly put down his gun.
- “What’s your problem? I haven’t done you anything.”
- “Oh yes, you have”, Crilly answered with a smile.
I glanced at my watch. She was a quarter past four. It felt like we had been here for an eternity.
The next second there was a big bang.
- “Drive for fuck sake!”
I step on the gas and drove faster than I ever driven before. I didn’t know where I was going, just driving.
Crilly talked and laughing. He was drunk. I didn’t listen. Just thought of what I had done. I had really helped him kill somebody. When I turned left there was a bridge over a river. Then a saw them. The cops.
- “Gas!” Crilly screamed. And I gased.
- “You drive like a fucking woman!,” and he took a grip of the wheel.
I tried to make him let go of it but he was too strong.
The police car was right in front of us now. They hoot and I tried to steer, I really did. But it was too late. I could hear Crilly laughing. The lights from the police car dazzled me and that was then I know that it was over.
At the same time as Cal heard the shot, the light was turned off. Cal felt his whole body shaking. Two seconds later Crilly tore the door on the car open and jumped in. Drive! he screamed to Cal. The car flew away, back against the mainroad.

Crilly rattled off a long jingle of swearings. ‘What’s wrong’, Cal said.

‘The bastard reached to turn the light off, and at the same time I saw him moving, I shot. But I have no idea of where I hit him, he succeeded to turn the light off. I don’t know if he’s dead.’

Cal, I didn’t wear any mask. If he will survive he can point me out. Then everything are screwed.

Cal kept driving, both of them sat in silence. They got closer to the bar, and when they were almost there they saw a policecar. They had stolen the car, and the owner must have called the police.

Quick Cal turned the car. They went out of town and dumped the car. They put it on fire. For a while they just stood there and watched into the flames.

Then they walked a kilometre, before they took a bus back to town.

The following days Cal just waited. He felt awful. He hadn’t heard anything from Crilly. They spoke about the policeman all the time on the news. They didn’t know if he was going to survive.

One day he sat in his sofa and watched TV. Suddenly an extra broadcast of news were shown. It sad that the policeman was going to survive, he had woke up yesterday.

The bell on the door rang. Cal froze. He walked slowly to the door and opened it. There stood two policemen. They had come to bring Cal to the policestation for an inquiry.

Cal’s future was uncertain, but it certainly didn’t look good. Now everything he can do is to wait and see. Atleast he had decided to tell the truth. He felt very bad over this and he’s ready to take his punishment.
‘What the...?’ the man began with a shocked expression on his face. But before he could finish the sentence there was a loud bang and the man sank slowly to the ground.

Suddenly Cal heard a crying voice from inside. Crilly stood paralyzed at the same spot where he had killed the man and gazed into the hall. And Cal saw her too. A young girl, approximately 5 years old, stood at the foot of the stairs looking at the man on the ground.

‘Jesus christ!,’ Cal whispered. ‘He had a daughter.’ Crilly reacted instantly and pointed the gun at her direction.

‘No!’ Cal shouted in shock. He reached out to open the door and ran out. He froze, standing on the lawn. ‘No,’ he said again in a low voice. The little girl, still standing in the hall turned her eyes to look at him. Her lips were trembling and her eyes huge with fear and shock.

‘She’s seen us Cal. That means that she’s a witness, and you know what we do with witnesses don’t you?’ Crilly’s voice was hard but Cal could see sweat dripping from his forehead and his hands shaking as he tried to hold still.

‘No,’ Cal repeated, ‘She’s just a child. Just as old as Kate.’ At the sound of his daughter’s name he gave a noise and sank his gun.

‘That’s right,’ Cal said. ‘Now let’s go.’ Both of them walked slowly to the car. As they drove away Cal gave a last glance at the house. The girl stood beside the man’s dead body.

‘And yes,’ Cal thought ‘she is a witness and it’s only a question of time until the police will find us’. The same thought circulated in Crilly’s mind, but they drove in silence and did not speak. What they had done could not be forgiven.
A silent noise from the gun and the policeman fell to the floor. Cal sees Crilly half running to the car, the dogs are barking even more now. The neighbours will probably be out any minute and see what’s wrong. Crilly jumps into the car and says with a calm voice: now lets return to the bar.

Cal can’t understand how Crilly could be so calm, he didn’t look affected at all, he just killed a man like he had killed a fly. Cal though, he was extremely nervous he hardly couldn’t drive the car and he felt a bit dizzy, if it was the beer or if it was the nervousity he didn’t know, but he knew that he probably couldn’t drive the car to the bar.

Crilly looks at Cal and sees how he is shaking. He shouldn’t be that nervous, he had done this before, think if he didn’t make it. Think if we will get caught. No, I can’t think of that.

Now they’re almost with the bar, but Cal starts to drive slower. What now says Crilly, but at the same time he sees the policecars. They’re to close to not be seen and a man are pointing at them.

Oh no! they both screams.

Cal’s nervousity is gone, now he only feels panik. He make a fast u-turn and starts to drive really fast. He look in the rear-view and sees a policecar come closer and closer.

We’re never going to make this! says Cal
Crilly says; Yes we are, just drive as fast as you can!
- Yes, but...
- No buts just drive!

The policecar comes closer and an other comes from the other way. They’re caught. Three policecars are around them. A policeman comes walking to them, he doesn’t look too happy.
- Hello there, what do you two think you’re doing wht this car?
- Crilly starts to think fast, they don’t know about the killed man, they only think we’ve stolen the car.

Crilly says; We needed a car fast so we borrowed the first that was unlocked.
- Okey, the policeman says, but you have to follow us to the station, I’m just going to call an other policeman who use to deal with this sort of things.

Oh no! Both Cal and Crilly understand that that policeman is the one they’ve killed.

A month later they are both sent to prison. Crilly got a longer punishment, Cal a shorter punishment because he didn’t kill the police.
The seconds seemed like hours. Cal held his breath. Everything stood still. Something was wrong, Cal knew that. Why didn’t Crilly shoot? As long as they had known each other, Crilly had never ever had trouble with shooting people, and they had known each other for a long time now, since they were kids, and played football together. Suddenly Cal knew what was wrong, the gun didn’t work, this had never happened before. Crilly’s face started to change, he was confused, “What the fuck?”, he said and stared at the gun. The man had stood there nice and quietly until now, when he realised Crilly’s mistake. He ran into the house and locked the door behind him. Crilly stood there, and looked like he didn’t understand what just happened. He turned towards the car and started walking. He didn’t see what Cal saw. The door opened again, and the man came out with a gun in his hand. He aimed the gun on Crilly. Cal went out of the car, screaming at his friend. “Get in the car!,” he has a gun!!” But it was too late. The gun fired, twice. And Crilly fell to the ground. Cal rushed to his friend, and started to drag Crilly towards the car. The man continued to shoot with anger. Cal was hit, but only in the arm, and he was able to drag his friend all the way into the car. They drove away. Crilly was conscious when they were only a few miles from the hospital. But when Cal had parked the car, Crilly was dead, he had lost too much blood.
The man just stood there not knowing what to do next.
- What is this? what's going on? he said
- You don't remember me? Crilly said while he held the weapon pointing at the man.
Crilly was now filled with anger and the beer just made him more aggressive.

- Have you forgot about everything you have done to me and my family? are you really that conscienceless
- Hey put down the gun and we could solve all this out, I'm sure we can!
The man said these words fast and his voice was filled with fear.
- No! we are gonna end this here and now!
Crilly now pressed his finger against the trigger.
The man tried to say something but he was not fast enough. The bullet had gone right through
his head. blood was now all over the wall behind the man.
Crilly now fired 2 additional shots at the body. Suddenly when he had lowered his gun he heard
footstep coming down the stairs in the room to the left. It was a boy. Crilly could see, how the
boy now leaned over the man crying.

Crilly didn't know what he was doing he was too drunk. the only thing knew was that the boy now
had seen him. He knew how the man who killed his grandfather or whatever looked like. Without
thinking he pointed the gun at the boy who now tried to escape. He fires a shot which hit him in
the back.
    Short after came Cal.
- What the hell is going on?
- I... I killed a boy...
- You what?! oh my god come on we need to get the hell out of here.

They now left the farm in the car.

- Hey man, you know that he got what he deserved!
- Yes I know. but thats not it... you know.... that kid who I shot in the back...
- Yea what about him?
- He, he is...
- Crilly, tell me who it was.

Crilly now took his gun. He put it against his head and said:
- That lad was my son...
Crilly grabbed ahold of the man and held the gun next to his head. The man looked frightened to death when they went into the house. Crilly pushed the man so he fell to the floor. Then he turned away from him and looked out the door opening, into Cals eyes. He kept looking into Cals eyes while he closed the door slowly.

Cal now felt scared of Crilly as well and thought to himself. If his not back within two minutes, I'm driving out of here. So, he started counting. When he had counted to 58, he saw a light appearing on the road behind him. He panicked, and then it hit him, that was why the man smiled at first when he saw someone at the door, he was expecting somebody. Cal turned off the engine and saw the light becoming brighter, he ducked and heard a car parking beside him. A man stepped out of the car and started walking towards the house. As the man approached the house, Cal wanted to leave. But he didn’t. He waited and saw the man entering the house. Short after, he could hear five gunshots coming from the house. He panicked even more, and started the engine, he started backing and saw Crilly running towards the car. Cal stopped and let Crilly in, and started driving away.

On the way home Crilly shouted that it didn’t go as planned, and that he shot them both. Cal started shouting at Crilly, and told him that they had to turn themselves in. Crilly went silent, and after a few seconds he agreed. So Cal stopped the car, turned it around and started heading towards the police station.
Crilly pointed the gun on the man, who started to defend himself, Crilly was too drunk to aim and pointed the gun on his own body, and fired, but shoot the man, in accident The man escaped in fear and Crilly law down in pain, Cal who sat and waited in his car heard the gun accident and jumped out of the car and started to explore his friend’s body. Crilly’s body need’s medical help.

Cal helped Crilly to the car and they drove to the hospital.

The bullet from the gun giving Crilly hard pain and sadly Crilly needs to amputate his leg, and now Crilly need to go in a wheelchair.

The thought of living like this, never gonna walk again, are too much for Crilly, Crilly wants to take his life, but cal always stopping crilly, but the thought to have a good friend as cal is really good.

Years has passed the gun accident, now peculiar things started to happen in Crilly’s life, its his conscience who haunting him, its over the dead body, Crilly Just left the gun shooted body for four years ago.

Crilly decision to go back to the gun accident, but he wanted Cal to follow and its cal who got a drive card.

Its late on the day, the place was empty because the town went in a badly bankruptcy so the town had been empty in four years, just some child who have played in the town sometimes.

Crilly walked around in the ghosty town, he can’t really remember where he shoot the person, so they decision to search the place.

Cal diappeared so crilly searched. Crilly searched in hours, intill he wanted to give up he saw a darkcloth person standing infront of Crilly, now crilly was scared, his handicap lamed him, the darkcloth person walked slowly towards crilly and pointed a big silver metal thing, it looks like a gun and then Crilly heard a voice - thanks for the help and in that moment a gun aimed.

In the powerful power in the gun who hits Crilly in his chest makes crilly’s body in hundreds of parts, and his dead, the man run and escape.
- What’s all this about? the man said. Crilly answered, you know what this is about.
  ‘No swear I don’t know what this is about’
  ‘Ok lets put it like this, I’m Justice and you deserve to be punished.
  ‘No wait!’
  ‘goodbye Mr. Cop
But before Crilly pulled the trigger steped out of the car and yelled
  ‘Wait don’t shoot him’
  ‘why?’
  ‘You said it yourself, he have arrested two innocent guys’
  Yeah...
  ‘So maybe we can make him confess that they are innocent and in that way free them.
  ‘Screw that I want to kill him now’
  ‘Sure but it will be more fun to make him confess and then kill him because then everyone
hates him
  ‘Oh you are smart Crilly said’
  ‘I know’ Cal answered and made a funny face.
So Cal turned off the car and they all went in to the man’s house.

Some minutes later Cal and Crilly had pushed the policeman to tell them why he arrested the two
guy’s and he said that they deserved it.
Why! Crilly yelled.
The policeman started to cry and tell uss about his past
‘Oh shut up! Crilly said
‘NO I won’t shut up this is a part of why I did what I did.’
So he kept going.

He talked for about 30 minutes and it made uss understand why he did it. He did it because
apparantly this guys when they were kids had lied to the police and in some way made the police
man’s parrants arrested. So he had arrested them so they got what they deserved. Cal and Crilly
knew everything about revenge so they totally understood the man.
  ‘We are sorry’ Crilly said
and you could really see in his face that he ment it.
I... I don’t know what to say.
  ‘We will just leave you alone’ Crilly said.
Crilly and Cal ran out to the car and drove away.

‘Do you think he will forget this’ Cal asked Crilly.
  ‘I don’t know but I hope so’.
  ‘Me too’
- What do you want? Whispered the man and his face turned pale and he started to shiver. Cal saw Chrilly raising his gun. Firing five rapid shots at the man, then bending down to check if he was dead. Then Chrilly walked out of sight. Cal heard three shots and dogs whining, he felt sick, he was unsure if it was the beer and nervousity or the fact that Chrilly just moments ago killed some innocent dogs.

When he had killed the dogs Chrilly dragged them to the house and into the kitchen. Then went to get the man they came to kill, dragged him to the kitchen as well and then started going through drawers and cupboards, trying to find anything of value. He went back to the car, gave Cal some cash and walked around the car opening the trunk to get a can of petrol from his bag.

Cal saw Chrilly go back inside the house with a can of petrol, after a few minutes he came running, jumped into the car and told Cal to drive. A few moments later there was a big explosion, flames bursted out in every direction and there was debris flying everywhere. The parts of the house which survived the explosion were devoured in flames.

When they headed back to the bar they met several firetrucks, ambulances and police cars rushing towards the farmyard.

Cal were about to wet himself so when they pulled up by the bar Cal rushed in to get to a bathroom and Chrilly went to the bar ordering 2 pints and 2 liquorice shots from the bartender and then he walked to an empty table, waiting for Cal and sipping on his beer.

Cal felt a wonderful relief when he walked towards Chrilly, they’d finished the job he was hoped to do. The only thing left was the payment so he sat down by Chrilly. He swallowed his shot in one second and then took a large sip of his beer.

When it was time to leave Chrilly said that they had to go get the money from his boss down by the docks, but when they arrived to the docks there were no one there. Cal turned his head to Chrilly but the only thing he saw was the barrel of the gun and the last thing he heard before he died was “No loose ends”
Crilly didn’t get much time to react when the man suddenly rushed towards him, but he wasn’t fast enough. Cal saw the man’s head explode in a big red cloud of goo.

‘What the hell’ Crilly shouted ‘I didn’t pull the trigger’.

Then suddenly Crilly saw someone behind Cal. As the person came closer he noticed a rifle in his hand.

‘Who’s there’ Crilly shouted, but got no answer. Crilly began lifting his hand but then his head exploded in the same way as the policeman. Cal felt nothing but fear now, the car’s engine was off and he was unable to move. He saw more people closing in from every direction, everyone had some kind of rifle in their hand and they all had camouflage clothes and helmets.

‘Get out of the vehicle’ one of them shouted with an accent he didn’t recognise. Cal didn’t have much of a choice, when he got out of the car he was forced to the ground by two men who were talking a foreign language. They put some kind of handcuffs on him and forced him to move forward as they went into the woods.

They walked for a long while until they reached the edge of the forest. There the group stopped, in front of them lay a huge military base. The base was quiet and they could only see a few guards. One guy started talking in a radio and the others just waited and looked.

‘Who are you’ Cal asked, he was too afraid to speak earlier.

‘We are from Russia thats all you need to know’. one of them answered. Suddenly he heard a roar and then the military base in front of him exploded almost instantly, that was when he understood, the third world war had started.
Crilly pulled the gun from his pocket and the man froze.

The man’s face turned white and all his words were missing. Crilly was just about to pull the trigger, when suddenly a harsh voice yelled – I wouldn’t do that if I were you
Crilly answered – why so? Crilly made his hand steady again and his finger clenched slowly around the trigger BAAM! Cal slowly opened his eyes which he by reflex closed when the shot went off. But what he saw, wasn’t what he first had expected to see, infact the man was still on his feets, but with a much more satisfied expression on his face.

It was quite a long distance from Cal’s position, but he couldn’t take wrong. Crilly, his friend was down and dead for sure.

the shock struck him as if hit by lightning and he wasn’t able to act...

two men approached slowly from the house, but Cal wasn’t able to move a fin.
eventhough he was astonished by the outcome, he’d managed hit the gas and the car flew away with the speed of light.

Cal was sweating when he locked the house door. He began to shiver and he had the feeling that someone was closing up on him. But how, he’d taken a very strange way home just to be sure that noone would have followed him. Suddenly he heard a loud “crack” and an Icy wind swept through the house and he heard voices.

Cal ran into his bedroom and made the door closed. he opened his closet and reached for his gun.

He wrote a letter in a hurry and jumped out the window... the men crashed the door and found the letter. in the letter stood “when you read this, I will be far away and think on how stupid two morons like you could go into a trap like this one, haha” the men turned around on eachother and looked confused... but nothing more was said before the whole house was crowded by police men.

- finelly we got you, hands up and drop your guns, you are for now on arrested for the murder of Crills.
Crilly pointed the gun against the man’s head. The man looked horrified. They stood there for a moment and then there was a ‘bang’.

Cal didn’t understand what had happened. Crilly lay there on the ground with his head blown off. The smoke from the man’s sawn-off shotgun filled the air in front of the door.

Cal just sat there and watched for a moment, choked and paralyzed with fear. Then he saw the man who had shot Crilly walking towards him with his gun held ready. Cal noticed that the engine had stopped. He turned the key but it wouldn’t start. As the man came closer Cal panicked, because the engine wouldn’t start. “Fucking crap car!” he yelled and banged the steering wheel.

Suddenly the man started firing shotgun rounds at the car. Cal opened the door and started running. The man still kept firing and then the car went up in flames.

Cal just kept running, now with tears in his eyes. He could hear the man running behind him. He looked back and saw that the man had just pulled out a 44’ magnum out of his coat. “Oh, who the fuck are you, Dirty Larry?!” Cal screamed.

A shot was fired and Cal fell to the ground, he felt a terrible pain in his leg.

Cal was on his stomach, groaning. The man came up to him and rolled Cal over on his back. The man stood and looked down on him, with the gun in his hand, but not pointing.

“Who are you and why are you here?” the man asked, rather calmly.
“I’m just the driver! Please!” Cal shouted
“You’re not ‘just’ the driver to me” said the man meaningly. “Good bye Mr. Cal” Cal didn’t understand how the man knew his name. “But how did you...?” Cal started, but he was rudely interrupted by a boot stomped in his face. He could see the man pointing a gun at his face. Then he saw a flash of light. Then it all went black.
Appendix 2 – Excerpt from *Cal* by Bernard MacLaverty

Crilly and he had gone to the bar and then retired to a corner with their drinks.  
‘Well, what’s the big one?’  
‘A cop – the Police Reserve.’  
‘What about him?’  
‘We do him – that’s what.’  
The muscles of Cal’s stomach went rigid and he felt his palms sweaty. He rubbed his hands slowly together.  
‘Is he coming here?’  
‘No. We’ll be seen here. We’ll do it, then come back.’  
‘I see.’  
“Where were you last night?” Answer: “At a dance.” Boom-boom.’  
Cal bought two more pints.  
‘Don’t worry, Cal. This guy is the greatest bastard unhung. Skeffington says that we’ve got to squeeze the Police Reserve and the U.D.R. Maybe put people off joining them. So he picked this guy, this real turd who lives outside Magherafelt. And tonight we do him.’ Cal said nothing. He cleaned the condensation from the outside of his pint with one finger. ‘He planted a gun on two totally innocent guys about a month ago,’ Crilly went on. ‘They are up in Crumlin Road jail now. Not only that, but he had his mates give them a kicking to end all kickings and said that they had resisted arrest. He knew them too – two Catholic lads from the town – the big fucker.’  
‘I’m just driving,’ said Cal.  
‘That’s all we’re asking you to do.’  
After his second pint Crilly warned him that he could have no more. They shouldn’t be drinking at all before a job. Cal had to drive straight. The band began to play and gradually the hall filled. Crilly bought a half bottle of whiskey over the counter and slipped it into his pocket. They danced with three girls each – ‘Someone who knowns you well,’ said Crilly. Cal was incapable of conversation with any of them. During a fast number the keys in his pocket chinked and he thought they might give him away.  
Crilly looked at his watch and said that he had some hardware to pick up and he would see him in the car park in fifteen minutes.  
‘By that time you should have wheels for us.’  
Cal loathed Crilly’s Hollywood turn of phrase. On nights like this Crilly thought he was in the big picture. Cal gritted his jaw and followed him. They had the date in purple ink stamped on the backs of their hands so they could come back in again.  
‘I feel like a library book,’ said Crilly, going down the stairs.  
‘Don’t be stupid,’ said Cal. ‘They closed ages ago.’ He felt guilty making a laugh but he was nervous.  
Cal slipped on a pair of thin leather gloves and walked around the dark end of the car park. There were two Cortinas among the ranks of cars. He tried the doors of one and they were locked. In the other, a red one, he noticed that the lock button of the back door was up. He was in and quickly over into the front seat. He pulled the string of Ford keys from his pocket and began to work through them systematically. Crilly had got them from a bloke in a garage in return for not burning it down. ‘He was a good mate of mine, anyway,’ he’d said. Eight keys tried and still no luck. The eleventh key clicked and the starter fired. He was expecting it so much that the sudden noise made him jump. He turned on the lights and edged the car out between the others and down the aisle. When the attendant waved a casual goodnight Cal made sure he was looking the other way. He parked, waiting for Crilly, the engine running. He should have gone to the lavatory after two pints. He rubbed his stomach and belched quietly. Nerves gave him wind. It was ten minutes before Crilly appeared from a side street with a Spar carrier bag. When he got into the car Cal smelt petrol but didn’t say anything.
‘Nice one, Cal,’ he said, looking round him. ‘Enough juice?’

‘Three-quarters.’

They drove on to the main Magherafelt road. Crilly navigated and checked his gun at the same
time. The tiny clicking of bullets set Cal’s teeth on edge.

‘I love the weight of an automatic,’ Crilly said. ‘You wee beauty.’ He held it up for Cal to see.

‘The only thing is, they’re liable to jam.’

Cal did not look at it but kept his eyes on the road. Undipped headlights glared in his driving
mirror and he slowed down. With relief he saw the car pass him and its tail lights draw away.

Crilly slipped the gun into his pocket. From the other pocket he took the half bottle and opened
it with a tearing click. He tilted it to his mouth and after swallowing gasped,

‘Oh fuck – that’s good stuff. Left here.’

Cal had missed the turn and had to reverse back to it. His voice was thin and tight.

‘You didn’t give me enough warning. Keep your eyes on the road.’

‘Oh-ho. Cal’s nervous. Getting jumpy, eh?’

Crilly gave him plenty of warning for the farm lane on the right. Cal slowed and the car
bumped and swayed through the potholes. They passed a dilapidated cottage on the right and
then pulled into a farmyard. It was a big cream house. Dogs in an outhouse somewhere started
up a frantic barking. Crilly took another swig from his bottle.

‘Keep her running, Cal. This won’t take long.’

Cal pulled the car up close to the front door and Crilly got out. Cal waited. He badly needed a
piss. He held on tight to the steering wheel. He ran his fingers round the back of it. For some
reason it reminded him of the ridges on the roof of his mouth. He curled his tongue and touched
them with its tip, counting. Five or six. Like the hard sand of the sea-shore. He wanted a cigarette
but he knew it would be in his way if they had to take off fast. The idling engine missed a beat
and Cal touched the accelerator lightly to keep it going. The thought of a stall at this stage made
him weak.

He didn’t hear the bell when Crilly pressed the button. It was dark but there was a light
somewhere in the house. Cal tried to burp. The beer and his nerves combined to make him feel
he had swallowed lead. He didn’t want to watch but he felt compelled to. He tried to get beneath
the wind by swallowing air but just managed to belch the pockets of air which he had swallowed.
A light came on in the hall, lighting up the area of the front door. Cal felt his bladder on the
point of bursting. Crilly waited, one hand in his pocket. The net curtain twitched, then the door
opened. Still the dogs kept up their incessant barking.

Cal saw the man smile. Then he looked confused. Crilly pulled the gun from his pocket and
the man froze.