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Recent Trends in Narratological Research

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Introduction

John Pier

1 When, in the 1960s, the study of narrative became self-consciously systematic, seeking to elaborate categories and models for the theory and analysis of literary narration, a term was required for what, it was felt, had become a branch of literary studies in its own right, and this was narratology. Narratology was not, however, so much a new field of study as it was an innovative convergence of already-existing specialties, for the theory of the novel had developed considerably since the time of Henry James's reflections on the subject (to mention only the English-speaking world). Although the new approach did, to varying degrees, take into account questions of plot, point of view, time, character, etc., its novelty consisted, at least in part, in its appeal to research being done in fields such as folktale analysis, structural anthropology and particularly structural linguistics which, up to this time, had had little influence if any in Western literary scholarship, but it was furthered by the discovery of Russian Formalism and Czech structuralism and the desire to establish a rigorous methodology for the study of literature. The theory of the novel gradually gave way to a theory of narrative, inspired, at least in some quarters, as much by the social sciences as it was by the bellettristic tradition and focusing on textual criteria that had previously drawn little attention in literary scholarship.

2 The limitations of narratological models soon came to be appreciated, however, for while gains were made in formal and methodological rigor, this was accomplished at a price. Narrative grammars, for instance, proved to be better adapted to the analysis of folktales than to a critical understanding of literary texts whose plot structure may have little explanatory power for other features of the text; endeavors in this area also led to questions about the semantics of the text that revealed the limitations of heavily syntactic theories. The drive to establish models having a general validity, i.e. models sufficiently abstract to account for all narrative structures, encountered the need to differentiate narratives typologically, but also historically, and found it increasingly difficult to reconcile formal models with the particularities of individual authors and the texture of specific works. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the "pilot" science of linguistics was evolving rapidly and no longer provided the paradigms initially relied on by narratologists. Others perceived the necessity of confronting narratological categories with or of returning to more traditional questions such as point of
view, character, reliability, fictionality, style, etc. And finally, the growth of
deconstructionism, poststructuralism and cultural studies has in some cases led to
questioning the need for or the basis of narratological reasoning.

3 However the situation is to be assessed today, there is little doubt that the legacy of
narratology has left its mark on the way critics and scholars study and understand
literature, including those who may have had little training in the field — be it due simply
to the currency of certain narratological terms and concepts. The publication of
specialized manuals and glossaries over the past two decades has also contributed to the
systematic study of narrative both in teaching and in scholarship, but this has not been
without the risk of a certain codification and mechanical application of narratological
principles, on the one hand and, on the other, a tendency to employ narratology as an
adjunct to traditional stylistics, explication de texte, etc., relying on it in a piecemeal way
whenever this might be helpful, rather than to carry out literary analysis based on or
with reference to a comprehensive narratological theory.

4 The studies included in the present volume bear witness to the vitality and diversity of
research going on in narratology more than thirty years after this approach to the study
of narrative first took shape. For the most part, they were initially presented at the
narratology round table convened by Professor Monika Fludernik of the University of
Freiburg at the Fourth Congress of the European Society for the Study of English held
Debrecen (Hungary) in September of 1997.¹ No common or centralizing theme or doctrine
binds these articles together, unless it be the desire shared by all of the contributors to
study narrative through the critical elaboration and clarification of theoretical concepts
coupled with appropriate analytical and critical practices. The theoretical bases,
objectives, methodologies, types of narrative and narratological problems focused on
differ in ways that the reader of this volume is invited to ponder and evaluate for him- or
herself. One possible line of reflection for bringing together the various orientations
adopted by the authors — and one which may have the further advantage of putting the
contributions into perspective with theories of narrative as they have existed at various
times in the past — is to read the articles against the backdrop of three general and
interrelated aspects of narrative that, to varying degrees and in different forms, have
always been taken into consideration in theoretically-informed studies in the field:
narrative contents, narrative signifiers and their configurations, the dynamics of
narrative deployment. While none of the articles is concerned with defining a clear-cut
position on each of these aspects, they do, generally speaking and in different ways,
reflect the long-standing tendency of narrative studies, and particularly of narratology,
to seek out some articulation between them as well as the historical movement of
narratology away from the predominance or generative power of narrative contents
towards a finer perception of the supple and multifaceted interplay of these three
aspects.

5 This tendency is reflected in Dieter Meindl’s "A Model of Narrative Discourse along
Pronominal Lines." Meindl’s contribution focuses on the consequences of the division
between first-person and third-person narration, addressing issues that have not been
dealt with extensively by those working within the scope of French narratology. Starting
with a number of principles established by Franz K. Stanzel, Käte Hamburger and Harald
Weinrich (key references for Germanspeaking narratologists), the author explores the
interaction between enunciation (cf. Benveniste’s discours) and illusion (cf. histoire) and
then goes on to delineate four frames of reference in the narrative text (comment, report,
scene, metaphor) together with the various types of transposition to which these frames of reference are subject, thus putting into a new light the problem of narrative levels.

6 Martin Löschnigg's "Narratological Categories and the (Non-) Distinction between Factual and Fictional Narratives" scrutinizes a number of key points debated among narratologists in the wake of Paul Ricoeur's *Temps et Récit*, showing that narratology, in spite of its predilection for the study of fictional narratives, also provides categories that are pertinent to historiography. Taking issue with Hamburger's tenet that fictionality is definable in terms of atemporality, thus driving a wedge between factual and fictional discourse, Löschnigg finds that in principle, time is not a determining factor for distinguishing historywriting from fiction-writing. More pertinent are the narratological categories of mode and voice, particularly as concerns focalization and the ever-resurgent paradoxes of the author/narrator axis, while any blurring of the lines between factual and fictional writing (as in postmodernist writing, for example) underscores the necessity for a narrative theory capable of discerning the differences between the two forms of narrative.

7 The problem of fictionality also figures prominently in Uri Margolin's "Story Modalised, or the Grammar of Virtuality." Margolin is one among a number of theoreticians who, following the demise of structuralist narratology, has sought a new paradigm for narrative studies in the logic of possible worlds, thus addressing questions of semantics that had earlier been sidestepped. In this article, he singles out prospective narratives — those that tell stories that have not yet occurred — as opposed to retrospective narratives and simultaneous narratives. He then examines four different modalities in future-oriented texts, with stimulating insights into the formulation and mediation of narrative contents.

8 In his "Reconceptualizing the Theory and Generic Scope of Unreliable Narration," Ansgar F. Nünning offers a valuable critique of Wayne Booth's widely and diffusely employed notion of unreliability, dissociating it from the implied author (itself never satisfactorily defined) so as to provide it with a new basis, grounded in the conceptual framework brought to the text by readers. Unreliable narration involves "an interpretive procedure," and this results partly from grammatical signals picked up by the reader, but also from various anomalies in the narrative determined on the basis of the reader's experience and other literary criteria. The shift towards a reception-theoretical approach to unreliable narration is further evidence of how current research in narratology is seeking to rethink traditional categories of narrative studies.

9 In a similar spirit of reformulation of narratological concepts, Manfred Jahn's "More Aspects of Focalization: Refinements and Applications" takes up one of the most extensively debated issues of modern narrative theory, arguing that the "Who sees?/Who speaks?" distinction of Genettean and post-Genettean narratology should be replaced by a more general model of perception which, at the level of focalization, is revealed through "vectored indicators of subjectivity." Accordingly, Jahn proposes to reframe the whole question of focalization by asking "Whose affect, perception, conceptualization orients the narrative text?" He goes on to outline a four-level gliding scale to account for varying degrees of focalization, and in an allusion both to Henry James's "house of fiction" and to computer technology, the term "window shifting" is introduced in order to designate variations in focalization, while the related problem of "deictic diffusion" in certain problematic passages is explained in terms of interferences or "window overlap" between the narratorial and reflectorial modes.
An age-old and recurrent problem in reasoning about narrative is that of time. Structuralist narratology has on the whole tended to approach time in terms of the spatial categories of the text, most conspicuously so in the case of Genette's model of narrative time (although Paul Ricoeur's and Käte Hamburger's writings, for example, have had an impact on the situation). From the perspective of narrative explanation, Jon-K Adams, in "Order and Narrative," provides a critique of the structuralist understanding of chronology, showing (among other things) the difficulties it encounters when a narrative includes multiple chronologies or embedded chronologies. Thus, in a work such as Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, the textually given order of events does not wholly coincide with the order of events in Gatsby's experience and with the order in which the narrator has gained knowledge of those events.

In what he terms a "stylistics of narrational techniques," Gordon Collier, in his "Apparent Feature-Anomalies in Subjectivized Third-Person Narration," examines in close detail, not the "deviations" of traditional stylistics, but the use of gnomic statements and the naming of characters in Patrick White's The Solid Mandala that reveal domains for the expression of subjectivity which can be accounted for only to a limited degree by free indirect discourse. Unlike most works using this device, White's novel does not include a narrator whose discourse seeks to mould itself into the character's consciousness (cf. figuralization and reflectorization), but instead is built up out of two central consciousnesses in such a way that the characters in effect narrate themselves in the third person.

Interpretative strategies take a turn that has been little explored by narratologists in works where the gender of narrators and protagonists remains indeterminate. Monika Fludernik deals with this question in "The Genderization of Narrative," where she examines in some detail three first-person novels that deliberately forestall facile conclusions as to both the biological sex and the gender roles of the characters. In these works, the textual inferences made by readers on the basis of proper names, pronouns, anaphors, etc. may not be wellgrounded, and at the same time they leave considerable latitude as to the cultural markers and frames that readers are inclined to or even encouraged to bring to the text. Here again, we see evidence of the tendency of current narratological research to focus on the dynamics of narrative deployment.

The study of narrative has become increasingly attentive to the misfit or differential relations between plot and the discursive forms by which it is expressed or conveyed. The tendency of narratives themselves to exploit parallel but non-convergent patterns of the two levels becomes particularly striking in postmodern works of a parodic bent. This question is taken up by Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth in "Parody as a Practice for Postmodernity" with a discussion of Nabokov's Transparent Things, the findings from which are interestingly corroborated with Jon Jost's film All the Vermeers in New York, where the cinematographic medium opens up a plurality of sequences and values between narrative codes and the camera — an "in-between" emerging out of a simultaneity of codes.

The syntagmatics of the written narrative text is explored by John Pier in "Three Dimensions of Space in the Narrative Text." With attention given to the graphic aspect of narrative (as opposed to the referential space of description) as well as to the semiotic categories of icon, index and symbol (rather than to the "linearity" of the signifier), texts by Dos Passos, Nabokov, Barth and Melville are taken into consideration, and emphasis is laid on space in this sense as a feature of intertextuality.
Pierre Gault's "Rhématique/Thématique, ou les élans de la syntaxe" focuses on the interferences in a number of narrative fragments between the pre-constructed (thematics) and the non-presupposed (rhematics). While the syntactic operations put into play by these two "phases" and the modalities of their interactions act on the reader's affect, the thematics/rhematics pair also raises questions concerning, for example, hypotaxis/parataxis, metonymy/metaphor, lapsus/condensation and neurosis/psychosis.

Individually, these articles approach narrative from various angles, focusing both on matters that have been debated since even before the advent of narratology and on questions that have been dealt with in only a limited way in the past; together, they show that narratology, far from being a method defined by fixed procedures, is diverse in its theoretical orientations and analytical practices and responsive to the evolution of literary theory and criticism. Modelbuilding — inherent in all forms of narratological research — has taken on a less monolithic character as researchers in the field have sought to account for the multiplicity of the fine points of literary expression that the highly differentiated corpus of narratives provides. As suggested above, it may well be appropriate to view work being done in narratology today as a new chapter in the study of how narrative contents, narrative signifiers and their configurations and the dynamics of narrative deployment interact. The articles in this volume are offered as a contribution to the writing of this new chapter.

NOTES

1. These are the contributions by Dieter Meindl, Gordon Collier, Monika Fludernik, Elizabeth Deeds Ermant, Jon-K Adams and John Pier.

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A Model of Narrative Discourse along Pronominal Lines

Dieter Meindl

I. The proposed model foregrounds the category PERSON

1 Given that a story normally presents an action, the radical of narrative is the verb. According to Emile Benveniste (1966, 227), no language possessing verbs fails to mark "les distinctions de personne": "On peut donc conclure que la catégorie de la personne appartient bien aux notions fondamentales et nécessaires du verbe." Surprisingly, theories of narrative do not much favor the category person. The present model of narrative discourse upgrades person by treating it as a transposition device, an operational principle permitting shifts and transitions between discrete frames of reference in narrative. In addition, this model emphasizes three elements habitually neglected in narrative theory: the reader's illusion, metaphor, and second-person narrative.

2 The ternary conception of person, derived from antiquity, was first radically challenged by Benveniste, who posits a fundamental disparity between the first and second grammatical persons, on the one hand, and the third person, on the other. In substance, his argument runs as follows: "I" inscribes both the enunciator and the enunciated in the text as the use of "I" designates an "I" enunciating itself; when "you" is used, it presupposes an "I" addressing the enunciated "you"; the use of "s/he," however, constitutes an enunciation without the enunciator being conveyed by the enunciated "s/he." Hence, Benveniste distinguishes between the persons "I"/"you" and the "non-person" "s/he." One also notes that the third person designates previously named entities (not necessarily persons) by what are hence literally pronouns. In contrast, "I" and "you" (usually persons) do not lend themselves to anaphoric use. We might say that the third person calls the notion "person" into question whereas the first and second persons do the same with the notion "pronoun."
II. A statement about reality is always in the first person; nevertheless, third-person narrative is a legitimate notion

Henry David Thoreau said in 1854: "We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking" (1966, 1). A statement about reality is made by its author. In this sense it is always in the first person, irrespective of the pronominal use that prevails. Structurally, it is marked by the fact that the enunciator and what is enunciated (including the past and credited mythic and religious items) belong to one and the same reality. In the area of narrative fiction, first-person narrative is defined by Franz Stanzel as featuring an identical realm of existence for the narrator and the narrated characters. Hence, first-person narrative is modeled on statements about reality, as Käte Hamburger (1993, 313) observed, who called it a "feigned reality statement."

What, then, is third-person narrative? With fiction, the reader does not hold the author accountable for the factual veracity of what is enunciated. Likewise, the reader does not attribute to the author but to the "narrator" the more or less pronounced attitude (stance, voice) that the text conveys together with the fictive world. This is what has generated and legitimates the otherwise nonsensical notion "third-person narrative": its narrative agency exists in a displacement between the author and the attitude inscribed in the text. In third-person narrative fiction, "narratorial attitude" (a term I prefer to "third-person narrator") figures as the enunciator that, as noted above, the enunciated "s/he" fails to convey.

Both statements about reality and first-person narrative fiction manifest quantitative limitation: the enunciator has, in principle, no access (short of inference, guess-work, etc.) to the minds of others. In third-person narrative fiction, however, there is such access. Conversely, first-person narrative fiction features qualitative unlimitedness, with the enunciator commanding the human being's whole range of expression: lying, erring, fantasizing, and telling the truth. Huck Finn believes he will go to hell for freeing a slave, for "stealing" Nigger Jim: clearly, the text wants us to disagree with this belief expressed by its first-person narrator. The situation is quite different if we take exception to the following views, propounded by way of comment upon a dentist's nearrape of his anesthetized patient in *McTeague*, a third-person novel by Frank Norris:

(1) Below the fine fabric of all that was good in him ran the foul stream of hereditary evil, like a sewer. The vices and sins of his father and of his father's father, to the third and fourth and five hundredth generation, tainted him. The evil of an entire race flowed in his veins. (1964, 29)

This is outmoded biological determinism, whose effect is detrimental to the text unless the reader is willing to make allowances for Norris's naturalist context. Evidently, contradicting the authorial voice, an incipient interpretative register in the text, moves us onto the plane of value judgments. The qualitative limitation of third-person narrative, then, consists in the fact that, in principle, its narrative agency is held to its authority by the reader. Being an authorial attitude rather than an enunciating subject (such as Huck Finn), this narrative agency cannot become subjective (or objective), but is authoritative, as indicated by the fact that unacceptable views on its part cannot benefit the text (as Huck's can). In contrast, first-person narrative invites us to entertain the
notion of the (un-)reliability of the enunciating subject, a fictional character. A general differentiation between spheres emerges from these considerations. Third-person (authorial) narrative is marked by quantitative unlimitedness/qualitative limitation, first-person narrative by qualitative unlimitedness/quantitative limitation.

This differentiation is structural rather than reliant on pronominal use. So we might ask ourselves: Is there first-person narrative without "I"-usage? Sundry character-told narratives in *The Canterbury Tales* and other such story-cycles are told with zero selfreference of the teller. However, this tends to turn characters within such narratives into centers of consciousness by invocation of their mental states, which are necessarily fictional in relation to the tellers. Such narratives — with their typical claim to independent status, retold rather than told by frame figures — represent a projection of the structure of third-person narrative into first-person narrative. The narrating character assumes an authorial or story-teller function so that the identity of the realms of existence of enunciator and enunciated that defines first-person narrative is dissolved. Conversely, when third-person narrative becomes geared to the point of view of a fictional character or figure (Stanzel's figural narrative situation), the structure of first-person narrative (whose narrator is a fictional figure) can assert itself without any occurrence of "I"-usage. Narrative perspective then becomes potentially unreliable (qualitative unlimitedness) and forgoes authorial omniscience (quantitative limitation). The structural conception of pronominal narrative advanced here involves shifting frames of reference in narrative. Before elucidating the principle of transposition at work in such shifts, the spheres of both first-person and third-person narrative must be demarcated in terms of types of narrative discourse. Establishing these types involves a consideration of the role of the reader's illusion in narrative.

### III. The registers of illusion and enunciation

The reader responding to narrative discourse mediates between two registers that subtract from each other. That is, s/he shifts between the theoretical (never fully actualized) extremes of imagining (visualizing, "illusioning") a world and apprehending an act of enunciation. The register of illusion is weakest when there is barely anything to be imagined because the register of enunciation is so strong:

(2) Falseness dies; injustice and oppression in the end of everything fade and vanish away. Greed, cruelty, selfishness, and inhumanity are short-lived; the individual suffers, but the race goes on. Annixter dies, but in a far-distant corner of the world a thousand lives are saved. The larger view always and through all shams, all wickednesses, discovers the Truth that will, in the end, prevail, and all things, surely, inevitably, resistlessly work together for good. (Norris, 1938, 360f.)

This concluding passage of a third-person novel is almost wholly given over to narratorial attitude, an authorial stance: the narrative agency's discussing or commenting on general matters in an abstract manner. We are practically incapable of imagining what we are told, given that "it is impossible to imagine at all without picturing things" (Goatly, 1997, 83). One also notes that this "narrator" does not narrate (erzählen), strictly speaking, but rather comments (besprechen), to use Harald Weinrich's distinction (1971). Evidently, the narrative agency manifests itself most clearly not by narrating a world, but by commenting on the narrated world, by formulating its attitude toward it. To the extent that it replaces the specific, concretely rendered textual world by abstractly worded
general views, it makes it harder to visualize that world, to experience it through illusion. That is, narratorial attitude (the "narrator" of third-person narrative), in emerging (by commenting), discloses the textual world as narrated (renders it less capable of being "illusioned"), as conceived in a certain manner, thus engendering a narratee asked to share that conception. This is the register of enunciation, which reflects the tripartite structure of communication. The interplay of the registers of enunciation (communication) and illusion — an interplay in which the narrative agency dissolves by evoking a concrete, detailed world and re-emerges when commenting on and thus backgrounding that world — is evoked by Gérard Genette in his opposition mimesis/diegesis: "... the quantity of information and the presence of the informer are in inverse ratio, mimesis being defined by a maximum of information and a minimum of the informer, diegesis by the opposite relationship" (1980, 166). Benveniste's discrimination between histoire and discours also anticipates the illusion/enunciation distinction. In third-person narrative (histoire), "les événements semblent se raconter eux-mêmes. Le temps fondamental est l'aoriste [passé simple], qui est le temps de l'événement hors de la personne d'un narrateur." Of discours Benveniste says: "Il faut entendre discours dans sa plus large extension: toute énonciation supposant un locuteur et un auditeur, et chez le premier l'intention d'influencer l'autre en quelque manière" (1966, 241f.). The two foundations of illusion are the third-person pronoun, which does not designate the enunciator, and the past tense, used for evoking a world. The foundations of enunciation are the first and second persons, which explicitly or implicitly designate the enunciator, and the present tense, used for comment by the narrative agency. Typically, narrating in the present tense (cf. the majority of Margaret Atwood’s numerous feminist stories) generates a certain exemplary quality.

The interaction of illusion and enunciation also takes place in first-person narrative. The two registers can here be designated with the help of Stanzel's terminology as the experiencing "I" and the narrating "I," which, closely examined, constitute theoretical extremes, since, even when clinging to the experiencing "I," we never quite lose touch with the fact that the experience conveyed is a narrative act and since, when aligning ourselves with the narrating "I," we are still related, however tenuously, to the experiential world the narrator supplants by looking back to and commenting on it. Hence, in first-person narrative too, the "narrator" is never there as such, being either a commentator or becoming, as illustrated by the following passage, practically inaudible:

(3) "Are you married?" he [Rinaldi] asked from the bed.
I was standing against the wall by the window
"Not yet."
"Are you in love?"
"Yes."
"With that English girl?"
"Yes."
"Poor baby. Is she good to you?"
"Of course."
"I mean is she good to you practically speaking?"
"Shut up." (Hemingway, 1976, 142)

Information about the act of enunciation is practically reduced to the level of general orientation on the part of the reader, who knows of course that the passage is narrated, but who is otherwise focused on — experiences — the event itself: a dialogue between Frederic Henry and his friend Rinaldi. However, for all the preponderance of the
experiencing "I" in Hemingway's novel, the narrating "I" makes itself heard. Note how Frederic Henry commemorates his dead love, Catherine Barkley:

(4)... the night can be a dreadful time for lonely people once their loneliness has started. But with Catherine there was almost no difference in the night except that it was an even better time. If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them. (209)

The narrator becomes audible as a "discourser" employing the present tense. However, the enunciator of first-person narrative is generally more stable than that of third-person narrative. The narrating "I" and the experiencing "I," which respectively activate the two structural components of the pronoun (enunciating/enunciated "I"), are, after all, the same person: a human agent, or subject, endowed with a life anterior to his or her narrative act.

The narrative agency of third-person narrative is not barred from adopting a backward-looking attitude. This is how Dickens opens A Tale of Two Cities: It [the period of the French Revolution] was the best of times, it was the worst of times... it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us" (5). In principle, what fiction conveys even in such passages is not the past, but retrospection resulting from an interaction of the temporal planes of the narrative act and the narrated events, respectively promoting the present and the past tense (cf. citation (4)). Data from history used in fiction apparently affect the reader's temporal orientation by underscoring retrospection, which strengthens the register of enunciation, as does the first person. Significantly, the retrospective passage from Dickens's third-person novel attracts an authorial "I" concealed in the amplifying plural "we" ("I" and the young people of that time).

IV. The frame of reference: comment-report-scene-metaphor

Defining comment as general in subject matter and abstract in manner yields two basic oppositions for differentiating between narrative discourses: particularization/generalization and concretization/abstraction. These oppositions permit four combinations.

COMMENT is general and abstract. Thus, citation (2), while recalling one of the novel's incidents ("Annixter dies"), is almost pure comment, proffering a world-view.

SCENE, the opposite of comment, conveys a particular narrative reality in concrete terms:

(5) Mr. Lorry... had just poured out his last glassful of wine with as complete an appearance of satisfaction as is ever to be found in an elderly gentleman of a fresh complexion who has got to the end of a bottle, when a rattling of wheels came up the narrow street, and rumbled into the innyard.

He set down his glass untouched. "This is Mam'selle!" said he. (Dickens, 1968, 29)

Apart from being an authorial gloss that portrays Mr. Lorry as the very image of the happy old tippler, the passage is scene.

The combination particular/abstract yields REPORT, which provides an abstract or summary of a particular narrative reality, as in this example from Hawthorne's "Wakefield":
(s) The man, under pretense of going a journey, took lodgings in the next street to his own house, and there, unheard of by his wife or friends, and without the shadow of a reason for such self-banishment, dwelt upwards of twenty years. (90)

19 Though this is undoubtedly a report, a certain bemusement ("without the shadow of a reason," "self-banishment") also bespeaks judgmental and ironic values classifiable as comment.

20 The fourth combination is METAPHOR, whose sphere is the concrete universal. Metaphor is not only "the archetype" (Ortony, 1993, 3) of tropes, but "an indispensable basis of language and thought" (Goatly, 1997, 1). It has been unduly scanted by narratologists (Cardonne-Arlyck, 1984, and Bal, 1985, being important exceptions). Narrative discourse is often saturated with metaphors, ranging from dead to conventional and active ones. The fact is that there is practically no escape from metaphor in narrative discourse, as can be seen from the citations offered in this study. For example, citation (1) is a commentmetaphor based on the image of "the foul stream of hereditary evil, like a sewer," which "flow[s]" in McTeague's veins. Metaphor privileges discourse using concrete terms (images) to figure forth general aspects of narrative reality.

21 The scheme report-scene-comment-metaphor constitutes a frame of reference (FR), its four demarcations figuring as theoretical reference points that narrative discourse can in practice only approach, but never reach. The distinction narration/description can be integrated into this scheme, which reflects the temporal determinants and generic affiliations of narrative discourse.

22 Report is geared to action, which it summarizes and abstracts. Hence, with report, story time surpasses text time (note how Hawthorne renders "upwards of twenty years" in a sentence, as it were). The maximum asymmetry would be reached with a finite reporting of eternity, something that not even eschatological scriptures (e.g., the Book of Revelation) can do, reduced, as they turn out to be, to declaring some state of affairs as eternal, thus describing eternity rather than rendering it as a story. Report, conveying an action, is by its nature opposed to description, which addresses itself to situations and states. This, however, does not mean that a report ("He lived a life of adventure") cannot be descriptively rephrased ("His life was full of adventure"). Generically, report is narration pure and simple: it is "naked" narrative equally distant from the evocative quality of scene and the conceptual spirit of comment and, in its literalness and straightforwardness, is opposed to the figurative and imagistic nature of metaphor.

23 Scene, the concrete rendition of a particular action, has a descriptive counterpart in concrete and detailed description of scenery, setting, and characters. Thus, Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" features scene both as action and as scenery. With scene conceived as action, text time and story time are conventionally said to coincide, particularly when the scene consists of dialogue from which inquit-tags have been eliminated. However, a full equation of text time and story time is possible only outside narrative, particularly in drama, where time performed and performance time coincide in the scenes and acts of a play. Scene is thus generically related to drama. As Percy Lubbock (1923) already explained, the purpose of scene in narrative is to "show": it promotes illusion by minimizing the audibility of the narrative agency while simultaneously supplying the reader with detail amenable to visualization.

24 Comment suspends the story, applying a pause to it. It promotes evaluation and characterization, thus becoming easily, but not necessarily, descriptive. Citation (2) illustrates how comment can convey a reality that is not static, a course rather than a
state of affairs, as it were. The theoretical extreme of comment would be an enunciator no longer related to an enunciated world capable of being imagined — a speaker treating general issues abstractly, as done by the essayist.

25 Metaphor conjoins similarity and dissimilarity. As a trope of resemblance or analogy, it works by incomplete feature-matching, by the "highlighting and suppression of aspects of experience" (Goatly, 1997, 2). Discussions of metaphor tend to locate its persuasive power in an imagistic dimension that "suggests the comparison of metaphor with figures or pictures" (Moran, 1989, 108). Melville's story "Bartleby the Scrivener" demonstrates how metaphor can graft an image-making quality on language. The "cadaverous" (132) protagonist is beheld writing "silently, palely, mechanically" (121), with other interlinking clusters of images of stasis, silence, and pallor casting the scrivener as a corpse. Generally speaking, by making us see one thing as something else, metaphor involves an iconic moment that makes it essentially descriptive.

26 Working on the principle of semantic substitution rather than syntagmatic continuity, metaphorization slows down narrative action and privileges text time over story time. In view of its iconic nature, the realm of metaphor can be conceived as circumscribed only by the infinitude of space (scientific, Christian, and otherwise), which it would take an eternity of text time to render. Making selections from the code (language), metaphor combines linguistic features in a way that suggests an equation of discrete semantic fields. Jacobson's dictum about poetry — "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (1960, 358; emphasis in the text) — has been called "a definition of metaphorical substitution" (Lodge, 1977, 92).

27 The FR thus constituted embraces the registers enunciation (conveying a communication scenario), illusion (evocation, immediacy), narration (temporal reality), and description (static reality). The axis scene-comment, depending on the direction taken, designates orientation toward either illusion or increasing enunciative value. The axis reportmetaphor mediates between narration (report) and description. Metaphor is further removed from narration than any of the other types of discourse: its equidistant position in relation to comment and scene translates into a conception of metaphors as "iconic signs presenting meanings as well as representing meanings" (Goatly, 1997, 164). Scene and comment, as shown, partake of both stasis and temporality. Report is open to evaluative nuances (see citation (6)) while metaphor easily becomes interpretative. Thus, both report and metaphor are related to comment, and they also point toward scene, which dissolves report into detail and which, more than the conceptually involved imagery of metaphor, caters to the reader's illusion. Actual narrative discourses can be conceived as occupying the FR, a force field within which they are determined by report, comment, metaphor, and scene in inverse ratio to their distance from these four theoretical reference points (the shorter the distance between a reference point and a narrative discourse, the stronger the influence exerted by the former on the latter).

V. The transposition principle

28 The scheme outlined above — a primary FR pertaining to thirdperson narrative — has an inherent tendency to transcend itself along the scene-comment axis. Comment often generates an authorial "I" and/or "you" after the model "you, my dear reader." Susanna Rowson uses this type of formulaic address in Charlotte Temple, a highly authorial novel: "Now, my dear sober matron... let me entreat you not to put on a grave face and throw
the book down in a passion" (1964, 59). The authorial "I"/"you" is directed toward the sphere of statements about reality, constituting, as it does, a narrative device in which the "I" lays claim to identity with the author of the text and the "you" figures as a narratee directly implicating the reader in the realm of fiction. Typically, such usage often yields illusion-dispelling and ontologically stratifying effects.

Hawthorne's sketch "The Haunted Mind," a second-person text in the present tense reflecting the essayistic origins of the American short story, is a foray into the domains of the authorial "you":

(7) What a singular moment is the first one when you have hardly begun to recollect yourself after starting from midnight slumber! By unclosing your eyes so suddenly, you seem to have surprised the personages of your dream in full convocation round your bed... (233)

In English, the pronoun you (like French tu and vous) serves to address a person (or persons) or to make an impersonal statement. Hawthorne's text conveys views and experiences that, given their general application, are advanced as pertinent to "you," the text's narratee. The authorial "I" implicit in this generalizing "you" surfaces as a part of "we" in the following comment-metaphor: "In the depths of every heart there is a tomb and a dungeon, though the lights, the music, and revelry above may cause us to forget their existence" (235).

Proceeding along the comment-scene axis, we eventually abandon the first frame of reference (FR1). In structural terms, every character speech in third-person narrative is a first-person narrative in nuce, provided the characters make statements about their reality (identical realms of existence of the enunciator and the enunciated) rather than narrating a fiction. Hence, a character speech after the model "S/He said: 'I...'" effects a complete, though momentary, transfer from FR1 to a second FR (FR2) — that of first-person narrative, with every reference to the primary narrative agency cut off, in principle, by the character speech. This means (by way of correcting Käte Hamburger) that the subject/object structure of narrative never totally vanishes, for it can vanish in one FR only to re-emerge in another. Typically, a character speech is a comment in the new FR that it establishes, but (no matter what its discourse variety) it has scenic value in the old FR, since it represents a character performing a speech act. Transference of discourse to a discrete FR puts discourse in a different key, as it were. Our term for this is "transposition."

In FR2, the scheme of narrative discourse recurs, even though, as indicated, the enunciator proves more stable. With citations (3) and (4), two passages from a first-person novel have already been provided: Frederic Henry's reunion with Rinaldi exemplifies scene and, as far as the dialogue parts are concerned, switches to FR3, whereas the protagonist's commemoration of Catherine Barkley is comment-report in FR2. Another text anchored in FR2 is Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," a story told in the first person plural. The "we" encompasses the narrator and the other citizens of Jefferson, Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, USA: "When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral" (119). "We" and "you" occur in Lorrie Moore's "What is Seized," which is basically a story in the first person:

(8) The rooms in our house were like songs. Each had its own rhythmic spacing and clutter, which if you crossed your eyes became a sort of musical notation, a score — clusters of eighth notes, piles of triplets, and the wooden roundness of doorways, like clefs, all blending in a concerto. (27)
This expanded simile has a general metaphoric capacity evoking the harmony that prevailed in the narrator's family ("our house") during her childhood. The effect of inserting the unspecified agent "you" is to enhance the pertinence of her account and to present a bid for authority.

Going far beyond FR2, Theodor Storm's novella "Der Schimmelreiter" (1888) is a complex case of narrative embedding. The text has an anonymous old man (a first-person narrator in FR2) recall a tale he once read in a magazine at his great-grandmother's home. In the remembered magazine tale (FR3), a man tells how, during the 1830s, he met a country schoolmaster who related a somber story (FR4) about a mid-eighteenth century Deichgraf. The story about the dike-association chairman, Hauke Haien, encompasses his longings as well as his own and others'words, thus deploying character speech and consciousness: transposition to FR5. The projection of an authorial matrix into the schoolmaster's story is made explicit by the comment of a man in the schoolmaster's company who claims that his maid-servant is better at telling the story, which hence figures as a folktale undergoing creative modification while being passed on. For somebody familiar with Storm's sources and family history, the structure of the text may be even more complex. For such a reader, the anonymous old man may become associated with the authorial "I" engaged in an elaborate mystification, so that the articulation of the text begins in FR1.

In theory, transposition is infinite, with the narrative agency of third-person narrative creating a first-person narrator introducing a "s/he" whose narrative may give right of speech to another character, and so on. In principle, FR2 and all further subordinate FRs are first-person narratives, but every embedded narrative that is fictive in relation to the narrator's world projects the matrix of third-person narrative into the FR in question. Clearly, the concatenation of FRs, which permits a survey of the territory of narrative discourse, functions along pronominal lines.

VI. Modes of conveying speech and thought

The presentation of thought in fiction is modeled on that of speech. "Thought" is to be understood here in a comprehensive sense, as consciousness in general, including sensory perception. Announced direct character speech corresponds to direct reporting of thought (patterns: "S/He said/thought: 'I am...'"). Announced indirect character speech corresponds to indirect reporting of thought (patterns: "S/He said/thought s/he was..."). When reporting of thought, direct and indirect, relies on a linguistic scenario — context — rather than on announcement, the result is, respectively, interior monologue or free indirect discourse (patterns: "[context] I am..."/"[context] S/He was..."). Free indirect discourse (discours indirect libre, erlebte Rede) also conveys speech. The spoken equivalent of interior monologue is unannounced direct character speech, which is the matrix of first-person narrative. Direct character speech and thought, whether announced or unannounced, effect a full transposition to a subordinate FR. Indirectly conveyed character speech and thought, whether announced or free, link up adjoining FRs.

Free indirect discourse (FID) is the most frequently discussed of all modes of presenting speech and consciousness.

(9) Old Man O'Brien spoke of the good old days, gone by, of the Washington Park racetrack.... And some of them horses, too, they were beauts.... Johnny's mother
knew how good them horses were, because she had had a good time more than once on their winnings.... (Farrell, 1977, 81)

The third sentence is FID/speech variety: indirect character speech, unannounced, though foreshadowed by "spoke" in the first sentence and by the second sentence, a direct character speech. FID/thought variety mixes well with interior monologue (IM):

(10) He pulled the halldoor to after him very quietly, more, till the footleaf dropped gently over the threshold, a limp lid. Looked shut. All right till I come back anyhow. (Joyce, 1968, 59)

"Looked shut" is FID, the sequel IM. Both "thoughts" are marked by ellipsis, a colloquial speech feature (cf. "them horses" and "beauts" in (9)). Free indirect discourse also occurs in first-person narrative:

(11) He [Lolita's husband] opened his mouth — and took a sip of beer...
Good. If he was silent I could be silent too. Indeed, I could very well do with a little rest.... (Nabokov, 1961, 288f.)

The second paragraph is in FID, conveying what Humbert Humbert, the narrator, thinks in this little scene. Since Nabokov's novel is introduced by a fictional editor ("John Ray, Jr., Ph. D."), the second paragraph represents a transition from FR3 to FR4.

Endorsing a distinction introduced by Genette, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan states: "In so-called 'third-person centre of consciousness' (James's The Ambassadors...), the centre of consciousness (or 'reflector') is the focalizer, while the user of the third person is the narrator" (1983, 73). This distinction is more logical than real. In the following passage, Lambert Strether, James's finicky hero, is wondering whether liking Paris too much will not undermine his authority with Chad Newsome, his charge:

(12) Was he to renounce all amusement for the sweet sake of that authority? and would such renouncement give him for Chad a moral glamour? This little problem bristled the more by reason of poor Strether's fairly open sense of the irony of things. (57)

The first two sentences are in FID, that is, focalized by Strether. By dint of that very fact, the narratorial voice is submerged in what (except for the past tense and the third person, both derived from FR1) figures as Strether's thought, subsequent to which the narratorial voice re-emerges ("poor Strether"). There is indeed no better way of suppressing the authorial voice than transposition — having fictional characters speak and think. Genette's distinction between "the question who sees? and the question who speaks? (1980, 186) has resulted in a wide-spread incapacity for perceiving the interaction between enunciation and focalization. The distinction between voice (the "narrator") and focalization does not correspond to our reading practice because the emergence of a figural perspective submerges the narratorial act, which means that a derivative subject-object structure (the character perceiving something) screens the superordinate one (the narrative agency telling something). This principle even extends to the merely incipient figural perspective provided by reference to, rather than a verbalization of, character consciousness ("psycho-narration" in Cohn's terminology [1978]):

(13) Presley was silent. Dyke's challenge was unanswerable. There was a lapse in their talk, Presley, drumming on the arm of the seat, meditating on this injustice; Dyke looking off over the fields.... (Norris, 1938, 17)

The narratorial voice tends to fade away in the references to character consciousness, which are generated by the scenic context and in turn engender scenic value. The second sentence of the passage may be FID; "this injustice" is an instance of character deixis, suggesting a transcription from Presley's meditation.
The authorial voice is also muted by character thought in the second person. In Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit*, a third-person novel about race relations in the American South, Bess, a black woman, is shown lying in bed, blaming herself for not having interfered in her sister Nonnie's affair with a white man: "Yes, if you had dared tell her — why hadn't you? I don't know... sometimes I don't know! Bess turned restlessly" (14; ellipsis in the text). Prior to the re-emergence of the narratorial voice with "Bess..." (FR1), we have silent self-address in the second person leading to IM (both in FR2). In another passage, the narratorial voice gives way to FID using the second person: "Nonnie... looked across White Town. Strange... being pregnant could make you feel like this" (2; first ellipsis mine). Clearly, the narrative agency and figural focalization, if not mutually exclusive, are mutually subtractive.

Finally, second-person narrative, which has a special affinity with the depiction of thought, invites further comment. Benveniste speaks of a "relation par laquelle 'je' et 'tu' se spécifient" (1966, 228). The manner in which "you" and "I" specify one another can be construed thus: "you," as the designation of the addressee, presupposes an addressor who becomes explicit by referring to him-/herself as "I." In contrast, the use of "I" primarily points toward self-reference, not the designation of an addressor. Put differently, "you" necessarily evokes "I," whereas the reverse is not the case. This state of affairs is reflected in the fact that most first-person narratives manage without "you"-usage — i.e., without specifying a narratee — whereas second-person narrative (Michel Butor's as in novel *La Modification*) tends toward intermittent usage of "I," thus designating the addressor implicit in "you." All this suggests that second-person narrative can basically be modeled on first-person narrative. In fact, the distinction between the two narrative types is a merely quantitative consideration in such texts as Robert Penn Warren's novel *All the King's Men* (1946), in which the narrator shifts between the first and the second person. Likewise, the authorial "I" has a counterpart in the authorial "you." Nevertheless, as has been indicated, the second person also has specific expressive possibilities. Among them, the affinity between "you"-usage and the depiction of consciousness stands out.

This affinity is due to the fact that the reader, confronted with one character addressing another or the self as "you" and thereby providing a story, finds it easier to conceive of the addressee as thinking than as speaking. Special cases apart (e.g., the detective explaining to the culprit how "youdunit"), one does not usually tell the addressee his or her own story, nor is one likely to tell a story by addressing him- or herself in speech. Hence, most narratives in the second person, or those making significant use of it, can be "naturalized" as silent address to another (Joyce Carol Oates's story "You") and, above all, to oneself. Such texts often reflect the waning appeal of a mimetic conception of interior monologue. Molly Bloom's famous IM at the end of *Ulysses* conveys the very notion of stream of consciousness by blurring syntactic articulation (promptly restored by the reader, who breaks down the 40page "sentence" into little phrases). By contrast, the first chapter of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* disarranges the chronological order of syntactically intact sections of first-person narrative in the past tense, thereby suggesting the working of an idiot's mind in structural rather than in syntactic terms (see Meindl, 1989, 151). The beginning of Butor's *La Modification*, evoking a passenger entering a train compartment, proves even less mimetic: "Vous avez mis le pied gauche sur la rainure de cuivre, et de votre épaule droite vous essayez en vain de pousser un peu plus le panneau coulissant" (9). The strange effect created by this passage is derived from the notation of automatic action and sense data unlikely to call for any mental registering at all — not to
mention a mode of formal self-address. It is this difficulty, presumably, that has led to analyses of *La Modification* entertaining the authorial option. Increasingly, however, this novel employs the second person for self-discovery in the mode of silent self-address. Léon perceives that his love for his Roman mistress Cécile is inseparable from his fascination with the Eternal City: "... vous n'aimez véritablement Cécile que dans la mesure où elle est pour vous le visage de Rome" (198). Rome-Cécile proves incapable of being integrated into Léon's ordinary Paris life and shortening future. A new, resigned sense of self marked by an occasional appearance of the first person emerges, expressing a design to reanimate an arid marriage: "Vous dites: je te le promets, Henriette, dès que nous le pourrons, nous reviendrons ensemble à Rome" (236). If the novel is regarded as anchored in silent self-address in FR2, the promise to Henriette is IM in FR3.

Jay McInerney’s novel *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) and several stories, including the title story, in Frederick Barthelme’s *Moon Deluxe* (1983) use the Butorian matrix, but permit no "I" to emerge from the "you." There is even a type of "you"-plus-imperative-mood narrative appropriately dubbed "the recipe form" by Brian Richardson (1991, 319):

> (14) Meet in expensive beige raincoats, on a pea-soupy night. Like a detective movie. First, stand in front of Florsheim’s Fiftyseventh Street window, press your face close to the glass.... You can see your breath on the glass. (Moore, 1986, 3)

In this text, which goes on to recount the brief affair of the "you" (eventually named "Charlene") with a married man, the authorial option (which, in Butors novel, looms in the background) seems to prevail. The imperatives and the "you"-usage in the present tense apparently issue from the narrative agency. However, this "you" poses the same problem as has been observed regarding certain forms of "you"-usage in Thomas Pynchon’s work: "Apparently, the more concrete and detailed the experiences ascribed to you, the less plausible is the hypothesis that [the addressee] is identical with the narratee" (McHale, 1985, 108). That is, the "you" in Moore’s story cannot be easily apprehended as a female reader-surrogate in the text. We suggest that this story, by means of educative authorial address, constructs a character ("Charlene") that eventually appears emancipated enough to be tentatively released into silent self-address as she is admonished/admonishes herself not to get inveigled again by the preying male: "He calls you occasionally at the office to ask how you are. You doodle numbers and curlicues on the corners of the Rolodex cards. Fiddle with your Phi Beta Kappa key. Stare out the window. You always, always say: ‘Fine’" (22). The reader cannot finally opt for one of the two mutually exclusive discourses between which the text negotiates: authorial address of a character and a character’s silent self-address. However, such perplexities, far from invalidating the proposed model of narrative discourse, demonstrate its usefulness as a grid for explaining even very special narrative effects.

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**NOTES**

1. This essay limits itself to narrative fiction. For linguistic advice I am indebted to Frances Schön, M. A., and the editor of this collection, John Pier, whom I also thank for some narratological suggestions.

2. Franz Stanzel originally distinguished between three implicitly pronominal narrative situations: first-person narrative, authorial (third-person) narrative, and figural (third-person)
narrative. Since then, he has reconstituted his theory by balancing it between the categories person, perspective, and mode. Gérard Genette downgrades person (1980, 243f.), as does Wayne C. Booth (1961, 158).

3. Genette’s homodiegetic narrative, defined by the presence of the narrator in the tale s/he tells, can be subsumed under Stanzel’s concept of first-person narrative (identity of the narrator’s and the tale’s world). See note 8 below, which ties in with my earlier critique of Stanzel (Meindl, 1986). Stanzel and Genette are excellently compared by Dorrit Cohn (1981).

4. “It is generally thought,” Andrew Goatly says, “that metaphor tends to have Concretizing tendencies” (1987, 124). However, he cites such examples as “The building was a diagram of prayer” (1987, 207), where the metaphoric vehicle (in bold) is more abstract than the metaphoric topic (in italics). But does this metaphor not invite us to imagine a particular building (perhaps one resembling a Gothic church)? Metaphors derive their “metaphoricity” from the distance between the semantic fields they conjoin. Significantly, Goatly assigns top rank to such metaphors as “Life is a box of chocolates,” for they span “the largest distance, because we have to cross... from the concrete artefact to the abstract,” thus accomplishing “an analogical Transfer or Concretizing metaphor” (1997, 39). Metonymy (“crown” for “king”) and synecdoche (“sail” for “ship”) undermine or minimize that distance.

5. Strictly speaking, describing something is saying what it is like. In examining the values of metaphor (as a creative cognitive device, as a cultural entity, as a mediator between mind and the world), Earl R. Mac Cormac (1985, 229) says “one recognizes them as descriptive values.” The most descriptive metaphors are noun-based, although this does not exclude verbs from metaphoric use: "Ships plowed the sea." In this report-metaphor, action is somehow stilled and framed, due perhaps to the fact that we cannot imagine plowing without imagining a plow: verbs, according to Goatly (1997, 86), permit only "indirect image evocation." The report-metaphor axis can be further fleshed out by treating simile, with David Lodge (1977, 105), as "the form of metaphorical language... least disturbing to syntagmatic continuity" (cf. "He fought like a lion"/"He was a lion in the fight"). Lodge's conception of metonymy, based on "Jacobson’s characterization of prose as ‘forwarded essentially by contiguity’” (1977, 88), and his view of synecdochic detail permeating portrayals of milieu, also illuminate the FR’s center area, where narration yields to description.

6. For the next paragraph and section V of this essay, consulting the following figure is recommended:

7. Stanzel’s circular model has problems with embedding (cf. Cohn, 1981, 159). By claiming (1984, 201) that such devices as the fictional editor of a manuscript (Richard Symson in Gulliver’s Travels) approach the function of an authorial narrator, the structural difference between first- and third-person narrative is obscured. Clearly, Symson, who calls Gulliver his "friend," and Gulliver share the same realm of existence. Symson is a first-person narrator in FR2 introducing Gulliver’s account (anchored in FR3). Genette (1980, 248) does not really transcend the
The distinction first-person/third-person narrative in positing "four basic types of narrator's status": LEVEL: Extradiegetic Intradiegetic
RELATIONSHIP:
Heterodiegetic Homer Scheherazade...
Homodiegetic Gil Blas... Ulysses

"Extradiegetic" designates a narrator in the first degree: "Homer" in the Odyssey, Gil Blas in Lesage's novel. Scheherazade and Ulysses (in Books IX-XII of the Odyssey) are intradiegetic; embedded narrators. Gil Blas and Ulysses are present in the stories they tell (homodiegetic), "Homer" and Scheherazade are not (heterodiegetic). However, Scheherazade's stories, in disclosing (fictionalizing) the characters'minds, are invaded by the third-person narrative matrix, which also reigns in "Homer." The rubric "homodiegetic" provides examples of first-person narrative. "Extradiegetic," in designating the mere fact of first-degree narrative, has the disadvantage that it refers to dissimilar narrative levels: the Odyssey is anchored in FR1, Gil Blas in FR2. Nevertheless, Genette's terminology has provided the basis for very subtle studies of narrative embedding (e.g., John Pier's analysis [1992] of Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire).

FID is not only unifocal, but also practically univocal: we hear the figural voice or overhear, as it were, the character thinking. It is often additionally signaled by character deixis (see citation (13)) and lexical markers of figural subjectivity (see citations (9) and (10)). However, spanning, as it does, discrete FRs, FID can also attract authorial elements. Consider this passage: "It will have been sufficiently seen that he [Strether] was not a man to neglect any good chance for reflection. Was it at all possible, for instance, to like Paris enough without liking it too much? He luckily, however, hadn't promised Mrs. Newsome not to like it at all" (James, 1938, 57). Authorial irony invades Strether's thought. It is only in extreme cases such as this that one would consider FID a dual voice. Generally speaking, the authorial idiom can be colored by figural discourse ("the good old days, gone by" in citation (9)), just as authorial elements can infiltrate a figural context. See Fludernik (1993) for a state-of-the-art account of such modulations.

This mode of arguing is related to "the redefinition of narrativity qua experientiality" proposed by Fludernik (1996, 13). The most comprehensive publication on second-person narrative, subsuming previous scholarship, is Fludernik (1994). See also Meindl (1998).

ABSTRACTS

The proposed model foregrounds the category PERSON by following E. Benveniste as to the fundamental disparity between the first and second grammatical persons, on the one hand, and the third person, on the other. My argument runs as follows: A statement about reality is in the first person, that is, made by its author. Third-person narrative fiction is a legitimate notion, given the displacement it enacts between the author and a narrating agency that does not share its realm of existence with the narrated characters (F. Stanzel). Third — and first-person narrative can be structurally differentiated as to qualitative scope ([un-]reliability) and quantitative reach. Basically, both narrative types show the same interplay of the registers of enunciation and illusion: the narrating agency dissolves in evoking a world and emerges by commenting on it (a "narrator" does not narrate, but, in H. Weinrich's sense of the term, comments). Comment (which is general in subject matter and abstract in manner), report (particular and abstract), scene (particular and concrete), and metaphor (general and concrete) demarcate a frame of reference for narrative discourse that subsumes description. With third-person narrative, this
frame of reference has a tendency to transcend itself toward the sphere of reality statements via comment (authorial "I"/"you") and toward first-person narrative via scene, given that, in third-person narrative, the speech of a character about his/her reality is a first-person narrative in nuce. The transposition principle at work between third — and first-person narrative and all further embedded narratives consists in the fact that narrative subject/object structure (K. Hamburger) vanishes in one frame of reference only by reemerging in another. The modes of conveying character thought and speech in fiction can be conceived in terms of complete or partial transposition of narrative discourse to a subordinate frame of reference. Regarding free indirect discourse, G. Genette's distinction between focalization and (narratorial) voice must be challenged as contradicted by our reading experience. Second-person narrative, whose special affinity for the depiction of consciousness is explicable from the angle of "natural" narratology (M. Fludernik), can be basically modeled on first-person narrative.

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Narratological Categories and the (Non)-Distinction between Factual and Fictional Narratives

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It is small wonder that narratological categories should have been derived almost exclusively from fictional narratives and that, in return, they should generally have been applied to the study of narrative fiction. After all, narratology developed as a branch within poetics and its practitioners have been literary scholars rather than linguists, sociologists or even historians. Still, it will appear as unsatisfactory to many that the theoretical discipline most immediately concerned with narrative as such has more or less restricted itself to what is only a segment of the narrative domain — even if, by common consent, it is the segment most rewarding to narratological analysis. It is only in the wake of the "linguistic turn" in historiographic theory and the debate on narrativity and fictionalization in historical writing as carried on by theorists like Hayden White, Paul Ricoeur, Paul Veyne or Michel de Certeau that the relevance of narratological categories to factual narratives, especially to the writing of history, has begun to be investigated (Rigney, 1990; Carrard, 1992). At the same time, literary narratologists like Gérard Genette (1990) and Dorrit Cohn (1989; 1990) have employed these categories to probe the boundaries between factual and fictional narratives, drawing on pioneering work by Käte Hamburger (The Logic of Literature) and, in their own ways, on Paul Ricoeur’s monumental synthesis of literary narratology and historiography (Ricoeur, 1984-88). In the long run, these efforts amount to a final abandonment of narratology's structuralist orientation and to an opening up of the discipline to the concerns of discourse typology and of cultural hermeneutics. They can further be seen as addressing two grievances, of which the second is in many ways a consequence of the first. For notwithstanding narratology's almost exclusive concern with narrative fiction, the theoretical concepts derived from narratological analyses of fictional texts have been invested, more often than not, with overall validity for fictional as well as for factual narrative. This is the background to Genette's postulate that "... fictional narratology cannot indefinitely postpone asking whether its results, that is, its methods, apply to a domain which it has
never properly explored but only silently annexed, without examination or justification" (Genette, 1990, 756). Surprisingly, however, the question of the relevance of narratological criteria for a distinction between factual and fictional narrative has not been pursued any further within the framework of the discipline since what must be regarded as the seminal essays by Cohn (1990) and Genette (1990) — not to speak of the earlier philosophical radicalization of the concerns of narratology and of historiographic theory in Ricœur’s *Time and Narrative* (Ricoeur, 1984-88). On the contrary, the latest developments in narratology (Fludernik, 1996) tend to dismiss the issue as irrelevant for narratological purposes.

The present paper proposes to discuss the applicability of narratological categories (especially tense, mode and voice) to factual narrative. As a wider-ranging discussion of several types of factual narrative discourse would far transcend the scope of this paper, I shall concentrate on historiography including biography and autobiography as the fields which have provoked most of the existing work on the subject. Although Monika Fludernik has tentatively excluded historiography from the domain of narrative in her impressive *Towards a 'Natural Narratology'* (1996) because of what she considers its lack of "experientiality," I should very much like to retain historiography as a paradigm of factual narrative. For one thing, it seems to me that the emphasis on "experientiality" as the essential element of narrativity amounts to privileging stream of consciousness types of narrative in the same way as the traditional emphasis on plot (as criticized by Fludernik) implies privileging report and "realistic" narratives. Moreover, in many historical accounts, "experientiality" is not really lacking, since history is also concerned — even if in an oblique manner — with the motivations and expectations of historical figures. I should argue even further that history participates in the category of "experientiality," as all individual experience is embedded in historical and cultural experience. If Fludernik, by adopting a constructivist point of view, tends to align experientiality with fictionality, narrativist theories of historiography have also stressed the fictionalization of the historian’s account which occurs as a result of "emplotment" (cf. White, 1973, 1978, 1987).

Applying narratological categories to historical narrative involves advantages for both narratology and historiography. As Wolf-Dieter Stempel has argued, historiographic texts provide more favourable opportunities for an analysis of the "elementary conditions of narrative" ("die elementaren Bedingungen des Erzählens") (Stempel, 1973, 326; my translation) than fictional narratives. Thus, it appears that the application of narratological categories to factual narrative may even lead to an expansion or modification of the inventory of narratology. Historiography, on the other hand, profits alike from a mutual illumination of the two disciplines. Narratology has charted, in the domain of fictional narrative, a wide range of complex narrative strategies whose implications for the interpretation of fictional narratives can be clearly defined. These strategies are usually foregrounded in literature as central elements of fictional representation and may be anticipated by the reader on the basis of his previous knowledge of fictional narratives. Applying the narratological tool-box to historywriting may help to identify stylistic or rhetorical effects and thus bring to light ideological substrata which would otherwise pass unnoticed.

The fact that narratological categories as constituents of different theories of narrative are rarely if ever fully compatible in their detailed circumscriptions, let alone the fact that they come dressed in so many different terminologies, leaves them open to endless
discussion and revision. Here, however, is not the place to enter into a discussion of narratological categories as such. Rather, I have decided upon a combination of Stanzelean and Genettean concepts (as compared in Cohn, 1981), partly in order to follow the paths indicated and tentatively explored by Dorrit Cohn in "Signposts of Fictionality. A Narratological Perspective" (1990), who refers to Stanzel’s narrative situations, and by Gérard Genette in "Fictional Narrative, Factual Narrative" (1990). First, however, I shall address — with Dorrit Cohn — the distinction between story and discourse and its validity in fictional and factual narrative. Following this, I shall refer to the Genettean categories for the analysis of time (order, duration and frequency) before proceeding to narrative situations (Stanzel, 1955 1971) and to the distinction between author and narrator (aspects covered by the Genettean categories of mode and voice). In their essays, both Cohn and Genette point to the opposing positions on fictionality of John Searle, for whom a priori "there is no textual property, syntactical or semantic that will identify a text as a work of fiction" (Searle, 1975, 325), and Käte Hamburger, for whom there exist, in the words of Genette, "incontestable textual indices (symptoms) of fictionality" (Genette, 1990, 757). I have included references to Hamburger’s classic The Logic of Literature whenever this seems apposite, but have refrained from a more extensive discussion of her tenets.

1. Story and discourse as elementary narratological categories and their applicability to historical narrative

The distinction between histoire and discours (Todorov, 1966, 126), or story and discourse (Chatman, 1978), which goes back to the Russian formalist critic Boris Tomashevsky’s opposition of fabula and sjuzhet, has become one of the commonplace of literary narratology, but has been ignored by narrativist approaches within historiographic theory. As Dorrit Cohn (1990, 778) suggests, the reason for this may well be that the story-discourse model of literary narratology, besides being a nonreferential model, is a synchronic one positing a simultaneity of the two levels. A model valid for historical narrative ought to comprise a diachronic as well as a referential level, as historiography, if one disregards (post-) structuralist or deconstructionist tenets, refers to events belonging to the real past. Cohn’s concern — like that of Karlheinz Stierle (1973, 530-4) — lies with the re-introduction of a third, referential level into the analysis of historical narrative (in Stierle’s model: all narrative), while at the same time she is cognizant of the constructivist view of historiography as propounded by narrativist theoreticians of historiography, notably by W. B. Gallie, Louis O. Mink and Hayden White. Leaving aside the theoretical and philosophical issues involved in such an extension of the story-discourse model, it must be asked, from a narratological point of view, whether the bi-level model of classical narratology is indeed only of marginal interest for the analysis of historical narratives. In other words, is the duplicity of énoncé and énonciation in fact the privilege of fictional narrative, as Paul Ricceur (1985, 61-99) has it? This seems to be refuted by historical practice, which gives us different versions of one and the same "history." However, Dorrit Cohn (1990, 778) is most certainly right in assuming a "more stable" and low-profiled relation between story and discourse in historiography as opposed to a more complex and variable one in fictional narratives, an assumption that would have to be proven by a comparative study of historical and fictional discourse.
drawing on insights provided by the respective theoretical disciplines: historiographic theory and (literary) narratology.

Unfortunately, each of the two disciplines has hitherto been concerned with only one level of the model to the virtual exclusion of the other. In the case of historiographic theory, this has been the story-level of historical narratives. Hayden White's term "emplotment" refers to the cognitive pre-structuring of historical contiguity in terms of established patterns of narrative. This process, according to White, is motivated by a desire for [the] formal coherency of a story," by the "universal need not only to narrate but to give to events an aspect of narrativity" ([1980] 1987, 4). Selection comes in as a major factor, as Arthur C. Danto states in his analysis of the function of narrative structure in the creation of meaning in historiography: "... narrative is a structure imposed upon events, grouping some of them together with others, and ruling some out as lacking relevance" ([1965] 1968, 12). For White, the historian's narrative encoding of his material is based on what he calls four "master tropes" — metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony-, which correlate with the archetypal plot structures defined by Northrop Frye with respect to fictional literature. This correlation is not incidental, as the narrativizing of history as described by White involves a process of fictionalization. According to White's theory, the narrative (pre)structuring of the historian's material sets in on a level prior to its exposition in the historiographical text with the conception of the past as history, i.e. as a coherent and "narrativized" sequence of events.

White is not at all concerned with the discourse level of historical narrative, the level which literary narratology (after earlier attempts at identifying narrative deep structures or at elaborating narrative grammars) has concentrated on in the field of narrative fiction. It must be pertinent, then, to apply narratological criteria to the discourse level of historical narratives, and the works by Rigney (1990) and Carrard (1992) are steps in this direction. While Rigney employs narratological criteria to cast new light on the ideological bias of the works she analyses and Carrard demonstrates that even in the works of the statistically orientated "new" historians narrative still holds its own, the more intricate question is of course whether we can identify discursive criteria to distinguish between fictional and factual narratives. The recent narratological investigations of the fact/fiction boundary by Cohn (1990) and Genette (1990) cautiously suggest a positive answer. Of the aspects investigated by Cohn, only focalization is firmly embedded in the level of discourse. Before I turn to focalization, however, I propose to take a look at a phenomenon which comprises both story and discourse: time (order, duration and frequency).

2. Time

In historical and fictional narrative alike there is necessarily a tension between the chronology and — in a wider sense — the syntactic structuring of the story. Literary narratology in the wake of Günther Müller, Eberhard Lämmert and Gérard Genette has developed a refined inventory of descriptive categories for the analysis of narrative chronology that may be profitably applied to a comparative analysis of fictional and factual narratives. Eberhard Lämmert states in his Bauformen des Erzählens (1955) that "an observing and critical comparison of narrated time and the time of narration... is at first the safest way to grasp hold of the relation between the world of the narrative and its linguistic representation" ("... ein beobachtender und urteilender Vergleich von erzählter
Zeit und Erzählzeit ist der zunächst sicherste Weg, das Verhältnis von erzählter Wirklichkeit und sprachlicher Wiedergabe zu fassen") (1955, 22 f.; my translation). This certainly holds true for the fictional narratives Lämmert is concerned with, but can the analysis of time provide clues for a distinction between factual and fictional narrative? Genette, in applying the categories of order, duration and frequency (as distinguished in his *Narrative Discourse* [1980]) to factual narrative (cf. Genette, 1990), denies this possibility. According to him, "nothing prevents factual narrative from using analepses or prolepses" (1990, 758), and a statistical comparison would reveal, as he rightly assumes, a higher degree of affinity between certain factual and fictional types (e.g., authentic diaries and diary-novels) than between all fictional types, on the one hand, and all factual types, on the other hand. It follows, therefore, that "fictional narrative and factual narrative are not to be distinguished wholesale either by their use of anachrony or by the manner in which they signal this usage" (Genette, 1990, 760). The same is valid, by way of analogy, for duration and frequency. If Hamburger, as Genette is aware, is right in including "the presence of detailed scenes, dialogues reported in extenso and verbatim, and extended descriptions" (Genette, 1990, 761) among the indices of fictionality as identified by her, it must be noted that these features are not ruled out in historical narrative, even though they may well result in a fictionalization of the historian's account. Indeed, analepsis, prolepsis, concentration, expansion and iteration do occur in both fictional and historical narrative, although I have a feeling that, in line with Cohn's assumption of a generally less variable relation between the "story" and "discourse" levels in history-writing, an empirical investigation would reveal more level and regular chronological patterns in historiography. At any rate, historical narratives in practice lack the extreme relations between story time and discourse time often resorted to in fiction. The prerogative of fiction thus lies in the exploitation of the creative potential arising from the dichotomy of story time and discourse time and in the foregrounding of that dichotomy for artistic purposes. To my knowledge, this prerogative is first emphasized in that famous passage from book II, ch. 1 of *Tom Jones*, where Fielding, styling himself "the founder of a new province of writing," declares his intention to "pursue a contrary method" to the isochronic manner of uninspired historians by making free use of scenic presentation as well as of concentration to the point of ellipsis:

> When any extraordinary scene presents itself, (as we trust will often be the case) we shall spare no pains nor paper to open it at large to our reader; but if whole years should pass without producing anything worthy his notice, we shall not be afraid of a chasm in our history; but shall hasten on to matters of consequence, and leave such periods of time totally unobserved. (1966, 88)

9 The fiction-maker's freedom from the constraints of strictly chronological presentation becomes most clearly visible in the case of the life-story, as "... one of the distinctions of fictional as compared to historical narrative is that the former is able to make an entire life come to life as a unified whole in a short span of story time" (Cohn, 1989, 3). To the obvious examples cited by Cohn (Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*) could be added William Golding's *Pincher Martin* (1956), in which the hero's whole imaginative life on the island passes before his inward eye in the brief moments before his death by drowning.

10 As different from chronology, temporality has been marked as a feature distinguishing historical from fictional narrative by Käte Hamburger. Central to her theory is the belief that in epic fiction "the preterite loses its grammatical function of designating what is past" (1973, 66) and becomes the a-temporal tense of (fictional) narrative. It does not refer to a real past, but instead merely indicates fictionality. Thus, the atemporality of the "epic
"preterite" is pivotal in her distinction between "reality statements" and "epic fiction." Even in the historical novel the preterite has nothing to do with the historical character of the novel's subject matter (cf. Hamburger, 1973, 110-16), but loses its temporality in the same way that the characters become fictionalized, undergoing an ontological transformation: "As subject-matter of a historical novel... Napoleon becomes a fictive Napoleon" (1973, 112). On the discursive level, this loss of temporality becomes manifest, she maintains, in the un-grammatical use of deictic adverbs. Contrary to what Hamburger implies, however, the indices of fictionality as identified by her, particularly the ungrammatical use of temporal adverbs in sentences like "Tomorrow was Christmas," are merely optional in fiction, while they can occur in factual narrative, as well, and it is not difficult to see the circularity of her argument as to the a-temporality of the preterite in fiction. Even if Hamburger's attempt to define fictionality via (a-) temporality and vice versa has proved to be a dead end, however, a sense of the difference in the value of tenses should continue to inform theoretical discussions on the fact-fiction issue. Yet, in the wake of (post-) modernist fictional practice, the focus in narratological investigations of temporality has shifted to its significance in defining narrativity (cf. Ronen, 1990; Sternberg, 1992; Fludernik, 1996, 320 ff.), the question being now how to distinguish not fictional from factual narrative, but narratives from non-narratives. Obviously, positions denying the past-ness of events as an essential prerequisite of narrativity create an even wider rift between historiographic practice, which is still informed by the past-ness of its subject matter, and fictional narratology.

As it seems, the rendering of time in narrative fiction and historiography cannot in principle provide a criterion to distinguish between fictional and factual discourse, although in practice different patterns are very likely to emerge. The case is different when it comes to the categories of mode and voice, as will be shown in the following.

3. Mode

"Fiction is recognizable as fiction only if and when it actualizes its focalizing potential" (Cohn, 1989, 9). Identifying focalization as a decisive criterion to distinguish factual from fictional narrative, Dorrit Cohn pursues thoughts developed by Kate Hamburger in *The Logic of Literature*. According to Hamburger's by now famous definition, "[e]pic fiction is the sole epistemological instance where the I-originarity (or subjectivity) of a third-person qua third person can be portrayed" (1973, 83). Simply speaking, this means that it is only in third-person fiction that characters can be presented, not as objects, but as subjects apparently existing independently from the "I" of the author (narrator). It should be added that Cohn's statement is expressly directed towards third-person fiction as the fictional pendant of historiography. In first-person fiction, (internal) focalization automatically applies. On the level of discourse, therefore, there cannot be any intrinsic criteria to distinguish a fictional autobiography of the *David Copperfield* type from the autobiography of a real (historical) person. The only clue, as Cohn remarks, is provided by the onomastic (non-)identity of author and narrator — a clue all too easily obfuscated by, for example, a nameless first-person narrator. Hamburger, as one will remember, banished homodiegetic narrative from the realm of "epic fiction" on the grounds that it represents a "feigned reality statement" different in its poetological ("dichtungslogische") implications from heterodiegetic narrative. As opposed to third-person narrative, according to Hamburger, first-person narrative does not permit a
categorical line to be drawn between fiction and "reality statement" (e.g., factual and fictional autobiography), there existing only a gradation according to the degree of feigning: in other words, the distance of the persona of the first-person narrator from the "I" of the real author.

Genette is prepared (with restrictions) to regard "subjectivizing constructions" as "distinctive features which differentiate one type from the other [i.e., fictional from factual narrative]" (1990, 762); contrary to Hamburger, however, who disregards this instance, Genette also regards "objective" narration of the Hemingway or Robbe-Grillet type, which is based on external focalization, as another such feature, thereby arriving at "two symmetrical forms of focalization" which "characterize fictional narrative, as opposed to the ordinary attitude of factual narrative" (1990, 762). For Genette as well as for Cohn, "mode is, at least in principle, revelatory of the factual or fictional status of a narrative and, therefore, a point of narratological divergence between the two types" (Genette, 1990, 763). Notwithstanding what has been said about the discourse level of homodiegetic narrative, this may be relevant, to some extent, for first-person narrative, too, if Philippe Lejeune (1980) is right in claiming that factual autobiography tends to emphasize the narrating self of the first-person narrator as opposed to a tendency towards emphasizing his/her experiencing self in autobiographical fiction.

Here, I am mainly concerned with heterodiegetic narrative. Historiography, as Cohn makes certain, "cannot present past events through the eyes of a historical figure present on the scene, but only through the eyes of the forever backward-looking historian-narrator" (1990, 786). In other words, there is nothing in historiographic narrative comparable to Stanzel's figural narrative situation with its emphasis on a character's perception and point of view. That the presentation of a character's thoughts and feelings can serve as a criterion to distinguish between factual and fictional discourse was already known to Jane Austen, who has one of her heroines, an avid reader of novels, declare: "... a great deal of [history] must be invention. The speeches that are put into the heroes' mouths, their thoughts and designs — the chief of all this must be invention" (1972, 123). In historiography, statements as to a person's motivations, desires, reflections, etc. can be made only on a conjectural basis, unless there is evidence from sources such as diaries, letters or memoirs. The historical novel has colonized this dark area of historiography, although it should be kept in mind that the founder of the genre, Walter Scott, (almost) consistently restricted the presentation of consciousness to his fictive characters. Tolstoy, in *War and Peace*, on the other hand, freely provides us with the (undocumented) thoughts and feelings of Napoleon on the eve of the battle of Borodino. Still, Tolstoy's novel does not clash with recorded history (as do revisionist historical novels like Peter Ackroyd's recent *Milton in America* [1996], which has the poet seek refuge from royalist persecution among the Puritan settlers of New England in 1660), but merely supplements it. Although in practice, historians (and especially biographers) may sometimes break the rules so as to lend more interest to their narratives, it still holds that a historian's account of a person's inner life should either be accompanied by a "perhaps" or a "maybe" or, when there is reason for more conclusive conjectures, a "he/she must have thought" — or the account should be documented in a footnote. In his biography of Queen Victoria, Lytton Strachey is careful to insert a cautionary "perhaps" to mark his presentation of the thoughts of the dying monarch as conjectural... perhaps, in the secret chambers of her consciousness" (quoted from Cohn, 1989, 10). In his portrait of Florence
Nightingale in *Eminent Victorians*, on the other hand, Strachey seems to be far less scrupulous, as can be seen from a passage which clearly approaches the fictional:

... dream she did. Ah! To do her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her! Assuredly she would not be behindhand in doing her duty; but unto what state of life had it pleased God to call her?... What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards... she hardly knew what, but certainly towards something very different from anything around her?.... Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being useful? So she dreamed and wondered... (Strachey, [1918] 1986, 112)

Florence's unuttered (and undocumented) dreams are presented by Strachey in the form of free indirect discourse, of which Käte Hamburger notes that its "sole grammatical locus" is "narrative literature" (1973, 88). Indeed, free indirect speech, which blurs the boundaries between authorial and figural discourse, should be banned from historiography (cf. Cohn, 1989, 11). As in the case of the chronological structure of narrative, historiographic theory might wish to draw upon narratology's refined inventory of analytic criteria pertaining to the presentation of consciousness to distinguish between factual and fictional elements in historiographic discourse. Unlike chronology, however, focalization does indeed present a decisive criterion in such a distinction.

That literary practice (especially post-modernist literary practice) is always apt to outwit theoretical efforts at compartmentalization does not in principle harm the validity of narratological analysis, as may be illustrated by the much-discussed example of *Marbot*, Wolfgang Hildesheimer's ingenious fake biography of a nineteenth-century English aesthete and art-critic who never really existed (cf. Cohn, 1992). Hildesheimer's narrator styles himself as a conscientious biographer, "adhering to the truth, to his best knowledge and belief, by discriminating clearly and rigorously between the documented and the undocumented, between fact and conjecture" ("mit bestem Wissen und Gewissen bei der Wahrheit [bleibend], indem er zwischen Bewiesenen und Unbewiesenen, zwischen Faktum und Konjektur, deutlich und streng unterscheide") (Hildesheimer, 1981, 189; my translation). If Genette (1990) cites *Marbot* as an illustration of the fact that fictional narratives may well do without any indices of their fictionality, this somewhat understates the case: *Marbot*, rather than merely refraining from marking its fictionality, flaunts its purported factuality in a way that may well arouse the suspicions of a sceptical reader. It is certainly a matter of no little import that, for instance, Hildesheimer suppresses indicative insights into the mind of his protagonist with a consistency which in all likelihood surpasses even that of the most scrupulous factual biographer. For, as Genette himself concedes, "[i]n actual practice... there exists neither pure fiction nor history [nor, in this case, biography] so rigorous as to abstain from all'plotting'and all novelistic devices whatsoever..." (1990, 772). Because Hildesheimer painstakingly refrains from internal analysis, an analysis of *Marbot* carried out along strictly narratological lines will of necessity produce the wrong results as to the factual or fictional nature — not of its discourse, but of the work itself. Even if this is the case, however, one must admit that only narratology, in its turn, can provide us with an explanation of why Hildesheimers *trompe l'oeil* succeeds in the first place.
4. Voice

Genette's cautious statement in *Narrative Discourse* that the identification of the narrator with the author of a given work is a "confusion that is perhaps legitimate in the case of a historical narrative or a real autobiography, but not when we are dealing with a narrative of fiction, where the role of narrator is itself fictive" (1980, 213) was reformulated in more decisive terms in his "Fictional Narrative, Factual Narrative" (1990, 764): "It seems to me that [the] rigorous identification [of author and narrator] (A = N), to the degree that this can be established, defines factual narrative.... Conversely, their dissociation (A ≠ N) defines fiction." With this, Genette addresses a distinction that has been valid in literary studies since Wolfgang Kayser's dictum that "[t]he narrator is always an imagined, a fictive figure, which is inseparable from the fictional text as a whole" ("Der Erzähler ist immer eine gedichtete, eine fiktive Gestalt, die in das Ganze der Dichtung hineingehört"; my translation) ([1954] 1961, 17). It must not be forgotten, however, that the role of the narrator in fiction has undergone some modification in that the "overt narrator," to use Chatman's (1978) term, of eighteenth-and nineteenth-century works has since given way to a more "covert" or objective narrative voice.

According to Marie-Laure Ryan (1980, 409), the narrator is a "substitute speaker," an "impersonation" of the author belonging to the alternative, fictional world of the text. In the possible worlds theories of Ryan (1991), Thomas Pavel (1986) or Lubomir Dolezel (1980), the worlds of fictional narratives are brought forth by the speech act of an authoritative source — in the widest sense, the narrator-, who is invested with what Dolezel calls "authentication authority" (1980, passim). Dolezel develops a triadic model of the narrator's authenticating function which roughly corresponds to the three "typical narrative situations" proposed by Franz K. Stanzel ([1955] 1971, [1979] 1984). Both models, however, are restricted to fictional narrative, and in both models the narrative voice in fiction represents the result of an imaginative projection on the part of the real author. Be it overt or covert, the narrator's presence is thus the outcome of a psychological transformation as manifested in the text, while at the same time it indicates an ontological distinction between fictional narrator and real author. What about historiography? Paul Hernadi may be right in claiming that "fictional narratives demand, historical narratives preclude, a distinction between the narrator and the implied author" and that "[t]he distinction between the implied and the actual author is in turn essential only with regard to historical narratives" (1976, 252). Yet, the applicability of his formula to practical analysis seems to me to be much impaired by his retention of that eminently superfluous category, the "implied author," as he thereby confuses distinctions pertaining to the textual level, on the one hand (the distinction between narrator and implied author as inscribed in the text), and to the ontological level, on the other hand (the distinction between fictional narrator and real author). Eliminating the "implied author," Genette's (1990, 766 ff.) comparative analysis of factual and fictional narrative concentrates on the (non-)identity of real author (A), narrator (N) and protagonist (P), as represented by the various constellations possible within a triangular scheme, with
applying in historical narrative (including biography) and heterodiegetic fiction respectively. According to his formula (A ≠ N), Genette is disposed to regard autobiography in the third person as "closer to fiction than to factual narrative" (765). This may confirm our intuitions as to the partial fictionality (if seen from a pragmatic angle) of most autobiographies as such, but may appear as too formalistic an approach, even though Genette is certainly aware of the gradations in impersonation between Caesar's Commentaries and Gertrude Stein's The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. Another conundrum is presented by a (hetero- or homodiegetic) narrator who presents a "manifestly fictional story" (767), but who is identified — either explicitly or implicitly — with the real author, as in the case, e. g., of Fielding's Tom Jones or of Dante's Divine Comedy. Faced with these borderline cases, Genette resorts to Searlean concepts of factual and fictional discourse. The formulae for historical narrative and autobiography do not apply, as onomastic identity, in these special cases, is not at the same time a functional identity. In Searlean terms: the narratives in Tom Jones and The Divine Comedy do not constitute serious assertions for which the author assumes full responsibility, but pretences at serious speech acts, which for Searle, represents the paradigmatic condition of fiction.

The identity of author and narrator in historical narrative is the reason why unreliable narration, a phenomenon that has lately come into the focus of narratological interest again, cannot apply in this case. In Booth's famous definition, a narrator is "reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" ([1961] 1983, 158 f.). Clearly, the notion of "unreliable narration" in the Boothian sense rests on a dichotomy between (implied) author and narrator, which, according to Genette, distinguishes fictional from factual narratives, and must thus be restricted to the former. Even if it may well be possible for a work of historiography to contradict the ethical or ideological norms it seems to be based on by the very style of its presentation (irony), this would involve an act of dissociation on the part of the author which would virtually amount to the creation of a fictional narrative persona. Recently, Ansgar Nünning has suggested a distinction between unreliable narration" (in the Boothian sense) and "untrustworthy narration"
As we have seen in the section on mode, the potential omniscience of a heterodiegetic narrator in fiction (of an authorial narrator, in Stanzel's terminology) with access to the consciousness of his characters is essentially different from the "pluri-qualification" (Carrard, 1992, 105) of the historian, who remains dependent on his sources. A subtle strategy of authentication occasionally used in heterodiegetic novels therefore lies in styling comments on characters' thoughts, feelings and motivations in the conjectural manner of historiographic discourse in order to make the narrator appear as a historian dealing with real-life personages, fashioning his report from source material. In other words, the narrator (temporarily) relinquishes the omniscience which is his/hers in principle and feigns ignorance as to a character's inner life. George Eliot, who analyses the minutest thoughts and feelings of her characters with great ease in the use of the authorial mode, at times denies her narrator full access to their inner state: "It is difficult to say whether there was or was not a little wilfulness in [Dorothea's] continuing blind to the possibility that another sort of choice [i.e. marrying Casaubon] was in question in relation to her" (Eliot, [1871/72] 1988, 29). In the case of first-person fiction, a similar strategy may consist in foregrounding the act of remembrance and the dynamics of memory and oblivion in order to enhance the illusion of a work's being (factual) autobiography and thus the product of reminiscence instead of invention. It may be interesting to note that strategies of authentication centring on aspects of mode are also employed, although on a higher level of sophistication, in post-modernist fiction. John Fowles, in his programmatic chapter 13 of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, postulates in the best post-modernist manner the all-pervasiveness of fictionality: "Fiction is woven into all" (1969, 82). On the other hand, the novel's narrative discourse makes repeated efforts at explicitly segregating fact from fiction. In the same chapter, Fowles makes it clear that Leaving aside the fact that there is no pretence involved in an author's rendering the "minds and innermost thoughts" of his fictional creations, as they are precisely that — his creations (there would be pretence in doing so in the case of historical characters, as we have seen) —, Fowles frequently undermines the fictional status of his characters as declared in this passage by presenting their inner lives mostly in the form of conjectures or inferences ("I think...", "he/she must have felt..."). When he does so, his characters are implicitly designated as historical, and despite the author's declarations to the contrary, the tangle of fact and fiction remains unresolved.

The question of authorial interpolations in the narrative as illustrated by the passages quoted above indeed seems to be of particular relevance to our subject. According to Hamburger (1973, 155 ff.), authorial intrusions amount to a breaking of the aesthetic illusion created by a narrative fiction and thus to an emphasis on the fictionality of the work. In her terminology, authorial interpolations cause a rupture within the "field of fiction," with the real "I-Origo" of the author taking over, "whose narrating — for this
moment — is not fictional, but historical" (155). This amounts to the assumption of the possibility of a partial fictionality of texts (a novel can contain non-fictional passages), which contradicts Hamburger’s insistence, otherwise, on a categorical separation of fiction and "reality statement": in a novel, she claims, everything (including historical characters, events or settings) is drawn within a "field of fiction" and is thus marked as fictional. Theoretically, therefore, a historical novel could feature both a historical Napoleon (where he is the object of such nonfictional intrusions by the author and thus, in Hamburger’s terms, a "statement-object") and a fictional Napoleon (as a character in the novel, i. e., as a fictive I-Origo) side by side — a state of affairs which may appear as somewhat ambivalent from a poetological point of view. Stanzel’s concept of an authorial narrator, a fictional persona created by the author, whose repertoire of rôles includes, among others, that of commentator to whom such discursive interpolations in the narrative can be attributed, provides us with a basis for a much more consistent explanation of this phenomenon: the narrator poses as a historian. This is corroborated by Lämmert’s contention that discursive interpolations, even if they are apt to break the illusion of the narrative’s factuality, will create an illusion of a different kind, namely that of the "personal reality and proximity of the author" ("der persönlichen Wirklichkeit und Nähe des Autors") (1955, 69; my translation). In sum, voice is a narratological category which allows for a distinction between factual and fictional narrative mainly on a theoretical level. Unlike focalization, it does not necessarily become distinctive on the level of discourse.

25 As I have tried to show, narratological categories may in some cases provide decisive criteria to distinguish between "factuality" and "fictionality." At any rate, they can provide valuable guidelines for drawing a theoretical boundary between factual and fictional narratives — a boundary, however, which may be transgressed and which has indeed been transgressed by postmodernist fiction. One could thus argue that, as postmodernist literary practices aim at blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction, the need for narratological criteria allowing — at least in theory — for a distinction between factual and fictional narrative discourse, such as certain aspects of mode and voice, is increasing. The reason for this is not any desire for compartmentalization, but to come to a fuller understanding of the interpretative relevance of narrative techniques used by authors like Fowles, Hildesheimer and many others, who have shown themselves "theoretically conscious" in a striking manner. In spite of prognostications to the contrary, there is thus a continuing relevance of structural narratology and narratological analysis in literary and sociohistorical studies. And one cannot help feeling (especially in the face of post-modernist pan-fictionality) that it would be a pity if narratology gave away its competence to contribute to a distinction between factual and fictional discourse by dismissing the relevance of this distinction for its own concerns.

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NOTES
1. In using the term "factual," I follow Genette, who prefers it to "non-fictional" on the grounds that the latter implies that the primary concern of narratology is with fictional narratives (cf. Genette, 1990, 756, note 2).
2. I prefer "mode" as a translation of mode (as it appears in Genette, 1990) to "mood" (as in Genette, 1980) because it is the variant more generally used in anglophone narratology to cover the phenomena addressed by Genette.
3. It is, however, no longer universally accepted (cf. Fludernik, 1996, chs. 6, 7 and ch. 8, 333-37).
4. In the same place, Cohn criticizes Culler (1980), who indiscriminately applies the bilevel model of narratology to fictional and non-fictional writing, making "story" the equivalent of "the temporally prior level of reference" (Cohn 1990, 782) in the latter.
5. For a perceptive treatment of the effect of summary and scene in the three 19th-century histories of the French Revolution analysed by her, see Rigney, 1990.
6. Hamburger's distinction between fictional narrative ("epic fiction") and "reality statement" has been carried further by Harald Weinrich (1985 [1964]) in his opposition between "narrated world" ("erzählte Welt") and "discussed world" ("besprochene Welt").
7. This, in spite of Strachey's mentioning a diary by her, which, however, he does not list among his sources.
8. Both Hernadi and Genette, however, retain the notion of referentiality in historiography as opposed to Roland Berthes, for whom there is merely referential illusion (effet de réel) based on reposing on the substitution of the author's "emotional persona" by an "objective persona."
9. I have attempted elsewhere to show the implications of such a strategy for the narrative discourse of fictional autobiography, using the example of Dickens (see Löschnigg [forthcoming]).

ABSTRACTS
Traditional narratological categories have been developed largely from fictional narratives, and their application has mostly been restricted to these. Even if theoretical concepts have claimed overall validity, they have been illustrated, more or less exclusively, by examples from narrative fiction. It is only in the wake of the "linguistic turn" in historiographic theory that narratologists such as Gérard Genette or Dorrit Cohn have begun to investigate the relevance of narratological
categories to factual narratives, especially to the writing of history, and to the distinction between factual and fictional narratives.

With reference to specific examples, this paper discusses the applicability of narratological categories (especially of mode and voice) to factual narrative. It is based on the assumption that these categories, even if they may not provide decisive criteria for distinguishing between "factuality" or "fictionality," can provide a valuable basis for drawing out a borderline between the two (which, however, may be straddled or even transgressed). Moreover, it appears that the application of narratological categories to factual narrative is apt to expand or modify the inventory of narratology.

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Story Modalised, or the Grammar of Virtuality*

Uri Margolin

1 It is a truth universally acknowledged (or at least a preconception universally enunciated) that literary narratives revolve around that which has already occurred and been completed in the story world, in other words, singular past states, actions and events; that such narratives are presented by the textual narrating voice as known facts; and that they thrive on certainty or factivity. But like all so-called universal truths, this one, too, is only partially valid. In this paper, I would like to point out, firstly, the existence of numerous areas of nonfactivity, even in narratives which conform to the classical model. I will then move on to explore several types of literary narrative for which the classical prototype of pastness+factivity+knowledge holds in part only, or not at all. I will seek to demonstrate that, far from being inconsequential oddities, such narratives constitute a modal system which is complementary or alternative to the restricted classical model.

A. Any classical, retrospective literary narrative can be viewed as a partial description of an assumedly pre-existent non-actual domain with its entities, states, actions and processes. The set of propositions, whether textually formulated or reader inferred, which have the truth value T/1 with respect to this domain, describes what the case is in the corresponding domain; in other words, this set of propositions represents the facts of the matter, the story told. But oftentimes that which did not happen or exist, when viewed against a background of textually defined possibilities or probabilities, or against the inscribed norms and regularities of the text world, is every bit as significant. Events which did not happen, although they could have, when explicitly referred to by the narrator, define the sphere of the disnarrated (Prince, 1988). The disnarrated can be represented formally by narrative propositions with the truth value F/0 (i.e., it was not the case that p) or as true propositions whose content involves negative facts (i.e., it was the case that not p). The disnarrated may also involve the epistemic and doxastic: that which could have been known or believed by one or more of the narrative agents but wasn't; the deontic: that which should have been done but wasn't; and the bulomeic: that which could have been wished for but wasn't.
Another way in which negative facts can be expressed in the context of retrospective narration is by means of *counterfactual conditionals*, such as "if she had been quicker in expressing her love for him, he would have stayed with her." The falsity of the antecedent, indicated by grammatical means, suggests that the consequent is false, as well. The proposition as a whole thus conveys two negative facts and their logical interrelatedness, such as cause and effect or enabling condition and subsequent situation. Although counterfactuals are, strictly speaking, about what was not the case, they still suggest that this could have been the case in the story world had things gone otherwise, thereby leading us to the realm of possibilities missed or not actualised.

**Possibilities not actualised**, alternatives not implemented or roads not taken, although they were available at a given point in the action sequence, form a thematically significant part of retrospective narration, defining a set of virtual scenarios with respect to the actual story world. For example, "She could marry a rich old man, but chose instead to marry a poor young one." In fact, the significance — psychological, moral, deontic, axiological or whatever — of a narrative agent's actions often emerges only when it is confronted with the zone of alternative options open to this agent. The objective existence within the story world of such possibilities is easiest to establish in retro-narration, where the narrator is able to survey the whole field of action in a synoptic manner in the light of later developments and final outcomes. Positive and negative facts, counterfactuals and possibilities which existed but were not realised thus jointly define what was the case in the narrative reference world.

Other existents, properties and relations, actions and events in the narrated domain may be explicitly referred to by the narrating voice in a mode of doubt and uncertainty: X may or may not have happened, existed or been thus and so; the course of events was precipitated by A or B or C, but no one knows for sure by which one of them; some say that p was the case, others maintain that it was q, but it is impossible to decide between these conflicting claims. In all such cases, we are dealing with narrative propositions which lack both definite confirmation and disconfirmation, with assumptions and conjectures left open, with uncertainties and *indeterminacies*. The truth value of such propositions or disjunctions is hence indeterminate, since their truth or falsity in the story world is deliberately left undecided and undecidedable. Differently put, each of the propositions in question is modalised as "possibly p," which is of course logically equivalent to "possibly not-p." While the nature and scope of narrative indeterminacy varies in different texts, we are all familiar with a whole genre, that of the *conte fantastique*, which is defined by a built in, unresolved hesitation between a natural agency (often psychological) and a supernatural one as the motivating force behind central events in the story. This hesitation inevitably spills over into the very ontological landscape of the narrated domain, which may or may not include supernatural entities. But even here, indeterminacy is not total: it is limited to certain events and entities and is defined relative to a stable framework of determinacy, embodied in the conjunction of facts and negative facts: A existed, B did not exist, and C may or may not have existed.

Indeterminacy may also be expressed by means of narrative *hypothetical inferences* such as "If anyone was there, s/he would see the great volcano erupt." As opposed to counterfactuals, the narrator is not able to assert the truth or falsity of either antecedent or consequent, so both are left in limbo as interrelated events which may or may not have taken place in the story world. For a further clarification of the relative role of indeterminacy and its status as merely epistemic or irreducibly ontic, we need now to
correlate narrative and temporality. When a narrated course of events is textually presented as anterior, as having been completed before the moment of narration, we are obviously dealing with narrative retrospection, with a reconstruction of what has gone on earlier, with a configuring of earlier states and events into a totality with global coherence. All the facts, both positive and negative, are in, so to speak; the relevant time frame is completed or closed, and certain knowledge can be available to the narrator. It is hence a fact that some things have occurred, that others have not, and that still other things may or may not have occurred. In other words, it is an objective fact of the narrated domain, not a mere logical possibility, that something has possibly happened, that a narrative agent may have been thus and so, that event A may have caused event B. Technically speaking, the merely possibly-possible is ruled out. The narrator and the reader are not able to resolve certain indeterminacies, to assign a truth-value to certain propositions, but this is due to an irreducible lack of information, not the inherent indeterminacy of the story world itself. In this sense, traditional narrative does not share the ontology of quantum mechanics, and all indeterminacies are, in the final account, considered merely epistemic, stemming from the incomplete information state of the narrating voice. In a similar vein, inferences made by the narrator or narrative agents are assumed to have been objectively satisfied or not, and suppositions or future projections referring to moments within the narrative's time span to have been realised or not. The temporal boundedness or closure of the narrated domain also deprives any wishes, hopes and commands the narrator may utter with respect to this domain of their illocutionary force: after all, we can no longer influence that which has already taken place.

B. When a narrated course of events is being presented as taking place concurrently/simultaneously with the act of its narration, we are dealing with on-the-scene reporting, observation or inspection, verbalising as one watches, not with retrospection; with the stepwise, on-line real time construction of a sequence, with a gradual figuring out of what is the case as it evolves, not with its integration into a totality in hindsight. The narrated domain is a world in the process of becoming or unfolding, progressively taking shape as it is being narrated, so that the overall situation emerges in stages. The situation is viewed from within as a series of unconfigured particulars. It is in progress, in the midst of a process, and does not yet form a bounded whole. It is not possible as yet to elicit an overall pattern from the succession, to determine results and define the contribution of individual events or actions to the global course of events. The dominant use of progressive and imperfective present tense verb forms in such narratives is a grammatical encoding of this ontic and epistemic situation. In simultaneous narration, factivity is inevitably reduced. While punctual, momentary actions and events can be reported with certainty, long-range, multi-staged ones, as well as most cause and effect relations, remain within the realm of mere possibility, since they have not yet reached their completion at the moment of utterance. Their outcomes are still undecided, and they may or may not succeed, be accomplished or achieve their goals. And the same applies to the negation of processes and complex actions, that is, the assertion that they have definitely failed to achieve their final stage. As for possibilities, most of them are further modalised, in that the narrator cannot often determine in situ whether they actually exist in the story world or are merely logically conceivable. Corresponding to this dramatic decrease in factivity, open conditionals or hypotheticals possess their full force: given that p has occurred or is occurring, q may or may not follow, but this is undecided as yet at utterance time. Similarly, whenever the text has a marked narrator or speaker, his or her wishes and hopes at every given moment regain at least part of their
Illocutionary force, especially with respect to the outcomes of processes not yet completed at utterance time. Narration in the present is thus located on the cusp or borderline between factivity and indeterminacy, actuality and virtuality, objective and speaker-envisioned possibilities of knowing.

C. However, this is not the final stage. Narration can also be prospective, dealing with posterior events, with that which has not yet occurred at speech time: a prediction, prognosis, scenario, projection, conjecture, wish, plan, and so on. Now here there is as yet no fact of the matter, positive or negative, to be experienced, known and reported. Prospection, construction and pre-figuring are now what the textual voice or personalised narrator is engaged in. The story world is purely virtual: a mere potentiality or possibility being projected, entertained and described, not a range of actual facts to be reported upon. While the semantic distinction between fact, negative fact and possibility remains, all three categories are subjected unexceptionally to the global "possibly" operator. Much is possible, but nothing has been decided as yet. While in past narratives the virtual was subordinated to and defined by the actual, and while both exist in an uneasy balance in concurrent narration, the would-be actual is now definitely put in the service of the potential. The fact/possibility, determined/undetermined hierarchy has by now been decidedly reversed. The governing frame or narrative matrix-clause has been shifted from the constative or affirmative to the speculative. Barring prophecies with supernatural warrant, the narrator of a future scenario cannot claim any certain knowledge of his reference world, and obviously no first hand experience of it. Belief or doxa necessarily replaces narrative certainty. All assertions in a future narrative thus have the indeterminate truth value at utterance time, and are problematic assertions in the technical philosophical sense. The temporal position (not yet) and the modal (mere possibility) are essentially intertwined in future discourse, the narrator's epistemic limitations being ontically grounded. Conversely, a process which began with concurrent narration now reaches its completion: hypotheses and conditions are truly just that, while the narrator's wishes, desires and instructions regarding the projected future domain possess their full illocutionary force.

II

The essential intertwining of the temporal location of events and their modal status in future narratives opens the door to a wider array of variously modalised narratives, all future-oriented and all opposed to the factive, completive, classical prototype. Let me define them by means of a semi-serious phrase each and then proceed to a fuller discussion and illustration. Here we go: (1) The future possible simpliciter or "once upon a time there will be"; (2) This may happen (to you/one) if something else takes place; (3) May this happen to you; (4) Do this and trigger the following course of events. The dominant modalities of these kinds of narratives can be ranged on a scale as follows. First, the doxastic, the speaker's belief that the following may take place. Second, the hypothetical, claiming that certain possibilities of action exist for one/whoever if a certain prerequisite condition is fulfilled. Third, the optative, the speaker's wish that such and such should befall his addressee. Finally, the deontic (understood in the wide, linguistic sense), the speaker imposing obligations on his/her addressee, instructing him/her to perform or initiate certain actions so that certain events could develop in the narrated domain. In terms of dominant mental faculties, the movement is from the cognitive via the emotive to the imperative. We are correspondingly moving from a scenario, in the sense of an outline of a potential course of events, through an
intermediate stage to a script, in which the textual addressee is given instructions which need to be fulfilled in order for an envisioned project to be realised. While all four varieties are inherently opposed to the concept of narrative as a factive report of what has already occurred, the report as a description of temporal situations, regardless of their ontic and epistemic status, still dominates future-oriented narratives. But it is framed by increasingly different types of discourse: inferential-conditional, emotive and imperative. The dominant type of illocutionary act (to put it in John Searle’s terminology) moves correspondingly from the representative (assertive) through the expressive (emotive) to the directive. The presence of a textually marked speaker or addressee is optional in future and conditional narratives, while it is built into the other two — the optative and imperative. In the last two, the addressee, as both recipient of the message and its topic entity, is naturally the essential constituent. The standard grammatical forms by which the dominant modalities of the four kinds of narrative are expressed are the future indicative, the present conditional, the present subjunctive and the imperative respectively.

Now, however, the time has come to leave the abstract system aside for a while and look at a few concrete examples. The American linguist Suzanne Fleischman states (Fleischman, 1982, 30) that we can regard discourse about the future as a temporal screen onto which humans project a variety of modalised notions, such as possibility and uncertainty rooted in the present, as a projection of one’s experiential present hopes or apprehensions, and not as an objective ontological category. This linguistic insight is beautifully borne out by Christine Brooke-Rose’s novel Amalgamemnon (1984), a first-person narrative consisting of various scenarios constructed by the speaker as to her possible future life course following her impending forced early retirement from her university post due to cutbacks. The only factive component of the narrative concerns the speaker’s present state of anxiety and her ongoing activity of projection and speculation. All narrative propositions refer to non-realised states and events: future or future conditional, expressed by verbs in the future tense or in the modal auxiliary (may, could, should, would, might). There are hence no grounds for including or excluding any particular projected sequence from the story world or for choosing between alternatives, the entire world of Amalgamemnon being left dangling in an ontological limbo (McHale, 1992, 219). Character discourse, as distinct from that of the narrator, does include references to past and present events, but only in the interrogative or in the negative, thus preserving, as Brooke-Rose herself says, the notion that nothing can be said to have happened or to be happening. Since the future is essentially indeterminate, several alternative probable branches grow forth from the common present node, and the resultant canonic structure of the narrative is "possibly" (a or b or c).

And now from future to conditional.

As we know, all open conditional sentences (if p, then q) consist of an antecedent and consequent (protasis and apodosis, in traditional grammar) whereby the antecedent proposition explicitly sets up a possible future situation or event while the consequent describes what may probably/likely follow from it. In other words, both p and q are entertained as mere possibilities or suppositions, not as facts. The maximally conditional, hence minimally factive, story would accordingly consist of a description of a merely possible future initial state of affairs, with what follows left completely open or unspecified, that is, a problematic supposition or premiss with no conclusion, or, quite simply, "if p, then what?"
This is precisely the case of the would-be story generated by the chapter headings of Calvino's If on a Winter's Night a Traveller (1979): "If on a winter's night a traveller...leaning from a steep slope looks down in a network of leaves...what story down there awaits its end?" The reverse case, that of a deleted but easily recoverable initial assumption and a detailed description of what could probably/possibly follow, is provided by the Swiss-German author, E. Y. Meyer, in his novel In Trubschachen (1973). The novel consists of a potential narrative, recounting on a day-by-day basis the activities of an anonymous traveller, designated as man (= indefinite singular pronoun, roughly equivalent to the French on), who could, might, or would spend a brief Christmas vacation (December 27 to January 3) in this small village in the Emmental. The deleted premiss is quite banal: "Should one go on vacation in Trubschachen at this time of the year, then one would...." The activities of this man, from the inbound to the outbound train trip, are recounted almost entirely in the German Konjunktiv form: "Man würde" — as are the setting, circumstances, and co-agents: "ein Wind wäre aufgezogen, der Himmel würde sich bedeckt haben," or "die meisten der Reisenden würden den Zug rechtzeitig genug bestiegen haben," and so on. While the activities "one" engages in range from the generic and the typical, applicable to every traveller/whoever (such as carrying one's luggage) to the specific and the unique (such as reading this particular passage of this specific book at this hour), their rendering is relentlessly hypothetical, as if saying "here is a description of a possible situation and course of events, of what one could do," and not a report or assertion of actualised, factive events. While the pronoun man itself may be recuperated as either first-or third-person narrative, the associated actions and situations cannot be naturalised into a traditional narrative form, since they are possibilities entertained, not facts asserted. Meyer has also judiciously chosen the würde form, which expresses a degree of probability located between the absolute müsste and the weaker könnte.

Marguerite Duras' La Maladie de la mort (1982) is a novel in which both antecedent and consequent regularly occur. This would-be story is presented by a voice which invokes, in the conditionnel présent, certain possibilities regarding an encounter between an unnamed vous (singular masculine) and an elle and the stages of their relationship, and it then describes scenes from this relationship in the present tense, thus alternating repeatedly between pouvoir-être (envisaged possibility) and the assertion of être (what is), between si and ainsi. In other words, the sentences in the conditional set up certain possibilities or potentialities for action whose envisioned consequences are explored by scenes in the present tense. However, the factive sections — and the text as a whole — are invariably framed by a conditional, thereby making the narratively actual conditional upon the realisation of an open, hypothetic possibility. For example: "vous devriez ne pas la connaître...vous pourriez l'avoir payée," where the modal verbs and the conditional ending both convey the idea of hypotheticality; and further on: "chaque jour elle viendrait... chaque jour elle vient," etc. The use of vous-conditionnel can be also construed, however, as a set of cinematographic or scenic directions for an actor who is about to perform the male role, as a programme for staging or a script, as well as a story sous condition. Under this interpretation, the conditional nature of the events is linked to an anticipated creation of a ludic world or game of make-believe, described in the present tense passages. Because of the possibility of the generalised vous being appropriated by actual male readers, a third, related interpretation is also conceivable: that the text is in fact a series of guidelines to the reader on how to imagine from beginning to end a love affair with an unknown woman. On these last two readings, the doxastic clearly shades...
into, or is even displaced by, the deontic: what the vous ought to do to bring the story about in a make-believe domain of individual imagining or of public staging.

The voice with whom a future-oriented narrative discourse originates may not only draw inferences with respect to potential situations and courses of events, but also express his/her attitude towards such imagined situations: hoping and wishing that they come about; wishing that a given individual be of a certain nature or that s/he do, experience and say certain things (imprecation). In so far as the individual in question is personalised and specified as an addressee, we get a blend of the referential (the story being invoked), the affective (the speaker's attitude towards his/her projected reality) and the conative, as the very formulation of these propositions is meant to have an impact on the addressee's future destiny. While in Duras' case the deontic reading was purely optional, we now are clearly faced with a narrative which is inherently on the borderline between scenario and script. Jean-Michel Raynaud's *Pour un Perec lettré, chiffré* (1987) is a rare example of an extended text predicated upon the speaker's wishes with regard to his addressee: "que vous concluiez..que vous insistiez, que vous fassiez remarquer, que vous soyez, que l'université ait organisé cette conférence, que la nuit soit belle," and so on. The necessity, at least in French, of employing repeatedly not only the same verb form (subjunctive present), but also the same phraseological mold, prevents us from being absorbed in the would-be reality, insisting on its purely wished-for rather than actual status. The projected or wished-for nature of the life story is also reflected in the very title of the book, which includes the word *pour* (towards). The text as a whole thus describes a project, not an accomplishment.

It is only a small step from a narrative consisting of wishes with respect to the addressee to one in which s/he is put under obligation to perform certain acts and thereby give rise to the story in which s/he plays the/a major role. Narratives whose framing clause consists of imperatives are an obvious case in point, since they are by definition future-oriented, directed to an addressee, and express the speaker's desires with respect to the domain of reference. In six of the stories in Lorrie Moore's collection, *Self-Help* (1985), a female character, who is either a teen-ager or an adult, is instructed how to behave in situations involving a divorced mother, a lover, a husband, an intended literary career. The purpose of the behaviour is the realisation of specific states or the achievement of certain goals. Fulfilment of the initial instructions gives rise to the development of the corresponding personal interrelations, described in a series of scenes in the present or future tense, with further instructions being interspersed as the sequence of the projected events progresses. We thus have an intercalation of instructions and attendant projected action sequences which, together, yield a possible biography of the recipient of the instructions as regards those items of behaviour that are either at issue in the instructions or result from them. This intercalation of imperative and indicative is in fact inevitable, since no narrative, actual or virtual, can consist of instructions alone. It is only the (non-)fulfillment of these instructions and its further results, expressed in the indicative mood, which can form a story of any kind. This is somewhat analogous to the antecedent-consequent relation discussed earlier. Two more points about instructions are worth noting. First, instructions always look ahead to what is not yet there. The title of the collection (*Self-Help*) as well as the titles of its individual stories ("A Guide to," "How to") remind us that the point of departure consists of a script yet to be performed, not a *fait accompli*. Second, their illocutionary force notwithstanding, instructions may or may not be carried out, and even if carried out conscientiously, they may not yield the
expected results. Any results expected from following a set of instructions are a conjecture, not a fact. And indeed, even though the "you" closely follows the textually-inscribed instructions, all ensuing affairs and relations in Moore's stories invariably end in failure.

III

16 Let me conclude with some brief remarks about three related issues: (A) textual devices which enhance the non-factive status of the foregoing kinds of narrative; (B) the compensatory narrative patterns they employ; and (C) possible reasons for the emergence of such nonstandard narrative forms.

17 (A) The non-factive nature of the narratives discussed in this article is further enhanced by their use of indeterminate referents: a traveller, man, vous, elle, "you," "him," and (in Meyer's novel) by the reference to all co-agents by role rather than by name, such as der Lehrer, die Wirtin. At least some of the virtual events referred to in all of these works are presented, not as unique possibilities, but as clusters of alternatives. Brooke-Rose's narrator projects diverse alternative possible futures for herself, from pig farming to international terrorism; the woman in Moore's story "How" is told to "begin by meeting him in a class, in a bar, at a rummage sale"; Meyer's man could possibly encounter, on his inbound trip, "an invalid, a deaf person, a blind person, a deaf and mute person." In Meyer's novel, all speech, including that of the man, is rendered exclusively in the indirect mode (oratio obliqua), which in German is always in the Konjunktiv form. This pervasive morphological feature helps to further enhance the merely potential quality of the surrounding narrated context, which is also portrayed in this form, as we recall. In Duras' story, the narrator addresses the vous towards the end of the narrative, after elle has disappeared, and raises the possibility that the whole love affair is now being recounted by the vous to some audience as something that could not actually have happened, or as something that the vous himself has invented. With this one stroke, Duras conjures up at least one more level of embedded indeterminacy: the possibility of a possible story-telling carried out by a possible character. Duras' text is followed by three pages of authorial commentary, all in the conditional, discussing various possibilities and manners of staging or filming the foregoing text, possibilities of transforming one kind of "as if into another mode of make believe.

18 (B) Even in these texts, action, action sequence and the logic of action — all traditionally viewed as central to narrative — are not dead, however. After all, even a virtual story is still structurally a verbal representation of an action sequence, and this is borne out by a whole array of elements and patterns. First of all, future projections share with past completive narratives the capacity of describing long and complex sequences of actions. Both punctual and durative events as well as short-term and long-term actions can find their place in a modalised story, which, in this sense, has the same range of options as traditional narrative. The texts I have been examining also narrate their projected stories in a strictly chronological order, thereby satisfying the most basic condition of action description. In Brooke-Rose's case, each alternative projected life story also loops back to the present moment of speculation and narration. Thirdly, although the factive and determinate is subordinated to or embedded in the non-factive, it is still there. In Duras and Moore, conditional and imperative frames are followed by scenes in the present, while the climactic scene of Meyer's novel, where "one" loses his way at night and is almost buried in a snow drift, is rendered in a blow-by-blow historical present. Fourth, the stories told are often familiar in their discourse models, following the literary
stereotypes of a spy novel, thriller or cheap romance in Brooke-Rose, of the unhappy love affair in Duras and Moore, and of the pedantic Swiss tourist guide book in Meyer. In Moore’s case, the text type of the collection as a whole is a parody of the American favourite: a primer, guide or "how to" manual — especially how to succeed in love, sex, business, etc. Fifth, much of the material utilised by these texts consists of familiar world knowledge and schemata of everyday behaviour. Brooke-Rose builds on international terrorism and kidnappings in the seventies and on the endless prognosticating chatter (economic, social and political) in the mass media; Meyer on the realia of Swiss everyday life, from common dishes to the SBB timetable; Moore on the pervasive role of TV, fast food and pets in middle-class American life. Raynaud’s case is much more radical. His book, published in 1987, several years after Perec’s untimely death, is in fact a fictionalisation in retrospect of actual events, utterances and literary activities of Perec's intellectual life. But, as Raynaud says, "since this biography misses Perec, it gives rise to several subjunctives." What is merely wished for in the fictional domain has already taken place and gone in the actual world, and the writer’s wish now, as he writes, is to turn the past life and person into a timeless literary monument, an enduring character and text which will capture and immortalise Perec.

Why would contemporary authors employ such unusual forms to begin with? I can think of several good reasons. In the broadest terms, the production of (alternative) scenarios for one’s own good future, or for that of a given group or even of mankind as a whole, is an ever increasing obsession of Western culture. All such projections are of course purely virtual at the time of their production, a fact that is further enhanced by the symbolic mode through which most of them are generated, namely, computer modelling, where pure virtuality is the name of the game. In this respect, literature is part and parcel of a wider process, which, according to some postmodern thinkers, may lead or has already led to the very replacement of the actual by the virtual as the dominant factor of our lives and our conception of the world.

However, more specifically aesthetic and literary reasons are also at issue. Imagining what may happen simpliciter or if some condition is met, playing with different alternative scenarios, wishing or commanding that some state of affairs should come into being are all activities within the fictional sphere which are analogous to the very act of literary creation, where everything is, initially, a merely potential story, and where the reality constructed is always non-actual and always amenable to further modification through manipulation by its creator. And then there is the parallel preoccupation with the reader and his/her role, one of the central concerns of postmodern literature and literary theory alike. One specific form this general issue has assumed concerns the possibility of the actual reader occupying the slot defined by the main narrative agent of the story in front of him/her. Making the events lie ahead of narration time (or providing a governing narrative frame consisting of scene-setting for potential events), making these events largely stereotypical and habitual and leaving their protagonist non-specific, hence, potentially each and every you/one, are all conducive to readerly imaginative identification, to making it true of oneself in the game of make believe that one is a member of the narrated domain, that one is acting out the textually inscribed scenario or script. Reduced factivity and specificity may thus be compensated for by the emergence of a near ideal set of conditions for readerly involvement and readiness to participate in a vicarious experience, to assume the textually inscribed role for a game of make-believe which may last as long as the reading act itself. Although all the texts I have discussed
precede the advent of computer-generated, virtual-reality activities, from hypertext to cyberspace, they seem to be almost prophetic in this respect. One could hence definitely expect to see in the future more and more narratives written under the sign of virtuality. This, too, is naturally merely possible, but quite likely, indeed.

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ENDNOTES

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ABSTRACTS

This article deals with areas of non-factivity in literary narrative: their nature, relative weight and aesthetic impact. I begin with non-factive elements embedded in traditional retrospective narratives. These elements include negative facts (the disnarrated and counterfactual conditionals), possibilities not actualised, indeterminacies and hypothetical inferences. In
concurrent ("present tense") narratives, the narrated sphere as a whole is poised on the borderline between actuality and virtuality. The story world is in the process of coming into being so that one can indeed define momentary actions or events in it, but not elicit an overall pattern of significance or define any long-range activities and processes. In addition, open conditionals, hypotheticals and possibilities not yet realised are far more central than in retrospective narratives. Prospective (future-oriented) literary narratives are concerned with that which is not yet there at telling time and are hence radically opposed to the factive and completive traditional prototype of narrative. They are dominated by one of four modalities: the doxastic (speaker’s belief that something may take place); the hypothetical (a claim that certain possibilities of action exist if some prerequisite condition is fulfilled); the optative (speaker’s wish that such and such should befall his addressee); and the deontic (the speaker’s instructing his addressee to perform certain actions so that some other events could take place in the narrated domain). We are correspondingly moving from a scenario through an intermediate stage to a script. Specific contemporary literary examples for each of these varieties are then cited and analysed in some detail. The article concludes with a discussion of several possible aesthetic and wider cultural reasons which may account for the employment of such unusual forms by contemporary authors.

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Reconceptualizing the Theory and Generic Scope of Unreliable Narration*

Ansgar F. Nünning

1 Ever since Wayne C. Booth first proposed the unreliable narrator as a concept, it has been considered to be among the basic and indispensable categories of textual analysis. Hardly anyone to date has modified or challenged Booth's well-known formulation, which has become the canonized definition of the term: "I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" (1961, 158-59). According to Booth, the distinction between reliable and unreliable narrators is based on "the degree and kind of distance" (155) that separates a given narrator from the implied author of a work. A comparison of the definitions provided in standard narratological works, in scholarly articles, and in glossaries of literary terms shows that the great majority of narratologists have followed Booth, providing almost identical definitions of the unreliable narrator.

2 What most critics seem to have forgotten, however, is that Booth himself freely admitted that the terminology for "this kind of distance in narrators is almost hopelessly inadequate" (1961, 158). There is indeed a peculiar discrepancy between the importance generally attributed to the question of reliability in narrative and the unresolved issues surrounding the concept of the unreliable narrator: "There can be little doubt about the importance of the problem of reliability in narrative and in literature as a whole.... [But] the problem is (predictably) as complex and (unfortunately) as ill-defined as it is important" (Yacobi, 1981, 113). Booth's canonical definition does not really make for clarity but rather sets the fox to keep the geese, as it were, since it falls back on the ill-defined and elusive notion of the implied author, which hardly provides a reliable basis for determining a narrator's unreliability.

3 The thesis of this article is that the concept of the unreliable narrator needs to be radically rethought because, as currently defined, it is terminologically imprecise and theoretically inadequate. The postulation of essentialized and anthropomorphized entities designated "unreliable narrator" and "implied author" ignores the complexity of
the phenomena involved and stands in the way of a systematic exploration of the
cognitive processes which result in the projection of unreliable narrators in the first
place. It would arguably be more adequate to conceptualize unreliable narration in the
context of frame theory as a projection by the reader who tries to resolve ambiguities and
textual inconsistencies by attributing them to the narrator's "unreliability". In the
context of frame theory, the invention of "unreliable narrators" can be understood as an
interpretative strategy or cognitive process of the sort that has come to be known as
"naturalization." Paraphrasing one of Malcolm Bradbury's observations in Mensonge, his
hilarious satire on deconstruction, I would like to suggest that it is high time to dismantle
many of the premises of realist theories of unreliable narration, and to convert the
foundations of some others.

The first part of the article is devoted to giving an assessment and critique of the
standard notions of the unreliable narrator. The second part outlines a radical
reconceptualization of unreliable narration. It is argued that a number of empirical
frames of reference and literary models serve as the modes of naturalization by means of
which readers (like critics and most theorists of unreliable narration) account for
contradictions both within texts and between the world-model of texts and their
empirical world-models. The third part gives a brief outline of the generic scope of
unreliable narration, arguing that it is unjustifiable and counter-productive to limit the
study of this phenomenon to narrative fiction. The final section will then provide a brief
summary and suggest that much more work needs to be done in this particular field of
narratology.

I. A critique of conventional theories of unreliable
narration

A brief look at conventional accounts of the concept "unreliable narrator" may be in
order so as to distinguish the approach argued for in this essay from the general
approach in narratology. Let us begin by asking just what it is that we know about the
mysterious unreliable narrator and by presenting a critique of traditional theories of
unreliable narration against the background of five hypotheses.

The definition provided by Gerald Prince in his Dictionary of Narratology will suffice to
indicate what is usually meant by the term "unreliable narrator": "A narrator whose
norms and behavior are not in accordance with the implied author's norms; a narrator
whose values (tastes, judgments, moral sense) diverge from those of the implied author's;
a narrator the reliability of whose account is undermined by various features of that
account" (Prince, 1987, 101). Despite the good job Prince does in summarizing the
communis opinio on the subject, this definition of the concept comprises an unholy
mixture of vagueness and tautology. Nonetheless, most theorists and critics who have
written on the unreliable narrator take the implied author both for granted and for the
only standard according to which unreliability can be determined.

One of the central problems in defining unreliable narration is the unresolved question of
what standards allow the critic to recognize an unreliable narrator. The usual answer to
the question "Unreliable, compared to what?" is woefully inadequate and untenable,
because it specifies just one basis for recognizing the narrator's unreliability, namely the
ill-defined concept of the implied author. The trouble with all of the definitions that are
based on the implied author is that they try to define unreliability by relating it to a concept that is itself ill-defined and paradoxical. Curiously enough, however, even the most sophisticated recent articles retain the notion of the implied author. In what are arguably the best critiques of orthodox theories of unreliable narration to date, the articles of Tamar Yacobi (1981, 1987) and Kathleen Wall (1994), the authors hold on to the implied author as though he, or rather it, was the only possible way of accounting for unreliable narration.

8 Critics who argue that a narrator's unreliability is to be gauged in comparison to the norms of the implied author just shift the burden of determination onto a critical catch-all term that is itself notoriously ill-defined. The tenacity with which narratologists have clung to the implied author in their attempts at defining unreliability suggests, as Mieke Bal (1981b, 209) observes, that the implied author is "a remainder category, a kind of passepartout that serves to clear away all the problematic remainders of a theory."

Introducing the implied author has certainly not managed to clear away the problems of defining unreliable narration.

9 Some narratologists have pointed out that the concept of the implied author does not provide a reliable basis for determining a narrator's unreliability. Not only are "the values (or 'norms') of the implied author... notoriously difficult to arrive at," as Rimmon-Kenan (1983, 101) observes, but the implied author is itself a very elusive and opaque notion. One might go much further than Rimmon-Kenan and suggest that the implied author's norms are impossible to establish and that the concept of the implied author is dispensable.

10 From a theoretical point of view, the concept of the implied author is also problematic because it creates the illusion that it is a matter of a purely textual phenomenon. But it is obvious from many of the definitions that the implied author is a construct established by the reader on the basis of the whole structure of a text. When Chatman (1990, 77) writes that "we might better speak of the 'inferred' than of the 'implied' author," he implicitly concedes that one is dealing with something that has to be worked out by the reader. Being a structural phenomenon that is voiceless, the implied author must be seen "as a construct inferred and assembled by the reader from all the components of the text" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, 87). Toolan has made the sensible suggestion that one should look at the implied author not as a speaker but as a component of the reception process, as the reader's idea of the author: "The implied author is a real position in narrative processing, a receptor's construct, but it is not a real role in narrative transmission. It is a projection back from the decoding side, not a real projecting stage on the encoding side" (1988, 78).

11 The most controversial aspect of the concept of the implied author is that it carries far-reaching, though largely unacknowledged theoretical implications. First, the concept of the implied author reintroduces the notion of authorial intention, though through the backdoor. As Chatman (1990, 77) has pointed out, "the concept of implied authorship arose in the debate about the relevance of authorial intention to interpretation." Providing "a new link to the sphere of the actual author and authorial values" (York, 1987, 166; cf. Yacobi, 1987), the implied author turns out to be little more than a terminologically presentable way of making it possible to talk again about the author's intention: "The concept of 'the implied author', with its air of being an inference from the work and thus as it were, like plot, an objective feature of the work, enables Booth to talk about the author under the guise of still appearing to talk about the work" (Baker, 1972/73, 204f.; cf. also Juhl, 1980, 203). Second, representing the work's norms and values,
the implied author is intended to serve both as a yardstick for a moralistic kind of criticism and as a check on the potentially boundless relativism of interpretation. Third, the use of the definite article and the singular misleadingly suggest that there is only one correct interpretation: "The very fact that Booth and Chatman speak of the implied author already implies, suggests the existence of one ideal interpretation of the narrative text" (Berendsen, 1984, 148). In short, the concept of the implied author appears to provide the critic again with a basis for judging both the acceptability of an author's "moral position," about which, according to Booth, a writer "has an obligation to be as clear [...] as he possibly can be" (1961, 389), and the correctness of an interpretation. The lack of terminological clarity and the problematic theoretical implications associated with the notion of the implied author have led some narratologists to argue that the concept should be abandoned. Some theorists have recognized that it has not fulfilled the promise "to account for the ideology of the text" (Bal, 1981a, 42) and is not capable of doing what it was supposed to do: "It not only adds another narrating subject to the heap but it fails to resolve what it sets out to bridge: the author-narrator relationship" (Lanser, 1981, 49f.). Whether or not narratology is really well served with such a problematic concept as the implied author, be it of the personalized and anthropomorphized or the depersonified variety, is an open question. Recently, some prominent narratologists have again emphatically come out in favour of the implied author, while others have argued just as strongly against the concept. But given the fact that phenomena like norms and values, structure, and meaning are central problems in literary criticism and will continue to occupy the attention of theorists and critics alike, they probably should not be allowed to disappear behind a concept like the implied author, which is ill-defined and potentially misleading. As I hope to show below, the implied author is neither a necessary nor a sufficient standard by which to determine a narrator's putative unreliability.

Despite what common sense would appear to tell us, definition is a problem with the unreliable narrator because most theories leave unclear what unreliability is and whether it involves moral or epistemological shortcomings. Most definitions in the wake of Booth have emphasized that unreliability consists of a moral distance between the norms of the implied or real author and those articulated by the narrator while other theorists have pointed out that what is at stake is not a question of moral norms but of the veracity of the account a narrator gives (cf. Toolan, 1988, 88).

In most work on the unreliable narrator, it is also unclear whether unreliability is primarily meant to designate a matter of misrepresenting the events of the story or whether it consists of the narrator's dubious judgments or interpretations. Rimmon-Kenan's (1983, 100) definition is a case in point. She simply leaves open whether unreliability is to be gauged in comparison to the accuracy of the narrator's account of the story or to his or her commentary and judgments: "An unreliable narrator... is one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect." The "and/or"-construction sounds very open and flexible, but this is a bit too nonchalant. Most would agree that it does make a difference whether we have a deviant narrator who provides a sober and factually veracious account of the most egregious or horrible events, which, from his point of view, are hardly noteworthy, or a normal narrator who is just a bit slow on the uptake and whose flawed interpretations of what is going on reveal that he is a benighted fool. Lanser (1981, 170ff.) provides an answer to the question of how we may classify narrators "with respect to 'reliability'" by positing...
three axes between the poles "dissimulation vs. honesty", "unreliability vs. reliability" and "narrative incompetence vs. narrative skill."

Conventional theories of unreliable narration are methodologically unsatisfactory as well because they either leave unclear how the narrator's unreliability is apprehended in the reading process or they provide only highly metaphorical and vague explanations of it. The metaphors that Chatman uses in order to explain how the reader detects the narrator's unreliability are a case in point. He resorts to what is arguably one of the two most popular metaphors in this context — that of "reading between the lines." Chatman (1978, 233) argues that readers "conclude, by 'reading out,' between the lines, that the events and existente could not have been 'like that,' and so we hold the narrator suspect." Leaving aside for the moment that the repeated use of inverted commas in definitions is not particularly reassuring, I just wish to suggest that such observations fail to shed much light on how a narrator's unreliability is apprehended in the reading process.

The second metaphor that critics and theorists continually employ in order to account for unreliable narration is that something is going on "behind the narrator's back" (cf. Riggan, 1981, 13; Yacobi, 1981, 125). Chatman (1978, 233), for instance, suggests that the implied author establishes "a secret communication with the implied reader. Riggan (1981, 13) not only uses almost exactly the same phrase, but he also states quite unequivocally that "the presence of the implied author's hand is always discernible behind the narrator's back" (77). He does not, however, bother to enlighten the uninitiated as to how the hand of the omnipresent implied author behind the narrator's back may in fact be discerned. Such metaphors, though vivid, provide only very opaque explanations of unreliable narration. From a methodological and theoretical point of view, they amount to nothing more than a declaration of bankruptcy. With regard to the question of how readers know an unreliable narrator when they see one, these metaphors are unenlightening.

To explain the mechanisms that stand behind the impression that a narrator is unreliable, it is not necessary to postulate an implied author but simply to have recourse to the concept of structural or dramatic irony (cf. Booth 1961, 255). The structure of unreliable narration can be explained in terms of dramatic irony and discrepant awareness because it involves a contrast between a narrator's view of the fictional world and the contrary state of affairs which the reader can grasp. The reader interprets what the narrator says in two quite different contexts. On the one hand, the reader is exposed to what the narrator wants and means to say. On the other hand, the statements of the narrator take on additional meaning for the reader, meaning that the narrator is not conscious of and does not intend to convey. Without being aware of it, unreliable narrators continually give the reader indirect information about their idiosyncrasies and states of mind. The peculiar effects of unreliable narration result from the conflict between the narrator's report of the facts" on the level of the story and his own interpretations. The narrative not only informs the reader of the narrator's version of events, it also provides him or her with indirect information about what presumably "really happened" and about the narrator's frame of mind.

If one gives up the notion of the implied author, then it is necessary to modify Booth's (1961, 74) explanations of the unreliable narrator in such a way as is already suggested by his definition of the implied author as "the core of norms and choices." Unreliable narrators are those whose perspective is in contradiction with the value and norm system
of the whole text or with that of the reader. The phenomenon of unreliable narration can be seen as the result of discrepant awareness and dramatic irony.

The general effect of what is called unreliable narration consists of redirecting the reader's attention from the level of the story to the speaker and of foregrounding peculiarities of the narrator's psychology. Wall (1994, 23) argues very convincingly that unreliable narration "refocuses the reader's attention on the narrator's mental processes." What is needed therefore is a more systematic exploration of the relation between unreliability and characterization. In the only available article on the subject, Dan Shen (1989, 309) has shown that "deviations in terms of reliability may have a significant role to play in revealing or reinforcing narratorial stance" and "in characterizing a particular consciousness." In unreliable narration it is often very difficult to determine whether what the narrator says provides facts about the fictional world or only clues to his distorted and evaluating consciousness. Consequently, the answer to the question "reliable, compared to what?" may vary dramatically depending on whether the standard according to which we gauge the potential unreliability of the narrator involves the events or the narrator's subjective view of them.

In sum, the link that theorists have forged between the unreliable narrator and the implied author deprives narratology of the possibility of accounting for the pragmatic effects subsumed under the term of unreliable narration. The critic accounts for whatever incongruousness s/he may have detected by reading the text as an instance of dramatic irony and by projecting an unreliable narrator as an integrative hermeneutic device. Culler (1975, 157) has clarified what is involved here: "At the moment when we propose that a text means something other than what it appears to say we introduce, as hermeneutic devices which are supposed to lead us to the truth of the text, models which are based on our expectations about the text and the world." This, of course, raises the questions of what kind of models are involved in the cognitive processes that lead to the projection of an unreliable narrator.

II. Reconceptualizing conventional theories of unreliable narration

Heeding Harker's (1989) call for a radical reorientation, I will try to outline a model-oriented approach to how texts that display features of unreliable narration are read. I will contend that we can define unreliable narration neither as a structural nor as a semantic aspect of the textbase alone, but only by taking into account the conceptual frameworks that readers bring to the text. If we are to make sense of unreliable narration at all, it would be wise to begin by looking at the standards according to which critics think they recognize an unreliable narrator when they see one.

Determining whether a narrator is unreliable is not just an innocent descriptive statement but a subjectively tinged value-judgment or projection governed by the normative presuppositions and moral convictions of the critic, which as a rule remain unacknowledged. Critics concerned with unreliable narrators recuperate textual inconsistencies by relating them to accepted cultural models. Recent work on unreliable narration confirms Culler's hypothesis about the impact of realist and referential notions for the generation of literary effects. Culler (1975, 144) argues that "most literary effects, particularly in narrative prose, depend on the fact that readers will try to relate what the
text tells them to a level of ordinary human concerns, to the actions and reactions of characters constructed in accordance with models of integrity and coherence."

24 Riggan's monograph on the unreliable first-person narrator provides a case in point. Despite its insights into a broad range of texts, it suffers from all of the theoretical shortcomings outlined above. A look at Riggan's typology of unreliable narrators provides insight into the basic mechanisms that are involved in the projection of an unreliable narrator. Riggan distinguishes four types of such narrators, which he designates as "picaros," "madmen," "naïfs," and "clowns."

25 These typological distinctions can best be understood as a way of relating the text to accepted cultural models or to literary conventions. What critics like Riggan are doing is integrating previously held world-knowledge with textual data or even imposing preexisting conceptual models on the text. The models used to account for unreliable narration provide a context which resolves textual inconsistencies and makes the respective novels intelligible in terms of culturally prevalent frames.

26 It is these models which determine the perception of narrators designated as "unreliable," and not the other way round. The information on which the projection of an unreliable narrator is based derives at least as much from within the mind of the beholder as from textual data. In other words: whether a narrator is called unreliable or not does not depend on the distance between the norms and values of the narrator and those of the implied author, but between the distance that separates the narrator's view of the world from the reader's or critic's world-model and standards of normalcy, which are themselves, of course, open to challenge. It is thus necessary to make explicit that customary presuppositional framework on which theories of unreliable narration have hitherto been based.

27 An analysis of the presuppositional framework on which most theories of unreliable narration rest is overdue, since research into unreliable narration has been based on a number of highly questionable conceptual presuppositions, which as a rule remain implicit and unacknowledged. The general notion of unreliability presupposes some sort of standard for establishing whether or not the facts or interpretations provided by a narrator may be held suspect. The violations of norms which interest critics and theorists "are only made possible by norms which," as Culler (1975, 160) wittily observes, "they have been too impatient to investigate in detail." These presuppositions about unreliable narration need to be made explicit and clarified because they provide the key for reconceptualizing unreliability.

28 Among these underlying (and unwarranted) presuppositions on which the concept of unreliable narration relies, one might distinguish between epistemological and ontological premises, assumptions that are rooted in a liberal humanist view of literature, and psychological, moral, and linguistic norms — all of which are based on stylistic and other deviational models. An analysis of the presuppositional framework on which most theories of unreliable narration are based reveals that the orthodox concept of the unreliable narrator is a curious amalgam of a realist epistemology and a mimetic view of literature.

29 The epistemological and ontological premises consist of realist and by now doubtful notions of objectivity and truth. More specifically, the notion of unreliability presupposes that an objective view of the world, of others, and of oneself can be attained. In contrast to the ideal of objective self-observation, it needs to be emphasized that "a maximally
objective view of oneself can be attained only by others" (Fludernik, 1993, 53). The concept of unreliable narration also implies that human beings are principally taken to be capable of providing veracious accounts of events, proceeding from the assumption that "an authoritative version of events" (Wall, 1994, 37) can in principle be established or retrieved.

30 Theories of narrational unreliability also tend to rely on realist and mimetic notions of literature. The concept of the unreliable narrator is based on what Yacobi (1981, 119) has aptly called "a quasi-human model of a narrator" and, one might add, on an equally anthropomorphized model of the implied author. Amoros (1991, 42) has provided a convincing critique of this general tendency of allocating human features to the narrative agent.

31 In addition, theories of narrational unreliability are also heavily imbued with a wide range of unacknowledged notions that are based on stylistic deviation models or on more general notions of deviation from some norm or other. The notion of unreliability presupposes some default value which is taken to be unmarked "reliability." This is usually left undefined and merely taken for granted. Most critics agree, however, that reliability is indeed the default value (cf. Martínez-Bonati, 1981). Lanser (1981, 171), for instance, argues that "the conventional degrees zero [are] rather close to the poles of authority," and Riggan (1981, 19) observes that "our natural tendency is to grant our speaker the full credibility possible within the limitations of human memory and capability." To my knowledge, Wall is the first theorist of unreliable narration who sheds some light on the presuppositions on which this "reliable counterpart" of the unreliable narrator rests when she argues that the reliable narrator "is the 'rational, self-present subject of humanism,' who occupies a world in which language is a transparent medium that is capable of reflecting a 'real' world."

32 Vague and ill-defined though this norm of reliability may be, it supplies the standard according to which narrational unreliability is gauged. If one takes a close look at the presuppositional framework on which theories of unreliable narration are based, one can further elucidate the assumption that an unreliable narrator departs from certain norms. What is involved here are various sets of ill-defined and usually unacknowledged norms, which can, however, theoretically be distinguished.

33 One of these sets of norms includes all those notions that are usually referred to as "common sense." Another set encompasses those standards that a given culture holds to be constitutive of normal psychological behaviour. Thirdly, the habit of discussing the stylistic peculiarities of unreliable narrators shows that linguistic norms also play a role in determining how far a given narrator deviates from some implied default. Finally, many critics seem to think that there are agreed-upon moral and ethical standards that are often used as frames of reference when the question of the possible unreliability of a narrator is raised.

34 One of the main problems with all of these tacit presuppositions based on unacknowledged norms and notions of deviation is that the establishment of norms is much more difficult than critics want to make us believe. Fludernik (1993, 349), for instance, argues that the "explicatory power of stylistic deviation breaks down at the point where one can no longer establish a norm, or where deviations from the norm are no longer empirically perceptible."
In both critical practice and theoretical work on unreliable narration, however, these different sets of norms are usually not explicitly set out but merely introduced in passing, and they seldom if ever receive any theoretical examination. Let me give one typical example: in what is the only book-length study of the unreliable first-person narrator, Riggan (1981, 36), for instance, suggests that the narrator's unreliability may be revealed by the "unacceptability of his [moral] philosophy in terms of normal moral standards or of basic common sense and human decency." By saying this, he lets the cat out of the bag in a way that is very illuminating indeed.

Phrases like these unwittingly reveal the real standards according to which critics decide whether a narrator may be unreliable: It is not the norms and values of the implied author, whoever or wherever that phantom may be, that provide the critic with the yardstick for determining how abnormal, indecent, immoral or perverse a given narrator is, but "normal moral standards," "basic common sense" and "human decency" — in other words: unreliable, not in comparison to the implied author, but unreliable in comparison to what the critic takes to be "normal moral standards" and "common sense."

The trouble with seemingly self-explanatory yardsticks like "normal moral standards" and "basic common sense" is that no generally accepted standard of normality exists which can serve as the basis for impartial judgments. In a pluralist, postmodernist, and multicultural age like ours it has become more difficult than ever before to determine what may count as "normal moral standards" and "human decency." In other words: a narrator may be perfectly reliable compared to one critic's notions of moral normality but quite unreliable in comparison to those held other people. To put it quite bluntly: a pederast would not find anything wrong with *Lolita*; a male chauvinist fetishist who gets his kicks out of making love to dummies is unlikely to detect any distance between his norms and those of the mad monologist in Ian McEwan's "Dead As They Come"; and someone used to watching his beloved mother disposing of unwelcome babies would not even find the stories collected in Ambrose Bierce's "The Parenticide Club" in any way objectionable.

There are a number of definable textual clues to unreliability, and what is needed is a more subtle and systematic account of these signals. Unreliable narrators tend to be marked by a number of textual inconsistencies. These may range from internal contradictions within their discourse over discrepancies between their utterances and actions (cf. Riggan, 1981, 36, who calls this "a gaping discrepancy between his conduct and the moral views he propounds"), to those inconsistencies that result from multiperspectival accounts of the same event (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, 101; Toolan, 1988, 88).

The range of clues to unreliability that Wall (1994, 19) simply refers to as "verbal tics" or "verbal habits of the narrator" (20) can and should be further differentiated by specifying the linguistic expressions of subjectivity. Due to the close link between subjectivity, on the one hand, and the effect called unreliability, on the other, the virtually exhaustive account of categories of expressivity and subjectivity that Fludernik (1993, 227-279) has provided are also extremely useful for drawing up a list of grammatical signals of unreliability, which can be further differentiated in terms of the linguistic expressions of subjectivity. The "establishment" of a reading in terms of "unreliable narration" frequently depends on the linguistic and stylistic evocation of a narrator's subjectivity or cognitive limitations (cf. Fludernik, 1993, 280).
Despite the above list of textual clues to unreliability, it needs to be emphasized that the problem of unreliable narration cannot be resolved on the basis of textual data alone. In addition to these intratextual signals, the reader also draws on extratextual frames of reference in his or her attempt to gauge the narrator's potential degree of unreliability. The term "unreliable narrator" does not designate a structural or semantic feature of texts, but a pragmatic phenomenon that cannot be fully grasped without taking into account the conceptual premises that readers and critics bring to texts. Consequently, it seems doubtful whether the term unreliable narrator can be defined, as Zimmermann (1995, 61) has recently maintained, solely on the basis of what she calls "intratextual dissonances."

What is needed instead is a pragmatic and cognitive framework that takes into consideration the world-model or conceptual information previously existing in the mind of reader or critic. It is necessary to take into consideration both the world-model and norms in the mind of the reader and the interplay between textual and extratextual information. Coming to grips with narrational unreliability is impossible if one conceives reading as being a mere "bottom-up' or data-driven process" just as if one conceives it as being nothing but "a 'top-down' or conceptually driven process" (Harker, 1989, 471).

Developing a viable theory of unreliable narration that accounts for the complex meaning effects subsumed under the concept of unreliable narration presupposes an "interactive model of the reading process" (Harker, 1989, 471) and a reader-oriented pragmatic or cognitive framework (cf. Fludernik, 1993, 51). It is only within an interactive model of the reading process that an adequate theory of unreliable narration can be elaborated. Fludernik's (1993, 353) explanation of irony illuminates how this might be conceptualized: "textual contradictions and inconsistencies alongside semantic infelicities, or discrepancies between utterances and action (in the case of hypocrisy), merely signal the interpretational incompatability... which then requires a recuperatory move on the reader's part — aligning the discrepancy with an intended higher-level significance: irony."

An interactive model of the reading process alerts theorists of unreliable narration that the projection of an unreliable narrator depends upon both textual information and extratextual conceptual information located in the reader's mind (cf. Harker, 1989, 476). Detaching the text from the reader and ignoring the world-models in the reader's mind has resulted in the aporias outlined above. On the other hand, one should beware of throwing the baby out with the bathwater by rejecting textual data as a legitimate basis for explaining unreliable narration.

Pragmatics and frame theory present a possible way out of the methodological and theoretical problems that most theories of unreliable narration suffer from because cognitive theories can shed light on the way in which readers naturalize texts that are taken to display features of narrational unreliability. To offer a reading of a narrative text in terms of unreliable narration can be thought of as a way of naturalizing textual inconsistencies by giving them a function in some larger pattern supplied by accepted cultural models. Culler (1975, 138) clarifies what "naturalization" means in this context: "to naturalize a text is to bring it into relation with a type of discourse or model which is already, in some sense, natural or legible." The concept of unreliable narration, for instance, provides the reader with a general framework which allows him or her to "treat anything anomalous as the effect of the narrator's vision or cast of mind" (Culler, 1975, 200). To my knowledge, Wall (1994, 30) is the only theorist to date who has at least briefly...
discussed the relation between naturalization and unreliable narration: "Part of the way in which we arrive at suspicions that the narrator is unreliable, then, is through the process of naturalizing the text, using what we know about human psychology and history to evaluate the probable accuracy of, or motives for, a narrator's assertions." She is certainly also right when she suggests that this kind of naturalization "is so much a part of our reading strategy with respect to both characters and narrators that, in all probability, we do not notice it."

45 Noticing and clarifying those unacknowledged frames of reference provides the clue to reconceptualizing the whole notion of unreliable narration. The question of whether a narrator is described as unreliable or not needs to be gauged in relation to various frames of reference. More particularly, one might distinguish between schemata derived from everyday experience and those that result from knowledge of literary conventions.

46 A first referential framework should be based on the readers' empirical experience and criteria of verisimilitude. These frames depend on the referentiality of the text, the assumption that the text refers to or is at least compatible with the so-called real world. Whether a narrator is taken to be reliable or not depends, among other things, on such referential frameworks as the reader's or critic's

- general world-knowledge,
- historical world-model or cultural codes,
- explicit theories of personality or implicit models of psychological coherence and human behaviour,
- knowledge of the social, moral or linguistic norms relevant for the period in which a text was written and published (cf. Yacobi, 1987),
- the reader's or critic's psychological disposition, and system of norms and values.

47 Whether a narrator is taken to be reliable or not depends, among other things, on such referential frameworks as the reader's general world-knowledge. Deviations from what is usually referred to as "common sense" or general world-knowledge may indicate that the narrator is unreliable. Secondly, narrators who violate the standards that a given culture holds to be constitutive of normal psychological behaviour are generally taken to be unreliable. What is involved here is psychological theories of personality or implicit models of normal human behaviour. In order to gauge the potential unreliability of the fictitious child-molester Humbert Humbert, the narrator of Nabokov's Lolita (1955), it does not suffice to look at textual data alone, because the process of character constitution during the reading process is inevitably influenced by the reader's implied personality theory, as Grabes (1996) has convincingly demonstrated. Thirdly, generally agreed-upon moral and ethical standards are often used as frames of reference when the question of the possible unreliability of a narrator is raised.

48 When a narrative text violates one or several of these normative presuppositions, the reader can always resort to one of these frames of reference in order to naturalize the text. As the reader relates discrepancies to these frames of reference, he or she brings the text into a context of coherence. Note that the choice of a particular frame of reference brings about a change in the mode of reading.

49 A second set of models brought into play in order to gauge a narrator's possible unreliability involves a number of specifically literary frames of reference. These include, for example:

- general literary conventions (cf. Amorós, 1991),
• conventions and models of literary genres,
• intertextual frames of reference — that is, references to specific pre-texts,
• stereotyped models of characters such as the picaro, the miles gloriosus, the trickster,
• and last but not least the structure and norms established by the respective work itself.

The generic framework determines in part which criteria are used when a narrator's potential unreliability is gauged (cf. Yacobi, 1987, 20f.). A narrator that is considered to be unreliable in psychological or realistic terms may appear quite reliable if the text belongs to the genre of science fiction.

Both the concept of unreliable narration and the various types of unreliable narrators that have been proposed can be seen as modes of naturalization. These are based on widely accepted cultural frames which not only link a high number of disparate items, but also resolve whatever conflicts he or she may have noticed. The reader can try to account for textual inconsistencies by reading the text as the utterance of an obtuse, morally peculiar, or psychologically disturbed (i.e., unreliable) narrator. In this process, accepted cultural models of "deviant" but plausible human attitudes or behaviour are made use of, and the text begins to become naturalized.

The postulation of an unreliable narrator can be understood as a "mechanism of integration" (Yacobi, 1981, 119) in that it resolves whatever textual contradictions or discrepancies between the textual data and the reader's world-knowledge there may have been and leads to a synthesis at a higher level. Although relying on the implied and/or real author as the ultimate reference-point on which "reliability-judgments performed by the reader" (Yacobi, 1987, 22) depend, Yacobi (1987, 24f.) comes to a similar conclusion: "The hypothesis of a fictional reporter's unreliability is a mechanism for reconciling textual incongruities by appeal to a deliberate tension between the viewpoint of this informant (a character, narrator, dialogist, monologist) and that of the implied author who created him for his own purposes." In calling the source from which the utterances emanate an unreliable narrator, the critic not only makes peculiar features readily intelligible, but she or he also specifies how the text as a whole should be read. In the pragmatic context provided by frame theory unreliable narration can be explained as "an interpretive procedure" (Yacobi, 1981, 121): "as the result of interpretative work brought to bear on the juxtaposition between the wording of the text and the (by implication incompatible) cultural or textual norms of the text as constructed by the reader or implied as values shared by the reader and the realistic textual world" (Fludernik, 1993, 440; emphasis added). Conceived in this way, the projection of an unreliable narrator is not only informed by textual data, as Chatman and other proponents of the implied author would like to make us believe, but also by the conceptual models or frames previously existing in the mind of the reader or critic.

III. Reconceptualizing the generic scope of unreliable narration

So far, the focus of the discussion of unreliable narration — not just in the present article, but in literary studies at large — has been almost exclusively on narrative fiction (cf. Jahn 1998). The generic scope of the phenomenon in question, however, extends far beyond first-person narrators in novels or short stories. The following brief outline of the
broader generic scope of unreliable narration will have to be provisional and
programmatic because no general overview of the subject is currently available.

54 Just as the history of unreliable narration does not begin with modern fiction, the use
of unreliable narrators is also not confined to narrative fiction; it rather extends to a wider
range of genres. The subgenres known as the dramatic monologue (cf. Bennett, 1987) and
the memory play (cf. Brunkhorst, 1980) are cases in point. These hybrid genres cut across
established generic categories of poetry, drama, and narrative: with its limitation to a
single speaker usually revealing key episodes of his or her life, the dramatic monologue
combines poetic diction with dramatic presentation and story-telling elements; similarly,
the memory play is a type of drama with distinct narrative features.

55 The dramatic monologues of nineteenth-century English literature provide ample
evidence of the use of unreliable narration in poetry. There are many noteworthy
examples of such unreliable narration in Victorian poetry, the most famous of which are
probably Browning’s "My Last Duchess" (1842) and Tennyson’s Maud: A Monodrama (1855).
Both structurally and thematically, these poems display almost all of the features of
unreliable narration that have been discussed: they involve first-person speakers whose
disturbed perceptions, egotistic personalities, and problematic value-systems lead the
reader to question the accuracy of their accounts. In Maud the monologist’s strong bias
results from a high degree of emotional involvement, from his divided loyalties, and from
his overt partiality. Similarly, the speaker of Browning’s "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at
Saint Praxed’s Church" (1845) is an unreliable narrator if ever there was one. The bishop
unwittingly reveals that he has fathered several bastards and that even on his deathbed he
is thinking of nothing other than material wealth and sexual joy. The study of a host of
other Victorian poems — e. g. Browning’s "Porphyrias Lover" (1836) and John Davidson’s
"The Testament of an Empire-Builder" (1902) — and of many of Rudyard Kipling’s Barrack-
Room Ballads would also benefit from the application of the conceptual tools developed for
the analysis of unreliable narration.

56 The same is true for the "memory play," which typically features an unreliable first-
person narrator. Many post-war English plays prove those critics and theorists wrong
who, like Elam (1980, 111), maintain that drama is "without narratorial mediation." However,
the study of both unreliable narration and point of view or focalisation in drama has received hardly any attention to date. In the only available article on the
subject, Brian Richardson (1988, 194) has convincingly shown that the deployment of
narratorial mediation and the appearance of unreliability in plays call "for the kind of
analysis of point of view usually reserved for modern fiction."

57 Such memory plays as Tom Stoppard’s Travesties (1974) and Peter Shaffer’s Amadeus
(1979), which feature Henry Carr and Antonio Salieri respectively as narrators,
demonstrate that post-war English playwrights make very subtle use of unreliable
narration. In the stage directions of his play, Stoppard explicitly draws attention to Carr’s
unreliability, something which results from the old man’s poor memory and his
reactionary prejudices: "the scene (and most of the play) is under the erratic control of
Old Carr’s memory, which is not notably reliable, and also of his various prejudices and
delusions" (Stoppard, 1974, 27). The main reasons for Salieri’s unreliability are his limited
knowledge, the high degree of his emotional involvement, and his problematic
value-system. In Amadeus dramatic irony results primarily from the tension between what
the audience sees and what Salieri describes, while Travesties contains a wide range of
textual clues to Carr’s unreliability.
Like many contemporary English novels, these memory plays call into question conventional notions of unreliable narration because they question the existence of a fundamental difference between "reliable" and "unreliable" narration (cf. Wall, 1994, 23). The fact that many recent English novels and plays challenge realist notions of truth and objectivity seems to confirm Wall's (1994, 37) view that we perhaps "need to re-think entirely our notion that unreliable narrators give an inaccurate version of events and that our task is to figure out 'what really happened'." It could be argued that the unreliable first-person speakers in plays such as Beckett's Play or Stoppard's Travesties, and novels such as Julian Barnes' Talking It Over or Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day are ultimately not at all unreliable: the stories they tell may not provide objective renderings of events, but they depict, in a very truthful way, the illusions and self-deceptions of the narrators themselves.12

Despite its brevity, this sketch of the generic scope of unreliable narration may serve to show that this feature is not confined to narrative fiction. Rather, such hybrid subgenres as the dramatic monologue and the memory play demonstrate that unreliable narration appears crossgenerically. However, the use of unreliable narration in genres other than narrative fiction has yet to receive the scholarly attention it deserves.

It needs to be emphasized that narrative theory could and should be applied to both narration in drama (cf. Richardson, 1988, 198) and to such hybrid genres as the dramatic monologue and the ballad. The application of narrative theory to genres other than fiction could open up new directions of research in an age of literature that has, after all, become noted for the blurring of genre distinctions. Since both the crossing of the boundaries between fiction, drama, and poetry and the phenomenon that has come to be known as "intermediality" have become hallmarks of contemporary English literature, literary studies would arguably stand to gain by applying the categories and methods developed for the study of one genre (e.g., narrative fiction) to the study of other genres and media. If criticism and theory want to keep up with such innovative literary developments as the blurring of generic boundary lines, critics should not forget the insights which the "cross-generic" application of genre-specific theories affords.

IV. Conclusion

Let me conclude with a few brief indications of some of the new territories to be explored that are opened up by such a cognitive framework for the analysis of unreliable narration. Firstly, it can bridge the gap that has separated narratology and cognitive theory for much too long — to the detriment of narratological inquiry, one might add. Secondly, such a cognitive reconceptualization can be usefully applied in the as yet unwritten narratological history of the development of unreliable narration. Thirdly, a cognitive theory of unreliable narration may be useful for understanding how readers make sense of a narrative as a whole. Lastly, only if we take into consideration both the cognitive strategies and the culturally accepted models and frames that readers and critics, usually unconsciously, deploy when they naturalize texts in terms of unreliable narration will we be in a position to assess possible links between the historically variable notions of subjectivity and the equally changing uses of what has come to be known as the unreliable narrator.
Many recent novels do indeed suggest that there is something to Wall's (1994, 22) hypothesis "that changes in how subjectivity is viewed will inevitably be reflected in the way reliable or unreliable narration is presented." Contemporary British fiction, for example, often challenges the processes of naturalization involved in the projection of unreliable narrators and calls into question conventional notions of unreliable narration. Wall (1994, 18) has demonstrated that Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* not only "challenges our usual definition of an unreliable narrator," but also "deconstructs the notion of truth, and consequently questions both 'reliable' and 'unreliable' narration and the distinctions we make between them" (23). The same point could be made with respect to many other post-war novels that employ first-person narrators including William Golding's *Free Fall* (1959), Anthony Burgess' *Earthly Powers* (1980), Nigel Williams' *Star Turn* (1985), William Boyd's *The New Confessions* (1988), and Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). Graham Swift's short stories and novels, for example, both foreground and challenge the problematic notions of truth, objectivity, and reliability on which theories of unreliable narration are based (see Nünning, 1993b). The fact that many recent novels and short stories challenge the usual definitions of an unreliable narrator confirms Wall's (1994, 37) view that we really "need to re-think entirely our notion that unreliable narrators give an inaccurate version of events and that our task is to figure out 'what really happened'." Many historians have at last begun to reject the noble dream of objectivity, and it seems to be high time that narratologists did the same. But much more work needs to be done if we want to come to terms with the complex set of narrative strategies and reading processes that, ever since the good old days of Wayne C. Booth, have been subsumed under the wide umbrella of the term "unreliable narration."

From the point of view of the proposed cognitive theory of unreliable narration, the answer to the question "Unreliable, compared to what?" can be summed up in one brief sentence: unreliable, not compared to the implied author's norms and values, but to the reader's or critic's preexisting conceptual knowledge of the world and to his or her (usually unacknowledged) frames of reference. This answer and the above hypotheses are not, however, meant to be the last word on the unreliable narrator, but rather the first word on a radical reconceptualization of the subject. If, however, we are to make sense of unreliable narration at all, we would be wise to give up the implied author and instead take into consideration the unacknowledged standards and frames of reference according to which critics think they recognize an unreliable narrator when they see one.

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NOTES


2. C. Bal (1981b, 208ff.); Jakobsen (1977, 182ff.); Toolan (1988, 77ff.); as I have proposed elsewhere (Nünning, 1993a, 1997b), instead of setting up an "implied author" and an "implied reader," it would be more sensible to conceptualize a textual level that encompasses the entirety of the structural properties of a work.

3. C. Chatman (1990, 81, 90ff.) and Nelles (1993), who does not even question the concept. Nelles (1993, 22) argues that the implied author and the implied reader "each has its distinctive function: [...] the implied author means, the implied reader interprets." By contrast, Diegott (1993a, 1993b) and Nünning (1993a, 1997b) are highly suspicious of the concept and try to demonstrate the problems it raises for narrative poetics.

4. Lanser (1981, 170ff.) and Hof (1984, 55) have suggested that one should distinguish between an unreliable narrator and an untrustworthy one. Hof shows that the report a narrator gives of the events may be heavily flawed although the narrator himself may appear to be absolutely trustworthy. And Lanser (1981, 171) suggests that "a narrator may be quite trustworthy in reporting events but not competent in interpreting them." Cf. Lanser’s (1981, 40) observation that "a narrator can be perfectly reliable with respect to the 'facts' of a given story, but unreliable regarding opinions and judgments about the story world." It seems doubtful, however, as Manfred Jahn has pointed out to me (personal communication), whether anything is gained by substituting two ill-defined terms for one problematic category.

5. This approach is indebted to Jahn’s valuable suggestions for a cognitive narratology (see Jahn, 1997) and to Fludernik’s work on "natural" narratology (see Fludernik, 1993, 1996).


7. Cf. Amorós (1991, 56ff.) and Culler (1975, 140), who distinguishes "five levels of vraisemblance, five ways in which a text may be brought into contact with and defined in relation to another text which helps to make it intelligible."

8. Cf. Culler’s (1975, 140) notion of "a general cultural text: shared knowledge which would be recognized by participants as part of culture," and Chatman’s (1978, 149) observation that what Booth called moral norms are really "general cultural codes."

9. C. Culler (1975, 190, 225, 237) and Wall’s (1994, 21) observation that unreliable narrators "reflect some reasonable model of human fallibility" and that readers use their "knowledge of psychology" (29) in evaluating a narrator’s motives and behaviour. For the relevance of the reader’s implied personality theory for the process of character constitution during the reading process, see Grabes (1996).

11. Other examples of plays which violate naturalistic stage conventions by relying on unreliable narration would be Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) and Harold Pinter's *Landscape* (1968), the latter being composed of alternating and independent acts of narration spoken by two characters.

12. Cf. Rabinovitz (1983, 67), who argues that "the unreliable narrator in *Murphy* is in an ultimate sense not at all unreliable; for it depicts, in a truthful way, the illusions and deceptions of the outer world."

ENDNOTES

*. The present article is a completely revised and extended version of a paper read at a symposium on "Narratologie, Rhetorik, Textlinguistik: Ein Integrationsversuch," held at the University of Dortmund in February 1996. I should like to thank Jon L. Erickson (University of Cologne), Luc Herman (Antwerp), Andreas Höfele (Heidelberg), Manfred Jahn (Cologne), and the convenors and participants of the Dortmund Symposium, especially Monika Fludernik (Freiburg), who also brought Yacobi (1987) to my attention, Gerald Prince and Susan Lanser for their stimulating comments and valuable suggestions.

ABSTRACTS

The paper argues that the concept "unreliable narrator" needs to be radically rethought because, as currently defined, it is terminologically imprecise and theoretically inadequate. The first part of the article is devoted to giving an assessment and critique of the standard notions of the unreliable narrator, arguing that the postulation of essentialized and anthropomorphized entities designated "unreliable narrator" and "implied author" ignore the complexity of the phenomena involved and stands in the way of a systematic exploration of the cognitive processes which result in the projection of unreliable narrators in the first place. The second part outlines a radical reconceptualization of unreliable narration. It is proposed that it would be more sensible to conceptualize the relevant phenomena in the context of frame theory as a projection by the reader who tries to resolve ambiguities and textual inconsistencies by attributing them to the narrator's "unreliability." In the context of frame theory, the reader's projection of "unreliable narrators" can be understood as an interpretive strategy or a cognitive process of the sort that has come to be known as "naturalization" (cf. Culler 1975; Fludernik 1993, 1996). A number of empirical frames of reference and literary models can be seen as standard modes of naturalization by means of which readers account for contradictions both within texts and between the world-model of texts and their empirical world-models. The final section gives a brief outline of the generic scope of unreliable narration, arguing that it is unjustifiable and counterproductive to limit the study of this phenomenon to narrative fiction.
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More Aspects of Focalisation: Refinements and Applications

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1 This essay is a continuation of an earlier one (Jahn, 1996) in which I suggested a revision of Genette's theory of focalization by linking its original question "who sees?" to Henry James's vision of windows in the House of Fiction and, more metaphorically, of windows provided by storyinternal "reflector" characters. The main strands of James's complex metaphor were taken up in the term "windows of focalization," a narratological concept grounded on a linguistic-cognitive model of the reading process (Jackendoff, 1987) and on Iser's (1976) and Wolfs (1993) reception-orientated accounts of narrative aesthetic illusions. The present essay continues this integrative bent, first, by situating traditional point-of-view-concepts within the narratological framework of Genettean and post-Genettean focalization theory, second, by reconceptualizing criterial aspects of focalization as "vectored indicators of subjectivity," third, by moving from Genette's ([1972] 1980) and Stanzel's (1979) [1984] typologies of focalizations/perspectivizations to a four-type gliding-scale model, and fourth, by extending Ryan's (1987) concept of "story-line windows" to focalized contexts and discussing patterns of window shifting and window overlap.

1. Standard models of focalization

2 As is generally known, Genette divides narratology into the three fields of Tense, Mood, and Voice. Tense treats the possibilities of temporal arrangement and presentation (Order, Speed, and Frequency); Voice deals with narrators, embedded narratives and the choice of grammatical person; Mood analyzes "the regulation of narrative information" (1988, 41), subsuming (a) modes of presenting action, speech, and thought, and (b) modes of selection and restriction. The latter subfield Genette terms focalization – or, rather, he promotes an already existing word (both in French and English) to a theoretical term.

3 For his definition of focalization, Genette draws on four traditional approaches: Brooks and Warren's (1959/1943) point of view approach, Pouillon's (1946) vision approach,
Blin's (1954) field approach, and Todorov's (1966) knowledge approach. Brooks and Warren build on the question "Who sees the story?" (1959, 659); Pouillon (1946, 69-114) distinguishes three main vision modes, *vision avec* ("vision with," i. e., vision through a character's eyes), *vision par derrière* ("vision from behind," i. e., from an omniscient narratorial vantage) and *vision du dehors* ("vision from outside"); Blin (1954, part II) treats Stendhal's use of subjectively restricted fields [*restrictions de champ*], and Todorov asks whether the narrator knows more than, as much as, or less than the character (1966, 126).

Genette's own contribution to this is, roughly, fourfold. First, he introduces a sharp focalization-narration distinction by setting "who sees?" against "who speaks?". Second, he defines focalization by combining and adjusting the four pre-narratological models just listed; third, he details a typology comprising three major types (zero, internal, and external focalization), roughly equivalent to Pouillon's vision and Todorov's knowledge categories. Fourth, he explicates two main types of *alterations*, that is, deviations from normal restrictions, such as a text's providing for too much or too little information (dubbed "paralipsis" and "paralepsis," respectively). Modestly, Genette avers that his account is basically "a reformulation" ([1983] 1988, 65).

Post-Genettean focalization theory is largely influenced by Bal's ([1977] 1983) critique of Genette and her introduction of various new terms and definitions. Basically, Bal proposes three major modifications: (1) she throws out Genette's category of external focalization – mainly, she argues, because it rests on a confusion of subject and object, a confusion of "who sees?" and "what is seen?"; (2) she adds the concepts of "external" and "internal focalizers," in effect re-introducing narratorial point of view (via the external focalizer); and (3) she initiates an inquiry into the nature and epistemological restrictions of perceptible and imperceptible objects. Although Bal's modifications have found the approval of many theorists, Genette himself remains largely unconvinced, passing the general verdict that "my study of focalizations has caused much ink to flow – no doubt, a little too much" (1988, 65). 1

For the present purpose, I will use the Genettean axioms as points of departure, adding, subtracting, and modifying as I go along. Specifically, I want to reassess the formula "who sees?" and the metaphor of "visual field" that defined focalization in Genette's original (later to be discarded) account. Taking these concepts quite literally, initially, I will use the following "mental model" of vision to derive a general model of focalization:

Although (1) is blatantly reductive in many respects, it integrates a number of essential concepts in an iconic frame structure. The model represents a field, an angle, a direction, and an extent, but it also suggests the deictic relations associated with a field of perception. Especially important is its incorporation of two types of foci, which correspond to two distinct meanings of the word focus in ordinary language: (i) the burning point of a lens or a mirror; (ii) an area of attention or interest. In (1), focus-1 is the burning point of an eye's lens, usually located in a person's head, and focus-2 is the area of attention which the eye focuses on to obtain maximum sharpness and resolution (foveal vision, in physiological terms). Literally or (not too) metonymically, by nature or close association, focus-1 represents a point of view, an origo, a deictic centre (Bühler), a point of origin (O'Neill), a subject of focalization (Bal). Focus-2, on the other hand, is roughly equivalent to an object of focalization; more properly speaking, an object of focalization is an object in F2. Since each point in V and F2 uniquely "vectors" from focus-1 (a cue first used by Jost [1989, 106]), V and F2 can be regarded as vector spaces, i.e., fields defined by vectors radiating from F1. It is this technical abstraction that allows one to generalize (1) beyond its purely visual denotation, promoting it not only to a general model of perception, but to a general model of focalization itself.

A focus-1 is usually located in a person's head, excluding, for the moment, any of the "camera eye" (or "hypothetical observer" or "empty deictic centre" options. In Genette's original account, the focus-1 is usually provided by a story-internal "focal character"; in other accounts, this agent is variously labelled centre of consciousness, reflector (James), refractor (Brooks and Warren, [1943] 1959, 663), figural medium (Stanzel, 1984), filter (Chatman, 1986), SELF (Banfield, 1982), or focalizer (Bal, 1983). Without entering into any detailed terminological discussion, I will use the Jamesian term reflector for a story-internal subject of consciousness, and like Bal, Lintvelt, Cohn, Rimmon-Kenan, Toolan,
Nünning, and many others (Genette and Chatman notably excepted), I am assuming that a focus may also belong to a narrator.

10 In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette briefly acknowledges that his own original formula "who sees?" was too "purely visual, and hence overly narrow," and he replaces it, first, by "who perceives?", and then by "where is the focus of perception?" (1988, 64). Considering, however, that "[i]nternal focalization is fully realized only in the narrative of interior monologue" (Genette, 1980, 193), Genette's modified definition still fails to apply to who thinks. In any event, the basic mold of the formula *whose orients the narrative perspective?* suggests a more general fill-in like "subjectivity" rather than Genette's own "point of view" (Genette 1980, 186), which is not only tautological but unhappily reintroduces the term "point of view" that "focalization" is meant to replace. Indeed, supposing "subjectivity" to express a central commonality, one can quickly factor out the following more comprehensive (though still not exhaustive) list of criterial aspects:

11 (2) Criterial aspects of focalization

Whose...

(A) affect (fear, pity, joy, revulsion, etc.)
(B) perception, i.e.,
(i) ordinary/primary/literal perception (vision, audition, touch, smell, taste, bodily sensation)
(ii) imaginary perception (recollection, imagination, dream, hallucination, etc.)
(C) conceptualization (thought, voice, ideation, style, modality, deixis, etc.)

... orients the narrative text?

12 Note that categories A, B and C have been arranged so as to represent a scalar progression toward increasing amounts of what one might term conceptuality." Apart from that, the categories exhibit considerable overlap and concurrence, and many of them are inherently very fuzzy. Yet (2) is sufficient, for the time being, to identify the types of subjectivity states, processes and data that can be assumed to vector from an origolike source. In fact, it is the textual provision and maintenance of such origos that creates a Jamesian window on the story world.

13 Unfortunately, from a mainstream narratological vantage, (2)'s multiplication of focalization indicators is likely to appear suspect in several respects. Especially problematic is (2C)'s inclusion of voice since Voice was, of course, the original razor used by Genette to separate focalization from narration. But as I have argued (Jahn, 1996, 243-51), this is a division that bears rethinking. Briefly, for one thing, thought indubitably has a voice quality, and Genette himself makes a point of calling interior monologues "immediate speech" (1980, 231). Second, a reflector is, of course, capable of speech and thus in principle has a voice just as the narrator does. Third, there is good reason to assume that the narrator, like a reflector, is conceived of as a thinking and perceiving agent (an "external" or "narrator-focalizer" in post-Genettean terms). In short, whether related to speaking or thinking, to discourse or perception, conceptualization is a powerful subjectivity indicator, vectoring from and pointing back to an origo.

14 Another suspect candidate in (2), again from a mainstream narratological point of view, is imaginary perception (B. ii). Mainstream narratology tends to treat a character's imaginary perception either as embedded (metadiegetic) narration (Genette's proposal, 1980, 231) or as embedded (hypo-) focalization (Bal's proposal, 1983, 255). As I have attempted to show elsewhere, both accounts are about equally questionable (Jahn, 1996, 260-1). Here, following the precept developed in a deliberately constructivist branch of
cognitive science (Neisser, 1967; Jackendoff, 1987), imaginary perception is considered as being fully coequal with ordinary perception. This view makes a virtue of the fact that it is often impossible to tell whether a perception is based on "real" sensory input, on imaginative processes, or on a combination of the two.

In fact, the very lack of exclusivity in this case usefully stresses the functional interplay between ordinary and imaginary perception.

Imaginary perception is of crucial importance also on the levels of narrating and reading. As for narrating, it may suffice, for the moment, to draw attention to the role of recollection in homodiegetic narration (I will turn to other instances of narratorial imaginary perception in section 2, below). Reading is most profitably seen as a series of bidirectional processes linking, in bottom-up direction, visual input and conceptual structure, and in top-down direction, conceptual structure and mental imagery (Jackendoff, 1987, 259). Reading a narrative, in particular, involves both the building of conceptual structure and the triggering of imaginary perception (Jahn, 1996, 3.2). Indeed, the close interaction of these levels is a good reason for considering narrative a "representational" medium. Something in the nature of a disclaimer is in order, however, and I will quickly acknowledge that narrative discourse need not, and in general does not, represent story events mimetically (i.e., without any intermediate levels of "cognitive construction," cf. Fauconnier, 1990, 153), that narrative discourse is a "grainy" medium, at best (Jackendoff, 1983, 224), and that the mental imagery effected by it is less vivid, less detailed, and more indeterminate than the images of, for instance, pictorial or cinematic representations (cf. Iser, 1971, 288). Even Genette, who is an avowed anti-representationalist ([1983] 1988, 42), is prepared to admit that a sentence like "Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived with her mother at the edge of the forest" appeals to and practically presupposes "the reader's imaginative cooperation" (1993, 39-40). On this view, a reader's textually conditioned imaginary perception is not merely an incidental by-product of some exceptionally picturesque style, but part and parcel of the normal processing of narrative statements.

Of course, there is also a long, albeit non-narratological tradition that has always accepted textual representation as an activating rather than a reproductive mode, as poiesis (creation) rather than mimesis (imitation). According to Karl Bühler's deictic field theory, whose narratological relevance has often been noted,4 textually induced imaginary perception amounts to a "transposition to the Phantasma" ([1934] 1965, 124-36). Ohmann (1971, 14) argues that a literary work's necessary pragmatic condition is that it "leads the reader to imagine a speaker, a situation, a set of ancillary events." As will be shown below, Iser and Wolf take readerly imaginary perception to be the key condition of various types of "aesthetic illusions." All these intuitions demand a more detailed narratological deliberation, and this may well begin with the question of how readerly imaginary perception correlates with fields of focalization and why it might be profitable to say that narrators, talking about what they imaginatively perceive, enable readers to adopt (transpose to) fictional points of view.

2. Aesthetic illusions and windows of focalization

The following textual evidence has been chosen mainly because it exhibits typical combinations of basic narrative parameters – narrators and reflectors, setting and character, story-internal and story-external contexts, description and diegetic report. All
excerpts come from first chapters, (3), (5), and (6) being actual incipits. Consider, first, (3) and (4), which are narratorial descriptions:

(3) The City stood, a set of mislaid dentures, somewhere near the middle of nothing. There was no discernible reason why it should have been built there rather than anywhere else, no great river, no range of protective mountains, not so much as an inflection in the ground. Some pioneer or other must have dropped his knapsack there out of weariness, or else a horse had died, and the city had grown from this negligible seed like a tree, or a disease. (Ustinov, 1973, 5)

(4) He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare, and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such a strained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open, and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. (Dickens, 1970, 12)

(3) is a block description of a City and the setting of incipient action. Some of the detail is perception orientated, as when the City is characterized as "a set of mislaid dentures," suggesting a view from afar and above (a bird's eye view, a view from an airplane), or when its growth is likened to that of "a tree, or a disease." Evoking this imagery, the text's heterodiegetic narrator executes some rapid shifts of point of view, but it is not in fact difficult for the reader to assume that the narrator is talking about what he or she mentally sees or to execute a similar series of shifting points of view in order to visualize the existents described. The narrator's language is characterized by a perceptible critical slant stressing the arbitrariness of the place, the monotony of the landscape, the City's sinfulness, and it is at times couched in collocations that seemingly pull in opposing directions. On the whole, however, it is not difficult to trace these switches in a judgmental direction; readers will readily accept this as the narrator's idiosyncratic style and rightly expect similar things to come.

(4) is a narratorial block characterization, and here, again, what is presented issues from a heterodiegetic narrator for whom Mr. Bounderby's facial and cranial features are obviously present in imagination- and since the imagery is so graphic, in ours as well. Like (3), (4) is characterized by a pronounced critical metaphoricity. Both (3) and (4) are narrative pauses spent on expositorial description. Following Wolf (1993, 102), they are instances of the primary illusion of existents, which is concerned with setting, characters, and things.

The following two examples have also been paired off because they exemplify the two main subtypes of Wolf's primary illusion of story events. (5) is a narrator's report of events while (6) mediates action through reflectorial perception:

(5) It was the month of January, 1516. The night was dark and tempestuous; – the thunder growled around; – the lightning flashed at short intervals; – and the wind swept furiously along, in sudden and fitful gusts. The streams of the great Black Forest of Germany bubbled in playful melody no more, but rushed on with deafening din, mingling their torrent-roar with the wild creaking of the huge oaks, the rustling of the firs, the howling of the affrighted wolves, and the hollow voices of the storm. The dense black clouds were driven restlessly athwart the sky; and when the vivid lightning gleamed forth with rapid and eccentric glare, it seemed as if the dark jaws of some hideous monster, floating high above, opened to vomit flame.... It was indeed an appalling sight! (Reynolds, 1975, 5)
(5) He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam, white in the summer sunlight.

"Is that the mill?" he asked.

"Yes." (Hemingway, 1987, 1)

22 The narrator in (5) assumes a panoramic imaginative point of view and proceeds to describe various Gothic detail. The description strongly relies on perceptual data, mainly auditory (second paragraph) and visual (third paragraph), concluding in affectual exclamatory judgment. Here, too, the various perceptions and affects presented are illocutionary invitations for the reader to assume the point of view from which they originate – even though, presumably, the passage will today no longer have the impact of sending a pleasurable shudder down one’s spine. (Modern readers are more likely to take a critical view because the passage presents such an inordinate amount of nonironic cliché.)

23 (6) begins medias in res in the typical fashion of what Stanzel terms a figural novel. To use Stanzel's own words, "[i]n the case of a narrative beginning with a reflector-character, the reader is obliged to forego all preliminaries and to place himself in the position of the reflector-character, experiencing the narrated events in actu. The absence of a teller and of narrative preliminaries and the reference to the reflector-character by means of a pronoun which lacks an antecedent are the narrative conditions under which this transfer is most quickly and completely effected" (1984, 160). Large portions of (6) represent the reflector's perceptions – things he sees, feels, and hears: the "pineneedled floor"; the "gently" sloping ground; the wind blowing "overhead." The first paragraph effectively crosses and triangulates visual, haptic, and auditory perception, all crisply oriented from the reflector's origo. Indeed, if the reader chooses to stick to this prototypically "figural frame" (Jahn 1997), the two speech acts in paragraphs 2 and 3 may well be construed as representing the reflector's awareness of his own question and his hearing the other character's reply rather than objective facts.

24 Lastly, (7) below may serve as an instance of what Wolf terms secondary aesthetic illusion (1993, 102):

(7) I read over the above lines and cannot help remarking in myself a certain discomfort, a physical oppression only too indicative of the state of mind in which I sit down today in my little study, mine these many years, at Freising on the Isar, on the 27th of May 1943, three years after Leverkühn's death (three years, that is, after he passed from deep night into the deepest night of all), to make a beginning at describing the life of my unhappy friend now resting – oh, may it be so! – now resting in God. (Mann, 1948, 9)

25 The novel's homodiegetic narrator here pauses in the act of telling to comment on his present environment, to name the current date, and to allude to his present high-strung "state of mind." The time/place coordinates establish the narrator's temporal and mental distance towards characters and events to be recounted. Additional detail (style, diction and syntax, references to "the above lines," "my little study," etc.) slowly build up a mental impression of this narrator, his voice, and his discourse here-and-now. Although divorced from story-time and story-line (excepting the leitmotif foreshadowing of the protagonist's fate), the passage is quite as origo-orientated in its perceptual, effectual, judgmental and stylistic features as the preceding ones.
A good deal more could be said about (3)-(7), particularly concerning how these passages deploy their "perception indicators" (Fehr, 1938), how they filter perceptual data, how they encode judgments, affects, and so on. At this point, however, it is sufficient to point out that (3)-(7) are all focalized passages, or, in terms of figure (1), predicated on vector fields originating from a focus-1 associated with a narrator's or a reflector's Self. Adapting Henry James's metaphor, I will say that a passage that is focalized in this manner represents a focalization window, either on story events and existents as illustrated in (3)-(6), or on the discourse here-and-now as illustrated in (7). Passages like (3)-(7) invite the reader to execute a Buhlerian transposition to fictional points of view. Focalization, in short, is a matter of providing and managing windows into the narrative world, and of regulating (guiding, manipulating) readerly imaginary perception.

3. Four types and a scale of focalization

In discussing (3)-(7) above, I argued that all of these passages are focalized. I did not, however, claim that they are all focalized in the same manner or to the same degree, and I will now turn to the question of whether the notion of degrees of focalization admits of a more precise definition.

There have been many attempts to devise a system of graded categories of "perspective," usually based on properties such as angle of vision, restriction of field (Blin, 1954), or amount of knowledge (Todorov, 1966). Generally speaking, such concepts are compatible with the iconic properties of figure (1); in fact, they can be easily implemented by drawing different angles, differently-sized fields, etc. Beyond that, however, they are notably resistant to more systematic definition.

One of Genette's focalization criteria is "selection of information with respect to omniscience" ([1983] 1988, 74). Exploiting the gradability of the terms selection and restriction, he arranges his types of focalization in a scalar typology in which omniscience marks a polar reference point ("zero or non-focalization"), subject to no restriction whatsoever, while internal and external focalization involve increasingly restrictive degrees of selection. Apart from the category of internal focalization, however, Genette's typology has not met with general approval. "External" focalization, for instance, is not based on "who perceives?" (or any of Genette's alternate focalization questions), but on how something is perceived (namely, without access to, or mention of, inside views). Zero focalization, in its final awkward definition, is "variable, and sometimes zero, focalization" (1988, 74). Discussing a case of internal focalization, Genette continues to insist that it might "just as well" be considered external focalization (1988, 75). The main problem, perhaps, is that Genette's typology mixes too many heterogeneous ingredients. Among the parameters that go into it is the number and identity of focal agencies (fixed vs. variable focalization, focal character vs. disembodied observer), the distance from which something is seen (close or far), the knowledge potential of narrators and characters (features of characterization involving quantitative and qualitative aspects), perceptual limitations (access or non-access to inside views), scope (whole texts or individual passages), and combinatorial constellations (variable or multiple).

A stalemate of a different kind arises in Stanzel's account of perspective ([1979] 1984, ch. 5). Taking a narrative text's treatment of spatial existents and relations to be particularly indicative, Stanzel distinguishes two main paradigms: "texts with distinctly perspectival
spatial presentation and texts with aperspectival spatial presentation" (1984, 117). The first type occurs mainly in camera-eye novels and figural texts such as (6) or Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* (Stanzel, 1984, 117-8). For a typical instance of aperspectivism, Stanzel quotes the following passage from Trollope:

(8) His lordship was at home, and the two visitors were shown through the accustomed hall into the well-known room where the good old bishop used to sit. The furniture had been bought at a valuation, and every chair and table, every bookshelf against the wall, and every square in the carpet was as well known to each of them as their own bedrooms. Nevertheless they at once felt that they were strangers here. The furniture was for the most part the same, yet the place had been metamorphosed. A new sofa had been introduced, a horrid chintz affair, most unpertinential and almost irreligious; such a sofa as never yet stood in the study of any decent High Church clergymen of the Church of England.... Our friends found Dr. Proudie sitting on the old bishop's chair, looking very nice in his new apron; they found, too, Mr. Slope standing on the hearth-rug, persuasive and eager, just as the old archdeacon used to stand; but on the sofa they also found Mrs. Proudie, an innovation for which a precedent might in vain be sought in all the annals of the Barchester bishopric! (Trollope, 1989, 33-4; qtd Stanzel, 1984, 120)

31 Focusing on the passage's spatial descriptions, Stanzel points out that the exact nature and location of the individual pieces of furniture seems to be largely insignificant. The reader is not given, and cannot easily derive, a "concrete impression" of the room. The text's prominent authorial narrator, Stanzel says, is simply not particularly interested in evoking an "experienced perception" of spatial relations (1984, 121). Extrapolating from this, Stanzel goes on to delineate a historical pattern according to which fiction up to and including the Victorian period falls under the general rule of aperspectivism, while perspectivism becomes the "predominant stylistic trend" (1984, 122) of the modernist novel, after which aperspectivism and perspectivism join to create the disillusionary games of postmodernism. Stanzel is careful to add that these are general tendencies only and that there may be numerous exceptions.

32 As always, it is difficult to fault Stanzel on his textual analyses, which, in contradistinction to a good deal of narratological practice, are all the more plausible for their determined awareness of reading effects. And yet the proposed perspectivism-aperspectivism opposition is too rigid to be entirely convincing (cf. Cohn, 1981, 175). Its problematic nature typically comes out in a classroom situation. Tell a group of students that (6) is a "perspectivized" passage, and everybody will generally nod and agree; tell them that (8) is "aperspectival," and the general reaction will be one of doubt and incomprehension. And indeed, Stanzel, moving from the perspectivism of spatial presentations to perspectivism (or the lack of it) in general, modifies the meaning of perspective in midstream. Although he is aware of the fact that "the figurative meaning of the term [perspective] in the sense of view of a thing as it presents itself from the personal, subjective point of view of a novel character or narrator is at least equally important" (1984, 123), he does not fully realize that this "figurative" meaning also affects terms like perspectivization and perspectivism. This explains why Stanzel's perspectivism-aperspectivism opposition is so wobbly and why it is difficult to accept that the Victorian novel, or the novel of the Eighteenth Century, or really any known novel whatever, should fall into an "aperspectivism" slot. If Edmiston (1991) had accepted Stanzel's scheme (as fortunately he did not) he could hardly have written his insightful monograph about "Focalization in Four Eighteenth-Century French Novels."
In fact, what Stanzel's treatment of (8) unintentionally suggests is that judgments on perspectivization (focalization) have to be based on a wider set of focus-orientated subjectivity features such as those listed in (2). While one can easily grant that (8) is not as "sharply" perspectivized as (6), one can hardly fail to notice that (8) is full of indicators of oriented perception, judgment and affect, hence no paradigm case of "aperspectivism" at all. In fact, in order to capture what one might call (8)'s attenuated perspectivism one needs a finergrained multi-category focalization scale such as the following.

(9) A scale of focalization

On (9)'s continuum (shown as an arrow proceeding from a zero point, on the left), I have placed four main categories graphically symbolizing a morphological progression. The rightmost type, strict focalization, replicates the vector-field shape of figure (1), but in order to indicate its more general nature, its "eye" has been removed and its focus-1 has been indicated by a "x" representing a point of origin. In strict focalization, F2 is perceived from (or by) F1 under conditions of precise and restricted spatio-temporal coordinates. In ambient focalization, the field of subjectivity is shown as an ellipse: like a geometrical ellipse, which has two foci, ambient focalization is based on two (or more) F1's, depicting a thing summarily, from more than one side, possibly from all sides, considerably relaxing the condition of specific time-place anchoring, and allowing a mobile, summary, or communal point of view. In weak focalization, all F1's, and with them all spatio-temporal ties, disappear, leaving only a focused object (F2). Lastly, in zero focalization the focused object itself disappears, as possibly do the limits of the perceptual field itself (which for this reason is shown as a dotted shape).

The foregoing descriptive definitions suggest that three basic properties are sufficient to differentiate the four types identified in (9): presence or absence of focus-1; the nature of the spatio-temporal link between F1 and F2; presence or absence of focus-2. Indeed, the intuitive rationale for deciding whether a passage is more focalized than another passage involves the following comparative judgments:

(10) Passage X is more focalized than passage Y if...
    a. X has one or more F1's and Y has none (strict/ambient vs weak/zero);
    b. X has one F1 and Y has two or more (strict vs ambient);
    c. X's spatio-temporal orientation is more determinate than Y's (strict vs ambient);
    d. X has an F2, and Y has none (weak vs zero).

Operationally defining more focalized than in this manner means that the individual conditions (10a-d) amount to cognitive preference rules capturing both typicality and exception conditions (Jackendoff, 1983, ch. 8; 1987, ch. 8. 3). Actually, ordering and weighting the rules as in (10) constitutes a preference rule system that defines two normal, typical, or "default" cases (strict and ambient focalization) and two exceptional types (weak and zero focalization).
Of the texts discussed so far, only the Hemingway (6) and the Mann (7) exhibit strict focalizations. Their F1’s are situated in a relatively determinate here-and-now, the main frequency mode of their diegetic statements is singulative, and the events roll by in scenic sequence. Cases (3) to (5), in contrast, are less strictly focalized.

Although they all have F1 origos, they use relaxed time-place deictics, their points of view are mobile, and they frequently employ the durative and iterative frequencies of summary or the static mode of description, where exact temporal sequence is not crucial. In other words, they are instances of ambient focalization. In fact, reassessing (8) in light of (2), (9) and (10) now confirms what I take to be most readers' intuition, namely that this is no case of "aperspectivism," but a case of ambient focalization. Specifically, its perceptional and judgmental point of view is that of an authorial narrator who, as Stanzel himself points out, "adopts" (1984, 121) the collective point of view of the two visitors who perceive the same things – in other words, it has two F1's (or perhaps three, counting the narrator) and one F2. Fittingly, too, the reflectors' progress in space remains vague, and the passage's temporal sequence is considerably clouded by the narrative mode of summary.

Generally speaking, strict and ambient focalizations appear to predominate in the narrative corpus. In fact, in order to document the two "exceptional" types, I have to turn to decidedly marginal material. I will assume weak focalization to occur in passages presenting a sequence of bare facts, independent of an individual point of view or specific spatiotemporal conditions. Genette's Water boils at 100 degrees C (1988, 101) might be a suitable example, even though it falls short of narrative import. Perhaps the general idea is better illustrated by passages such as (11) and (12):

(11) Joan ate an egg and Peter drank a glass of milk, then they went to the theater. (Prince, 1982, 76)
(12) Here he moved, to and fro, from the door to the window, from the window to the door; from the window to the door, from the door to the window; from the fire to the bed, from the bed to the fire; from the bed to the fire, from the fire to the bed; from the door to the fire, from the fire to the door; from the fire to the door, from the door to the fire.... (Beckett, 1963, 203-4)

(11) presents bare story facts before their passing through a focalization filter. (12) exhaustively describes all possible return paths between four objects – door, fire, window and bed – and is quite obviously constructed from a nonperspectival spatial model.

It is even more difficult to imagine anything less focalized than (12)-(13), since a zero focalized text must have no perspective, no spatial order, no origo, no foregrounded center of interest, and no obvious organizing principle (excepting, let us say, an entirely serial or random arrangement). Instructively, anything that lacks all these characteristics succumbs to what in statistical theory is termed the zero hypothesis, that is, the hypothesis of random distribution. Hence, a random collection of narrative sentences such as (13) and a monotonously serial arrangement such as (14) can serve as suitable instances of zero focalization:

(13) It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a shot rang out. A door slammed. The maid screamed. Suddenly a pirate ship appeared on the horizon. While millions of people were starving, the king lived in luxury. Meanwhile, on a small farm in Kansas, a boy was growing up. (Schulz, 1970, n.p.)
(14) Krak! - - - Krek! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! - - - Krik! -

[...]
The famous Schulz passage (actually, "Part I" of Snoopy's novel, itself a parody of "dark and stormy night" beginnings like (5)) is composed of more or less random sentences – so much so, perhaps, that if one inserted an arbitrary additional sentence, it would be difficult to spot. From a text-linguistic point of view, its lack of coherence even turns it into a "non-text" (Werlich, 1976, 23). (14), in contrast, is highly coherent, although its serial nature prevents it from having anything like a clearcut focus. Arranged in 16 groups of three lines, it represents a musical score based on the voices of three frogs, one croaking "Krak!" at intervals of eight beats, one croaking "Krek!" at intervals of five, and one croaking "Krik!" at intervals of three. All start out in unison, and the chorus continues up to a point when the three voices (after exactly 120 beats, two pages of text) arrive at their second accord. Obviously, from here on onwards, the chorus could loop ad infinitum. (14) therefore nicely exhibits the main characteristics of zero focalization: it lacks a subject of consciousness (i.e., there is no F), and everything is equally prominent or lacking in prominence (i.e., there is no F2). Perhaps characteristically, the sequence is wholly serial and affords no sense of closure.

The continuous ordinal scale presented in (9) locates two common and two marginal categories, and it defines the relation more focalized than with the help of a preference rule system, (10), which specifies a set of cognitive parameters predicting intuitive comparative judgements. In combination, (9) and (10) constitute an explicit theoretical account allowing one to describe the range of narrative focalization. An additional advantage of preference rule systems is that they facilitate extrapolation, especially when faced with borderline or intermediate cases. Since intermediate cases between strict and ambient focalization are of particular importance, consider the following passage, which is an instance of collective focalization (Banfield's "plural SELF" scenario 1982, 96):

(15) The sails flapped over their heads. The water chuckled and slapped the sides of the boat, which drowsed motionlessly in the sun. Now and then the sails rippled with a little breeze in them, but the ripple ran over them and ceased. The boat made no motion at all. Mr. Ramsay sat in the middle of the boat. He would be impatient in a moment, James thought, and Cam thought, looking at their father, who sat in the middle of the boat between them (James steered; Cam sat alone in the bow) with his legs tightly curled. He hated hanging about. Sure enough, after fidgeting a second or two, he said something sharp to Macalister's boy, who got out his oars and began to row, but their father, they knew, would never be content until they were flying along. He would keep looking for a breeze, fidgeting, saying things under his breath, which Macalister and Macalister's boy would overhear, and they would both be made horribly uncomfortable. He had made them come. He had forced them to come. In their anger they hoped that the breeze would never rise, that he might be thwarted in every possible way, since he had forced them to come against their wills. (Woolf, 1971, 187-88)

This passage depicts two reflectors, James and Cam, sitting in a boat at opposite ends. Between them, they see common objects such as Mr. Ramsay, Macalister, and Macalister's boy. Both James and Cam think the same thoughts about them, and thus far the scenario clearly approximates the frame of ambient focalization. On the other hand, (15) is clearly more focalized than, for instance, (8): the reflectors' perceptions and thoughts are firmly locked in a determinate story here-and-now, and the passage proceeds scenically, singulatively, and in actu, that is, in the typical spatial fixedness and temporal rhythm of
strict focalization. In other words, the preference rule system detailed in (10) enables us to recognize and differentiate important intermediate cases such as these and to account for what is surely no rarity in literary texts – something that is partly A and partly B.

4. Window shifting and deictic diffusion

The sample passages adduced so far are all assumed to be uniform with respect to focalization. Uniform focalization is one of their main coherence factors, and all categories defined are focalizations that are "local" in scope. I will now turn to passages which are no longer uniform, either because they shift from one window to another, or because one window overlaps or overlays another window.

For both scenarios, I will follow Ryan's (1987) approach to "storyline windows" and her exploitation of film and computer metaphors. Postulating a "narrative screen" (1987, 69) and defining a story-line window as the continuous "take" of an imaginary narrative "camera" (1987, 62), Ryan introduces a powerful array of window concepts including actual and virtual windows, open and closed windows, successor and continuator windows, merging and splitting windows, and many more (1987, 74). Interestingly, Ryan briefly deliberates whether the windows concept could be extended to focalized passages. She discards this intuition, mainly for two reasons: first, because many of her textual examples are not strictly or perspicuously focalized, and second, because she assumes standard focalization to be complex, involving an internal focalization embedded in an external (narratorial) focalization, "two imaginary cameras, one focused on the other" (1987, 77). Neither of these reasons is entirely compelling: on the view developed here, less-than-strict focalization can be accounted for in the guises of ambient or weak focalization, and the notion of overlapping windows is easily naturalized within the computer screen analogy used by Ryan herself. Significantly, too, the "shifting" conditions detailed by Ryan are equally as valid for storyline windows and focalization windows. According to Ryan, a window shift occurs when there is a "referential break" in the text's continuity. Referential breaks come in two forms: either "the camera goes offline" and shifts to a different location, or the "narrative clock is reset, either forward or backward" (1987, 63). Applying this to focalization windows yields two sufficient conditions: shifting from one origo to another implies a shift in location but may or may not be accompanied by a temporal shift; conversely, a text may shift from one location to another, or it may gap a period of time or turn to a previous period in time and yet remain anchored in the same origo. (16) and (17), below, illustrate the respective scenarios:

(16) For Heaven's sake, leave your knife alone! she cried to herself in irrepressible irritation; it was his silly unconventionality, his weakness; his lack of a ghost of a notion what anyone else was feeling that annoyed her, had always annoyed her; and now at his age, how silly!

I know all that, Peter thought; I know what I'm up against, he thought, running his finger along the blade of his knife, Clarissa and Dalloway and all the rest of them; but I'll show Clarissa.... (Woolf, 1973, 52)

(17) 'Not for me,' he said, often and decisively. 'I'll be the last of the Coopers and I'll go out in a blaze of glory.

'Nine years and three novels later, Anthony Cooper was in a private sanatorium in a town ninety miles from New York. (Metalious, 1966, 134.)
While (16) shifts from one reflector to another reflector, window shifting in (17) involves both a shift in location and time, leaving the main narratorial focus-1 unchanged. Shifting itself is well-signalled in both instances, both by paragraph breaks and/or the use of attributive phrases like he thought, she thought, etc. Apparently, the language of fiction commands a host of such shifting indicators, and these are usually deployed in such a manner that shifting is often doubly and triply marked. Occasionally, however, shifting may also be left underdetermined to such an extent that it is impossible to draw a precise line. Consider the following example discussed in Galbraith (1995, 40):

(18) For he was gone, she thought – gone, as he threatened, to kill himself – to throw himself under a cart! But no; there he was; still sitting alone on the seat, in his shabby overcoat, his legs crossed, staring, talking aloud.

Men must not cut down trees. There is a God. (He noted such revelations on the backs of envelopes.) Change the world. No one kills from hatred. Make it known (he wrote it down). He waited. He listened. A sparrow perched on the railing opposite chirped Septimus, Septimus, four or five times over and went on, drawing its notes out, to sing freshly and piercingly in Greek words how there is no crime.... (Woolf, 1973, 28)

As Galbraith points out, the paragraph break in (18) does not mark the shift from Rezia's to Septimus's point of view. The first few sentences of the second paragraph are still Rezia's perception of what Septimus is muttering, and perhaps of what he is writing down. Clearly, quotation marks plus an inquit or attributive discourse tag would have "helped" to arrive at a more determinate presentation. As it is, the word "revelation" is modally ambiguous, suggesting either Rezia's desperate irony or Septimus's sincere belief. It is not until later in the text, when the bird begins to call out Septimus's name and to sing "in Greek," that the reader has enough evidence to be certain that a shift is taking place, or rather, has taken place. In fact, the text's use of a transitional area of indeterminacy can perhaps be likened with the cinematic device of a "dissolve" from one shot to another.

Apparentl, a window shift also occurs when the text shifts from a representation of ordinary perception to one of imaginary perception. The following passage contains two shifts which are not expressly signalled, and it is interesting to observe the heuristics that enable one to recognize the shift into, and out of, the dream window:

(19) [a] He turned out the light, opened a crack of the window and dropped wooden with sleep into bed. [b] Immediately he was writing a letter on a linotype. Now I lay me down to sleep....

The arm of the linotype was a woman's hand in a long white glove. Through the clanking from behind amber foots Elbe's voice Don't dont, don't, you're hurting me so.... Mr Herf, says a man in overalls, you're hurting the machine and we wont be able to get out the bullgod edition thank dog. The linotype was a gulping mouth with nickelbright rows of teeth, gulped, cruunched, [c] He woke up sitting up in bed.

He was cold, his teeth were chattering. (Dos Passos, 1974, 329; ellipses in original)

Here, the spatial criterion alone appropriately suggests that a new window opens when the scene shifts from bed to printing office, and, similarly, that this window closes and gives way to the previous window when the scene shifts back to the reflector's bed (and ordinary perception). While it might be thought that such shifts should be identified on the strength of a qualitative difference, it is probably an advantage that our present set of shifting principles is so poor as not to include any qualitative criteria. If one posited that a shift from ordinary perception to dreaming was necessarily attended by a dream quality of some sort – (19)'s dream window obviously has this quality – then one would be hard
put to account for verisimilar dreams. However, dream, recollection, and vision qualities might well enter the window shifting preference system as additional, non-necessary clues.

Galbraith (1995, 46-9) has suggested treating shifts into imaginary perception with reference to a hierarchy of "ontological planes" (1995, 47). On this view, texts and readers variously "push into" or "pop out of" the text's current ontological "stack" (a LIFO, or "last in, first out" stack, in artificial intelligence parlance). For instance, the reader pushes into a "higher" ontological level by moving from a reflector's ordinary perception to imaginary perception, as in the transition from (19a) to (19b). Alternatively, the current window may "pop off" the stack and return reader and text to an underlying level, as in the transition from (19b) to (19c). Similar "pops" also occur when a text shifts from quotational inset to quotational frame, from figural perception to narratorial report, from narratorial report to comment, and so on.

It is obvious from the foregoing examples that a theory of shifting can be used to explain the various arrangement, grouping, and cutting patterns of focalization that a text exhibits on a macronarrative level of analysis. Shifting also has the effect of partitioning an extended heterogeneous passage into homogeneously focalized windows. There is another type of focalization heterogeneity, however, that seems to be due not to shifting but to mutual interference between concurrently active windows. In this case, it seems sensible to follow Ryan's (1987, 78) suggestion (again making use of the computer and film screen analogy) that windows can coexist, overlap, or overlay. In fact, a text's deictic elements which, according to (2C), are criterial focalization indicators, often imply more than one origo. Consider the following synthetic sentence (cf. Hamburger, 1977, 59-72; Banfield, 1982, 154-67; Galbraith, 1995, 25):

(20) She felt sad now.

In (20), "now" supposedly indicates a story-now and "she" indicates a figural deictic center. At the same time, "she" has the deictic import of 'not-I-who-is-speaking', just as the past tense has the deictic import of not-now-as-I-am-speaking' so that both references are anchored in a deictic center other than the current reflector. Hence the deictic vectors in (20) pull in different directions, creating an effect of "deictic diffusion."

In the literature, several suggestions for dealing with deictic diffusion have been brought forward. According to one view, deictically diffuse passages present a "dual perspective" (Hernadi, 1973); according to another, they are a "dual voice" phenomenon (Pascal, 1977); in a third, they are due to "allophonic focalization" (Füger, 1993, 48). Persuasive as these proposals may seem in restricted areas of application, they reduce the matter either to a purely perceptual or to a vocal issue, leaving the precise character of the "duality" undefined. Pursuing a more radical tack, some deictic shift theorists (Duchan et al, 1995) follow Hamburger ([1957] 1977) and Banfield (1982) in assuming a "speakerlessness" position that conveniently filters out all complicating narratorial noise. However, as Cohn (1990, 795-97) and many others have pointed out, this view not only ignores the deictic implications of pronouns and tenses that were noted in (20), it also fails to account for the very real option of a dialogic coexistence of authorial narrators and third-person reflectors. Against these proposals, a more viable solution would be to assign deictic elements different weights or orders of precedence (cf. Cohn, 1990, 797) and to posit, for instance, that a present and active figural deictic center and an explicit story-now take precedence over a narratorial deictic center and an implicit discourse-now. This stipulation amounts to a preference rule that captures a common case such as (20) and at
the same time happens to be fully compatible with Galbraith's notion of a stack of ontological planes. Since the current window is always the one on top of the stack, the lower levels may be taken to be partially occluded (as on a computer screen) or backgrounded, but leaving some "deictic residue." Deictic residue not only accounts for a past tense without a prominent past meaning, but also for the reduced perceptibility of "covert" narrators (Chatman, 1978, ch. 5). Backgrounded deictic residue can also serve as a much-needed "excuse" -- in the non-pejorative sense of frame theory (Minsky, [1975] 1979, 18) -- for treating third-person, past-tense passages such as (6) as fully "internally focalized" segments. Similar excuses are, of course, also needed for retaining a given focalization frame in the presence of nonconforming conceptual material such as quoted, heard, mentioned or imagined linguistic matter.

56 More active interferences between narratorial and reflectorial conceptualizations usually result in a phenomenon variously termed substitutionary perception (Fehr, 1938) or discordant psychonarration (Cohn, 1978). In substitutionary perception, a reflector "lends his sight" while a narrator "substitutes" his words (Fehr, 1938, 97-8); in discordant psychonarration, the narrator's diction and style transcend the reflector's perceptual or conceptual ability. Such passages may well be experienced as juxtapositions of two windows, one anchored in a reflectorial "fallible filter" (Chatman, 1986), the other on a knowledgeable and well-spoken narrator. Discordant psychonarration is most obvious when the reflector is an infant (What Maisie Knew) or an animal. Consider (21), below, in which we witness the shooting of a lion from the animal's point of view.

(21) Then watching the object, not afraid, but hesitating before going down the bank to drink with such a thing opposite him, he saw a man figure detach itself from it and he turned his heavy head and swung away toward the cover of the trees as he heard a cracking crash and felt the slam of a .30-06 220-grain solid bullet that bit his flank and ripped in sudden hot scalding nausea through his stomach. (Hemingway, 1987, 13)

57 Even though (21) initially makes some effort to create a concordant representation of the animal's perception, plausible lion concepts such as "the object," "a thing" (i.e., the hunters' car), "a man figure," a "biting" pain, etc., heavily collide with "a .30-06 220-grain solid bullet," a technical term accessible only to the narrator and momentarily foregrounding the window of the secondary aesthetic illusion playing the narrator's voice.

58 A similar type of conceptual diffusion underlies the stylistic device termed "colouring," (Hough, 1978, 49-60; Fludernik, 1993, 334-8), "contamination," or "reflectorization" (Stanzel, 1984, 168-84; Fludernik, 1996a, ch. 5. 1; Fludernik, 1996b). In colouring, reflectorial diction is nonironically integrated into narratorial sentences, as in the following passage:

(22) Ol Abe always felt relaxed and great in his Cadillac and today he felt betteranever. Ghuddham if this wasnt a real fine day and he looked at the back seat, at the floor (seems to be a little messy, but the boys always clean it out after theys finished washin), rubbed his hand along the fine upholstery, patted the dashboard again (ghuddamn if it didnt shine like a babys ass), turned up the radio and once more dug the cats washin their cars with buckets of water, soap and sponges. (Selby, 1974, 275)

59 In (22), a few snippets from the character's idiom ("betteranever," "dug the cats") colour not only directly quoted and free indirect discourse passages (where colouring is expected and normal), but also the diegetic statements themselves (where it is not).\footnote{\textsuperscript{10}}
Obviously, the examples adduced in this section do not exhaust all shifting and overlapping patterns, nor do the windows concepts introduced here provide a means for addressing all features of narrative discourse. However, what has hopefully become apparent is that the present approach provides some promising initial heuristics for analyzing a wide range of micro-and macro-narrative patterns of focalization.

**Conclusion**

This paper began by reviewing the original axioms of focalization and embracing its narratological basis. In order to evolve further, however, the theory must outgrow any mere "reformulation" (Genette, [1983] 1988, 65) of traditional accounts. Nor can it remain satisfied with "diadic" or "triadic" typologies (Cohn, 1981, 175) based on too few or too many criteria. Ultimately, the present shortcomings of the theory were shown to be mainly due to a tendency toward overprotection. Genettean narratology tends to deny the representational effect of narrative for fear of committing the mimetic fallacy, and it implements its categorical distinction who speaks?/who sees? in order to avoid the fallacy of treating characters as narrators. There may have been good reasons for introducing such fallacy stoppers in the seventies, yet it is apparent today that the consequent compartmentalizations closed the door to many promising avenues of inquiry. This paper attempts to reopen that door, primarily by stressing the role of imaginary perception in the process of reading and in the reader's construction of fictional worlds. Methodologically, it executes the "cognitive turn" called for by Ibsch (1990), and it does so by applying a set of interdisciplinary concepts such as mental models, frames, stacks, and preference rules.

At this point, two main projects suggest themselves for further treatment. First, a number of theoretical questions need to be addressed in greater detail, particularly as concerns the phenomenon here identified as "deictic diffusion." It remains to be seen whether the solutions tentatively suggested – assuming a context of overlapping windows or of "excusing" the diffusion on a rationale of deictic weight – will ultimately prove useful. Second, we must obviously also push beyond the dryly theoretical business and see whether our extended toolbox (preferably used with "intelligence, ingenuity, and tact," as was once said of *Narrative Discourse* [Prince 1980, 413]) enables us to undertake new types of textual analyses, to arrive at new insights about themes, styles, techniques, and effects.

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NOTES


2. On the "empty deictic centre" option, see Banfield (1987) and Fludernik (1996a, 5.2).

3. Saying this, I am not, of course, suggesting that we reset the notorious point-of-view trap which originally motivated Genette to oppose "who speaks?" and "who sees?" Dichotomizing speakers and seers/ perceivers effectively inhibits Booth’s point-of-view blunder of "christening narrator' a focal character" (Genette, 1988, 65); however, it also prevents us from recognizing that narrators are "capable of both speaking and seeing, and even of doing both things at the same time" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, 72).


6. I must point out here that both (13) and (14) are in fact embedded texts, and that their contexts largely recuperate them for more standard types of focalization. For instance, the frogs' chorus in (14) is Watt's perception.


8. See Ryan (1991, ch. 9) for a convincing application of the LIFO stack concept to embedded narratives.


10. "Reflectorization" more generally comprises both characterial diction and figural perception.
ABSTRACTS

This essay pursues the methodological and practical consequences of "windows of focalization," a concept introduced in an earlier article. Focusing on cognitive and reading-oriented parameters, the essay first reviews and situates traditional point-of-view concepts within the narratological framework of Genettean and post-Genettean focalization theory. Generalizing from a mental model of vision, it argues that focalization rests on "vectored indicators of subjectivity," reconceptualization that provides a more comprehensive set of analytic criteria and paves the way toward an improved gliding-scale typology. Further exploiting windows metaphor, the essay also makes an attempt to look into patterns of window-shifting and window-overlap and to proffer an explanation of "deictic diffusion."

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The order of events is a property of narrative. Since narrative represents a sequence of events, the events must have an order: one event must follow another. For a theory of narrative, the task is to describe that order of events, or to be more specific, to describe the principle that determines it. The problem is well-known: although we assume that narrative represents events that occur in a world, whether fictional or nonfictional, the order of presentation in a narrative need not match the order of occurrence in the world it represents. Faced with this problem, structuralists assume that narrative order consists of these two orders: the chronological order, the order defined by the occurrence of events in the world; and the textual order, the order defined by the presentation of events in the text. The structuralist concept of narrative order focuses on the contrast between temporal chronology and textual presentation, and as a result, when the textual order does not follow the chronological order, the narrative order is assumed to be deviant. Gérard Genette refers to the contrast between chronological and textual order as a “dissonance” and “discordance,” and he calls the various relations that this contrast produces “anachronies” (Genette, 1980, 49-50).

In the structuralist description of narrative order, temporal chronology and textual presentation are linear concepts, that is, each is independent and complete in itself, a single uninterrupted sequence of events. This linear concept of order is too simplistic. It cannot account for the order of events in a narrative that consists of multiple sequences of events because in such cases the narrative order forms a hierarchy in which one sequence of events dominates the others that are woven through it. In Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the order of events is a major aspect of the narrative, and it consists of three sequences: the main story sequence defined by the narrative present, and two subordinate story sequences made up of past episodes. The main story sequence begins with Offred’s arrival at the Commander’s house and ends with her departure. Embedded within this main story sequence are a number of episodes from Offred’s past, and when we put these episodes together, they form two subordinate sequences of events. The earlier sequence consists of events from Offred’s life before she attempts to escape from Gilead, and the other sequence consists of events from Offred’s experience at the Red Centre. Two points need to be made about the order of events in such narratives: first, the
order is based on a hierarchy dominated by the main story sequence, and second, the events in the main story sequence are presented in their chronological order while the events in the subordinate sequences are not. The structuralist description of order cannot account for either of these points, mainly because it is based on a linear concept of order, in which events are gathered into either a purely chronological series or a purely textual one.\(^3\)

In contrast, a pragmatic description of narrative can account for both the hierarchical nature of narrative order and for the difference between the chronological main story sequence and its achronological subordinate sequences. But first I need to indicate what I mean by a pragmatic description of narrative. In what follows, the concept of narrative that I employ derives from the assumption that a narrative, like every other type of discourse, is used for a reason. Which means that narrative is not just a text and its semiotic structure, but also an act and its pragmatic purpose. The purpose of narrative, the reason that a speaker or writer takes up narrative as a type of discourse, is to explain past events. I call this concept of narrative, somewhat redundantly, “narrative explanation”\(^4\). From this pragmatic perspective, chronology determines the order of events in a main story sequence but not in its embedded episodes. Since the pragmatic purpose of narrative is to show how one event leads to another—which constitutes a narrative explanation—it is crucial that the events in a main story sequence appear in their chronological order. But since the purpose of an embedded episode is to show how events in the narrative past explain an event in the narrative present, that is, in the main story sequence, an embedded episode need not appear in its chronological order. As a result, there may be various types of order in a narrative, but there is only one narrative order, the order of the narrative explanation. Embedded sequences are linked to this order, but they do not form alternative orders; in particular, they do not form a purely chronological order.

**Narrative Order**

In *Ars Poetica*, Horace notes approvingly that Homer begins his epics *in medias res* (Horace, 1929, line 148). The *Odyssey* does not begin with the birth of Odysseus but with the tenth year of his wandering. As the story of Odysseus continues, the narrator reaches into the past to tell us about events that occurred before the beginning of the story, that is, before the Trojan War. When we describe the *Odyssey* in this way, the expression *in medias res* becomes ambiguous, for as the expression has been used, it is not clear what the narrator begins in the middle of.\(^5\) First of all, it cannot mean one thing: it cannot mean that the narrator begins in the middle of the text. The text begins at the only place it can begin, at its beginning. And since the text represents the narrative, the narrative also begins at the beginning. In contrast, *in medias res* could mean the narrator begins either in the middle of the hero’s life, or in the middle of the chronological series of events that are presented in the narrative. The first meaning is closer to Aristotle, who criticizes poets for constructing epics around the life of a man, for “among the actions one man performs there are many that do not go together to produce a single unified action” (Aristotle, 1982, 1451a). At the same time, Aristotle praises Homer for constructing the *Odyssey* “around a single action” (Aristotle, 1982, 1451a). The second meaning assumes a linear conception of the chronological order of events in a narrative. If to begin in the middle means in the middle of the chronological order of the events, then all of the events in a
narrative must be on the same temporal level, simply rearranged. But when we examine this assumption more closely, we find that rearranging the events in narrative leads to altering the narrative order rather than describing it.

5 Genette’s analysis of narrative order in *Narrative Discourse* is the most extensive discussion of the topic we have. He focuses on the relations between the chronological order of events and their textual order. These relations are referred to as anachronies, “the various types of discordance between the two orderings” (Genette, 1980, 36). Genette then proceeds with a description of these anachronies. Most subsequent narratologists have adopted Genette’s analysis of anachronies, either explicitly or implicitly, and none have extended it. However, Genette’s anachronies rest on two conflicting views of narrative order. The first view presents two orders in narrative, a chronological order and a textual order. The second view presents a single order in narrative, the order in which the chronological and the textual orders converge and in which deviations from this order become “various types of discordance.” These two views of narrative order are similar to the two senses of Horace’s expression *in medias res.* To begin in the middle of the chronological order of events assumes that there are two orders, chronological and textual. To begin in the middle of the protagonist’s life assumes that there is one order, the order at which chronology and text converge and which represents “a single action.” For example, Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* begins *in medias res*; the problem in this case is deciding which of these two views we want to adopt. If we adopt the view that there are two orders, and if we rearrange the narrative of *Oedipus the King* in its chronological order, beginning with the prophecy that Laius hears, then we destroy the plot, the single action around which the events are organized in the narrative. And if we adopt the view that there is one order, then Jocasta’s tale about the inadequacy of prophecy and Oedipus’s tale about killing a man at the crossroads both become “types of discordance.” This view of order does not show how deviations from the chronology of events are integrated into the narrative, which is a serious failure because the tales of Oedipus and Jocasta are crucial to the plot of the drama.

6 When he takes the view that there are two orders in narrative, Genette argues that it is “necessary” to recover the chronological order of events (Genette, 1980, 35). Chatman elaborates on this necessity: “The discourse can rearrange the events of the story as much as it pleases, provided the story-sequence remains discernible. If not, the classical plot fails in ‘unity’” (Chatman, 1978, 63). But when the events in a narrative are rearranged in their chronological order, major aspects of the narrative, including the plot, are often destroyed. If we reorder the events in a story like Bret Harte’s “The Outcasts of Poker Flat,” we do not confirm the unity of its plot, but violate it. Bret Harte’s story consists of a simple chronological sequence with only one minor interruption or chronological deviation. After Oakhurst and the others have been banished from Poker Flat, they head for the next camp, Sandy Bar, which lies over a steep mountain range. About half-way there, they meet Tom Simson, who is coming from Sandy Bar. At this point in the narrative, the narrator reaches back into the past to tell us about Tom Simson:

> A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh, open face of the newcomer Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as “The Innocent,” of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a “little game,” and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door and thus addressed him: “Tommy, you’re a good little man, but you can’t gamble worth a cent. Don’t try it over again.” He then handed
him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson. (Harte, 1896, 1: 17-18)

7 This chronological deviation is needed to explain why Tom Simson decides to help Oakhurst and the other destitute outcasts. After this explanation, the story continues on its chronological course. Since the events in this explanation occurred “some months before,” they must have occurred before the story opened, for Oakhurst must travel from Sandy Bar to Poker Flat before he can be banished from Poker Flat. But if we rearrange the events in the story chronologically, first with the events at Sandy Bar and then with the events at Poker Flat, the story becomes episodic, and the unity of its plot is not enhanced but reduced. Logically, rearranging the events means constructing a different plot because plot is the arrangement of events. Structuralists account for this rearrangement of events by appealing to the concept of story or histoire, but even if we allow this appeal, we still need to be aware that since the purely chronological order of events violates the structure of the narrative, it cannot describe that narrative.

8 Plot is not the only aspect of narrative that is affected when events are rearranged chronologically. If we rearrange the events in the opening paragraph of Flannery O’Connor’s story “A Good Man is Hard to Find,” then we alter the narrative perspective:

   The Grandmother didn’t want to go to Florida. She wanted to visit some of her connections in east Tennessee and she was seizing at every chance to change Bailey’s mind. Bailey was the son she lived with, her only boy. He was sitting on the edge of his chair at the table, bent over the orange sports section of the Journal. “Now look here, Bailey,” she said, “see here, read this,” and she stood with one hand on her thin hip and the other rattling the newspaper at his bald head. “Here this fellow that calls himself The Misfit is aloose f rom the Federal Pen and headed toward Florida and you read here what it says he did to these people. Just you read it. I wouldn’t take my children in any direction with a criminal like that aloose in it. I couldn’t answer to my conscience if I did.” (O’Connor, 1955, 9)

9 In an attempt to change Bailey’s mind, the Grandmother seizes on the newspaper report about The Misfit. Obviously, The Misfit escaped from prison before the story opens, but if we rearrange the events to reflect this chronology, we lose the limited point of view. In the story’s limited point of view, the Grandmother is the focal character, which is to say that the events are presented from her perspective. But if the events are rearranged to reflect the chronology of The Misfit’s prison escape, then the events cannot be told from the Grandmother’s point of view, mainly because she did not experience the occurrence of these events. Instead, she learned of the events from the newspaper report, and separating the events of The Misfit’s prison escape from her reading about them in the newspaper results in separating her point of view from the representation of those events. The problem of using a purely chronological order to describe narrative order should be clear: if rearranging events into their chronological order changes a narrative, then that rearrangement cannot be used to describe the narrative.

10 The particular problem of using pure chronology to describe narrative order should not be confused with the general problem of analysis. When we analyze narrative, we focus on one aspect of it, forcing other aspects outside of our field of vision. This focusing is unavoidable, but at the same time it does not in itself violate the structure of narrative. Only if the principle we use to analyze narrative is a non-narrative principle does the analysis violate the narrative. Pure chronological order, in other words, is a non-narrative principle. It is defined by the occurrence of events in the world rather than how
the narrator uses those events. It is there, in the text, but not everything in the text is part of narrative.

The view that narrative order consists of a chronological and textual order is not the only possible one. Genette, who devotes the bulk of his analysis to anachronies, tends to favor the view that narrative order forms a hierarchy that consists of a single order, which he calls “first narrative,” and deviations from that order:

Every anachrony constitutes, with respect to the narrative into which it is inserted—onto which it is grafted—a narrative that is temporally second, subordinate to the first in a sort of narrative syntax.... We will henceforth call the temporal level of narrative with respect to which anachrony is defined as such, “first narrative.”

(Genette, 1980, 48)

The “first narrative” is a sequence of events that preserves both chronological and textual order. Anachronies are deviations from this first narrative, that is, events whose textual order departs from the chronological order. Since these anachronies are subordinate to the first narrative, they are embedded within it. In this view, chronological order is not played against textual order; so narrative order can be described without rearranging the events. Instead, there is a single order that is both chronological and textual, and this single order is interrupted by anachronies that depart from the chronological order in various ways.

This description of narrative order goes beyond Genette’s stated view, but it is implicit in the hierarchy that Genette uses to relate his anachronies to his first narrative. But although Genette’s description implies a hierarchy, he does not abandon the principle that contrasts chronological and textual orders because this contrast is the basis for his concept of anachrony. Anachronies are related to the first narrative not only by “syntax,” but by a syntax that turns out to be linear. The concept of anachrony, like the structuralist concept of order itself, assumes that events are on a single plane, so that their order can be simply reversed. And in his analysis, Genette links the anachronies to the first narrative in purely relational terms, such as “reach,” which refers to the temporal distance between an anachrony and the first narrative (Genette, 1980, 48). As a result, although Genette defines anachronies in hierarchical terms, that is, as subordinate to the first narrative, he analyzes them in linear terms. And when we turn to examples in narrative, the linear concept of anachrony becomes inadequate. Consider an anachrony from Hawthorne’s story “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” which appears when Professor Baglioni attempts to warn Giovanni about Rappaccini and his daughter:

“I have been reading an old classic author lately,” said he, “and met with a story that strangely interested me. Possibly you may remember it. It is of an Indian prince, who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great. She was as lovely as the dawn, and gorgeous as the sunset; but what especially distinguished her was a certain rich perfume in her breath—richer than a garden of Persian roses. Alexander, as was natural to a youthful conqueror, fell in love at first sight with this magnificent stranger. But a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her.”

“And what was that?” asked Giovanni, turning his eyes downward to avoid those of the Professor.

“That this lovely woman,” continued Baglioni, with emphasis, “had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them, that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence.” (Hawthorne, 1962-87, 10: 117)
In terms of Genette’s analysis, the important point about this example is that the events in Baglioni’s story occurred long before the opening of the first narrative. Saying only this, however, is the same as placing the two sequences of events side by side, as if they were on the same linear plane. But this is not the case, or at least not the whole case, for Baglioni’s story is embedded in the first narrative. Anachronies, like all embedded events, have two aspects: a text and an act. Genette’s analysis of narrative order focuses on the text, the events told, but not on the act, the event of telling. Much later, Genette takes up the issues that derive from the act of narrating, which he organizes under the heading of “voice.” It is here that he discusses embedded narratives, including their narrative use or “explanatory function” (1980, 232). But Genette’s discussions of order and embedding in narrative are not coordinated or cross-referenced. As a result, Genette does not develop the impact that the act of narrating has on narrative order. For example—to return to the illustration from Hawthorne—as a text, Baglioni’s story is an anachrony, but as an act, his story is presented in its chronological order in the first narrative. And as an act, Baglioni’s story is an event in the first narrative.

First narrative, which is the main story sequence, is hierarchical rather than linear, and it consists of one order, the order in which temporal chronology and textual presentation converge. All other orders found in narrative are not orders of narrative; that is, they are not based on narrative principles. Deviations from narrative order are embedded events, but since they appear at a subordinate level, they cannot be reordered chronologically without destroying the fabric of the narrative. This becomes clear in narratives that are organized around recognition. In *Oedipus the King*, Jocasta tells Oedipus not to worry about the prophecy because prophecy can fail, and then she tells him a story that illustrates her point. When we take Jocasta’s story in purely chronological terms, then we view the narrative as a text that can be reordered in a linear manner. This textual view destroys not only the narrative order but the narrative itself. In contrast, when we take Jocasta’s story in relative chronological terms, we view narrative as discourse that embeds other discourses. This discourse view preserves the narrative order, and therefore the narrative, because Jocasta’s act of telling her story is an event in the narrative order.

Jocasta’s act of telling is a crucial event in the drama because the events that she reveals to Oedipus are, as he soon recognizes, the events of his own birth. The point here is that there is no other way Oedipus can learn about these events than by having someone tell him: the events have to be told in order for Oedipus to recognize both his fate and the power of prophecy. Oedipus’s recognition is also an event, the main event that the narrative explains. So the plot that Aristotle admired is organized around the recognition of events rather than their occurrence, and therefore the anachronies that occur are necessary for the unity of the plot.

**Chronological Order**

Narrative order is derived from narrative explanation, the attempt to bring about the understanding of an event by presenting a sequence of events that leads up to it. Since narrative explanation requires a chronological order, in the sense that one event leads to another, narrative order is chronological. Departures from this order are not deviations but supplemental explanations, such as embedded stories. Embedded stories are told, and thus are events in the chronology of the sequence of events that forms the basis of the explanation, but at the same time they provide information about events that have
occurred earlier. It is the textual order of these embedded events that departs from a purely chronological order.

Narrative maintains a chronological relation between narrative order and embedded events, but not between different sequences of embedded events. Saul Bellow’s novel *Seize the Day* has a narrative order or main story sequence that consists of actions that occur on a single day in the life of Wilhelm, from leaving his hotel room in the morning to attending a funeral in the afternoon. In some parts of the story, Wilhelm reminisces about the past. In others, the narrator relates past events. Although it is simple to place these past events in relation to the main story sequence, it is not always possible to place them in relation to one another. We know that the past events always occur before the main story sequence, but we do not always know if one past event occurs before or after another past event. Consider two subordinate sequences or past episodes, both involving conversations between Wilhelm and his father, Dr. Adler. The first is placed in the past with the adverb of time “Recently” and the other with “Not long ago”:

> Old Dr. Adler had retired from practice; he had a considerable fortune and could easily have helped his son. Recently Wilhelm had told him, “Father—it so happens that I’m in a bad way now. I hate to have to say it. You realize that I’d rather have good news to bring you. But it’s true. And since it’s true, Dad—What else am I supposed to say? It’s true.”
>
> Another father might have appreciated how difficult this confession was—so much bad luck, weariness, weakness, and failure. Wilhelm had tried to copy the old man’s tone and made himself sound gentlemanly, low-voiced, tasteful. He didn’t allow his voice to tremble; he made no stupid gesture. But the doctor had no answer. He only nodded. You might have told him that Seattle was near Puget Sound, or that the Giants and Dodgers were playing a night game, so little was he moved from his expression of healthy, handsome, good-humored old age. (Bellow, 1961, 11; emphasis added)

This conversation interrupts the main story sequence just before Wilhelm meets his father at breakfast. In the second example, the conversation interrupts the main story sequence just after Wilhelm leaves his father at the breakfast table:

> Not long ago his father had said to him in his usual affable, pleasant way, “Well, Wilky, here we are under the same roof again, after all these years.”
>
> Wilhelm was glad for an instant. At last they would talk over old times. But he was also on guard against insinuations. Wasn’t his father saying, “Why are you here in a hotel with me and not at home in Brooklyn with your wife and two boys? You’re neither a widower nor a bachelor. You have brought me all your confusions. What do you expect me to do with them?” (Bellow, 1961, 27; emphasis added)

The adverb “Recently” and the adverb phrase “Not long ago” place these conversations in the past, but they do not place them in relation to each other. These temporal adverbs are not specific enough to allow us to establish a purely chronological order, which indicates that such an order is not part of the narrative.

The relative chronology of narrative order is more complex than the examples from *Seize the Day* indicate. When there are multiple sequences of events, there are four possible types of chronology: 1) the chronology of the events in the main story sequence; 2) the chronology of the events in the embedded sequences; 3) the chronology of one embedded sequence in relation to another embedded sequence and; 4) the chronology of the events in one embedded sequence in relation to the events in another embedded sequence. The chronology of the first two types are always recoverable, but the chronology of the latter two types is not. As the examples from *Seize the Day* illustrate, we cannot always
determine when one embedded sequence occurred in relation to another. Jack London’s story “The Law of Life” provides a more complex illustration, one in which we can determine the order of one embedded sequence in relation to another, but in which we cannot determine the chronology of the events in one embedded sequence in relation to the events in another. London’s story is about an old Yukon Indian who, during the last few hours of his life, thinks about his past. Thus, events in the main story sequence, or narrative present, become mixed with various episodes from the Indian’s childhood and early manhood:

He remembered how he had abandoned his own father on an upper reach of the Klondike one winter, the winter before the missionary came with his talk-books and his box of medicines. Many a time had Koskoosh smacked his lips over the recollection of that box, though now his mouth refused to moisten. The “painkiller” had been especially good. But the missionary was a bother after all, for he brought no meat into the camp, and he ate heartily, and the hunters grumbled. But he chilled his lungs on the divide by the Mayo, and the dogs afterwards nosed the stones away and fought over his bones. (London, 1906, 42-43)

This episode from the past occurs during Koskoosh’s early manhood because from the context of the story we know that for a man to have abandoned his father he must have reached manhood. The next episode from the past occurs during Koskoosh’s childhood, and therefore further back in the past:

He remembered, when a boy, during a time of plenty, when he saw a moose pulled down by the wolves. Zing-ha lay with him in the snow and watched—Zing-ha, who later became the craftiest of hunters, and who, in the end, fell through an air-hole on the Yukon. They found him, a month afterward, just as he had crawled halfway out and frozen stiff to the ice. (London, 1906, 44)

The phrase, “He remembered, when a boy, during a time of plenty,” starts an episode that is also linked to the chronological scheme of the character’s life. This allows us to place this episode from Koskoosh’s childhood before the one that begins with Koskoosh’s early manhood. We can also determine the chronology of the events within this episode. But we cannot determine the chronology of the events in this episode in relation to the events in the episode from Koskoosh’s early manhood. The episode that begins with Koskoosh’s childhood contains the events: “Zing-ha, who later became the craftiest of hunters, and who, in the end, fell through an air-hole on the Yukon.” The chronology of these events about Zing-ha is explicitly marked with the adverbs of time “later” and “in the end,” but this chronology is relative to this current episode. In contrast, we cannot determine the chronology of these events in relation to events in the episode from Koskoosh’s early manhood. We do not know, for example, if Zing-ha fell through the air-hole before or after the missionary died and whether the dogs fought over his bones.

The conclusion to be drawn from this inability to determine the absolute or purely chronological order of events is that such an order is not important for our concept of narrative. It may be that we do not even notice the achronological relations between episodes and events unless we consciously search for them. So although chronology is part of narrative, because it is part of narrative explanation, a purely chronological order is not. A purely chronological order belongs to our concept of how events occur in the world. And since narrative is not a copy of the world, it need not copy the chronology of the world. Narrative explanation determines narrative order, and narrative explanation is not in the world but in the discourse about the world.
Narrative order is the chronology of events necessary to form a narrative explanation. Other chronological orders may appear in narrative—orders that contribute to the narrative explanation. The most obvious chronological order in narrative is the one defined by a character’s experience. This tends to be an absolute chronological order, for it is derived from the order in which events occur in the world. But there is another important chronological order, based not on the character’s experience but on the narrator’s knowledge of them. The narrator’s knowledge of the events is related to his learning about them, and since a narrator can learn about events without directly experiencing them, he can learn about later events before he learns about earlier ones. This produces a chronology that is different from the one defined by the character’s experience. In other words, there are two types of chronological order in narrative that can depart from the textual order: the order of a character’s experience, and the order of the narrator’s knowledge of that experience. Neither of these orders needs to appear in the text in its chronological order.

The order in which a narrator learns about the events he tells can become an important feature of a narrative. Sherwood Anderson’s story “Death in the Woods” is told in the chronological order that parallels the order in which the events occur. In the first half, the narrator tells the story of a woman’s life and death. In the second half, the narrator tells how he came to know the events of the woman’s life and death. The second half of the story then implies another type of chronological order, one based on the narrator’s experience or knowledge of the events. In this order, the narrator, as a young boy, first witnesses the discovery of the woman’s body, and then over a number of years, the narrator pieces together what led up to the woman’s death from what he hears and what he experiences. We thus have two chronological orders: the order of the woman’s experience, and the order of the narrator’s knowledge of her experience.

There are three main episodes in the woman’s life. As a girl she is a hired-girl on a German farm, where her task is to feed the family and the farm animals. Later, as the wife of Grimes, her treatment is similar, for Grimes leaves her for long periods, with inadequate resources, and she is forced to feed the farm animals in whatever way she can. In the end, as she struggles home with a sack of supplies, she decides to rest under a tree on a winter night. She falls asleep and freezes, and the farm dogs, in their hunger, tear the sack from her back, dragging her body into the middle of a clearing and stripping her clothes to her waist. It is in this position that her body is found. This is the end of the story, in terms of the woman’s life; but it is the beginning of the story for the narrator who, as a boy, is with the men who go to the woods to retrieve the body:

I had seen everything, had seen the oval in the snow, like a miniature racetrack, where the dogs had run, had seen how the men were mystified, had seen the white bare young-looking shoulders, had heard the whispered comments of the men.

(Anderson, 1933, 21)

At the point where the woman’s story ends, the narrator’s knowledge of the story, that is, of the events that led up to her death, begins. At this point, the story is a mystery, for the men do not know who she is or how she died. This becomes the story of what the narrator learns.
Later, the narrator learns about Grimes and his treatment of his wife from town gossip and from visiting the abandoned Grimes house. As a young man, the narrator works on the farm of a German, where there is also a hired-girl. The narrator sees how she is treated, and relates this to the treatment of the woman. And finally, as a man, the narrator spends a winter night in the woods, in which a pack of dogs wait for him to die. The narrator does not die, but the experience allows him to understand what the woman must have experienced on her last night in the woods. Without this experience, which occurs when he is a man, the narrator could not tell the story of the woman, which occurred when he was a boy.

The textual order, the order in which events are presented in narrative, need not follow either the chronology of the character’s experience or the chronology of the narrator’s knowledge of that experience. An example of this appears in Ernest Hemingway’s novel *The Sun Also Rises*. For the most part, the order of events in Hemingway’s novel follows the chronology set by the experience of Jake, the first-person narrator. However, Jake does not experience the climactic scene in which Cohn physically beats Romero but is unable to break his spirit. Jake was knocked out by Cohn earlier, and by the time he arrives back at the hotel, the fight between Cohn and Romero is over. The next day, Jake learns about the fight from Mike and Bill, who learned about it from Brett, who was there. So there are two chronological orders: the order in which the events occur, and the order in which the narrator learns about them. But between these two orders, the text interposes a third order, the order of presentation. After the fight occurs—in fact the next morning—but before Jake meets Mike and Bill and learns about the fight, the following passage appears:

> The bull who killed Vicente Girones was named Bocanegra, was Number 118 of the bull-breeding establishment of Sanchez Taberno, and was killed by Pedro Romero as the third bull of that same afternoon. His ear was cut by popular acclamation and given to Pedro Romero, who, in turn, gave it to Brett, who wrapped it in a handkerchief belonging to myself, and left both ear and handkerchief, along with a number of Muratti cigarette-stubs, shoved far back in the drawer of the bed-table that stood beside her bed in the Hotel Montoya, in Pamplona. (Hemingway, 1926, 199)

When this passage appears in the narrative, Jake has just watched the running of the bulls, in which Vicente Girones is killed. But it is still morning, and the bullfight has not yet occurred and Romero and Brett have not yet left Pamplona. There are then three orders in the narrative: the chronology of Brett’s experience, the chronology of the narrator’s knowledge of that experience, and the order in which the narrator presents his knowledge of that experience in the text.

These three types of order in narrative raise a question: How are these different orders related to the narrative order? We can take up this question by turning to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, for here the three types of order are spread across the entire novel. Three important episodes in Gatsby’s life can be ordered in three different ways. According to the chronological order of Gatsby’s experience, these episodes are: 1) Gatsby as a youth before meeting Daisy; 2) Gatsby at the height of his powers and reunited with Daisy and; 3) Gatsby after the loss of Daisy and the death of Myrtle. The narrator describes Gatsby’s youth, his meeting with the self-made Dan Cody and his transformation from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby: “he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 99). But this description of Gatsby’s youth comes in Chapter 6, after Gatsby and Daisy are reunited in Carraway’s house in Chapter 5. So there
is a simple reversal of the chronological order of events, common in narrative. However, it is only in Chapter 8, on the last night of Gatsby's life, that Gatsby actually tells the narrator about his youth: “It was this night that he told me the strange story of his youth with Dan Cody—told it to me because 'Jay Gatsby' had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice, and the long secret extravaganza was played out” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 148). In between, much happens, including the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom, the accident in which Myrtle is killed, and Gatsby's vigil outside Daisy's house. The three types of order can be schematized as follows:

Character Order (order of Gatsby's experience):
1. Gatsby before meeting Daisy
2. Gatsby reunited with Daisy
3. Gatsby loses Daisy

Knowledge Order (order of the narrator's knowledge):
2. Gatsby reunited with Daisy
3. Gatsby loses Daisy
1. Gatsby before meeting Daisy

Textual Order (order of events in the text):
2. Gatsby reunited with Daisy
1. Gatsby before meeting Daisy
3. Gatsby loses Daisy

The first point about these three types of order in the novel is that neither the order defined by Gatsby's experience nor the order defined by the narrator's knowledge of that experience is used to present the episodes in the text. Carraway knows all the events before he begins to narrate, so he can present them in any order he wants, which means he does not need to follow either the order of Gatsby's experience or the order in which he learned about that experience. Since these are both chronological orders, the question becomes: Why does the narrator invent a third order for his narrative? The answer is found in the narrative explanation. The narrative order represents the way in which the narrator wants us to see Gatsby, for seeing Gatsby is what the narrative is about, as the narrator indicates at the opening of the novel:

When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the “creative temperament”—it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end. (Fitzgerald, 1925, 2)

For the narrator, Gatsby is an exception, but a complex one. The narrator's attitude toward Gatsby is marked by three stages: “unaffected scorn,” “romantic readiness,” and the attitude implied by “turned out all right at the end.” These three stages mark the stages of Gatsby's character, as the narrator sees him: ridiculous, romantic, and—to keep within traditional terms—tragic. Gatsby's character does not develop, but the narrator's understanding of him does, and this development of his understanding is what the narrator explains in his narrative. In the episode in which Gatsby and Daisy are reunited, Gatsby appears ridiculous, with his initial embarrassment in Carraway's living room and
his later exuberance as he shows off his mansion. In the following chapter, the narrator emphasizes Gatsby’s romantic side, the character that "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 99). And on the night before his death, when Gatsby tells the narrator about his past, he achieves, through self-recognition, a certain tragic stature. The narrator’s understanding of Gatsby follows neither the chronology of Gatsby’s experience nor the chronology of the narrator’s knowledge of that experience. It follows the chronology of the understanding he acquires after he learns all of the events of Gatsby’s life, and this is the order that is used to present the events in the narrative.

Narrative order is more than the simple contrast between purely chronological and purely textual orders. In its simplest form, narrative order consists of the convergence of the chronological and textual orders. In the case of multiple sequences, where textual order departs from chronological order, narrative order forms a hierarchy in which one sequence dominates the others. The dominant sequence is chronological and defines the order of the narrative explanation. The subordinate sequences contribute to the narrative explanation, but they do not produce an alternative order; in particular, they do not produce a purely chronological order that can be used to provide a description or measurement of the dominant sequence of events. Finally, what constitutes the chronological in narrative order is not self-evident. Sometimes it is the chronology of the character’s experience; sometimes it is the chronology of the narrator’s knowledge of that experience; and sometimes it is the chronology of the narrator’s understanding of his knowledge of that experience. These all form chronological orders because the principles on which they are based—experience, knowledge, and understanding—are determined by what happens in the world, for as Paul Ricceur points out, narrative “is grounded in a preunderstanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character” (1984, 54). And which temporal character is found in a narrative depends not on a chronology of events, but on the purpose and structure of its explanation.

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**NOTES**

1. Tomashevsky points out the distinction between chronological and textual order that underlies the conception of order in narratology (1965, 66-67).

2. One exception is Sternberg in his discussion of narrative order in terms of “preliminary” and “delayed” expositional material (1978, 35-36). Although Sternberg provisionally accepts the idea of chronological and textual orders (1978, 15), his focus on narrative exposition entails a position that is my point of departure, namely, that events that are not presented in their chronological order have an expository or, more generally, an explanatory function.

3. Smith argues that the structuralist concept of order—and structuralist theory in general—is based on “a number of dualistic concepts” (1980, 213); Ronen argues that it is based on “an essentialist conception of chronology understood as an absolute order” (1994, 216).


5. For an extended discussion of narrative and *in medias res*, see Sternberg (1978, 35-41).


ABSTRACTS

One established task of narrative theory is to describe the order of events in narrative or, to be more specific, to describe the principle that determines it. The problem is well-known: although we assume that narrative represents events that occur in a world, the order of presentation in a narrative need not match the order of occurrence in the world. Faced with this situation, most structuralists assume that narrative order consists of these two orders: the order defined by the occurrence of events in the world and the order defined by the presentation of events in the text. This assumption leads to at least two difficulties for a description of narrative. The first is the structuralist belief that temporal chronology and textual presentation are linear concepts, i.e. that each is independent and complete in itself, a single uninterrupted sequence of events. But this linear concept of order cannot account for the order of events in a narrative that consists of multiple sequences of events because in such cases the narrative order forms a hierarchy in which one sequence of events dominates the others that are woven through it. The second difficulty is the belief that it is not only possible but also necessary to recover the chronological order of events in narrative. But when the events in a narrative are rearranged in their chronological order, major aspects of the narrative, including the plot, are often destroyed. Logically, rearranging the events in a narrative means constructing a different plot because plot is the arrangement of events. I present an alternative to the structuralist view of narrative order, and my major assumption is that chronology determines the order of events in a main story sequence but not in its embedded episodes. Since the purpose of narrative is to show how one event leads to another, it is crucial that the events in a main story sequence appear in their chronological order. But since the purpose of an embedded episode is to show how events in the narrative past explain an event in the narrative present, i.e. in the main story sequence, an embedded episode need not appear in its chronological order. As a result, there may be various types of order in a narrative, but there is only one narrative order, the order of the narrative explanation. Embedded sequences are linked to this order, but they do not form alternative orders; in particular, they do not form a purely chronological order.

AUTHOR

JON-K ADAMS
Apparent Feature-Anomalies in Subjectivized Third-Person Narration

Gordon Collier

Introductory

1 Patrick White’s fiction I would label "fiction of consciousness," yet in its peculiar narrativity it is light-years removed from exemplars of stream of consciousness, and also wholly individual in its use of Free Indirect Discourse (FID). One of the cardinal virtues of "natural narratology" is to pick us up and set us back down at the inception of all processes of story-making; the first guiding principle or quantum theory is that all fiction has to do with consciousness. This may well empty out the force of my belief that novelists like White, Faulkner, James and Dostoevsky are the masters of the "fiction of consciousness."

2 White’s *The Solid Mandata* is a useful test-case for theories of the text-constitution of consciousness. It is for most of its length a fiction of twin consciousness, having two main sections, "Waldo" and "Arthur," devoted to the eponymous, somatically and characterologically dissimilar twins. The narration is third-person. Most critics of White's work take it for granted that his novels are regulated by conspicuous, ironical control, even intrusiveness, on the part of what we might still dare to call an "auctorial narrator" — a kind of Jamesian Dickens. I am unable to align myself with this. Neither White nor a narrating stand-in for White is a functional presence in the twin narratives. The stories of the twins appear to be narrated, told, but the centre of consciousness in each case is that of the twin concerned; in Dorrit Cohn's term, there are "transparent minds" present. In these central sections, there cannot be said to be any representational hybridity, syncretism, melding, or slippage. The "malleability of language" indicated by Monika Fludernik in her discussion of the post-realist phenomena of reflectorization and figuralization does not extend to *The Solid Mandata*, but internal focalization does, even though it is not "conceived as part of, as well as abetting, authorial omniscience"
Reflectorization combines "the knowledge of the narrator with the focalization and language of a character present on the scene, but is identical to neither the narrator nor a specific identifiable character" (Fludernik, 1996, 181). In *The Solid Mandata*, there is no sense of a narrator's knowledge: knowledge, focalization and language are identical to a specific identifiable character. There is thus no ironic narratorial dissociation from the characters' "false" values (ibid.). Figuralization is "the evocation of a deictic centre of subjectivity in a reflector-mode narrative that has no ruling figural consciousness attached to it"; in this "figuralized narrative," the reader is empathetically projected into the figure of an observer "on the scene" (Fludernik, 1996, 197-98). In *The Solid Mandata*, the reader is empathetically projected into, at most, "a deictic centre of subjectivity" which is a "ruling figural consciousness."

All prior reader-responses to White's fictions and their narrational characteristics (with the signal exception of Hilary Heltay's admirable approach) have assumed that a narrator was present who could not be identified with a central character or a shifting array of characters. For them, White practised "authorial narrative." Heltay's inclination was to accept the classic *erlebte Rede* theory of functional overlay — the thin man of a character trying to struggle out of the body of a fat narrator, or vice versa. My view was to assume the functioning of mediative agency: that stories were being told, but that White had renounced the double game and had fashioned a construct of characters narrating themselves — telling, showing, experiencing, sensing — in the third person.

**Features of subjectivized third-person narration**

To provide a perspective on the kinds of coverage central in creating an assemblage of indices that might coalesce into a characterization of White's narrative style, here are some of the topics I dealt with in an earlier study (Collier, 1992). I studied the localization of action in time via temporal deixis, analepsis and prolepsis, and the perspective from which action is represented, including ostensible instances of "outside somatic views"; it could be demonstrated at the micro- and macrostructural levels that Waldo's and Arthur's sections of the novel are wholly subjectivized. "Seeming" indices (indicatives, modals such as "might have," discourse markers such as "apparently," adverbial clauses such as "as though"), which are often classed as the pseudo-conjecture of external narration, exhibit a strongly differentiated correlation with the otherwise deducible psychology of the central characters. Aspectuality (psychologically relational progressives, for example) had to be presented in some detail, as their use in White often puzzled his critics; comparative analysis showed a higher incidence of such progressives in White's fiction than in that of any other major modernist I examined. Although the progressive, like Flaubert's *imparfait*, is the stock-in-trade of narratologists discussing FID, quantitative considerations do, along with other narratological features, prompt the question of the extent to which a specific "stylistics of narrational techniques" might be a worthwhile goal. The whole area of shifted modals and conditionality is, of course, analysed with respect to FID, but these categories, too, reveal patterns of characterological differentiation on the one hand and interesting patterns of marked preference and implementation that, like other features, point towards the existence of a "mind-style" peculiar to White (or, rather, to his view of the workings of consciousness). I discuss patterns of iconicity typical of subjectivized narration and take over wholesale Seymour Chatman's approach to the analysis of psychological verbs and predications in
James, with results which again correlate exclusively with character consciousness, as does my analysis of text cohesion and patterns of deixis (definite, demonstrative, "it"). An essentially non-narratological clutch of features is constituted by categories of logico-grammatical linkage in White (e.g., with "so," "then," "for" and "because") which run counter to the modernist preference for "inferred linkage"; far from indicating the presence of an "auctorially" aligned narrator, these indices correlate exclusively with differentiated centres of character consciousness. The same applies to the quintessential feature of White’s style, which is his tendency to construct individual sentences that effectively circumvent the principles both of parataxis and of hypotaxis; this discourse-structuring technique, which has baffled and infuriated many a critic of White, constitutes what I have called "ataxis" (but with a quite different spin from Bernhard Fehr, 1938: "ataxis" as "substitutionary perception" [103-104], or Helmut Bonheim, 1982: "ataxis" as "syntactic fragments" [65]), and serves exclusively to represent the pulse and emphases of figural consciousness. Similar in function are White’s speech-tag practices (the "he said" bits commonly termed "inquits").

**Two feature-"anomalies"**

At least for the one text *The Solid Mandala*, and by analytical extension to White’s fictions generally, the above features make out my prime facie case for subjectivized third-person narration beyond the classic models of FID and stream of consciousness. I have left to last two areas which are customarily banished beyond the pale of interior focalization or narratives of character consciousness based on the third person, and which, in awareness of exclusionary models or rules of thumb, I shall sceptically term feature-"anomalies." The one has to do with the pervasive presence in White’s fictions of "gnomic" statements in the present tense. The other is White’s gradation of character-identification, where replacive pronominalization plays a conspicuously minor role in comparison with "objectivizing" nominals — a procedure which I have termed White’s peculiar approach to "modal deixis." If the above array of features is inclusively and exclusively indicative of subjectivized third-person narration, then the two features (or groups of features) reported on below cannot have "anomalous" status within White’s texts and cannot be excluded as indices of subjectivization. I should add at this point that I cannot regard the points at issue as illustrations of the practice of stylistic "deviation," as the very scepticism conveyed by my echoic use of the term "anomalous" already implies that I am troubled by the idea of having to proceed from normative models of expressivity in prose fiction. My assertion above that White is "wholly individual" does not mean that I regard him as a "deviant" narrative stylist.

**Feature-"anomaly" 1: Gnomic statements**

"Gnomic" statements in the present tense have been taken by White’s critics universally as an indicator of the author’s obtrusive commentative presence. This is the usual view (e.g., Lodge, 1984, 103) of a phenomenon forming the chief constituent of the narrative mode called "commentary" or "comment." Unlike report, speech and description, comment is "ideational" because it is independent of the parameters of time and space even though it reflects on matters which arise in fictive time and space. Comment is easily identifiable as such: it is not susceptible to "epic" back-shifting of tense, and
inhabits a "neutral time-sphere" (according to Bronzwaer, 1970, 51, who finds the phenomenon unproblematical enough not to discuss it). Bonheim (1982, 12, 30) also regards this mode as easily identifiable: it uses "evaluative modifiers, generalizations not imputed to one of the fictional characters, or judgments using a fairly high level of abstraction." Comment in fiction relates, in genre-terms, to the "essay, philosophical discourse, sermon, or newspaper editorial," and is avoided by "writers of fiction in our age" (except for the postmodernists), "especially in its pure forms, that is, unalloyed with the other modes, at sentence and paragraph length and in the present tense" (1982, 31). It can be seen how problematical the category of comment might prove to be in the case of Patrick White's fiction, especially when the mode is understood in its broader manifestations, and in view of Bonheim's prescriptive aesthetic aside that "too much comment spoils a work of art" (ibid.).

Critical presuppositions play a large part in determining the presence of comment in narratives. There is, even in Cohn, a tendency to seize on superficial formal characteristics as signalling only auctorial comment and a concomitant rationalizing away of contradictory evidence (the maximum position allowed being a "marriage" of irony between narrator and character). Bonheim's category depends upon the identification of contextual, text-pragmatic determinants which make comment necessarily non-figural: generalizations must not be imputed (explicitly, one assumes) to "one of the fictional characters." On the other hand, comment for Bonheim depends for its identification on partially applicable formal considerations such as present-tense marking. Other markers include conjuncts and disjuncts such as after all, possibly, it might be that for "observations and connections" not expected "of a casual spectator." The connecting observer who is not "a casual spectator" need not, however, be a non-figural consciousness. These formal markers are not primarily evidence for the presence of narratorial comment, but are potential second-level corroborations of a classification reached by logical, deductive means. The gnomic sentences in The Solid Mandala are formally and contextually (text-pragmatically) figural. If my assertion of zero-degree comment in The Solid Mandala is valid, then there are no grounds for assuming that White the artist is by nature an interfering implied-auctorial presence in all his fictions.

It should at this point be mentioned that current narrative theory allows for the retention of the present tense in FID (as in reported speech) "in 'general saws', proverbs, timeless truths" (McHale, 1978, 252, note 3). As an extension of this, once FID has been established, "the present tense can be safely used to convey subjective statements, if there is an advantage in so doing. For a generalisation... the present tense makes the assertion seem more confident and dogmatic" (Pascal, 1977, 83; cf. also 96). Statements of a universal nature involve different "insinuations" in the present tense from those conveyed in a FID "past" tense: a shift out of the gnomic present invariably lends temporal meaning to generalizations so that they lose their "claim to absolute truth" and seem to be thoughts (of characters) devised as rationalizations (Pascal, 1977, 49). One can, of course, always proceed on the principle adopted by Chatman, Cohn and Bonheim and consider the possibility (for them, the probability) that a present-tense generalization is auctorial-narratorial; but one has to weigh up the effect of this on textual comprehension against the effect achieved contextually if one postulates that the generalization is figural (there is a good example of the application of such a deductive procedure to a passage from Flaubert in Pascal, 1977, 101-102).
Feature-“anomaly” 1: Statements in immediate context

9 Gnomic statements characteristically co-occur in White with certain markers. Some features are narratologically formal, others contextual and related to the sense conveyed by the gnomic formulation. More than one marker may apply to a given passage.

10 1. The So-marker. The presence of a sentence beginning with So immediately after a gnomic statement can indicate a shift of consciousness from an inward rationalization (of the form taken by — or given by Waldo to — an inward vision) to a concentration on inward or external perception. In the following example, Waldo, lighting a lamp after entering the darkness of his mother’s bedroom, holds up one of her old dresses between himself and a mirror, exhilarated at the icy, metallic, sequinned image of the past evoked (as well as the present transvestite persona he himself has "entered" thereby): "Standing as she had never stood in fact, because, although memory is the glacier in which the past is preserved, memory is also licensed to improve on life. So he became slightly drunk with the colours he lit on entering" (192). The frame is FID-subjective (preceding: "He need not mention names, but"; "he could see"; the self-congratulatory "designed by special cunning"; the disjunctive syntax of "Standing"; following: the expressive "How his heart contracted"). Waldo becomes "slightly drunk" because the "two selves" of his maternal ancestry are standing there in unreal transformation: "So" links this fantasy-perception to the emotional reaction entailed, with the gnomic statement between the two. The result-aspect of "So" is maintained in the direct connection between improvement on life (the gnomic sentence) and the force of Waldo's reaction. The resultative force of so is attenuated in one dimension here, and a lesser degree of rationalization is apparent in the gnomic statement. The adverbial behaves as though it were summing up, resuming, or joining logically the sentences on either side of the gnomic statement, but is in fact retained in another dimension. In the next example, the whole of the paragraph (including the gnomic sentence with its expressive indices) is FID, as is the previous paragraph.

Take Goethe. Goethe must have worn a track.... The vanity was that men believed their thought remained theirs once turned over to the public. All those goggle-eyed women reverent... trailing... and earnest young people Fingering.... because it is ordained that great works of art.... done-by-the-public sculpture.

So Waldo raced the traffic up the Barranugli Road. (118)

11 The emergence from thought into action is signalled by the single-sentence paragraph with "So." The resumptive sense connects Waldo's continuing hurried walking with the implied inception of this at "scuttled" on the previous page. The resultative sense of "So" connects the anxiety generated by Waldo's thoughts (gnomic present) with an increase in speed of walking and with sharpened present awareness.

12 2. Aspect and transition-marking. The occurrence of gnomic statements immediately before sentences in the past progressive similarly indicates figural consciousness emerging from inward contemplation into perception of an external situation: "He took his brother by the hand.... But twin brothers, brothers of a certain age, at times only remember what has been laid down in the beginning. § They were walking on" (57; § marks a new paragraph). This has the additional, internal feature of a coyness or vagueness — "brothers of a certain age" — that has no point unless generated figurally. The following reveals rationalization, and includes a simile using a specific detail from the local context.
in such a way as to compromise the universality of the gnomic statement: "As it was, Waldo could even make a compensation out of the prospect of prolonged mutual habit. *Habit in weaker moments is soothing as sugared bread and milk.* § Arthur was now preparing to go in and make the bread and milk" (204).

13 **3. Rationalization.** Many of the gnomic sentences can be regarded contextually as figural rationalizations. The gnomic statements conform to Pascal's view that the present-tense form lends strong, dogmatic status and to his suggestion that a past-tense form would signal a personal rationalization. Rationalization, in White's representations of mental processes, must momentarily convince the character who is thinking (just as, at the macrostructural level, Waldo's distortions of temporal relations must not be perceived immediately by the reader, or by Waldo, for what they are). The following gnomic is a semantic joke: "He had never felt guiltier, but guilt will sometimes solidify; he could not have moved for a shotgun" (61). Generalization here represents mental flight from full acknowledgement of personal guilt: a flux of emotion is, as it were, gnomically frozen, kept at arm's length by introspection. This sentence is, in effect, also a resurfacing into discourse of the gnomic thought (with FID markings) expressed in the following (both contexts having the twins'neighbour Mrs Poulter, looking, and the guilt-nexus in common): "The dust-coloured bus plunged.... *Look into a passing bus, and more often than not you will see something you would rather not* Mrs Poulter's face was too stupid" (60).

14 **4. Comparisons and citations.** Gnomic statements may take the form of universalizing comparisons that are self-defensive strategies, neutralizing and distancing potential antagonists by their knowledgeable reduction to items in a predictable set: "Saporta stood smiling *in the manner of those men who will never have anything of importance to say and in its absence hopefully allow good-will to ooze out of the pores of their faces.* He had despised Saporta from the beginning" (64). To this extent, the gnomic statements constitute rationalizations. The following is a *"citation"* after an impersonal passive tag, the whole being embedded in FID: "*the cleft hinted at again in the chin, which, it was said,* is the sign of a lover. Waldo almost sneeze-laughed. Love me, Cranko, in a white hat!" (172).

15 **5. Immediacy.** The gnomic present may, in contradistinction to group 4, convey the immediacy of present figural thought — a kind of stunned sense of the individual's cognitive will being lost in an ocean of paralyzing contingency, as in the following: "trying to remember what his intentions could have been. But he was unable. *Intentions exist only in time.* §"Give me my spect — my glasses,' he was able to order" (67). Or present figural recollection of habitual past experience attains a kind of comforting universal validity: "Remembering the springy green cushions grass can become as it collaborates with sleep, he decided to take the train back" (309).

16 **6. Tagged discourse.** Here, a verb of mental operation (or, in a wider sense, a tag) is found in the immediate vicinity of the gnomic statement. The following looks like a good instance of auctorial-narratorial comment, in view of the verbal configuration of the gnomic passage:

Arthur did not particularly notice Dulcie's greyness or her glasses, nor that Mr Saporta was setting in fat, because friends and lovers enjoy a greater freedom than their bodies: they are at liberty to move out of them, and by special dispensation, communicate with one another through farsighted eyes.

It was Waldo who suffered, Arthur regretted, from his meeting (279)

17 This would be distanced comment if we were to take it as a representation of articulated rather than preverbal thought. But the clincher for figural consciousness comes in the
At the level of what is traditionally regarded as the strongest indication of formal narrative dissonance — the gnomic present-tense statement — the discourse of The Solid Mandata exhibits the closest consonance between non-direct speech and figural consciousness where processes of rationalization, mental evasiveness, and/or aphorismcoining are contextually discernible. The narrative is in this respect wholly "reliable." In terms of traditional narratological frames dealing with FID, this cannot be the case where such features are all-pervasive in third-person narration. In White, however, this is very much the case.

**Feature-"anomaly" 2: Character-identification as "modal deixis"**

White's practice in having characters or actants identified is "anomalous." I have been able to demonstrate for The Solid Mandata, and for other works of White, that the sliding scale leading from periphrastic nominalization through full and emotively reduced proper names to replacive pronouns ("his friend," "George Brown," "Waldo," "he") fails to have validity as a test for distinguishing the authorial pole of narrative from that of character-consciousness in White. If "a number of authors use NPs rather than pronouns also in passages of consciousness description, usually for ironic purposes" (Fludernik, 1993, 141), this does not yet suffice as a reassurance of the "normality" of White's practice, which does not correlate so much with irony as with the monitoring nature of consciousness.

Character-identification is included under deixis on grounds of convenience. As with the treatment of spatial, temporal and affective dimensions, the concept of relative distance is involved, on the plane of narrative perspective, focalization, or modality and thus forms part of "modal deixis." It is normal for the reader to assume that the naming of characters in narrative is a functional index to the presence of an auctorial narrator, whereas an increase in the frequency of substitutive reference ("familiar" names in "outward" reference, personal pronouns in reflexive contexts) indicates an empathetic entry into the mind of the character being referred to.

Stanzel (1982, 245) relies on the universal validity of this assumption in marking out the criteria for "personal" or figural narration. Macrotextual considerations are often dominant in Stanzel's reasoning: hence, in his chief example, Joyce's Portrait, where the "early-draft" periphrases of Stephen Hero are dropped, the use of names is restricted, and Stephen is referred to throughout by the personal pronoun. In a summary presentation of his own earlier studies on narrational personalization in Joyce's Ulysses, Stanzel (1982, 226-232 passim) rightly indicates the subtle way in which the consciousness of the figural "medium" has had the consciousness of the auctorial "medium" superimposed upon it (this narrational melding resembles in part the ambiguity of focalization often encountered in FID and is one manifestation of what Bakhtin calls "bivocality"; cf. also Pascal, 1977, 21).

Sympathetic qualification (e. g., "poor Strether" in James) and "auctorial periphrasis" (e. g., "our hero") are non-neutral indices of auctorial presence — significantly absent from The Solid Mandala. If "our hero" is clearly complicitous, most other forms of classificatory
periphrasis are narratorially neutral. Periphrasis is employed, it is commonly assumed, as elegant variation — an auctorial or narratorial means of introducing variety (a service to the implied reader as reader). But it can also be implemented (often simultaneously with the intention of reducing monotony) for ironic, analytical reasons, as in the following sentence, where there are thematic and contextual reasons for choosing this normally less likely sequence: "She [Mrs Poulter] turned to investigate her friend's [here, Mrs Dun] seamed and yellow cheek, but Mrs Dun was too discreet to cash in on anyone's approval" (17). The term "elegant variation" implies an element of sophisticated choice, all things being equal. But White is not interested in variety for its own sake and is also prepared to engage in "inelegant" variation. Whatever their function might be as an index to narratorial presence, White's shiftings of designation are always locally specific or situationally evaluative, usually with the aim of indicating figural reaction of some kind.

23 White is quite capable of sovereignly ironic play with the convention of elegant variation: perhaps the best example is the naming texture of Voss, which is intentionally (intertextually) contaminated by the high-Victorian extreme of this technique. On the surface, the result can have an almost parodic feel to it, and the reader's sense of mocking, wilful, mandarin authority is reinforced. As soon as one stops trying to brush away these annoyingly persistent flies (the hypnotic — almost unvaried — recurrence of "the German" instead of "Voss," for example) and decides for once to test them for their functionality, one discovers that they constitute a most subtle metering system for psychological attitude. It is, for example, not for the sake of elegant variation that Mr Bonner's first private encounter with Voss (15-20) should have "the [shabby/cloudy] German" in proximity to Bonner's view of his visitor, and "Voss" whenever the latter's own thoughts and opinions are mediated independently of Bonner's evaluations, or that Mr Bonner's shape-changing ("Mr Bonner," "Edmund Bonner," "the merchant," "the draper," "the thick man," "the man whose money was involved") should (with the single exception of Voss's designation of him as "his patron") be keyed to variations in the man's own sense of social identity.

24 The principle of substitution (pronoun to name, or vice versa) clearly has a functional aspect at the straightforward level of text-cohesion. Pronouns replace names wherever speaker-identification is not otherwise ambiguous. Names are used obligatorily (often after untagged dialogue) in Section 1 of The Solid Mandala, for example, to avoid association with a different person (name or pronoun) or to individuate from a plural pronoun, irrespective of whether the immediately preceding utterance is in direct speech or not. To avoid the possible confusion of speakers in longer strings of dialogue, names are occasionally introduced with neutral tag-verbs. Where this signposting of dialogue is not necessary, there is character-focalized mediation of thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Although the "frame" may be clearly narratorial ("Mrs Poulter"), the pronominalizations contained therein are indices to figural consciousness, as are the accompanying external namings (e. g., "Bill" for personal perspective, "Bill Poulter" for his wife's perception of his public identity) and periphrases ("her husband"). We may, of course, still speak of a blending of "media," but it is a rough blend only, with character-awareness rising to the surface and occluding the functionally identifying presence of a non-characterological narrating instance.

25 These assertions require further elucidation. As they clash in part with Stanzel's rules of thumb, I should perhaps turn briefly to his narrative theory once more. In discussing passages from the Wandering Rocks episode of Ulysses, Stanzel notes that the extracts
examined (various occasions on which Father Conmee encounters people on the street and talks to them) reveal ruptures in the conventions of nonfigural narrative, as well as stretches of FID in which the consciousness registering the conversation is not that of Father Conmee, but that of a third person (the auctorial narrator) whose style of narrating begins to resemble that of a "reflector'-character. Stanzel's proof for the absence of internal perspective in the narration is the repeated occurrence of name and honorific instead of the personal pronoun: "Father Conmee was wonderfully well indeed"; "Father Conmee was very glad indeed to hear that"; "Father Conmee was very glad to see the wife of Mr David Sheehy M. P. looking so well." These sentences are "approximate transpositions" of what Father Conmee and Mrs Sheehy say to each other. Stanzel does not remark on the "replacement" of "her" (for direct-speech "you") by "the wife of Mr David Sheehy M. P." in a statement whose wording is otherwise parallel to spoken idiom. This, like the presence of "Father Conmee" instead of "he," would support Stanzel's view that the perspective is external — were it not for the pragmatic context, which can be identified as the verbal interaction of a parishioner with a priest in the latter's extended social (rather than narrowly pastoral) role. It is, of course, possible to imagine an observer formally (and persistently) identifying the priest in this role by so naming him (and, presumably, omitting to grant Mrs Sheehy the same degree of referential attention), and to assume that a persistent use of "he" would shift the perspective to Father Conmee's own consciousness.

However, replacing the names with pronouns produces a curious effect which we would surely resist: the statements quoted above now feel as though they fully endorse the sentiments expressed — as though there were thought behind utterance, or thought instead of utterance. It is also possible if we consider the original formulations again that Father Conmee is himself aware that he is addressing a parishioner — and not, say, an intimate friend or personal acquaintance — and that the formal naming is an index to his awareness that he is speaking phatically in the capacity indicated by the designation "Father Conmee." In this case, what is being conveyed to us in FID is the speaker's/figural narrator's pragmatic self-image, which is constantly being checked in the mirror of consciousness registering the probable expectations of the addressee (in this case, Mrs Sheehy, who is classified by the speaker in terms of her socio-marital status). This consciousness of self could also be present when the priest chats jocularly and paternally with "three little schoolboys" (Stanzel, 1982, 230). Once again, Father Conmee is aware, while speaking, that he is executing a social function expected of a priest and that the boys know he is a priest (he is, after all, doubtless dressed as one). Stanzel, however, takes the sentence "The boys sixeyed Father Conmee and laughed" in order to demonstrate perspectival superimposition — "sixeyed" being an index to figural consciousness, "Father Conmee" to external narration. I have no quarrel with Stanzel's conclusion that the narration is "personalized" — only with the firmness of his assumption that nomen instead of pronomen must mean nonfigural orientation. There should be a system of safeguards allowing consideration of psychological and text-pragmatic determinates alongside our conventional reactions to patterns of referentiality that are linguistically determined.

I should like now to test the assumption that naming instead of pronominalization, together with various levels of naming or nomination, can differentiate levels of figural subjectivity rather than being just narratorial mediation. This can be seen in various deictic sequences in The Solid Mandala in instances where Stanzel's theory is not involved
in any way, notably with passages in which Waldo or Arthur is represented as thinking of or reacting to ("acting" towards) somebody other than himself. Such instances customarily involve elegant variation and the disambiguating use of names to ensure the identity of actants. The Brown parents are referred to as follows in Sections 2 and 3 of the novel:

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<thead>
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<th>the parents</th>
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<td>his mother and father</td>
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<td>Mother and Dad</td>
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<td>George Brown (Anne Quantrell)</td>
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<td>their father</td>
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<td>the old man</td>
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<td>Dad</td>
<td>Mother</td>
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Pronominal reference ("he," "she," "they") is, of course, also present. "Mother" and "Dad" are markers of stylistic register. They indicate individual social role-relationships in such a way that the "mode of expression" is "incompatible with the narrator's voice"; passages including such namings are classifiable as FID or, at the very least, as extremely consonant psychonarration (Banfield, 1973, 23-24; McHale, 1978, 270, Cohn 1978 passim). Such indices to figural consciousness are the rule throughout Waldo's and Arthur's narratives, and furnish a kind of norm against which to measure deflections.

**Feature-"anomaly" 2: Statements in immediate context**

Arthur's narrative employs these family-relationship names so persistently that the very few occasions on which other forms occur are conspicuous enough to require explanation. When Arthur senses that his histrionics have embarrassed his father (230), it is still "Dad" whom he feels "turn against him." A couple of paragraphs on, the shift from "Dad didn't seem to think it would" to "For his father it would have been detestable" could be explained as elegant variation. However, this is not the case, as the topical context has to do with the (im)possibility of an empathetic relationship between an "afflicted" father and his "afflicted" son: Arthur's mental speculation encodes the distance at which he now perceives himself to be from "Dad." Relationships are also invoked when Arthur decides to ask for help in explaining the word "totality" (239). He mentally singles out "Dad, or Waldo" as possible "intimate" sources of information on this topic, which relates to the very core of his being, but Waldo is discarded as an option: "But suddenly he knew his brother wouldn't"; "That left their father." Nouns instead of names hint not only at the speculative or notional level on which Arthur mulls over the problem of appealing to authority, but also at the anticipated distancing of Waldo. The relationship is subjectively reduced, but is maintained in the sibling reference involved in "their" (instead of "his"),
which is then repeated in "Why did he not propose to ask their mother, he wasn't sure" (distance again). The moment at which Arthur actually makes his final decision implies a shift from speculative distance to perceptual immediacy and subjective commitment: "So there was Dad. Cleaning his moustache of salmon."

30 What now occurs is an unprecedented shift to formal naming when Arthur registers Mr Brown's reactions (239-240) to his question: "George Brown looked at first as though he had been hit"; "Again George Brown might have been recovering from a blow"; "George Brown recommended." Such namings do not indicate a temporary reversion to auctorial perspective: they suggest, rather, the impact on Arthur's consciousness of gestural behaviour which makes his father "unfamiliar" to him. Arthur sees him as others would see him if they were not friends or members of the family: he is bathed in the naked light of public neutrality, a mere human being like anybody else, lacking the privilege of filial trust. His apophthegmatic wisdom ("Accuracy in the first place can only be called a virtue"), articulated mentally in a situation where he has already amply demonstrated his uncertainty, is an attempt to set up a façade of impersonal expertise: "George Brown recommended" implies as much. Arthur's expectations have not yet been shattered — he accepts this "public" pronouncement, although it is not to be received as a communication wholly characteristic of "Dad." The three occurrences of "George Brown" remain isolated moments of alienated perception. Arthur's father is constantly refamiliarized here as "Dad," even when he exposes his bumbling inadequacy in responding to his son's enquiry. The suggestion we are left with is of Arthur's acceptance of this inadequacy: "Then Arthur realized Dad would never know, any more than Waldo"; any less familiar a naming would have signalled distancing rejection.

31 Distancing and rejection are involved on the next occasion in the text when the designation "Dad" fails to occur — on the morning Arthur discovers his father's corpse (269): "the morning their father died"; "finding their father in the dark room"; "Arthur touched George Brown's hand"; "Not that George Brown had done more than withdraw from Arthur a second time"; "Excepting the morning George Brown died." Mr Brown has ceased to exist in a way that would allow Arthur to think of him as "Dad." Instead, the discourse refers to him in relation to both of the boys: "their father" is contiguous with reference to Waldo. The original, emotional, withdrawal (230) was maximized by the use of "their father"; the second and final physical withdrawal takes Arthur's father irretrievably beyond filial claims into the realm of the public and the impersonal: "George Brown" is, in Arthur's consciousness, severed from role-relationships and "exists" only in terms of the most generally valid yet most specifically personal of nominal designations. This form of naming persists in retrospective narration, in a context of naming where "Dulcie and Leonard got married" represents the norm of familiarity: "That was already as far back as 1922, the year George Brown had died" (274). This distancing is not markedly apparent in the case of Mrs Brown, for whom "Mother" is the usual form of reference: "After Mother's death their twin lives would not have diverged" (274). Here, the alternative "their mother" does not offer itself, on stylistic grounds, as this occurs elsewhere only when Arthur is conscious of filial obligation to her and of fraternal obligation to Waldo simultaneously (e. g., 272-273) and on the sole occasion on which he comes close to expressing discontent at his mother's loss of interest in him ("Arthur would have liked to admire their mother less" [269]).

32 Waldo lays so much claim to Mrs Brown's affections that the normative alternation in his narrative is between "Mother" and the proprietorial "his mother" (e. g., 28, 120, 145, 162,
167), which excludes sharing her with Arthur. "Their mother" occurs very occasionally: when Waldo ruminates on family relationships (72, 160); when Arthur’s co-presence cannot be denied (71, 72, 158); and once when it is clear to Waldo that Mrs Brown has distanced herself from her children (158). Twice (in connection with a proleptic reference to her death, and with reference to her cremation) she is named a "true Quantrell" (167, 171) — an expression of Waldo's desire to restore her to "dynastic" status by removal from the nominal, stigmatic ambience of her husband. Once, the narration has to be "corrected" as an imperiously indulgent mental gesture on Waldo's part to accommodate Arthur ("Some people would have considered his — their mother, dowdy" [120]).

Narrative perspective is sometimes ruffled by insertions of "Mrs Brown" into passages otherwise referring to "Mother." In such cases, we can imagine Waldo perceiving his mother playing a social or "public" role in (narrat ionally approximated) conversation with people outside the family circle.

In Waldo's discourse, the word "Dad" cannot be regarded as more than a token of familiarity and is thus not an index to positive emotional attachment. The relationship is constantly neutralized into passively accepted consanguinity ("their father"). Proprietorial reference ("his father") occurs, not as an act of will (cf. "his mother"), but solely where Waldo is unavoidably confronted with parental authority in situations excluding Arthur, and where such confrontations impinge forcefully on Waldo's emotions. The ultimate in neutrality is reached in the frequent identification of Waldo's father as "George Brown." I attempted above to justify this designation as a reflex of Arthur's attitude, forbearing to mention that its occurrences have an explicit prehistory in Waldo's section.

Directly after a long passage on the twins' childhood relationship with their father (referred to as "Dad"), there is the statement: "Often strangers, and always children, were fascinated by George Brown's boot, which was something members of the family hardly noticed" (33-34). Now, this could easily be taken for a momentary auctorial intrusion, but contextual details undermine this assumption. Disjunctive constructions precede, implying emotive involvement, and the status of Mr Brown's limp as habitual and unnoticed is placed in question by the fact that Waldo is then represented as watching "their father limp down Terminus Road," where Waldo's consciousness is (narrationally) still conditioned by the emotive distance of "George Brown," and can return to close familiarity ("As Dad walked his thin lips were slightly parted" [34]) only in stages. Waldo has been looking at his father through the eyes of "strangers": by which token "George Brown" is not meant to be a name that these "strangers, and always children" could readily put to the limping man. "George Brown" is simply Waldo's sign for a complex process of estrangement from the Wounded Father — an estrangement whose existence Waldo can try to underplay (it is all too palpable elsewhere in the narrative), but which is sharply focused as soon as Waldo suffers humiliating implication in the public curiosity devoted to his father's surgical boot. The effect is ambivalent — perhaps confusingly so: both cold imaginative empathy and emotive dissociation.

This kind of naming is soon topicalized, and Arthur is implicated in the act of naming: "Later on, when the twins got to refer to their father as 'George Brown', Arthur affectionately, Waldo with irony and understanding..." (37). The intention behind the appellation and the tonality of reference is not explained narratorially, but is taken as selfevident (i. e., by Waldo, on behalf of himself and his brother). A string of "George Brown" references, interspersed with "Dad," occurs when Waldo and his father are seated
in the train and Mr Brown is agonizing his way through his dutiful explanation of the facts of life (77-79). Waldo is humiliated, embarrassed, scornful: his father is obviously as inadequate to the task as he is to explaining the word "totality" for Arthur. Although he is ostensibly trying to fulfil a standard paternal role, it is a role that is foreign to him, and one which Waldo refuses to acknowledge. The naming indicates both Mr Brown's estrangement from the role (in a public conveyance) and Waldo's resulting estrangement from his father. Few full namings by Waldo can be said to accord with the claim that the appellation "George Brown" is used "with irony and understanding." It is evident from many passages in the novel that the name "Brown" is dwelt upon because it evokes mediocrity, a total lack of distinction (at least as far as Waldo is concerned). Waldo's consciousness keeps throwing the name "George Brown" back in its bearer's face; even when this reproach is suppressed, it is a resonating undertone, so that it can truly be said that Waldo employs the name "with irony," if not with understanding (in the sense of sympathy). The most extreme juxtaposition is to be found in the passage: "his sympathies were somehow with Dad over The Brothers Karamazov. Which George Brown had carried to the bonfire with a pair of tongs" (199). This seems to violate cohesion rules ("George Brown" seems for a moment to be a different person from "Dad") until we see how Waldo's shifts of consciousness are precisely reflected. "Dad" occurs in a context where Waldo can afford to be concessive in his alignment with his father. Such is the case, for example, when Waldo aligns himself so securely with his mother that he can afford to bask in the role of husband-substitute, patting his safely absent father on the head, as it were: "Since Dad died in 1922 she had been dependent on him" [120]). The image then evoked when "George Brown" goes to destroy the book that threatens to expose the weakness of his rationalist beliefs is that of a resolute "public" Inquisitor. This "externalized" role, however, is perforce contaminated by the other connotations already set up in Waldo's consciousness by the name "George Brown," so that Waldo's endorsement of the act is subliminally undercut by pathetic negativity.

Other "modal deictic" sequences exhibit a similarly sensitive correlation with a character's shifting emotive constitution of other persons. Arthur's discourse is either neutral-to-respectful in its namings ("Mr Saporta," "Mr Feinstein," "The woman at Barranugli/The woman/those people at Barranugli/Mr and Mrs Thompson" [218]; "Mrs Poulter/their neighbour/the woman in the iron hut" [256-257]) or unchangingly loyal to a fixed form of reference, as in the case of "Dulcie" (no matter whether her behaviour in his presence is positive or negative — except in his mystical mandala-dance before her, when he formally declares "his love for Dulcie Feinstein, and for her husband" [265]). Waldo's narrative, by contrast, is characterized by sudden swings (as between "Dad" and "George Brown") and a much more prominent emotive component; gradations in perception and familiarization are sensitively marked. The quintessential instance is the handling of Dulcie Feinstein at Waldo's first (89-98) and second-last (157) meetings with her. At the first meeting, the designation "Dulcie" is taken over at the outset from the direct speech of another character, even before Waldo has been introduced to her. Externalizing terms are then interspersed ("the girl Dulcie," "the girl in pink"). The initial, tentative stretch of conversation is prefaced prejudicially by a mental note on "this ugly dark girl," then conducted in subjective close-up, as it were, by means of wellnigh unrelieved pronoun reference. Waldo's self-defensive reduction of Dulcie is then signalled deictically in "this Dulcie" (91) before her full name is "quoted" ("Dulcie Feinstein," 94) in a context juxtaposing it favourably with the name "Brown." From now on, it is intermittently downhill, with the emotional stasis afforded by "she" or "Dulcie"
being offset by a distancing use of her full name (95, 97-98). At the second-last meeting, where Waldo learns that Dulcie is engaged to Leonard Saporta, the prelude includes a "public" use of the full name as Waldo toys with the idea of marriage (149). Having pumped taut his fantasies of marital bliss, Waldo registers the identity of his love-object in the familiar form of "Dulcie" (150-156) until the truth dawns on him, at which stage there is a sharp reversion to "Dulcie Feinstein" (157), an attempt to regain superiority via reductive periphrasis ("a rather coarse little thing"), and a lapse into projective, sarcastic distancing ("Mrs Saporta" > "This giant incubator" > "Dulcie Feinstein Saporta" [157]).

It could be expected that, because of sibling intimacy, narrative discourse which is figurally oriented would have one brother referring to the other by his Christian name (or, in the absence of coreferential ambiguity, as "he"). This is often enough the case: Waldo's narrative refers to "Arthur," Arthur's to "Waldo." Evaluative expressions requiring "the presence of some evaluating speaker other than the narrator" (McHale, 1978, 269) also indicate figural discourse or FID: "Poor Arthur" (42); "funny old Arthur" (76); "the wretched Arthur" (174); "poor [old] Waldo" (245, 290); "silly old Waldo" (249). Further away from the core of personal familiarity, however, there are role-relationship expressions ("his brother") which — leaving aside the remote possibility that an auctorial narrator might wish to remind the reader constantly of consanguinity — cannot be accounted for simply in terms of the stylistic desirability of elegant variation.

It is made formally clear in Free Indirect Thought ("My brother, Waldo would breathe" [25]) and in FID ("It was all very well to hang on to your brother's hand" [229]) that the characters thinking are represented as themselves identifying the relationship. Elsewhere, it is the thematic and psychological tendency of the narrative as a whole which conditions us to read such expressions as "his brother," "Arthur his twin brother," "his twin brother Waldo," or "Waldo the twin" as reflecting the character's own preoccupation with the duties and burdens of fraternity and twinship. Harder to assimilate naturally is full-name reference (of the "George Brown" type already discussed). Arthur's narrative never has reference to "Waldo Brown," although there are frequent references in Waldo's narrative to "Arthur Brown," usually in close proximity to the familiar designation "Arthur." Sometimes, occurrences are plainly quasi-citational, as when Waldo speculates uncomfortably about what "other boys" might think of "Arthur Brown" and his domestic activities (36). Elsewhere, Waldo can be construed as perceiving his brother to be the object of "public" attention.

The final problem to be examined is that of full-name reference to the focal character ("Waldo Brown"). As I stated at the outset, we are conditioned by linguistic convention to interpret such reference unquestioningly as external to the character, as originating in the consciousness of a dissonant or consonant (psycho) narrator. When we examine the more restricted domain of narration represented by FID, however, we find that current narrative theory rejects the validity of this assumption. Banfield (1973, 32) concedes that nouns are infrequent with reference to the subject of consciousness in FID, but her examples are all drawn from first-person narratives, where referential discordance is apt to be experienced most acutely by the reader. In a later, more elaborated study (Banfield, 1982, 311, note 19), she sets out the ground-rules: nouns and proper nouns can appear in FID but not in sentences of represented thought (which must employ pronouns). In "representations of perceptions (and of non-reflective conscious states in general) any appropriate [noun phrase] may refer to the SELF... as long as the appellation or description does not present information unknown to the SELF" (70-73); "the proper
name is the name the SELF knows himself by, as opposed to such descriptive phrases [as] 'the quaker librarian' [in *Ulysses*] (206-209). This, then, can account for the coreferentiality of the Christian names with the focal figural consciousness: the frequency with which "Waldo" appears in Section 2 is not an index to an auctorial narrator's intimacy (affectionate or otherwise) with the presiding intelligence. In conventional third-person narratives, of course, with no formal markers of FID, the latter situation could be said to obtain (the mimetic representation of a one-sided relationship of intimacy between observing psychonarrator and the character observed). *The Solid Mandala*, however, cannot be termed a conventional narrative — and this by a long shot.

In considering the possibility of non-focalized narration in terms of actional context, the naming-gradient "Mr Brown" > "Waldo Brown" > "Waldo" (183) can be regarded as explicable in terms of figural consciousness — Waldo's propensity to projective self-dramatization by writing himself into the Secret Writing of his life. All more "public" namings can be similarly explained, whether role-relationship markers (such as "the Brothers Brown"), surnames with courtesy-title ("Mr Brown"), or full and reduced forms ("Waldo Brown," "W. Brown"). To take the least usual forms first: "W. Brown of honourable service" (115) occurs in a passage of syntactically broken interior monologue, and signals Waldo's imaginatively "retrospective" observation of self as mediated by a eulogistic obituary. Occurrences of the courtesy-title ("'Who can say,' Mr Brown said" [166]; "Mr Crankshaw was several years his junior when appointed the superior of Mr Brown" [171]) indicate Waldo's consciousness of his own role in a professional context, for he questions Crankshaw's authority through noncommittal formality of tone and expression (even though the "said"-tag works ironically against the "say" of the rhetorical question), and "Mr Brown" also encodes Waldo's reaction to being so addressed by Crankshaw when the latter questions his efficiency. On page 171, details of the narration point to figural focus, quite apart from the book-end structure of the sentence, with the iconic distancing of the two names from each other and the inside-out coreferentiality of "his junior" and "Mr Brown."

Nominal appositions function as figural identifications with a role, whether these appositions be derived from an evaluation originally external to the thinking self ("Arthur, Waldo's big dill brother" [294], "Arthur, stupid Arthur" [234]), ironically projected via exclamatory discourse ("As though her little boy Waldo would take for granted anything she might arrange for him with his big brother" [74]) or, most radically, as wishful projection of a desirable self in a quasi-schizoid frame which omits personal naming ("He admired the sound of her kind strong son" [166]). Instances of full naming ("Waldo Brown") in Waldo's section outnumber those in Arthur's section 8 to 3 (or, adjusted for text-length, 2: 7:1. 4). Arthur's awareness of self is located in an interpersonal "public" context: what is mediated by full naming is consciousness relativized and bounded by social ambience. It is Arthur's consciousness of himself as performing a social (not just a personal) duty that is paramount in the sentence "Arthur Brown visited them all through the two children and several miscarriages" (275). In the following example, the self is caught up in the machinery of public existence, formally and impersonally acted upon so that Arthur's self-image reflects the way in which he senses he is being viewed: "Arthur Brown was taken on by Mr Allwright about the time Waldo began at Barranugli High. Arthur Brown's apprenticeship was arranged quite quickly and easily" (232). This is also true where Arthur is immersed in a mass of public celebrators and is aware of that "non-personal" part of himself whose presence is all the mass demands), as
in: "But many of them kissed Arthur Brown" (252); or "In the First War Arthur Brown had been all fireworks and singing" (280).

In Waldo's case, full namings suggest acute self-consciousness rather than self-awareness. There are many instances of "Waldo Brown" in the actional-present (non-analeptic) narrative where his actions or situation vis-à-vis Arthur provoke in him a strong, controlling sense that there may be other people watching him/them. The full name similarly occurs when Waldo traverses public territory, particularly when roleplaying is involved, when he senses that a disruption of equilibrium may have made him look ridiculous, or when his actions are potentially exposable as moral transgression, as in his voyeurism. He may be entertaining an image of his public self which (he hopes) conceals a secret and private self, or may be aware projectively of the (luckily not eventuating) possibility that he might be publicly spotted. The enunciation of Waldo's beliefs, prejudices, prevarications and lovingly groomed fragments of philosophy — whether merely thought or actually expressed by him — tends to be attributed to a 'Waldo Brown' who sees himself as he would have others see him. This also extends to his consciousness of his personal appearance (e. g., when he borrows the diction of adult praise [127]) and of his role as Secret Writer (e. g., when the style hints lightly at the biographical mode [129, 173]). A kind of stunned iciness of consciousness may be mediated, the awareness of a self threatened by imminent scrutiny from without: this Self as Voyeur is the "Waldo Brown" who crosses the road to spy on his neighbour (61), imagines an old school-mate and his woman copulating (190), and peers through the window to find his father exposed in death (70). In this last instance, the personal self has been shocked into absence, and Waldo is flung centripetally away from emotional confrontation with the scene, fleeing first mentally then physically, before retreating even further behind his public persona's assertion of "facts." The threefold occurrence of "Waldo Brown" gives the last sheen of psychological polish to a masterfully mediated scene. Sometimes, more complex psychological effects may be suggested, as when "Waldo Brown" realizes that his female neighbour's nose reminds him of a penis (136): the image is "forbidden," and full-name reference hints at the shrinking of consciousness from the thought of What the Others Would Think If.... The past locus which provides the experiential basis for the forbidden identification (a clergyman's penis in a public lavatory) is also evoked, both as a formulated memory and via Waldo's imaginings of his public self standing in a public place.

**Conclusion**

In the kinds of naming and gnomic utterance discussed here, we are as readers obliged to reconstitute character in line with the ways in which two central consciousnesses, Waldo and Arthur, constitute themselves. Naming-gradients and mental "citationalism" suggest the various degrees to which figural consciousness is able to empathize and selfdramatize. White has handed over referential authority, not to "a narrator of some kind, who impersonates the characters in the course of the relation of the history" (Docherty, 1983, 65-66), but to central characters who are made to impersonate the voice of conventional omniscient narrators. Ultimate generative authority, of course, rests with the author. White — like those novelists who avoid using names altogether and force the reader to generate character from pronominal references — is exploring the subjectivity of characters (and readers!) rather than the moral (etc.) status of strongly predetermined
"selves." It is naming, more than any other feature of narrative discourse and style in White, that is most subject to misconstruction by readers attuned to conventional narrative voicings (and conventional accounts of these voicings, like Stanzel's), simply because the rhetorical overlap with these voicings is complete. It is (like gnomic statements) a technique recurrent enough in White's repertoire to mislead critics into detecting express and intrusive authority on his part when no such authority is functional in the text.

Why should the syncretic illusion-making process of a "narrator imitating a character" exclude the possibility of a much greater challenge whereby an author relinquishes overlay in favour of sculpting from within a character; so that the narrational instance is that of a character's mental processes? The character is made to relinquish the formal markings of ego (first-person narration) and assume the burden of the chief grammatical medium of narration, which is the guise of an "external" third-person narrator. Any form of "imitation" of psychological inwardness is going to be artificial anyway, since cognitive and emotive states are pre-articulatory and verbally inaccessible (who has ever returned to confirm that stream of consciousness is really like that, or that, or that?). Contemporary physics has a "tunnelling" hypothesis, testable by laser, whereby particles can travel at three times the speed of light, arriving before they leave, as it were. This is supposed to be impossible, and undermines the causality of cosmogenesis. But if science finds it plausible, why not give a twist to our assumptions about the vector of FID? The light gleaming on the surface of a still life painting (to shift from the cosmic to the aesthetic) may fool the viewer into accepting a level of conventionality and mundanity that is belied by closer inspection of texture, composition, and relation. Much the same can surely apply to verbal narratives, whose dance of particles may be more sophisticated, contrary and in(tro)verted than at first meets the eye.

This has been a false coda or dying fall, as I am still troubled by the suspicion that the absence of a snug fit between White's eminently explicable practice and the resources of narratological modelling might have a simpler, less impressionistic resolution in some straightforward datum about narrativity to which I am blind or have been blinded. In order to assert the primacy of figural presence, I have perforce opposed this presence fairly indiscriminately to terms such as "auctorial" and "the narrator." Maybe it would serve to naturalize White's procedure by espousing the Gordian-knot approach recently advocated by Richard Walsh (1997), who manages to banish the middle term of a "narrator" from the universe of discourse, leaving the author as a narrating subjective instance (for me, in White's case, a non-starter) on the one side and the character(s) on the other (which is okay by me). In a loose sense, I have used the terms "frame" and "pragmatic" to indicate that my construal of narrative markers is resolutely contextual and grounded in the cognitive patterns yielded by the density of particular fictional worlds and their human inhabitants. I have recently discovered to my comfort that Manfred Jahn has also attended to indexical features and to what I have called feature-"anomalies", including them among the "protean forms" (1997, 456, note 8) that he embraces as part of his project to "shake off the fatal exclusionary attraction of the so-called normal case" (452). Jahn's eminently level-headed inclusionary scheme is a continually adjustable, pragmatic one based on "frame theory." If an explanatory theoretical "frame" has been absent from my analytical lucubrations here, then it is most likely to be supplied by Jahn (who doesn't jettison the narrator, incidentally) or, in more desperate moments, by Walsh.
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NOTES

1. Cf. Quirk et al. (1972, 669, note [b]). Greenbaum (1969, 70-71) classifies so as an "illative" conjunct indicating "that what is being said is a consequence or result of what has been said before," but also points out that so can be "partly continuative, partly summative," or even "virtually weakened to sequential and." Cf. also Halliday/Hasan (1976, 240-241 and 256-257) on "the two planes of conjunctive relations, the external and the internal" which may coexist in conjunctions (additive, adversative, temporal or causal). The narrational shading of so that I am analyzing seems not to have been considered by Halliday/Hasan, though central to cohesion.

ABSTRACTS

The Australian Patrick White's novel, The Solid Mandala, is a useful test-case for theories of the text-constitution of character consciousness. The contrasting sections of third-person narration reflect the psychology of two dissimilar twins. Previous accounts of the novel have tended either to deduce an intrusive auctorial narrator or (a decidedly minority view) a narrating instance which mediates characterological traits (classic Free Indirect Discourse). After listing a broad, coherent and consistent range of narrational features in White's fiction that point to thoroughly subjectivized or wholly figural narration, the present study then focuses on two features that are, in narratological models, customarily situated towards the opposite pole to subjectivized, figural discourse. These two features as they occur in White — gnomic present-tense utterances or comment clauses, and non-pronominal naming gradients — have anything but "anomalous" status. The discussion inverts the notion of a narrator imitating a character (Free Indirect Discourse), positing instead a vector involving characters whose awareness or repression of the role-relationship interface between self and other leads them quite naturally to play out
mentally the identity of a third-person narrator. The pragmatic psychological anchorage of the analytical procedures leading to this hypothesis is, in conclusion, linked with the developing model of frame analysis.

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The Genderization of Narrative

Monika Fludernik

In recent years several narratologists have started to examine the significance of gender in narrative. Robyn Warhol was concerned with the more intimate narrator-narratee relationship in the nineteenth-century novel (Warhol, 1989); Ina Schabert (1992) analysed the ambiguous and changing genderizations in Victorian fiction; and Susan Lanser (1986, 1988, 1992, 1995, 1996) has pleaded for a more extensive, and more central, integration of feminism within narrative theory, besides her concern for gender attributions to characters whose presentation in the text does not make their sex explicit (1992, 1995, 1996). Nilli Diengott (1988) maintained that the issue of gender had no place in the structuralist system of narratology. (For an excellent summary of these positions see Nünning, 1994.) My own work has looked at this issue only tangentially, in connection with second-person texts where the referent of you, the protagonist, remains unspecified gender-wise—a strategy that is employed with great skill by gay and lesbian writing, for instance (Fludernik, 1994, 1995a, 1995b). In Fludernik (1996) I also devoted a section to the discussion of gender issues and noted that the issue of default gender needs to be examined in much more detail within narrative study (section 8.5.1., 1996, 359-61). Although the greater part, of that section dealt with the establishment of default gender for the narrator in heterodiegetic texts which, I argued, operates on the basis of readers'analogical transference of authors' biological sex onto the narrator's gender (Dickens the narrator...he; Austen the narrator...she), I also briefly noted the desirability of empirical study regarding the establishment of gender attribution to narrator-protagonists. Such empirical work can be set up, for instance, by choosing texts by authors whose biological sex is unknown to the reader.

A few words of explanation are here in order regarding my use of the terms gender, sex and orientation. Biological human sex (male, female) is constructed in narrative texts in explicit and implicit manner: explicitly by graphic physical description and masculine/feminine gender (pro)nominal expressions (he vs. she; gendered first nouns); implicitly by the paraphernalia of our heavily gendered culture (handsome vs. beautiful; shirt vs. blouse) and by the heterosexual default structure (if A loves B, and A is a man, then B must be a woman). Thus, except for references to body parts, the textualization of biological sex has recourse to gender categories of a linguistic and cultural nature. Homosexuality or
homoeroticism derive their transgressive potential precisely from the upsetting of this
genderization structure where gay men are then perceived to display 'feminine' gender
traits and lesbians are seen to behave like 'men.' Although orientation therefore belongs to
the level of sexual behaviour (not affecting biological sex itself), it disturbs the
genderization structure by questioning the neat alignments of sex, gender and sexual
object choice and points up most forcefully how gender is constructed culturally, and
how it is actively adopted or contested by individuals in their identity profiles. Except,
perhaps, in the sauna we therefore tend to ascertain biological sex from a surface of
gender signs, and these gender signals may prove to be utterly confounding in the case of
same-sex orientation since the system is based on heterosexual assumptions and
structured in complementary asymmetrical fashion.\(^2\)

In the present paper I wish to discuss this question of gender construction in narrative.
The paper has two parts. First, I analyse the findings of an empirical test that I conducted
among colleagues and students in Freiburg, Basel and Berkeley. Second, I discuss three
novels that allegedly have a first-person narrator and/or main protagonist whose
biological sex is never resolved in the course of the book. These three novels are Maureen
Duffy's *Love Child* (1971), Ann Garréta's *Sphinx* (1986), and Jeanette Winterson's *Written on
the Body* (1992). I will conclude with some theoretical remarks on the construction of
gender and with a plea for more extensive empirical research.

1. Empirical Testing and its Pitfalls

In the summer term of 1996 I was teaching a lecture course on narrative theory in Basel,
and I used this opportunity to conduct a test with the students. I also later distributed the
same test to members of the English Department at Freiburg and Basel, and I tried to get
some additional feedback from colleagues at Berkeley, where I spent a sabbatical in the
winter term of 1996/7.

The test consisted of a short story by Gabriel Josipovici, a prolific contemporary British
author. For the test I had xeroxed the entire text (four pages) of the story. The readers
were also given the title, "The Bird Cage." One set of interviewees received no
information about the author of the text (they therefore had no clue as to the biological
sex of the empirical author of the story); the second set were given the author's name and
therefore knew the author to be male. (Since I cannot reprint the entire story for
copyright reasons, I provide a summary in Appendix B for readers unfamiliar with the
text.) "The Bird Cage" (1987, first printed in Josipovici's *In the Fertile Land* and later
reprinted in *Steps*) contains no explicit markings of gender either for the
narratorprotagonist ("I") or for the addressee-cum-protagonist ("you"). Both sets of
informants were asked to indicate the gender attributions that they had established for
narrator and narratee and to give reasons for their choice (non-obligatory). Those with
the anonymous text were additionally asked to specify whether they knew the story (and
therefore its author) whereas those who were given the name had a question on whether
they knew any other works by the same author. I additionally asked for the
informants'own sex.

My hypothesis was that those informants who did not know the author's sex would tend,
by default, to read the narrator as belonging to *their own* sex; i.e. women would tend to
regard the narrator as female, men would classify the narrator as male. In the case of
those informants who knew that "The Bird Cage" was written by Gabriel Josipovici, I expected the narrator-persona to be read as male (and the you-addressee as female), irrespective of the sex of the informant. Since nobody among the informants receiving the anonymous text knew either text or author and nobody in the second set knew any other works by Josipovici, foreseen complications due to familiarity with the author and/or the text did not arise.

7 The results of the test did not bear out my hypotheses. Despite a lack of explicit gender markings, the majority of readers classified the narrator as female (and the "you" as male). This was surprisingly true of even male informants who did not know the author's sex; and it was true of male and female readers alike who knew the author was a man.

8 Figure 1 in Appendix A shows that, out of 58 informants (27 male and 31 female), the majority of men and women in all categories decided that the narrator was female. On the other hand, figures for the categorization of the narrator as male demonstrate that a sizeable minority opted for this reading, and nearly one third of the informants either decided the question was irresolvable or added remarks like "Could be the other way round, too."

9 The only indications, however slight, that the author's sex or the reader's may perhaps influence categorization can be found in the result that more women opted for a male narrator when the author's sex was given, and in the fact that more men opted for a male narrator when the author's name was unknown. This might allow the inference that more women, given a male author, conclude by default that the narrator will be male (although they are apt to reconsider on the basis of the story). Likewise, when the author is unknown, male readers sometimes allow themselves to project their own gender identification on the narrative persona. One could link these reactions to two clichés: the cliché of women's habitual confrontation with a dominantly male literary world in which male authors most frequently write about male protagonists; and to the cliché of men's supposedly more'intellectual'approach to problems—note that, where the author was unknown, four male informants decided that the question of the protagonists'sex was irresolvable.

10 Particularly interesting were some of the "explanations" offered for a later change in categorization, and the afterthoughts appended to the questionnaire. One informant noted that he decided the "you" had to be male since the bird was referred to as "he." A second male reader thought that the author might be Lawrence Durrell and "therefore" conceptualized the narrator as male, but he later "gradually realized that the 'I' was feminine." Another reader (again male) decided that the "I" had to be female because only women would read to little girls.

11 This takes me to some of the reasons people gave for their analysis. Quite a few informants found the scene with the little girl at the end decisive in terms of the gender issue: the I has to be female. That the (male) you would be the one to sell the house then inclined them further to this interpretation: the you is business-like. However, one informant rejected this line of argument as too pat, contending that this was too obvious an inference and that, for that reason, the narrator had to be male.

12 Discussion about their reaction with some of my colleagues also brought to light that—even more than the final scene with the child—the overall interpretative frame induced people to opt for the "narrator-isfemale" option. Most informants read the story as a prototypical story of female desertion: the partner goes away, and they never meet again.
I myself had initially classified the narrator as male, on the basis of the author’s sex, but it became apparent to me later on that this reaction was motivated decisively by my equally sexist analysis of the story as a story of male pursuit that ends in failure. At least subconsciously, women going on vacation to the seaside, women trying to have birds to keep them company and writing about such trivia to busy husbands who remain at home, women who convalesce at the seaside while husbands and their children need to remain in town to attend their offices and schools or kindergardens determined my reading of the text.

Since there are no explicit signals of gender identification in the text, readers, I conclude, tend to utilize cultural markers for their analysis: cultural norms are projected on the situation, and their frames determine gender identification. Informants almost to a (wo)man agreed that the narrator and narratee had to be of the opposite sex, that there was an erotic interest between them and that the story was therefore one of desertion and disappointment in love. Readers then looked for stereotypical male and female behaviour in the text and ended up finding what they were looking for. The text, once its overall design (love story of desertion) had been determined, served to enhance and corroborate cultural preconceptions about gender attributes.

I should, perhaps, briefly note what my own later and more elaborated interpretation of the story is. On the background of a detailed knowledge of Josipovici’s work I have come to the conclusion that the story, like so many of Josipovici’s texts, is an exercise in metafiction. At the end of the story, the narrator tells the child to turn the page of the picture book. That picture book’s illustration had contained the picture of the room with the bed, the mirror and the bird cage, and it is from this representation that the story takes its beginning—the invention of the scenario that we have been reading about. It does not much matter what the gender of the protagonists is any longer; besides, the person in the room can now be read as a mere projection of the invented narrator figure. The I with the child may well be female, but she may also imagine a situation in which the you is the woman and the (male) I is addressing her. Such a reading skirts the relevance of the gender issue much in the way that Jeanette Winterson’s novel, as we will see, transcends the relevance of the protagonist’s biological sex.

I now turn to my discussion of the three novels with genderindeterminate first-person narrators to illustrate how gender issues are (or are not) resolvable in these texts.

2. Duffy—Garréta—Winterson: The Disguised Male Narrator

Maureen Duffy’s Love Child on its jacket and catalogue distribution text alerts the reader that s/he is about to encounter a text of radical “ambiguity: of age, sex, and intention” in which the gender of the narrator and of his/her mother’s lover remain a mystery. Ajax, referred to as “my mother’s lover” (passim), in the entire text never has a pronominal anaphor (he/she) referring to him/her; and the first-person narrator, Kit, likewise is never explicitly identified as boy or girl (Kit might be a pet name for either sex, e. g., a familiar abbreviation for Katherine). Nevertheless, from the context there can be no doubt that both Kit and Ajax have to be male. The most important indicator for these gender attributions consists in the descriptions of the mother’s clandestine assignations with Ajax in Ajax’s room in the albergo: with his periscope, Kit, from the toilet of Gerry’s room
next door, watches his mother and Ajax having sex, and from the wording of the following passage, it is more than probable that Ajax has to be a man:

Now as if I had shaken a kaleidoscope Ajax moved into the picture so that it became unfallen Adam and Eve, Eros and Psyche. My mother lifted her arms and her lover went into them to be entwined there. I saw the strong tensing of carved marble muscles as the knee thrust to part her thighs. (124)

 Shortly afterwards, Gerry arrives and, commenting on the sounds from next door, says, "'Jesus, someone's enjoying themselves'" (125). Besides the (almost) unequivocal physical description of thighs opening to a male thrust, the heterosexual script of this passage is underlined additionally by the reference to Eros and Psyche, Adam and Eve (and, elsewhere in the book to Actaeon and Diana, Adonis and Venus), and by the stereotypical soundtrack of heterosexual love ("a soft fierce crying") which Gerry immediately identifies as the accompaniment of jouissance. Although Kit's father has male and female secretaries, Ajax (whose mythical ancestors are commented on early in the novel [4]) therefore would most likely be male; at least that is what the text suggests. Another tell-tale passage is the following: "'How do you do.'My mother's lover leapt up and shook hands like a perfect English gentleman, except that nowadays it's only elderly members of the working class who still do it, according to my father who is after all the social expert" (94). Ajax, additionally, is conceptualized by Kit as somebody to wrestle with (96) — a fact that would also tend to imply that both are men. Moreover, Ajax's definition of art as "'Pleasure comes from a release of energy, doesn't it?'" (99) could be perceived as a tell-tale masculine conception of (artistic) jouissance. Only explicit markers of femininity (and none are present in the text) could therefore still counteract the reader's classification of Ajax as male.

 Similar arguments apply in the case of Kit. The first-person narrator, who vies with Ajax for the love of his mother, and who, at the end of the novel, says that he has now become his mother's lover, cannot but be male. Again, the most obvious indication of this emerges from physiological references, especially from descriptions of how Kit "comes": "My hand moved faster until in a minute I too was shuddering and jerking into sleep" (20); "When I came it was so hard and fierce I thought I was going to be sick but that may have been the unaccustomed scotch in my stomach" (181). The latter passage occurs just after Kit has lain down in Ajax's bed, imaging how his mother and Ajax had earlier had sex on the same bed. Additional indications of Kit's gender are cultural rather than physiological: Kit is able to swim very well; he climbs over walls; he constructs a periscope; he smokes (in order to fool Gerry); he has enough pocket money to pay for Gerry's room at the albergo (she is led to believe that he is really bad, an addict, whereas he merely pretends to smoke in the secret of Gerry's room so he can spy on Ajax and his mother next door). Kit's sexual jealousy alone, although a possible sign of his masculinity, however, does not necessarily clinch the question of gender: a jealous girl might just as well have faked letters and driven Ajax to suicide.

 Despite the lack of formal (morphological) markers of genderization, Love Child therefore seems to be a perfectly clear case of a male first-person narrator caught in a love triangle with his mother's male lover, Ajax.

 ***
My second example, Anne Garréta’s *Sphinx* (1986), is a more complicated case, although here, too, the textual evidence suggests (though less unambiguously) that the first-person narrator is male and that his lover, A***, is also male. The gender identifications in this novel are less stereotypical, and they leave space for some doubt (particularly as to the gender/sex of A***). The unnamed first-person narrator of *Sphinx* narrates to us (in the passé simple) the story of his love affair with A***, a story that ends, tragically, with A***’s accidental death, the death of A***’s mother, the narrator’s written account of the love affair (218), and—in the present tense—the narrator’s murder in Amsterdam (a typical case of "dying in the first person").

The first-person narrator, a student of theology, gets to know A*** in consequence of his having witnessed an accidental death in one of the dance halls (boîtes) to which his spiritual advisor, referred to as "le Padre," first takes him. Having to stand in for the disk jockey that night, the narrator stays at *L’Apocryphe* and soon starts to acquire a reputation in this new métier. It is in connection with this new job that he starts to go to other clubs before his own shift starts after midnight, and it is at the *L’Eden* that he sees the black dancer, A***, with whom he falls in love. It is highly unlikely that a theology student who goes out to dance clubs with his spiritual advisor should be anything but male. Likewise, at the end of the text, where the narrator’s refusal to hand money over to the two robbers (he has no money on him) leads to his being stabbed, there is no mention of a purse, or of a sexual threat. These are more or less the only contextual clues to the narrator’s sex.

There is, however, one grammatical signal that explicitly notes the dancer’s (A***’s) masculinity. Early into the novel, the narrator remembers a conversation with A*** and quotes A***’s words: "Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m’avais pas trouvé; tu ne me désirerais pas si tu ne m’avais pas un jour tenu dans tes bras" (10). Unfortunately, this explicit passage sounds suspiciously like a (Biblical?) quotation and not a report of A***’s words. The words occur after a long passage in which the narrator describes his past with A*** as belonging to a nightmare vision of life as hell:

> A l’époque, si je me souviens bien, je décrivais le monde comme un théâtre où auraient dansé, au bal macabre des pulsions, des théories de cadavres... la voie de l’enfer s’étioïtait de souches lanternes; un fond d’abîme se rapprochait indéfiniment; aux parois lisses du tourbillon dans lequel je me mouvais, je discernais les images déformées de corps extatiques, dans le râle lent et rauque des tortures de la chair à vif.

Mais je glissais et ne pouvais m’éprendre, m’interrompre et faillir à mon destin de fuite fascinée. Étais-je vraiment une imposture que d’aller nier la grâce là où je ne pouvais pas croire qu’elle ne résidait pas? Était-ce une hérésie de soutenir que la lucide traversée de l’enfer est voie directe de rédemption? "Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m’avais pas trouvé; tu ne me désirerais pas si tu ne m’avais pas un jour tenu dans tes bras." (9-10)

The passage continues with a description of A***’s body ("Ses bras, douceur intense"; "Et qui ne se fût épris de cette charpente élancée, de cette musculature comme modelée par Michel-Ange"[10]), a description that does not necessarily refer to a man’s body but nevertheless—especially through the reference to Michelangelo—implies a muscular male dancer.

On the other hand, the narrator’s other descriptions of A***, such as we get them, are preponderantly amenable to a male and female reading; one can note additionally that at A***’s death only female dancers ("danseuses" [150]) are mentioned and that a replacement for A*** is soon found (151). Although the latter might indicate that A***
was, after all, a woman, this tenuous conclusion cannot be said to falsify the hypothesis of A***'s masculinity.

Another indicator of A***'s gender could be established from the fact that the narrator's desire to see Harlem and A***'s reluctance to go there (132-4) is never motivated by fear of rape, for instance, but by A***'s unwillingness to confront his (?) origins. Moreover, the fact that the narrator comes to behave as a child substitute for A***'s mother also suggests (but, again, does not necessarily prove) that A*** was perhaps male, since the child substitute would have to be the same sex as A***.

The ambivalent gender identification as relating to A*** is addressed by the title of the novel, *Sphinx*. This connects with a passage in the novel (116-8) where the narrator describes one of A***'s dance numbers which accompanies an English song entitled "Sphinx." The prophetic and mysterious tune of that song correlates with A***'s dance in which A*** is compared to a cat, a feline godhead. Although cats are usually imaged as female, the lexeme *le chat* is used in this passage (rather than *la chatte*), and no explicit markers of gender are available:

> Instantanément, je revois A*** parcourant la scène et, dans l'errance féline de sa chorégraphie [sic!], donner corps à une énigmatique figure de silence, se faire torsade à la limite extrême de la désarticulation, syncopée miraculeusement sans que son geste se brise ou se heurte de saccades. Lors même que le corps s'éloigne, perdure dans l'espace une figure fantomatique demeurée là, immobile; la scène se peuple d'incarnations, d'exergues soudains, poses hiératiques enchâssées dans un cheminement pourtant sans trêve. Il y avait du chat ou de la divinité dans ce corps qui, mû par quelque inquiète volupté, exprimait dans la nonchalance du pas une languide damnation ou immémoriale fatalité faite geste. (118)

An additional but still inconclusive piece of evidence could be noted in the reference to mirrors just before A***'s death: the narrator in the mirror sees himself as A*** (147). However suggestive, that clue cannot clinch the evidence either.

Other erotic factors likewise fail to resolve the puzzle. The narrator has a great number of female friends—but that again does not disambiguate the situation. The general distaste for the narrator's presumed affair with A*** among his acquaintances seems to relate to A***'s skin (75-6) rather than his (?) sexual orientation. Indeed, the issue of homosexuality is never thematized in the novel, although the repeated references to hell might point to the narrator's guilty conscience. After all, the "liaison" between the narrator and A*** is generally taken to be unnatural: "Et de cette affirmation première d'un impossible assortiment de couleurs découla le sentiment général d'une union contre nature" (76). A***'s flings with other lovers are with *male* partners: "un Adonis de revue de mode au beau visage idiot" (103)—this is how the narrator describes one of his competitors. On the other hand, A***'s love of jewelry (155) and lack of interest in museums and reading, cannot be adduced as (implicit) evidence for A***'s femininity, either (the cliché has become more than outdated); besides, once a gay milieu has been established, "femininity" in any case no longer counts as a viable argument one way or the other.

To summarize: in Garréta's *Sphinx* gender identifications are kept deliberately vague, but the interpretation of the protagonists as a gay couple has much to commend itself. Again, although physiological and cultural evidence determines one's decisions about the matter—in *Sphinx* there is much less to go on by way of dress or other behavioural patterns.
In Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992), by contrast, signals of genderization proliferate, but the result remains just as ambiguous. I will argue below that the unnamed narrator is a man (possibly), who has a quite "ordinary" heterosexual love relationship with the female protagonist, Louise. However, no definite proof for the narrator's masculinity can be provided, since much of the evidence in the text is open to diverse interpretation. If one attempts to specify the narrator's gender in this manner, one is in fact reading the novel against the grain: what the novel (or Winterson) is trying to achieve is the description of passionate love in which the issue of gender has been completely transcended and no longer matters at all, an affair in which normatively male and female patterns of behaviour, since they have become equally acceptable for men and women, have lost their significance as a determining sign of gender identification.

*Written on the Body* at first also conceals the sex of the narrator's lover. The text consists of long stretches of second-person fiction in which you refers to the beloved. Only a few pages into the novel do we get a proper name for the you, Louise (20), and then the love relationship begins to lend itself to more definite visualizations. From the initial scenario of a description of unattainable desire for Louise, the text moves to a more or less chronological report about how the narrator met Louise, how she left her husband, and (all of this in the present tense of the flash-back) how the husband shows up to tell the narrator that Louise has cancer and that only he (a doctor) will be able to cure her. The separation from Louise is healed by the narrator's eventual recovering her, but the "happy ending" (190) that the narrator wonders about is "where the story starts," the story of inevitable loss: "Why is the measure of love loss?" (9, 39).

The mystery of the narrator's sex in *Written on the Body* arises not merely from sheer indeterminacy; on the contrary, potential signifying markers abound in the text. Thus, the novel refers to several former love affairs of the narrator and to an almost-relationship with Gail, the owner of the bar in which the narrator takes refuge after having ceded Louise to her husband-doctor, Elgin. As far as these former love affairs are concerned, they are deliberately, tantalizingly, disorientingly ambiguous. Three of them are with men (Crazy Frank [2-4]; Carlo [43]; Bruno [52]), and both Carlo and Bruno are described as being gay. Carlo forsakes the narrator for "Robert who was taller, broader and thinner than me" (143); and Bruno is described as undergoing a religious revival in which he is taken by Jesus "[o]ut of the closet and up into your heart" (152). Both of these relationships therefore imply that the narrator is male; yet, in the relationship with Crazy Frank such easy inferences are immediately undermined by the text, since his gender identity remains ambiguous. Although he "had the body of a bull," he wears gold hoops through his "nipples," which should have had a "deeply butch" effect (93). Since the lexeme nipples is most commonly associated with female breasts, and since "butch" is of course the current term for a "mannish lesbian" (COED), Frank's masculinity becomes questionable: is Frank a cross-dresser? On the other hand, Frank's "ambition was to find a hole [sic! in every port" (93), and the emotional reactions of the narrator are those of a prototypical woman: "Was that what I wanted? A man whose chest jewellery rattled when he walked?" (94). Even more startlingly, the narrator feels about this extravagance as if (s?)he were "a convent virgin" (94).
Then there are of course the narrator's love affairs with women (e. g., Bathsheba [16-7], who is mentioned even before Louise's name first appears in the text). Only one of these relationships (with Jacqueline) endures for a measurable period of time. There is no doubt about the narrator's ingrained (constitutional?) promiscuity; indeed, the narrator's habitual promiscuity lends additional poignancy to the experience with Louise, constituting the narrator's first really deep love relationship.

The narrator's gender, "undeclared" as the blurb says, is an issue not only on the plot level: for most readers the kind of love relationships that are mentioned would seem to require clarification. Additionally, the undetermined or undeclared sex/gender of the narrator figure becomes an important figurative and evaluative index on the discourse level. The narrator, as we have seen, compares her(?)self to a convent virgin; at another point in the text, however, the simile deploys a male term of comparison: "There are people who say that sex isn't important in a relationship.... I had come to this feeling myself. One does after years of playing the Lothario and seeing nothing but an empty bank account and a pile of yellowing love-notes like IOUs" (20-21; my emphasis). This is, again, offset by a reference to Alice in Wonderland— very non-definitive in the context ("A curse on this game. How can you stick at a game when the rules keep changing? I shall call myself Alice and play croquet with the flamingoes" [10]). Gender attribution is even further obscured by the conclusion of that paragraph in which a series of clichés are strung together like pearls on an irregular necklace that defies authenticity: "All you need is love. Nobody ever died of a broken heart. You'll get over it. It'll be different when we're married. Think of the children. Time's a great healer. Still waiting for Mr. Right? Miss Right? and maybe all the little Rights?" (10).

In the following I provide a list of all the indices that imply a gendered reading. Over-all, semi-explicit markers of femininity predominate in the text, although none of them are conclusive; on the other hand, among the general (very frequently "cultural") clues, masculinity wins out over femininity.

I. Textual clues suggesting the narrator is male

1. The reference frame for adultery (14-16 et passim) suggests the traditional script of "male falls in love with (married) female."

2. Women fall for the narrator in such numbers that the world would have to be a lesbian paradise for this representation to be anywhere near realistic. (Counter-argument: the narrator never expects the women to leave their husbands for him—this could indicate that the narrator is lesbian after all, but it might also simply underline the narrator's promiscuity.)

3. The homosexual element in the three love relationships with men suggests that the narrator must be male.

4. When the narrator and Elgin start a fight over Louise, the narrator hits Elgin (170-2), and Elgin kicks the narrator in the stomach. If the narrator was female, Elgin would hardly be likely to get into a serious fight with her.

5. The "Lothario" (20) role and the wooing scenes with roses and champagne imply a stereotypically heterosexual relationship of a man wooing a woman.

6. The narrator compares himself to a boyscout (58).
7. The narrator hits Jacqueline: "Now I'd shown myself to be a cheap thug in a scrap" (86). Particularly with the reference to courts and to being worthy of Louise (87), this suggests a male narrator.

II. Textual clues suggesting the narrator is female

1. The narrator compares her(?)self to a "convent virgin" (94).
2. "I shall call myself Alice" and "Mrs Right" (10).
3. The second male boyfriend is called a "butch" (93; see above).
4. Is Louise's look of "love and possession and pride" (18; my emphasis) a "male" and therefore lesbian fantasy on her part? The reference to Adam and the fig-leaf can be interpreted either way: "But you are gazing at me the way God gazed at Adam and I am embarrassed by your look of love and possession and pride. I want to go now and cover myself with fig leaves" (18-9).
5. The narrator's sympathy for the women at the Clap Clinic, especially for the "middle-aged woman in a floral print," suggests a female perspective (46); yet, the use of the word "tarts" earlier in the passage has connotations of a male rather than a female speaker (wouldn't women choose "whores" rather than "tarts" in British English?).
6. In Gail's bar the narrator has to dress in "lime-green body stockings" (141) for Christmas. Again, this is inconclusive—Gail might have a perfectionist attitude towards the proper celebration of the festive season.
7. Gail's pleasanty about her tastes could be read in lesbian terms: "'I have to do something for a living. Can't depend on Prince Charming at my age.'She laughed. 'Or with my tastes'" (142). Note also, however, that Gail's second name is Right: "Gail Right" (142), a fact which links up with the passage about "Miss Right" (10) and again destroys the lesbian implications.
8. "Nipple" (162) may imply that the narrator is female; but then Crazy Frank's nipples had been mentioned earlier in an at least superficially "male" context (cf. above).

III. Textual clues with contradictory or equivocal readings

1. Louise is portrayed as "a Roman Cardinal, chaste, but for the perfect choirboy" (67): This appears to imply that Louise is a lesbian, in which case so must the narrator. On the other hand, this can also be read as the (male) narrator, who is bisexual, having a homosexual fantasy about Louise.
2. Deliberate equivocation occurs in the tantalizingly and frustratingly inexplicit phrase "'When I saw you [Louise] two years ago I thought you were the most beautiful creature male or female I had ever seen'" (84). Since the narrator is obviously bisexual, this fits the bill.
3. The narrator's protectiveness of Louise (159) can be male paternalism or female motherliness.
4. In the passage about Inge's breasts the narrator first seems to be male (why else should "he" be fascinated with breasts), but then the description of Inge's breasts as the narrator's "gypsy sisters" and the final line in allusion to (female, lesbian) Gertrude Stein again suggest a lesbian affair with Inge:
I can tell by now that you are wondering whether I can be trusted as a narrator. Why didn't I dump Inge and head for a Singles Bar? The answer is her breasts. They were not marvellously upright, the kind women wear as epaulettes, as a mark of rank. Neither were they pubescent playboy fantasies. They had done their share of time and begun to submit to gravity's insistence. The flesh was brown, the areolae browner still, nipples bead black. My gypsy sisters I called them, though not to her. I had idolised them simply and unequivocally, not as a mother substitute nor a womb trauma, but for themselves. Freud didn't always get it right. Sometimes a breast is a breast is a breast. (24)

55. The nurse's "If your habits are such that you have caught it [the clap] once it's likely that you will catch it again" (47) seems to apply to a male offender but could equally be directed at the "tarts" that the narrator had earlier noted in the waiting-room of the Clap Clinic.

56. The narrator's description of sex with Louise has almost explicit "male" connotations, but penetration is not unequivocally described: "Eyes closed I began a voyage down her spine, the cobbled road of hers that brought me to a cleft and a damp valley then a deep pit to drown in" (82). 12

57. Louise compares herself to Emma Hamilton, Nelson's mistress (85), who wet her dress to "work on" Nelson. Louise did the same thing to attract the narrator. This implies that for Louise the narrator takes the male role, but, again, it does not clinch the issue.

58. The narrator and Louise dance "like a pair of 50s homosexuals" and "we'll say she's my accountant" (73). This is difficult to read as a lesbian context but suggests, rather, that Louise is in trousers, impersonating the male accountant rather than the (female) secretary of the traditional script.

59. Whereas "my shirt" (103, 118) does not provide evidence of masculinity at all these days, the reference to the "Dutch wife" (110) metaphorically transforms the narrator into a (male) widower, but the context can equally well evoke a scenario of (female) masturbation: "In bereavement books they tell you to sleep with a pillow pulled down beside you. Not quite a Dutch wife, that is a bolster held between the legs in the tropics to soak up the sweat, not quite a Dutch wife" (110).

60. The comparison of the love relationship with the tale of Bluebeard transforms the narrator into the (male) Bluebeard. Yet the context equally allows for a reading in which it is the narrator who unlocks the secrets of Louise's body, and it is of course the princess who finds her predecessors' (female) corpses behind the door:

Bone of my bone. Flesh of my flesh. To remember you it's my own body I touch. Thus she was, here and here. The physical memory blunders through the doors the mind has tried to seal. A skeleton key to Bluebeard's chamber. The bloody key that unlocks pain. Wisdom says forget, the body howls. The bolts of your collar bone undo me. Thus she was, here and here. (129-30)

In other words, the passage could be read as an inversion of the Bluebeard story, with the narrator (female) unlocking in memory Louise's body to find the corpses of their former passion—the grief and the pain of it. 13

61. In the following passage the narrator identifies with British Rail passengers rather than "customers"—and these customers buy, among other things, condoms. Does this indicate that the addressee is by definition male? And does the narrator's lack of empathy derive from her female gender (rather than merely from her ideological criticism of consumer society)?
Nowadays British Rail call me 'You the Customer' but I prefer my old-fashioned appellant, 'Passenger'. Don't you think 'I glanced at my fellow passengers' has a more romantic and promising air to it than 'I glanced at the other customers on the train'? Customers buy cheese, loofahs and condoms. Passengers may have all these in their luggage but it is not the thought of their purchases that makes them interesting. A fellow passenger might be an adventure. All I have in common with a fellow customer is my wallet. (181-2)

12. The narrator frequently takes a distanced perspective towards men. Thus, the comparison of men with sheep and cows: "Like men in johns, cows and sheep do things in unison. I've always found it disturbing. What have gazing, grazing and micturating got in common?" (186). Likewise, in the scene where the narrator's revolutionary girlfriend Inge involves him in scaring people with a gun, only the gun intimidates the men, whereas the narrator's earlier polite "My girlfriend has just wired up the Semtex, would you mind finishing off?" (22) has absolutely no effect on the men "cocks in hand, staring at the brown-streaked porcelain as though it were the Holy Grail. Why do men like doing everything together? I said (quoting Inge)" (22). "Quoting Inge" necessarily fudges the issue again.

To summarize. There are many clues that suggest the narrator of Written on the Body might be male, but none of them are entirely conclusive. The most convincing aspects are those that relate to the three relationships with (gay) men; the fight with Elgin; and—more generally—the lack of thematization of homosexuality. Elgin is worried about Louise's adultery, but there is no mention of "perversity" or "unnatural" practices (and Elgin, who is an arrogant prig, would certainly find lesbianism acutely distasteful).

Although I have attempted to sift the evidence very carefully indeed, this approach has been quite contrary to the spirit of the text, violating its implicit norms. In actual fact the novel needs to be seen as a tour de force, as a deliberate obfuscation of the gender issue, a purpose in which it succeeds quite splendidly. The "message" of the novel is, of course, that same-sex love relationships are quite normal, and that irrespective of the sexual make-up of the partners there is always the same poignancy in real love. Nevertheless, the close analysis of gender clues, which points up the stereotypical and fictive nature of genderization, has allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of how the reader is led astray. After our analysis, I believe the current reader of the text will no longer agree with Susan Lanser's dictum that "[...] only the most conventional of readers—readers unable to imagine that a woman could wield a hammer, urinate out-of-doors, deride marriage, hit a man, or make love to other women—would insist that this narrator is gendered male. For other readers, the markings of gender in Written on the Body will be as elusive as the markings of sex" (1996: 252). The point is not, in semiotic terms, whether the narrator could not also be female, but whether the accumulation of gender stereotypes does not make the traditional script more probable in terms of the cultural clichés that the text so deliberately evokes. Lanser has a point—we must not identify with Elgin; all things are possible—but perhaps we decide for what makes most sense for us from our personal orientational norms.

3. A Typology of Gender Clues

In this final section I would like to present a list of gender markers in narrative texts such as I have inductively established them from the analysis given above. The reference here is to gender markers that establish the biological sex of a fictional character on the plot.
level. Biological sex on the plot level is either male or female. Genderization, however, even on the plot level, can be varied and open to strategic change: characters may be gay or lesbian, transvestites, androgynes, or they may even be unsure about their own gender identifications. If no explicit naming devices have established referential "security," the reader has to reconstruct biological sex and gender identifications from textual clues of various sorts, most of which are cultural clues that repose on a default reading of the situation as "normal." Texts like the ones that I have analysed above deliberately subvert easy inferences from the prototypical constellations of bourgeois society, and it is for this reason that they point up in what manner cultural codes crucially determine the interpretation of ambiguous or ambivalent scenarios. Once there is some doubt as to the gender of a major protagonist, all sorts of clues acquire major importance, and much of the analysis has to proceed from (logically) shaky inferences. I find it particularly ironic that such evidence repose on the worst (and most naïve) kinds of cultural clichés. This unintended reinforcement of gender stereotypes was already noted by Jonathan Culler when he remarked in reference to determining the gender of the authorial narrator:

"Trying to infer the sex of individual narrators from the character of their reflections and judgments, though, risks conferring authority on the most tendentious stereotypes, which would come to serve as standards: this observation sounds feminine, this one masculine" (Culler, 1984: 5).

What kind of signals are there?

**A. Unambiguous linguistic signals**

1. **Proper Names and anaphors**

   Proper names, i.e., Mr/Mrs/M(is)s X, and first names usually reliably establish a character’s biological sex. Problems arise when no address lexemes occur or when only the first name is given and this first name does not unequivocally provide a gender clue. In *Love Child* the first-person narrator Kit has such an ambiguous name, and the first names of many of the other characters in the same book would be equally disorienting if, in their case, one did not have explicit anaphoric disambiguation (he or she). In June Arnold’s *The cook and the carpenter* (1973) proper names are gender-undeclared; e.g., one of the members of the commune is named Three. (English has a number of first names that are truly gender-ambiguous, such as Leslie; many Catholic countries employ Maria as a male name.)

   Other tricks to obscure characters'gender attributes include the substitution of names and gendered anaphors, for instance, by descriptor noun phrases and the complete avoidance of anaphoric nounphrases and possessives in reference to the main character. Thus, in Arnold’s novel, the two women protagonists are consistently referred to by the descriptive noun phrases *the cook* and *the carpenter*, and anaphors are textualized by resorting to an invented pronominal morphology: na (he/she) and nan (his/her”). Duffy’s "my mother’s lover" functions in a similar manner so that the narrator manages to never refer to Ajax with a possessive or anaphoric expression.

   In *Sphinx* another variant, the use of an initial, is utilized: A*** consistently appears as A***, and all anaphoric items refer to his (?) body parts. One sometimes has to reread twice to realize that il anaphorically relates to the noun phrase *ce corps* (165) several lines further up, or that it is l’âme and not A*** which is the antecedent of elle (177).
Even where a recognizably male or female name is provided, the fictional reality may be belied by the label. We noted in Winterson that the narrator's first male boyfriend, Crazy Frank, might conceivably be butch—in which case the name would indicate Frank's gender identification, but not necessarily her (?) biological sex. Subjects with a history of a sex-change operation provide an even more fruitful ground for textual experimentation with gendered anaphors and naming strategies. Thus, in Sarah Kirsch's "Blitz aus heiterem Himmel" ("Bolt from the Blue") the female protagonist Katherine turns into male Max—a change which is signalled by a concomitant anaphoric shift from she to he ("Während sie vorher die Brause immer zuerst auf den Bauch gerichtet hatte und dann zu anderen Partien übergegangen war, traf ihn nun das Wasser zwischen die Schultern").

2. Agreement and Concordance

Many languages have instituted obligatory agreement between the adjective or participle and the subject or noun qualified in this manner. Thus, Garréta's ability to write an entire novel in which neither the je nor A*** are once forced into a construction like je suis allé(e), elle m'a attendu(e) or A*** était chaud(e) is to be regarded as a major technical feat of ingenuity. She manages to find adjectives with genderindeterminate forms (drôle, malade etc.), uses either the present tense or the passé simple (A*** fut; j'allai) rather than the passé composé with its obligatory agreement after être, and—as already noted—she consistently uses possessive pronouns which in French utilize the grammatical gender of the noun phrase that they modify: son corps ("his/her body"), sa poitrine ("his/her chest").

While French allows the liberal use of possessives, the use of possessives in English constitutes the most difficult crux of gendernonspecific writing. In fiction of the type that have been studied here, this may explain the English preference for second-person texts, since first and second-person pronouns in English allow for the consistent obfuscation of gender attribution (Fludernik, 1994).

B. Other Textual Clues

Clues that are not grammaticalized usually relate to two major areas: gender roles in sexual relationships and cultural gender roles (jobs, clothing, acceptable behaviour).

The default for (sexual) gender roles is heterosexuality. If a character of ambiguous gender identification evinces an erotic interest in a person of specified biological sex, the inference is that the character has to be of the opposite sex. Thus, on a naïve level the narrator of Written on the Body should be male since he(?) falls in love with Louise. Secondly, as we have seen, roles within the relationship—not merely references to the physiology of heterosexual love—constitutively define partner roles (buying flowers; beating up the wife).

Comparisons with key texts from literature, mythology or history (Emma Hamilton, Adam and Eve, etc.) frequently provide additional clues. Thus, the repeated references to Adonis and Actaeon in Love Child provide a fairly unequivocal hint that Ajax must be male. More complex is the reference to Bluebeard’s chamber in Written on the Body: it remains open to argument which character in the myth is the one with whom the protagonist enjoys an imaginary relationship.

Cultural gender roles are even more complex and open to negotiation and change. Texts that bank on gender ambiguity frequently re-utilize and modify culturally significant
gender signals. In The cook and the carpenter, for instance, June Arnold makes good use of shirts and blue jeans as items of clothing which no longer signal masculinity (indeed, the protagonists are both women). Long hair, earrings or tattoos likewise fail to definitely constrain gender attribution these days, nor are cooking and child-rearing any longer necessarily female concerns. In the texts that I have analysed, some cultural indicators, although they never establish any conclusive results, do however still plague the critic or reader intent on fixing gender identity: is A***’s reluctance to walk through Harlem a gender-specific manifestation of anxiety, or does it relate to his/her childhood experience of dire poverty? Since the narrator in Written on the Body beats up Jacqueline, is he male? Does the narrator’s distanced perspective on men congregating in toilets indicate that the narrator is a woman?

Where explicit markers have been eliminated from the text, radical indeterminacy threatens. The reader is thrown into a vicious circle of speculation without issue. Whereas an explicit gender identification allows for a consoling reinforcement of cultural stereotypes, the absence of specification sometimes leads the reader to scrutinize possibly quite misleading aspects of the plot from which gender attributes are then projected. When, as in the case of Written on the Body or of Sphinx, such attributes are inconclusive, no reinforcement from the cultural script materializes, and incompatible or inconclusive pieces of evidence fail to solve the puzzle. Such refractoriness on the part of a novel(ist), refusing a very determinate gender allocation, ultimately destroys the interpretative accessibility of the text, since any evaluation of the novel needs to first establish the “facts” of the plot, and these, in our cultural understanding, crucially relate to the over-all schemata that we project on the text. Whereas Duffy, Garréta and Winterson deliberately contravene such identificational ploys on the reader’s part and manage to suggest that, in the presence of passionate love, gender identification may be irrelevant, insignificant or distracting, in other texts the refusal to specify gender allocation can become very disturbing indeed. In the early parts of The cook and the carpenter, for instance, the reader’s visualizations of what the text is about are significantly hampered by her inability to categorize characters’relationships with one another. Arnold’s text therefore foregrounds the fundamental cognitive dependence on gender patterning, whereas Garréta and Winterson seek to overthrow the power of such classifications, arguing that passion knows no gender boundaries (or boundaries of race).

The subject of gender, it can therefore be argued, is handled quite differently in these novels. The gender markers themselves are, however, part of a restricted inventory which I have here tried to discuss in some detail. It would be of great interest to me to learn of further texts that thematize gender ambiguity, and I look forward to getting some feedback from readers of this article.16

Appendix A
The story consists of an address by the unnamed "I" to an unnamed "you." It starts with the lines: "So you are in the house at last. How well you describe the room. The sea. The window. The bird in the cage. The mirror. And then in the mirror the cage, the window and the sea." In the second and third paragraphs the I decides to go visit the you. The second section of the story starts with the I announcing that "I will catch the train this afternoon," and continues to fantasize about the scenario that the you has painted in the letter: In the second paragraph, however, we get: "I am here now and you are gone. I came and we were together and now you are gone." This is followed by two paragraphs in which the narrator is quite happy to be alone at the seaside, but in the final paragraph of section two regret for the you's absence emerges.

In the third section (one paragraph) the I tries to phone the you in the flat, but has a failure of nerves and puts down the receiver again.

In the fourth section the narrator leaves the house at the sea without seeing or speaking to the you again. Back in the town, the narrator receives new letters from the you and refuses to answer them since the you has not provided a satisfactory explanation: "And now you write as if nothing has happened. [...] As if I had never been and you had never gone and left me there, for a day or two you said, while you dealt with urgent matters in
the town. What is the meaning of your letter?" In the next, fifth, section the I refuses to follow or even answer renewed invitations to the seaside by the you. In the sixth section, the I speaks of the you begging for an answer, of selling the house, but still refuses to give in: "You say you want to see me and beg me to answer. How can I write a letter like that?" (These passages, incidentally, are almost verbatim evocations of Josipovici's novel Contre-jour [1986], so that a knowledge of Josipovici's oeuvre would indeed have a manifest influence on readers' interpretation of the story.)

In the seventh section (three paragraphs) the you writes to say the house has become dilapidated. The I still refuses to react to these letters and indulges in fond memories of the room at the seaside and the you's description of it. There is then the first mention of "my little girl" looking at the picture "you had drawn," followed by a philosophical meditation on cages: "I don't think you see that we are all in cages, but the cages are our lives." In the final section the child is asked to turn the page and "look at another picture."

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NOTES

1. Lanser (1996) distinguishes between sex, gender and sexuality and sees pronominal reference as a gender question:

[...] for the purposes of this essay I will use the term "sex" to designate the formal identification of a represented human entity as male or female. I will use "gender" to designate characteristics constructed in and by texts that implicate—but do not prove—a male or female identity by drawing on cultural codes that conventionally signify masculinity or femininity: codes such as proper names and metonymic references to clothing, activities, and behaviors. And I will use "sexuality" to designate erotic orientation or identity particularly with respect to object choice. I am assuming that readers routinely attribute a sex to narrators and characters and that they do so both through explicit linguistic markers such as "he" or "she" (or "the man" and "the woman"), through gendered codes that vary historically and culturally but are nonetheless present at least in all language cultures of the so-called West, and sometimes also through presumptions of (hetero)sexuality. (251-2)

2. I wish to thank an unnamed reviewer for her (?) comments on a previous version of this paper which led me to add this paragraph.

3. Although, owing to departmental structure, recipients of the questionnaire were about 75% male, more women than men reacted to the questionnaire.
4. Only one informant suggested that I and you might both be female, and two informants thought the text might be a kind of dialogue, and that the referents of/and you might not refer consistently to the same subjects.

5. It may or may not be in this latter sense that Josipovici regards the I as female (personal communication).

6. See "My mother's lover has killed Ajax rather than live without the chrysolite" (214) and "I am my mother's lover now" (215).

7. Colvile (1994) concludes differently, though she does not argue the point: "Pour moi, 'Je' est un homme et A*** une femme" 111.


9. On the other hand, at the narrator's first encounter with A***, Tiff takes him past the women dancers to the men's rooms ("les loges... des danseurs") and A*** emerges from one of the doors ("sortant de la sienne" [20]).

10. The Carlo liaison, incidentally, does lend itself to a reading in which Carlo suddenly discovered his homosexual leanings, so that the necessary inference about the narrator's masculinity no longer follows.

11. The scenario that Frank's disappearance evokes is that of desertion—another prototypically "female" script as we already noted in connection with the Josipovici story.

12. Women, of course, may use artificial mechanisms to effect penetration, too so even if one reads the passage as alluding to penetration, this does not necessarily determine the narrator as male. (Thanks to Gordon Collier for the suggestion.)

13. The door in this reading is the door of rationality behind which we lock away our passions as the body locks away our souls. The passage, however, can also be read as an allusion to Charles Ludlam's play Bluebeard (1970) in which the Paustian hero Bluebeard attempts to create a third sex behind the doors of his laboratory, also referred to as the "House of Pain." Compare: Bluebeard: How do you know when you unlock any door in life that you are not entering a House of Pain? (Ludlam 138)

Thanks go to Stephen Shapiro for alerting me to this reference.

14. See also "Je lui souhaitai tendrement un bon sommeil et, me penchant vers elle, son parfum attira mon attention. Comment s'appelait-il déjà et à quoi me faisait-il songer?" (21-2), where il refers to son parfum, and "Je regardais à la dérobée son épaule où la tête venait reposer; déportée latéralement, elle m'offrait à voir le méplat d'une pommette" (173), where elle refers to la tête.

15. Quoted from Finney (1992, 169). Translation: "Where as formerly she had started to shower by turning the spout on her tummy and only later went on to the rest of her body, now the jet first hit him between the shoulder blades."

16. The author's e-mail number is fluderni@ruf.uni-freiburg.de

ABSTRACTS

This article deals with three first-person narratives in which the biological sex of the narrator and, in two cases, that of one other character in the novel is indeterminate. It is argued, however, that in two of the texts (Maureen Duffy's Love Child and Anne Garréta's Le sphinx) the probable sex of the narrator can be inferred from the gender signals of the narrative, although no definite proof can be provided. In the third case, Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body, indeterminacy
is even more pronounced, although here, too, an informed guess as to the sex of the narrator and
that of A*** is made. The paper also presents the results of an empirical study conducted among
students and faculty in which the gender attribution to the narrator and narratee-protagonist in
Gabriel Josipovici’s "The Bird Cage" was used as a test. Finally, a list of textual clues to the sex
and/or gender of characters in fiction is provided

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Parody as a Practice for Postmodernity

Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth

1 As a literary form and rhetorical trope, parody has a venerable history: in classical literature and rhetorics; in the great precursor of the Western novel, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. But it has become a particularly important feature of postmodern narrative for the simple reason that parody resists singularity. All parodistic narrative is doubled narrative: there is a story, but also activity that undermines that story; there is anecdote, and its antidote.1

2 Parody thus makes the fundamental paratactic gesture of postmodern discourse. To recap what I take to be generally understood, discourse is the broad term that applies to any differential system of meaning and value, that is, any system that acts like language as Saussure conceived it, even though its signs may consist of garments, or bodies, and not words. In differential systems of value that constitute discourse, then, syntactic relations have the power to produce (statement, unity, meaning) while paratactic relations run (as the term suggests) parallel to the syntactic and productive sequence, remaining within sight of, but heterogeneous to it. In postmodern narrative the classical genre or trope (Gr. *parodos*; L. *parodia*) expands out of all recognition into anthematic development that multiplies many times the doubling gesture of parody.

3 This *para* prefix marks the characteristic doubling feature of parody, *para* meaning alongside of, heterogeneous to. In classical terms, parody literally is the precursor or parallel ode. In modern terms — that is, in the terms of post-medieval Europe — the agendas of art, as of politics, and science, were to establish a world of difference mediated by common denominators, especially those all-important media of modernity, time and space (*Ermarth*, 1983, 3-97). In modernity, therefore, parody, did not have the importance it had in earlier writing. To the modern empiricist mind, in human as well as physical science, the term "parody" could seem to modernity to imply little more than a faintly unsavory undercut, a weak form of humor or joking, a sallow form of satire lacking the cultural agreements that enable satire’s wit and edge. In the discourse of modernity, then, parody's doubling capability lacks opportunity.
But in a post-modern era, this doubling power — the power of implicating alterity (alterity) whatever the agenda — becomes pre-eminent: not just in the critical vocabulary of recent decades, but in the cutting-edge art of the time, beginning with famous examples such as Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896) and Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). Such works undermine single narratives in the broadest cultural sense of narrative: the narratives of order and identity and project across the range of practice. Parodic form thus suits an age that suspects master-narratives.

Postmodern writers, whether their medium is words, or stone, or sound, or celluloid, find in parody a useful tool precisely because the convention denies priority to any single narrative. The most fully achieved examples of pluralized plots and exfoliating styles of postmodern parataxis transcend anything that might be recognized as classical parody and turn into something quite uniquely postmodern. In the hands of accomplished artists, parody becomes a means for reconstructing the world. Parody has "play" or scope in postmodernism because it undercutss singular narrative; and parody itself is play-ful in the sense that it is a form that pluralizes the possibilities, the play, of systems. Postmodern parody thus exercises old tools in the service of a new conjugation that surprises and takes on the objectified world of humanism and history. In the process, postmodern artists transfigure classical parody.

The title of this essay invokes a cinematic incident as a kind of marker for the way in which this full exfoliation of postmodern discourse is related to those older, simpler parodic forms. The marker incident I have in mind occurs in Steven Spielberg's film, *Close Encounters of A Third Kind* (U. S. 1977), where the alien spacecraft first communicates to a spellbound (and reassured) crowd of earthlings by sounding a sequence of several notes, each accompanied by a different colored light — a kind of outer space son-et-lumière — and then proceeds to fuller and fuller orchestration of those relationships. The initial, apparently tentative sequence of notes acts as a kind of instruction, a set of finger exercises for the more massive deployment. The first tentative five or six notes repeat and repeat, as if slowly iterating an alphabet or practicing a scale; then less tentatively and in pairs, trios, and harmonic intervals; and then beyond harmonic intervals and eventually into an immense, textured sound that swallows up initial details and even discernible sequence in a massive orchestration including an equally complex lightworks display. Classical parody is a bit like those finger exercises by aliens: a basic narrative alphabet or format for sequence that then can be transformed beyond recognition by more complex and inspired usage.

My argument builds on those established in several important recent studies. Margaret Rose's ground-breaking work (1979) traces the history of literary parody to its classical roots, compares it with satire and irony, and discusses its new value in the twentieth century. She demonstrates most importantly the epistemic value of parody (chap. 4 "The Parodic Episteme") and the role of twentieth-century parody in the crisis of representation (Rose, 1979, 128-34) where, unlike satire's attempt to re-inforce a code, the text involves an uncertain "dialogue" between codes; and she also invokes the surrealist painters, especially Magritte, as cross-disciplinary instances of parody at work.

Acknowledging Margaret Rose's important work, Linda Hutcheon (1985) goes on to argue for a broader respect for the pragmatic complexity of parody in twentieth-century writing and for a critical response respectful of the complex "aesthetic realities" (116). Hutcheon uses both visual arts and music alongside literature to suggest the broad cultural range of expression in which parody's variety can be discovered. She argues that
parody occurs in many quite different media and often for quite different ends (99). Her student, Martin Kuester (1992), adds among other things the important point that parody need not necessarily be humorous, by which I take him to mean that its life-affirming pleasures go beyond the kind weak joke that I mentioned above as a possible interpretive tendency in the project of modernity. He treats parody as a special case of irony; others treat it, especially in its fullest forms, as almost consonant with, or as a special case of postmodernism (Lyotard, 1984; Ermarth, 1992). In any case, parody is one of the para-powers that have emerged into contemporary usage (paratactic, parataxis, parallax), if not always yet into dictionaries and encyclopedias.

9 Because these differences in usage depend on the cultural and historical context in which terms like "parody" or even "postmodern" function, a brief historical reprise is in order. It should be noted in particular that the problem of parallel worlds was recognized and explored long before contemporary parody developed its particular strengths. It was a primary cosmological problem for seventeenth-century astronomy and theology as they dealt with the Copernican revolution and its implicit recognition that many "centers" compose the universe — as many as the (uncountable) number of planetary or galactic systems. After the seventeenth century, while this problem remained and, for that matter, still remains, the cultural activity of modernity in politics, art, and science all tend to focus primarily on the production of common denominators between systems: especially the common denominators of neutral time and neutral space as they were constructed after the Renaissance and Reformation, and later, and most poetically, the fictional "aether" of Victorian science.

10 In the twentieth century when, as Derrida says (1978), "language invaded the universal problematic," the problem of parallel worlds becomes discursive. As Julio Cortázar puts it, residence in a language means residence in a reality, where the term "language" includes not just verbal enunciation, but usage in any of the myriad sign systems with which we enunciate, reinscribe, and revise our social, psychic, political, cultural lives. Thus, the problem that parody enunciates in narrative form is the postmodern problem of parallel discursive worlds: a problem of relationship and adjustment within a condition of constantly multiplying "codes."

11 Having rapidly sketched a cultural and historical horizon, I want to turn to my central point, which concerns the variety of postmodern parody's possible deployment. It cannot be overemphasized that parody in the hands of the most accomplished contemporary artists far transcends anything evident in its classical forms. And it cannot be said too often that the problems of postmodernity, enunciated in part by philosophers and theorists, have been most fully expanded and explored by artists, writers, filmmakers, and architects broadly interested in cultural value. Theorists could improve their position, and avoid priestly language, by taking a few more cues from the likes of Magritte, Borges, Duras, Buñuel, Jost, Nabokov, or Frank Gehry.

12 In what follows I will take works by two such artists to show how full deployment of parody provides the postmodern utmost in complex value: first, Vladimir Nabokov's exquisite little novel, _Transparent Things_ (1972) and then Jon Jost's film, _All the Vermeers in New York_ (U. S. 1990). These works take parodic form to lengths so delicately judged that we might want to find a new term for their achievement, one that acknowledges the vibrant moral quality of play. I am conscious in undertaking to "unpack" these texts, that I am reducing to mere analytical words, for the sake of a common cause, what is sublimely superior to mere analysis or to a single discursive language. These are not
works for those still (still?) interested in plot-and-character or, worse, in what an artist "means."

I approach Transparent Things with special trepidation. This novel, always delightful to re-read and to teach, is particularly difficult to write about because its values — in the sense that painters or musicians use the term "values" — tend to float in a kind of mobile arrangement that does not submit to standards of evidence and meaning-production.

Its in-between values always involve discursive shifts as the sequence moves from one contained series to the next, each containing elements of the others in a kind of musical arrangement, but none developing the kind of contextual unity in which such elements could function as "evidence."

The parodic element develops exponentially from the parallel texts of the Person plot on the one hand, involving events in the life and death of Hugh (sometimes pronounced "you") and, on the other hand, the shifting paratactic style whose patterns run alongside that (vestigial) plot. The Person plot involves an indefinite number of years (chronological time is unimportant) and four trips between New York and "so-called Switzerland" in which the young man pursues his desire and, incidentally at the end of Chapter 11, manages to bed the exotic Julia.

The other dimension of the book belongs to the distinct narrating voice, delighting us with conjunctions that have nothing to do with those of Person's pilgrimage, or with the usual narrative climaxes, and that is at odds with the whole narrative convention of life as a pilgrimage (invoked by the Person plot). This narrative medium of the novel, with its distinct voice and interests, runs parallel to the Person plot not so much to undermine it, though it does do that, but to amplify it in ways that demonstrate to readers, if not to the hapless Hugh Person, what worlds of pattern and pleasure are available to anyone willing to digress.

Transitions between these two levels of narrative are particularly marked in the shift between chapters 11 and 12. Chapter 11 ends with Hugh and Julia's assignation in the same bachelor's flat on East Sixty-fifth where, coincidentally, she had met an earlier lover, now dead in a distant war.

She (Julia) noticed that the close mirror as seen from the bed reflected exactly the same still-life arrangement, oranges in a wooden bowl, as it had in the garland-brief days of Jim, a voracious consumer of the centenarian's fruit. She was almost sorry when upon looking around she located the source of the vision in the folds of her bright things thrown over the back of a chair.

She canceled their next assignation at the last moment and soon afterwards went off to Europe. In Person's mind the affair left hardly anything more than a stain of light lipstick on tissue paper — and a romantic sense of having embraced a great writer's sweetheart. Time, however, sets to work on those ephemeral affairs, and a new flavor is added to the recollection.

We now see a torn piece of La Stampa and an empty wine bottle. A lot of construction work was going on.

A lot of construction work was going on around Witt, scarring and muddying the entire hillside upon which he was told he would find Villa Nastia. Its immediate surrounding had more or less been tidied up, forming an oasis of quiet amidst the clanging and knocking wilderness of clay and cranes. There even gleamed a boutique among the shops forming a semicircle around a freshly planted young rowan under which some litter had already been left, such as a workman's empty bottle and an Italian newspaper. Person's power of orientation now failed him but a woman selling apples from a neighboring stall set him straight again. An over
affectionate large white dog started to frisk unpleasantly in his wake and was called back by the woman. (Nabokov, 1972, 36-37)

So many things are going on in this transition, that the reiterated sentence can seem almost like a welcome anchor, except that it occurs with two completely different meanings in two completely different and parodically related dimensions of the book. One is the Person pilgrimage, and the other the narrative discourse itself composed of language calling attention to its constructive power. That power, what's more, comes from a creative addition to experience. Time does not add up in terms of results; instead, it adds value ("flavor") to recollection.

"A lot of construction work was going on" matter-of-factly begins Chapter 12, and the litter already present under the freshly planted rowan provides some unaesthetic interference for Hugh's pilgrimage (and some quiet amusement for observers of Switzerland, where construction cranes are as typical as alps.) But this matter-of-factness is not single or simple: it translates the philosophical musing at the end of the preceding chapter, in which the constructions of memory — and their mechanisms — are likened to a cubist collage. Time reduces the ephemeral: the "mere" material environment carelessly noted by Hugh Person can and for him will carry intensely important meanings. Aesthetic construction appears here over the shoulder of and as an echo for more mechanical apparatuses. The cubist construction of Chapter 11 ("a torn piece of La Stampa and an empty wine bottle") returns to its elements in Chapter 12 ("a workman's empty bottle and an Italian newspaper").

That allusion to painting in turn belongs to a series of references to imaginative construction that has only its most recent iteration in the (apparent) still-life associated by Julia in memory of her Jim, and mistaken in a mirror reflection that makes a canvas bowl of oranges from the folds of her orange blouse. Orange, in its turn, has its own frequency in the novel, appearing elsewhere in various fires occurring in book titles and hotels, and in some crucial orange peels by the side of a crucial trail. The "apples" (Chapter 12) introduce another theme with another set of frequencies into this already-crowded range, where selling "apples" echoes (yabloni) "apple trees," and "apple green" (apron, shutters) where the "apple" theme crosses the more insistent "green" theme ("reptile green" ink, skis; "green wine," "glossy green nylon" and, especially, the "green skier figurine"). Even the white dog from this passage frisks through more than once, re-appearing like Odysseus's Argos when Person much later (encouraged by his psychiatrist) makes his final ill-fated pilgrimage to find his past.

These brief passages iterate only a tiny number of the myriad themes echoing through the text, with its avalanches, lavender, windows, Giulias/Juliets/Julias, texts, marginalia, trails, digressions, colors, strangling, transparencies, transitions, hillsides, not to mention various Nabokovian anagrams and alliterations. Each detail invokes the others, sometimes singly, sometimes in duos and triads, and in compounds with increasingly ineffable resonance. This other world, as Nabokov says in The Gift (1963), "surrounds us always and is not at all at the end of some pilgrimage" (322).

This universe of delight-in-digression Hugh Person fatally ignores, intent instead on his obscure object of desire. "What had you expected from your pilgrimage, Person?," asks the narrative voice in the penultimate chapter. The answer is, "a moment of contact" with an "essential" presence (chap. 25). But that doomed search leads directly to death. Or rather, to what the wiser narrative voice calls, "the mysterious mental maneuver needed to pass from one state of being to another" (chap. 26) The narrative universe of
language, with its worlds of pleasure, lies like a gigantic planetary system outside the purview of gloomy Person as he pursues his pilgrimage: it is like the "noise" that his system cannot translate but ours can, especially with obvious encouragements like the transition between Chapters 11 and 12.

These two dimensions of the novel, the plot and the play, comment on each other, each requiring a different "act of attention." Hugh Person chooses one, while readers of Nabokov's multivalent sequence are encouraged to favor the other. The Person plot, with its helpless and rarely satisfied desire, occupies a parallel position to the other, more imaginative sequence superimposed on it by the powers of language and art. The novel is a training exercise for novices on how to sustain those powers, as Chapter One explains.

When we concentrate on a material object, whatever its situation, the very act of attention may lead to our involuntarily sinking into the history of that object. Novices must learn to skim over matter if they want matter to stay at the exact level of the moment. Transparent things, through which the past shines! Man made objects, or natural ones, inert in themselves but much used by careless life (you are thinking, and quite rightly so, of a hillside stone over which a multitude of small animals have scurried in the course of incalculable seasons) are particularly difficult to keep in surface focus: novices fall through the surface humming happily to themselves, and are soon reveling with childish abandon in the story of this stone, of that heath. I shall explain. A thin veneer of immediate reality is spread over natural and artificial matter, and whoever wishes to remain in the now, on the now, should please not break its tension film. Otherwise the inexperienced miracle-worker will find himself no longer walking on water but descending upright among staring fish. (Nabokov, 1972, 1-2)

When we concentrate on the moment — for example in transition between Chapters 11 and 12 — so many frequencies and anthematic arrangements are simultaneously present, each with its own past, that keeping all that in view requires a discipline likened to walking on water. To slip away in pursuit of one, or to sink into a single "meaning" would be to lose the rhythm (another figure from the novel) by grasping at one of its elements. The novice tries that, and sinks. The experienced miracle worker, however, learns to perform that "mysterious mental maneuver required to pass from one state of being to the next"; it involves a kind of suspension in which multiplied dimensions — including especially the "past" — shine through. In pursuit of his singular desire, however, the inexperienced Person breaks the tension film.

_Transparent Things_ is the ultimate narrative demonstration that less is more. Its play of elements, multiplied many times from the few instances mentioned here, seems to encompass the universe, yet occupies only one hundred pages; the 26 chapters composing it alternate between two and six pages each. Where poor Person clumsily attempts to grasp the past, to relive it or retrieve what he thinks is its essence, the parodically distanced reader, staying "on the now," recognizes the past as a vital part of each present arrangement. The parodic element in such a text is not singular, but instead a constant and virtuoso act of language running multiple parallels to the (Person) plot. Its resonances contrast entirely with Person's narrowing determinations. Nabokov develops the parodic gambit into a complex system of paratactic constructions, orbiting themes, multiple frequencies, exfoliating digressions. For the character, Person, and his pilgrimage, and for a range of workmen from house builders to readers, a lot of construction work is going on.

A similar development of parodie form appears in the 1990 film, _All The Vermeers in New York_ (U. S.), directed by Jon Jost. For those not yet familiar with this cinematic jewel, a
meagre starting point is this description from one U.K. program guide (Radio Times, Jan./Feb 1997) which introduces it as: "a subtle and often moving story of unfulfilled love, in which the pace and emptiness of modern life is contrasted with the serenity and beauty of the paintings by Dutch artist Jan Vermeer hanging in New York's art galleries." With an added note about the problematic role of money, this might stand as a decent description of the film, except for one thing: it does not mention the camera. The art. The substantial construction of alternative discourse.

27 The parody here resembles that of Nabokov's novel: style comments on so-called "plot" by diversifying its holdings. The very values lamented in the so-called plot remain vigorously present in the filmic sequence. I say "so-called plot" because the sequence here includes so much, much more than "plot" and "character," those values imported from drama that were already inadequate for describing narrative in 1800 and that are certainly inadequate for describing film. The real "plot" here is a doubled and even multiplied sequence in which the (supposedly tragic) "failure of love in the modern world" is a lot less important than the happy, contradictory, and erotic (that is, life-sustaining) tensions between sight, sound, and explanation running in multiple parallels through the sequence. To allege contrast between the "serenity of Vermeer" and the "emptiness of modern life" actually makes very little sense, once we take into consideration the visual delight of this film. The director and editors have constructed an articulation of sight and awareness that links the film directly (not thematically or allegorically) with Vermeer, especially in its treatment of light and of object relations in space, in its respect for details of ordinary life, in its encroaching but (this is important) non-tragic awareness of finitude, including that ultimate finitude of death.

28 The film operates various codes simultaneously: camera motion, the sound track, Vermeer's canvasses, the vestigial "love" plot. The basic parodic form here consists of the commentary available in-between the two primary narrative codes of plot, and camera. Upon this is built a rich and textured set of values, in the painter's sense of "value."

29 The first code concerns plot and a world of meaning-value in which two protagonists, a struggling French actress ["Anna"] and a burnt-out New York broker ["Mark"], meet in the Metropolitan Museum of Art through their common interest in Vermeer. They meet thereafter in a cafe, and again in an unspecified number and kind of meetings (amounts of chronological time are unimportant) wherein the keynotes are a certain good will and lack of communication. The self-consciously alienated personae each pursues some obscure object of desire, seeking elusive identity in a Chekhov character, a Vermeer, a face; or seeking an identity apart from investments; or seeking to "own" an elusive value by competing in commodities markets or art markets (how is this show/currency selling? who is buying? let me buy in); or hoping to find love through a common obsession with Vermeer. This plot, and its outcome, remains episodic.

30 The other narrative code, which comments on the first, belongs to the camera. In the manner of parody, this second code runs parallel to the first and, by its very existence, produces mutual tension and commentary between codes. The camera moves around New York with apparent ease and delicacy, but always with restraint, never sweeping to heights or magnifying distances. This lens can make even the New York skyline look like a Vermeer: reduced from heroic materialism to a configured space by wide-angle lens and late-afternoon sun.

31 This camera's frame and motion rigorously limit the visual horizon, and thus the expanse of neutral space in which heroics usually become possible. But this limit does not confine:
like Nabokov’s narrative language, it opens up a seemingly infinite world of possible sequences, codes, and values. The actual frame almost always remains portrait-sized, featuring a head or profile, respecting a figure’s precarious importance, and rarely taking in more than one person at a time or even whole bodies.

With one or two exceptions at crises, when it creates alarm by panning up, the camera moves laterally; its lateral motion slow and contained, resting momentarily on a detail before it moves laterally again, often retracing its course back over now-familiar details. Its gravitational field remains an individual head or profile, where it usually comes to rest, but its motion takes in a range of objects in enclosed spaces. For example, in one sequence in an apartment room, the camera laterals left from a stockinged foot propped on a bed by a girl on the floor reading, then to postcards, trainers, a bit of woodflooring in a herringbone pattern, photos, magazines, the rumpled edge of a blue bedspread; then it laterals back along the same course, this time to the sound of weeping. No zooms, no rapid breaks, no insistence on connection, no explanation of grief.

In short, and like Nabokov’s language, this camera concentrates on the details of life that "plots" tend to use carelessly — a discarded shoe, a jet stream against almost-indifferent blue, a low-level view of a polished marble floor, the bases of apparently huge marble columns in an institutional lobby, a kind of sound, a certain angle of light. This lens appreciates painterly values of color and intensity, of configured space and proportion. While the central figures pursue their obscure objects of desire, a world of beauty lies about them, disregarded. Like Hugh Person, these characters remain interesting insofar as they show some awareness of that Other world, represented to them in this case by Vermeer. They miss the resemblance of their own world to that of the artist, but the camera picks it up for us.

This description of the film’s parodic structure, however, hardly does justice to the richness, that is, to the aesthetic (that is, the moral) value of the sequence. Like the thematic iterations in Nabokov that provide texture but avoid meaning, Jost’s various visual themes recur and vary gently, just perceptibly, doubling their possible value. Money, for example, is a common currency, and perhaps the root of evil (as one character muses), but it is also actual bills in a bundle, interesting in themselves and creating no desire: money is investments, but there are more kinds of investments than monetary ones; money raises questions of value, especially in the markets for selling, buying, and trading in currencies or in art.

As in Nabokov’s novel, the camera here pays affectionate attention to things much used and unnoticed by careless life. Floors, for example, or windows: wood floors in herringbone-patterns, grained marble floors, marble parquet floors in black and green; and windows in paintings, in apartments, in cafes, or conspicuously absent in commodities trading centers. As in Nabokov’s novel, multiple themes exfoliate: artists — a painter, a singer, an actress — who appear not as icons or as mythologized producers of desirable objects, but as ordinary talented people with ordinary problems; pictures in museums and galleries, re-incarnated in photographs and on postcards, the framed view that emphasizes the frame. In varying frequencies, objects and gestures occur and re-occur: glossy hair, telephones, upholstery, doors, platform railings along a quay or atop a skyscraper, muted colors of rose, grey, white, and beige; gestures of going through a door, looking over a shoulder, at a Vermeer.

A sequence of etched sounds, and of equally etched silences, adds dimension to this multi-dimensional visual sequence: contemporary jazz, running water, awkward voices,
footfalls in a deserted museum, traffic on upper Fifth Avenue, a single low-register note with two voices, piano and cello, barely discernable, then moving into atonal, then harmonic, and again atonal relationships. The recurrences sustained by such elements vary in their mutual complexities: the same kind of thing over and over again like a novice practicing, and yet developed to such a degree that elements disappear into something more massively fused.

This cinematic achievement is aesthetic in the full sense of being saturated with value. The aesthetic achievement is profoundly qualitative. In the so-called plot, on the other hand, death haunts everything in the form of quantitative measure: "numbers, I'm sick of numbers," says the broker who wants to give it all up and opt for what he hopes will be love, for his Anna who has a face as beautiful as a Vermeer. His "I'm dying," on the day when his currencies investments begin to plummet, punctuates a sequence in which death, or figures of it, have been a factor increasingly. "Mark" hates being atop a skyscraper and looking at all those people all at once; "it's like being dead." The emphasis falls on numbers of dollars, numbers of people, numbers of transactions that dissipate quality. The sequence then becomes a sustained search for qualitative results to escape from the realm of quantity and death.

The camera entirely reverses these plot emphases, parodying them perhaps, except that the sequences and commentaries are too complex for this term. Its torque and vitality depends on what is fragile, unnoticed, perishable. Whereas in the "plot," death is Big but unimportant, life is small, perishable, and very important. What "plot," relegates to margins and irrelevance, the camera recovers as exquisite in its finitude; nothing large or grand can equal the small things for vitality. Life by definition has qualities, or "values" in the painter's sense of value. With motion, light, passing contact, a magazine, a discarded shoe, a lot of construction work is going on, constantly creating a useable past. Material objects "much used" (as Nabokov puts it) "by careless life" become "transparent things, through which the past shines." This calm universe of aesthetic value parodies, that is, it renders amusing and even trivial the plot of loss and alienation.

The parallel codes in Jost's film threaten to meet near the end, where the so-called plot brings the broker to the point of saying "I love you," before he collapses from too much quantity. His Anna, his obscure object of desire, responds to the call, but the irony remains. The message reaches an answering machine, and he dies before she reaches him and before he learns that her plans did not include him. The last word on value is delivered by opaque Anna's voice-over:

There is no reason inherent in the conditions of life on this earth that can make us consider ourselves obliged to do good, to be fastidious, to be polite, even; nor make the talented artist consider himself obliged to begin again a score of times a piece of work, the admiration aroused by which will matter little to his body devoured by worms. Like the patch of yellow wall painted with so much knowledge and skill by an artist who must forever remain unknown and is barely identified under the name, Vermeer.

In this film, as in Nabokov's novel, the exquisitely meaningless details of ordinary life are all that remain of "reason." And they are enough.

Both these texts, novel and film, use alphabetical elements to constitute slowly a discursive universe, deploying those elements in evermore complicated systems of relationship. Both use parodic form to deny priority to a single sequence or narrative. The doubled and redoubled sequence always presents alternatives to any particular
selection, until the selective act of attention itself becomes the focus of interest, especially as it resides in between systems.

These are the "in-between" values that call to mind the discursive "writing" Cixous describes as the basis of renewal: "working (in) the in-between... without which nothing can live, undoing the work of death" (Cixous, 1975, 883). These postmodern parodic texts that negotiate shifts between parallel systems and sequences achieve exactly that kind of discursive in-between "writing." Parodie undercut is only the rudimentary beginning of this pluralizing format in which the original parody gets subsumed in the vibrant play of values that constitutes the chief moral quality of this art.

Postmodern parody makes quite complex new demands on attention and recognition. Such texts as those discussed here preserve particulars from erosion by "meaning" so that they can function, in their particularity and discreteness, as the basis for a new kind of order: one that reorders relations between present and past, that constitutes such new orders entirely by differential relationships. Such sequences, in novels or in film, leave a residue of intensely felt value that, like linguistic value in Saussure's sense, exists quite apart from, and even prior to, all established meanings. Such texts, such "writing," insist on value in a new sense that is systemic, profound, adequate.

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NOTES

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ABSTRACTS

Parody has become a particularly important feature of postmodern narrative for the simple reason that parody resists singularity. All parodic narrative is doubled narrative: there is a story, but also activity that undermines that story; there is anecdote, and its antidote. Parodic form thus suits an age that suspects master-narratives. Once important as a literary form in classical literature, parody fell out of favor in modernity for various cultural reasons. Postmodern parody thus exercises old tools in the service of a new conjugation that reformulates the objectified world of humanism and history. In the process, postmodern artists transfigure classical parody.

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current projects include a cultural history of the American west, an analysis of the political consequences of postmodernity, a feminist essay on method, and a collection of essays on the future of universities
Three Dimensions of Space in the Narrative Text

John Pier

If the evolution of literary theory and criticism over the past few decades were to be summarized succinctly, one conclusion would be that we have witnessed a growing awareness of the problematic nature of the signifying text and, concomitantly, that whatever it is that lies beyond the text is neither the final guarantor nor the ultimate source of meaning in literary expression. While for some, the *effet de réel* has undermined any possibility of realistic portrayal, for others, it has led to new ways of qualifying the imaginary universe of the literary work (e.g., a narrative semantics based on possible worlds logic) and yet others to subordinate textual production to a wealth of contextual and pragmatic factors (new historicism, cultural criticism). And where authorial intention has survived the death of the author, it has done so in connection with various reconceptualizations of the self (Lacanian psychoanalysis, gender criticism). The text itself, to no negligible degree deconstructed and disseminated in the colloquy of critical discourses and further destabilized in the wake of hypertext technology, hardly seems to fulfill the role of arbiter that it did in times when philological and, later, new critical orientations held sway. Even the book, that depository of cultural memory, has come into question, for as Jacques Derrida has stated: “La fin de l’écriture linéaire est bien la fin du livre...” (1967, 129).

The object of this paper is to map out some of the ways in which the space of the written text – and not merely the supposed linearity of the signifier – contribute to and, indeed, are indissociable from the formation of meaning in narrative. As an initial example of this aspect of narrative, we shall consider an extract from John Dos Passos’ novel, *The Big Money* (1936):

Newsreel 68
[1] WALL STREET STUNNED
[2] This is not Thirtyeight but it’s old Ninetyseven You must put her in Center on time
[3] MARKET SURE TO RECOVER FROM SLUMP
[4] DECLINE IN CONTRACTS
[5] POLICE TURN MACHINE GUNS ON COLORADO
MINE STRIKERS KILL 5 WOUND 40
[6] sympathizers appeared on the scene just as thousands of office workers were pouring out of the buildings at the lunch hour. As they raised their placard high and started an indefinite march from one side to the other, they were jeered and hooted not only by the office workers but also by workmen on a building under construction.

[7] NEW METHODS OF SELLING SEEN

[8] RESCUE CREWS TRY TO UPEND ILL-FATED CRAFT WHILE WAITING FOR PONTOONS

[9] He looked 'round an' said to his black greasy fireman
jus' shovel in a little more coal
And when we cross that White Oak Mountain
You can watch your Ninety-seven roll

[10] I find your column interesting and need advice. I have saved four thousand dollars which I want to invest for a better income. Do you think I might buy stocks?


[12] PLAY AGENCIES IN RING OF SLAVE GIRL MARTS

[13] MAKER OF LOVE DISBARRED AS LAWYER

(Dos Passos, 1966, 1151)

3 This textual “montage” (only the first third of the Newsreel is reproduced here) reveals the convergence of a number of features that depart markedly from the conventional presentation of prose fiction, including many works of a highly polyphonic nature and other experimental forms of writing. Each of the three typographical forms is associated with a text type: capital letters with newspaper headlines; Roman type with extracts from newspaper articles and letters to the editor; italics with popular songs. Thematically, the first group is doubly subdivided: the shock of the Wall Street crash (1, 4) versus faith in the system (3, 7) which, together, are opposed to the downside of capitalism (5, 8, 11, 12, 13), further divided into the repression of the working classes (5, 8) as contrasted with criminal justice (11) and the seedier side of the entrepreneurial spirit (12, 13). While all of the popular songs reflect the hardships of the working classes, the thematics of the segments in Roman type lies somewhere between the thematics of the songs and that of the headlines, going from the neutral journalistic report of a workers’ demonstration (6) to a letter in the financial column requesting investment advice (10). However, as this latter segment shows, the distribution of the three typographically-determined groups produces networks of meanings that do not exist within the groups themselves – hence, the highlighted naiveté of the well-intentioned but potentially ill-fated investor whose letter is sandwiched between a ballad about work on the railroad and the impersonal headlines reporting unsavory social and economic behavior.

4 A full analysis of the complete newsreel along these lines would reveal a complex typology of semantic, pragmatic and thematic links among the typographical groups and the various segments. What I would like to emphasize here, however, is the highly schematic manner in which this text is constructed, and particularly the ways in which its graphic features – the “form of the expression,” so to speak – contribute to the elaboration of this textual montage. One cannot fail to be struck by the total lack of punctuation or of any form of syntactic coordination and subordination between the segments. Yet, segmentation of the text into units does occur, and this is accomplished partly by graphic means. Were the entire text presented in, say, Roman type, following the standard line-by-line succession of written discourse but with no other changes to the original, we would have a very different sort of discourse – possibly an interior monologue, in which case the disembodied “voices” that are so cacophonically marked off from one another by typographical means as they are in the newsreel would be filtered.
through a centralizing reflector figure that is glaringly absent from the text as we have it here; presented on the stage as a soliloquy, or even with a different actor for each of the segments, still fewer aspects of the textual montage would remain intact. Far, too, from the so-called “camera-eye” technique whereby the events “just happen” before our eyes, the passage remains inconclusive as to the positioning of a possible observer and that of the reporting instance. This is due in part to the absence of deictic expressions, notably temporal and spatial deictics in the graphically marked newspaper headlines, even though some trace of personal deictics can be recovered through a process of deduction: 3, 4 and 7 are evidently taken from the financial page and thus intended for a specific readership distinct from that of 5, 8, 11, 12 and 13; and while the readers of these various headlines as they appear in their sources are necessarily individuals scattered in time and place, this is not the case of the reader of the newsreel. The lack of grammatical coordination and subordination between the extracts represents a further retreat from authorial control, contributing to the effacement of any centralizing consciousness within the passage other than intermittent (cf. journalistic report in 6 and letter to the editor in 10). The result is a dissonant form of figuralized narrative, that is, a discourse that can be assigned to neither a narrator nor a character, but which at the same time, due in this case to the thwarting of deictic and of syntactic functions, shifts the balance to the reader who, nevertheless, is prevented from identifying in an empathetic fashion with any consistent text-internal position. In sum, what characterizes the Dos Passos newsreel, setting it off from narrative forms expressed in accordance with the graphic conventions, is the fact that here, graphic configurations largely supplant deictic expressions and syntactic markers: the written word is produced according to criteria that diverge from those of the spoken word, suggesting that written discourse does not stand as a mere visual copy of spoken discourse, but is closely bound to the possibilities and constraints of the page upon which it appears. Indeed, the generic title, “Newsreel” – itself a misnomer, as the textual segments that follow can be qualified as cinemagraphic only to the extent that they are an assembly of fragmentary evocations of newsworthy topics – could even be said to highlight the disparity between the written and the spoken in the text that it designates.

5 The example taken from Dos Passos, while hardly typical of the mass of published prose fiction, is nevertheless one instance, among others, that points towards the need for a renewed investigation of space 194 in the written text. The space in question is only marginally that of description in the sense of the pictorial evocation of a place, object or character insofar as this form of discourse is couched in a referential language. What will be focused on here is the space of the written text derived from a syntagmatics of writing – a syntagmatics distinct from that of speech and which is subject to spatial and graphic criteria with no equivalent in spoken discourse. This point of view is inspired, not from Derrida’s grammatology, but from the semiology of writing of Roy Harris, who argues that the syntagmatics of writing is of a distinctly different order from the syntagmatics of speech and is indeed more complex and varied than that of speech (Harris 1994, 1995). According to Harris, the widespread failure to distinguish between the two forms of syntagmatics is due in no small measure to Saussure’s characterization of the signifier as “linear”: while it is clear that two linguistic signs cannot be emitted from an identical source simultaneously, to speak of the “linearity” of the signifier confuses auditory signs, which occur in time and are transitory, with graphic signs, which occur in space on a material support and whose resources far exceed those of the line; moreover, the written sign, contrary to the spoken sign, is a form of non-kinetic graphic communication of
widely varying degrees of durability, indissociable from the writing surface upon which it is inscribed. There is a good deal more to say about Harris's lucid and pathbreaking theory of writing than can be dealt with here. In any case, the idea I would like to develop in these pages is that a syntagmatics of writing can provide us with certain insights into the narrative text that neither the “linearity of the text” nor the “linearity of the signifier” can provide, even in their contested and/or revised forms. The questions to be considered clearly go beyond narrative (calligrams and concrete poetry are fertile ground for exploration, as are certain graphic forms of advertising) and even beyond literature, for at issue are all forms of linguistic expression in graphic form, and not merely those using the phonetic alphabet. These matters lie beyond present concerns, however, which are confined to identifying and illustrating the principle features of space that contribute to modes of signification in prose fiction.

6 A distinction fundamental for our considerations is to be made between an internal syntagmatics and an external syntagmatics of the written text. According to Harris, “Internal syntagmatics relates to the disposition of written forms relative to one another and to other forms within the same graphic space” (1995, 121). Concerned here is the arrangement of writing on a page, for example, but also the syntagmatic relations between a photo and its accompanying caption in a newspaper, while in the literary domain the works of William Blake (among others) can be cited, showing the interactions between the graphic forms of writing and the graphics of visual illustrations. In such a process of “intersemiotic translation,” the question of iconicity obviously comes into play, although the degree of correspondence or similarity between word and image, even in those instances where it can be established, by no means exhausts the question. In this connection, Magritte’s painting Ceci n’est pas une pipe will serve as a striking reminder of the inherent disparities between word and image.

7 Closer to present concerns, however, is the Dos Passos newsreel, composed only of printed text, but of text in a variety of typographic forms that cannot be dissociated from the text’s meaningfulness. In such examples, as we have seen, graphic discontinuity in the succession of words produces effects that graphically conventional texts can accomplish only through linguistic means of a different order, if at all. However, discontinuity on the printed page can take on other forms, as in Vladimir Nabokov’s Pale Fire (1962), which consists in texts by two fictional authors, one being a poem entitled “Pale Fire”, the others comprising a critical apparatus (“Foreword,” “Commentary,” “Index”) by the poet’s paranoid friend and neighbor who also acts as editor of the poem. The novel is so written that the reader is driven to switching back and forth constantly between the pages of the poem and those of the Commentary (printed in the latter half of the book), so that the syntagmatic structures of the written text (both poem and Commentary) are perpetually reconfigured, while the Index, organized alphabetically, serves to re-order the facts in yet another way. This “book of mirrors,” as Mary McCarthy aptly dubbed Nabokov’s novel, results from a particularly intricate overlapping and intertwining of more or less divergent discourses, with the critical apparatus serving as a paratext of the poem and the poem acting as a paratext of the critical apparatus. In effect, Pale Fire generates a multitude of books within the space of one volume – books that can be qualified as “pale imitations” of one another.

8 While the internal syntagmatics of a text is defined in part by the iconic features of that text’s constituents, external syntagmatics is associated with the text’s indexical functions. “External syntagmatics,” explains Harris, “covers the various relationships
which may obtain between the written forms and items or events to which they are significantly connected in the space outside (i.e., that space within which the graphic space itself is situated)” (1995, 121). A panel on the road from Debrecen to Budapest with the word “Budapest” and an arrow pointing in the direction of that city illustrates how a written sign can be directly connected with the non-verbal environment in which it appears.

Although the theater abounds in such indexical phenomena, prose fiction, an inherently de-contextualized form of discourse, would be hard put to provide examples that correspond to the above definition. To be sure, indexical features do play a role in narrative, but this comes mainly through deictic expressions as they intervene in focalization, discourse typology (including the thorny problem of free indirect discourse) and the positioning of center of consciousness within the fictional universe. The external syntagmatics of the literary text, i.e., its relations with (textual) space outside its own graphic space, can be related, broadly speaking, to intertextual traces and their markers, although intertextual analysis clearly calls for the elaboration of further distinctions and categories: the knowledge of Robinson Crusoe required for a reading of Michel Tournier’s Vendredi is not of the same order as the familiarity with the generic conventions of the Künstlerroman presupposed for a reading of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, nor do cases such as these follow the same set of criteria as those brought to light in the prefaces written by Henry James for the New York Edition of his works after the original publication of the novels.

Within the graphic space of a given fictional text, an external syntagmatics properly speaking is thus excluded. Even so, the possibility of a “second-order” external syntagmatics does exist for the individual text, by which I mean that the relations of a text with the graphic space outside can be reduplicated within a given work. Particularly interesting in this regard is John Barth’s Lost in the Funhouse (1968/1969). Preceded by an “Author’s Note (1968)” and followed by “Seven Additional Author’s Notes (1969),” the fourteen tales making up this volume which, when read in their textually given order from the first page to the last, appear to be little more than a heterogeneous collection of stories, do in fact form a rigorous configuration of no fewer than four “series” of texts (the term comes from Barth himself), each with a subtle but unmistakable thematic and/or diegetic stamp of its own:

1) an “interwoven” series (tales 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14; tales 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13);
2) an “echo” series (tales 8 through “Seven Additional Author’s Note (1969)” are an “echo” of “Author’s Note (1968)” through tale 7 such that tale 8 “echoes” tale 1, tale 9 “echoes” tale 2, etc., while an additional series is constituted by reversing the order [tales 1 “echoes” tale 8, etc.]; significantly, no tale is found in the middle, while tale 8, entitled “Echo,” immediately follows (or precedes) tale 7: “Lost in the Funhouse”;
3) a “Chinese box” series (tale 14 is read after tale 1, tale 13 after tale 2, etc., although here again, the order can be reversed, as it is possible to read tale 14 before reading tale 1, etc.; there being no “center,” this series is, in principle, infinitely regressive);
4) a “Protean” series, based on an intricate system of embedding, present particularly in tale 13 (“Menelaiad”), which is divided into fourteen sections numbered 1 to 7 (each successive section is provided with an additional set of quotation marks) and 7 to 1 (with the corresponding suppression of quotation marks). A spectacular mise en abyme of the work as a whole, this tale is connected, through the itineraries traced by the previously-mentioned series, to the work’s ultimate mise en abyme, found in tale 1: entitled “Frame-Tale,” this text consists in
Reading *Lost in the Funhouse* according to these six series lends an accessibility to Barth’s textual “labyrinth” that is all but absent from the textually given order—a seventh “linear” series that remains largely marginalized. Much as *Pale Fire*, then, *Lost in the Funhouse* is a work that defies any continuous reading from beginning to end. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the two works in that, through the demands made on the reader, the syntagmatic structures of *Pale Fire* are perpetually interrupted at the micro-textual level only to be re-ordered through their confrontation with other discourses that diverge from it markedly, while each of the tales included in *Lost in the Funhouse*, a fairly self-contained unit in itself, is re-articulated into six different but contiguous series which, even though printed within the same volume and thus occupying the same graphic space, remain curiously autonomous yet complementary. The internal syntagmatics of *Pale Fire*, in contributing to the (imperfectly) iconic character of its constituents, thus contrasts with the external syntagmatics of *Lost in the Funhouse*, a second-order external syntagmatics in that the various recontextualizations of the fourteen tales produced by the integration of these tales into the six series puts each series into a distinctly indexical relationship with one another.

My proposals for the study of space in the narrative text, as the examples discussed show, have little bearing on the space concerned with descriptive discourse, while at the same time they are intended, not as a revision of, but as an alternative to the supposed “linearity” of the signifier. This position obviously raises questions as to how space, understood in such a way, relates to current and/or traditional principles of poetics and narrative theory. The predilection for spatial metaphors of narrative theory, and particularly of structurally-inspired models of narrative, has frequently been noted. In his *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative*, for instance, Andrew Gibson comments extensively on the “geometrics” of classical narratology and, with reference to the writings of Michel Serres and other postmodern thinkers, sets forth a program for the “pluralisation of the narratological imaginary” (1996, 15) through the introduction of a new set of spatial metaphors (fluent form, heteroplasty, transversals, laterality, etc.). The discussion centers on an informed critique of the rigidity of many narratological concepts, attributable to the reliance of narratologists on “geometric” spatial categories, but it does not take up the question of the non-linear graphic resources of narrative in texts such as those dealt with here. As for the reflection on the sign by Jacques Derrida, a prime mover in the deconstruction of the sign as concerns, among other things, the metaphysical presuppositions of “presence” underlying the phoneticist bias, revealed notably in the Saussurean binary conception of the sign together with the differential and linear character of the signifier, this theory seeks to invert the supposed priority of speech over writing. The literary text thus becomes irreducibly graphic, with “difference” constituting the non-linear articulation of signs among themselves and “trace” representing the “deconstruction of presence” which is productive of sense.8 It would seem, then, that by its theoretical basis, deconstruction, through its subtle redefinition of the relations between speech and writing along lines of reasoning that depart from both
structural linguistics and semiology, does not (and need not) elaborate a syntagmatics of the written sign distinct from that of the spoken sign.

With interactive or electronic fiction, it is another aspect of the written sign that emerges. In works of this kind, we have a form of writing set off from fiction in the printed book due to the instantaneous and extensive mobility between episodes included in portions of text. These possibilities for highly varied combinations of text segments result from electronic linking, a technological innovation that tends to reduce the distance between reading and writing, thereby adding a new dimension to the internal syntagmatics of the text (cf. Harris, 1995, 162). Yet, as Jay David Bolter has shown, electronic writing has served to open our eyes to the “nonlinearity” inherent in fiction from Sterne to Borges, that is to say, in books dating from before the impact of computer technology on writing (1991, 121ff.). Texts such as those discussed in the present paper could well be included among Bolter’s examples, although it must be pointed out that, as fictions that are bound up with intricate and subtle explorations of non-planar and non-tabular dimensions of graphic space in the book, they necessarily rely on a different distribution of written signs. Placed in two windows on the computer screen, for example, the poem and the critical apparatus comprising Pale Fire would become more “readable,” but would occupy the writing surface in a manner distinctly different from the way they do in the novel as it was published. In a similar way, “scrolling” the tales in Lost in the Funhouse would provide the reader with speedier access to the six series of tales, but at the same time would eliminate the Möbius strip effect, restoring to the series a textually “linear” order that is so ingeniously manipulated by the novel in book form. It is perhaps the Dos Passos newsreel, with its graphically differentiated but planar presentation, that would best lend itself to electronic linking, as this would allow different semantic, thematic, pragmatic, graphic and other configurations, as well as various combinations of these configurations, to be traced in a systematic way.

More generally speaking, however, discussion of these works suggests that space in the narrative text, as it is understood here, follows a principle of intratextuality which, at the level of the individual work, acts as a counterpart of intertextuality. Pale Fire presents the two parts of the novel (the poem and its critical apparatus) in such a way that each acts as the paratext of the other, providing a rich illustration of the resources of paratextuality, that is to say, of the intermediate or transitional zone between a text and its hors-texte. More precisely, what is brought into play here is the “peritext,” a type of paratextuality in which various elements such as titles, subtitles, chapter headings, prefaces, postscripts, notes, etc. that are not part of the text properly speaking are nonetheless included in the same volume – a standard feature of fiction published in book form that has been exploited by Nabokov in a way that goes beyond the practices even of his eighteenth-century predecessors. The situation with Lost in the Funhouse, however, is somewhat more ambiguous. Of the fourteen tales in this work, seven appeared separately in various journals and magazines during the five years leading up to their publication in book form in 1968: introduced by “Author’s Note (1968),” this edition was followed by another in 1969 that included at the end “Seven Additional Author’s Notes (1969)” as a sort of postscript. Although the “Notes” clearly serve the prefatory function of “guiding” the reader, they also play a pivotal role in constituting Lost in the Funhouse as a book by assembling a number of pre-existing texts within a single volume; the “Notes” are thus also comparable to an author’s notebooks or journal elucidating the links between various of his writings that might otherwise be overlooked by the public. In other words,
while the “Notes” qualify as peritext, they also bear the marks of “epitext,” that is (in this case), authorial comments inscribed on a physical support which is distinct from and thus occupies a space different from that on which the work appears – a circumstance that accounts in part for the six relatively autonomous yet intertwining “series” elaborated in Barth’s work, as discussed earlier in this article. The important point here is that Lost in the Funhouse, over and above the tales and “Notes” appearing in their published order, contains between its covers six additional “volumes.”

It is thus on the diffuse juncture between the space of a text and the textual space external to it that so much depends, on this fluctuating and multifaceted paratext that sets off the intratextual from the intertextual. The works chosen for the present study seem even to highlight this feature and to confirm an important connection between paratext and the syntagmatics of writing that, we maintain, casts a new light on the problem of space in the narrative text. Thus, peritext, or the elements that intervene in the interstices of the text, comes within the scope of an internal syntagmatics of writing, while epitext, i.e. material of editorial, allographic or authorial origin bearing on a given work, but not included within the graphic space of that work, concerns an external syntagmatics of writing. In a word, analysis of a text in terms of the syntagmatics of writing accentuates the interface between the intratextual and the intertextual.

Up to this point, emphasis has been laid on space in the narrative text according to the relations of the written sign with its environment, either within the same graphic space or in its connection with the space outside, and this has led us, through the prominent position of paratext, to regard narrative space in terms of intertextuality. But we have also seen that internal syntagmatics lends an element of iconicity to a text’s constituents (Pale Fire), and external syntagmatics an element of indexicality (Lost in the Funhouse). To proceed now with the account of space in the narrative text within the semiotic framework that has been adopted here, it is necessary to refer to the symbolic. In the semiotics of Peirce, the icon, which is based on a resemblance or similarity of qualities between the sign and its object (whether or not this object actually exists), and the index, with a relation of contiguity by which the object is related to the sign through dynamic action, are distinguished from the symbol, a conventional or arbitrary sign, due to the fact that the symbol exists by virtue of the connection made by the symbol-using mind: “A Symbol is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas” (Collected Papers, § 2. 249). It is neither possible nor necessary in these pages to elucidate Peircean semiotics or, in any extensive way, its implications for literature. What does need to be pointed out, however, is that with regard to space in the narrative text, written signs in their symbolic dimension are less dependent on graphic features and their distribution on the material support than are signs appearing in contexts where the syntagmatics of writing accentuates either the iconic or the indexical.

A work of particular interest in this connection is Herman Melville’s Moby-Dick (1851), a novel with deep roots in the medieval liber mundi tradition but which, in the wake of post-romantic developments, is deprived of the totalizing intent of the absolute Book grounded in medieval thought, becoming a fragmented and plural book or, in Richard H. Brodhead’s words, “an encyclopedia of extracts.” My argument, firstly, is that attempts to represent Moby Dick in any mimetic sense are largely fruitless. In “The Whiteness of the Whale” (Ch. 42), for instance, Ishmael states “I almost despair of putting it in a comprehensible form” (287), and an entire chapter, “Of the Monstrous Pictures of
Whales” (Ch. 55), is devoted to the inadequacy of pictorial representations of whales. Even more scientific approaches to gaining knowledge of the whale prove disappointing, as in “The Tail” (Ch. 86): “Dissect him as I may, then, I but go skin deep; I know him not, and never will. But if I know not even the tail of this whale, how understand his head? much more, how comprehend his face, when face he has none?” (488).

Unknowable by direct observation, the whale is provided at various points in the novel with texts that seek to render it accessible by human intelligence. Hence, the “Etymology” and “Extracts” that serve as an introduction to the novel, the very important mise en abyme of the story of Jonah and the Whale in “The Sermon” (Ch. 9) and the elaborate attempt, in “Cetology” (Ch. 32), to transform the whale into a “volume” by classifying it according to a “bibliographic system”: “According to magnitude I divide the whales into three primary BOOKS (subdivisible into Chapters), and these shall comprehend them all, both small and large” (231).

However, such attempts to render the whale knowable by “textualizing” it, by superimposing on it a human language, meet with limited success, for the whale seems to bear an inaccessible message expressed in a language of its own. Ishmael notes, in “The Blanket” (Ch. 68), that the “linear marks” on the skin of the whale “are hieroglyphical; that is if you call those mysterious cyphers on the walls of pyramids hieroglyphics, then that is the proper word to use in this connection,” and he continues: “I was much struck with a plate representing the old Indian characters chiselled on the hieroglyphic palisades on the banks of the Upper Mississippi. Like those mystic rocks, too, the mystic-marked whale remains indecipherable” (412-413). The decipherability of the whale’s language is further put in doubt in “The Praire” (Ch. 79), devoted to the physiognomy and phrenology of the whale, where it is asked: “Has the Sperm Whale ever written a book, spoken a speech? No, his great genius is declared in his doing nothing particular to prove it. It is moreover declared in his pyramidal silence” (454). The resistance of the whale to human intelligence, its “message” to man, so to speak, is perhaps best characterized by Ahab who, in his obsessional hatred of Moby Dick, sees in it an “unreasoning mask,” an “inscrutable thing” with, perhaps, “naught beyond”: “All visible objects... are but as pasteboard masks” (“The Quarterdeck” [Ch. 36], 262).

In Moby-Dick, then, there are two semantic movements, one gesturing toward an adequation between human signs and the order of nature, the other being an attempt to recover the “meaning” of natural signs; both movements, as the quotations above suggest, are foiled, so that a gap emerges between human signs and natural signs. To designate this disparity between the two orders, we adopt the felicitous neologism “diabolic,” a term applied by André Bleikasten to the novel as the other face of “symbolic” (from the Greek symbolon: “thing thrown together”). Many factors contribute to the semantic particularities of Melville’s text, but, as hinted at in the full title of the work, Moby-Dick; or, The Whale, perhaps none more so than the relative but persistent indistinction between Moby Dick and whales as a general class of beings, between the denotatum of the sign and the qualities predicated of that denotatum, with the consequence that, in part, the represented yields to or is eclipsed by the representative.

There is, however, a third element to be taken into account which is that, according to Ishmael, when the terms of his method are applied to an ant or a flea, they “might justly be deemed unwarrantably grandiloquent. But when Leviathan is the text, the case is altered” (“The Fossil Whale” [Ch. 104], 566; my emphasis). This phrase is of capital importance, for it makes explicit one of the key features of the novel, namely, that the
whale is a vehicle for representation rather than an object of representation. It is in “A Bower in the Arsacides” (Ch. 103), however, that this idea takes on substance, producing numerous repercussions throughout the rest of the work. In this richly allusive chapter, Ishmael relates how a whale washed ashore on a Pacific island visited by him some years prior to the voyage of the Pequod and reduced to its “unconditional skeleton” had been transformed by the natives into a temple, a “worshipped skeleton.” Here, in place of the whale marked with indecipherable hieroglyphs mentioned above, is a whale whose “vertebræ were carved with Arsacidean annals, in strange hieroglyphics” by the priests of the island (560). But the skeleton also forms part of a bower and, overgrown by vegetation, it becomes, under the effects of the sunlight, a sort of loom: “Through the lacings of the leaves, the great sun seemed a flying shuttle weaving the unwearied verdure. Oh, busy weaver! unseen weaver!... Yet, as the ever-woven verdant warp and woof intermixed and hummed around him, the mighty idler seemed the cunning weaver; himself all woven over with the vines; every month assuming greener, fresher verdure; but himself a skeleton. Life folded Death; Death trellised Life; the grim god wived with youthful Life, and begat him curly-headed glories” (561). And finally, the skeleton is assimilated to a labyrinth: “To and fro I [Ishmael] paced before this skeleton – broke through the ribs – and with a ball of Arsacidean twine, wandered, eddied long amid its many winding, shaded colonades and arbors. But soon my line was out; and following it back, I emerged from the opening where I entered. I saw no living thing within; naught was there but bones” (561-562).

Reduced to its “unconditional skeleton,” the whale as hieroglyph, loom and labyrinth stands as a textual metaphor for *Moby-Dick*. Considerable commentary on the novel would be necessary to develop this idea and to show how innumerable meanings throughout the text are “woven” out of the whale, how the whale forms a sort of “framework” for the elaboration of the novel. The point to be stressed here is that, since the whale is unrepresentable (due to the failure of the symbolic, as suggested above), it is replaced by the Arsacidean whale, that is, by a simulacrum out of which *Moby-Dick* is generated: the skeleton, reconstituted, is an icon that acts both as a model for the analogy of relations and as a metasign.

Here again, the intratextual appears as the key to space in the narrative text, although the emphasis in this case lies with a network of semantic relations that is less dependent on graphic space than the semantic relations developed in the other works examined in this article. This being the case, it may seem remarkable to see the re-emergence of the iconic which, in our observations on *Pale Fire*, was associated with the internal syntagmatics of writing. It is also true, however, that the indexical enters into *Moby-Dick* through the large number of references, allusions, etc. that it includes, even though this work does not seem to accentuate the external syntagmatics of writing that characterizes *Lost in the Funhouse*. In fact, while we have sought to draw a distinction between types of space in narrative according to criteria defined by the iconic, the indexical and the symbolic, none of these types excludes the others, but rather stands out as relatively more prominent, more determinant, in the configuration of a given text and its mode of signification.
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NOTES

1. I wish to thank Thomas Dutoit for his thoughtful reading of this article and for his perceptive suggestions.
2. See Fludernik, 1996, 178-221, where reflectorization, derived by Franz Stanzel from his earlier “figural narrative situation” (persönale Erzählsituation), is contrasted with figuralization, which Fludernik, partly with reference to Ann Banfield’s “empty deictic center,” qualifies as “the reflectorial equivalent of camera-eye narrative” (198), characterized by “consonance,” a term coined by Dorrit Cohn to designate a discourse in which the narrator fuses with the consciousness that s/he narrates. The dissonance we see in figuralization here is one result of graphic discontinuity.
3. To speak of description in prose fiction as “referential” is admittedly reductive, given the numerous forms of description and their various narrative functions. However, as emerges from Gerhard Hoffmann’s exhaustive study of space in the English and American novel, space is inextricably bound up with referentiality once “lived space” (gelebte Raum) is viewed either as “perceptual space” (Anschauungsraum), “space of action” (Aktionsraum) or “mediated space” (gestimmte Raum) (Hoffmann, 1978).
4. For a fuller account of Harris’s Signs of Writing, see Pier, 1997.
5. I borrow this term, which refers to the interpretation of linguistic signs by means of nonlinguistic systems of signs, from Jakobson, 1959, 233.
7. Although she does not frame her argument specifically in terms of indexicality, Monika Fludernik deals with the latter two questions (among others) using categories that are largely indexical in nature (Fludernik, 1993, 1996).
9. According to Gibson, interactive fiction “makes the user choose from among a set of radiating possibilities as readers of novels cannot” (1996, 276). This is a revealing statement, for even a “linear” reading of detective fiction, for example, draws one into conjectures on the “radiating possibilities” generated by the text.
10. Relating space in the narrative text in this way to intertextuality results in a partial rearticulation of the five types of “transtextuality” identified in Genette, 1982, 7ff.: intertextuality (quotation, allusion, etc.); paratextuality; metatextuality (commentary); hypertextuality (transformation or imitation); architextuality (taxonomy and “horizon of expectations”). This classification goes from the “immanent” to the “transcendent,” and while Genette’s skillful employment of these categories demonstrates their ultimate interdependence, it is not predicated on the intratextual and the intertextual.
11. For a valuable account of this aspect of Moby-Dick, see Bleikasten, 1991.
12. Ibid., 388; see also p. 380, where the author suggests that one of the best introductions to Moby-Dick is the chapter in Michel Foucault’s Les Mots et les choses entitled “La prose du monde,” where it is explained that the medieval episteme of “resemblance” shows us “comment le monde doit se replier sur lui-même, se redoubler, se réfléchir ou s’enchaîner pour que les choses puissent se ressembler.” It seems to me that the chapter “Représenter” should also be mentioned, as here it is explained how, under the influence of scientific thought from the seventeenth century onwards, the relation of the sign to its content came to be put in doubt.
13. Alluded to here is Peirce’s “diagrammatic” iconicity (e.g., “Epilogue” as the “tail” of Moby-Dick) and metaphors, that is to say, icons “which represent the representative character of a
representamen by representing a parallelism in something else” (e. g., Arsacidean twine/Ariadne’s thread), as opposed to imaginal icons (identity photos, etc.) (cf. Collected Papers, § 2. 227).

ABSTRACTS

This article sets out a syntagmatics of the narrative text that departs from the notion of the "linearity" of the signifier. The space concerned, which is also not that of description, for example, is bound up with graphic space as it is deployed in texts such as the Dos Passos "Newsreel" or Nabokov’s discontinuously articulated Pale Fire. While space as it is manipulated in these texts corresponds to an internal syntagmatics that accentuates the iconic, in Barth’s Lost in the Funhouse, composed of parallel and partially overlapping "series" of narratives, textual space is developed according to an external syntagmatics and follows an indexical principle. With Melville’s Moby-Dick, space is related less to the graphic features of the text than it is to the symbolic function of the sign and the network of semantic relations woven out of the whale as "representative," the whale being a "vehicle" that acts both as a model for the analogy of relations and as a metasign, thus serving as the principle structural metaphor in the novel. The forms of space as conceived here are elaborated along the juncture between the intratextual and the intertextual

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Rhématique/Thématique, ou les élans de la syntaxe

Pierre Gault

1 Les questions qui vont suivre pourraient s’inscrire dans la continuité du colloque consacré à “Cliché et Violence” organisé par le Groupe de Recherches Anglo-Américaines de Tours en septembre 1995.1 Plusieurs communications construites sur le prétexte de mouvements idéologiques (discours de la Revanche avant la première guerre mondiale, ou argumentation de la Political Correctness) se sont intéressées à la façon dont l’usage délibéré ou spontané de clichés et de stéréotypes contribuait à modeler la doxa d’une époque. Donc à construire une “réalité” si crédible que dans le premier cas en particulier elle devait se révéler performatique. Plusieurs études consacrées à des textes littéraires ont examiné de plus près la morphologie du cliché et analysé diverses contraintes exercées sur le discours par l’usage de formules dites préconstruites véhiculant ce que l’on pourrait appeler du prêt-à-penser, et les conséquences diverses qui s’ensuivent.

2 Lors des discussions, il est apparu à plusieurs reprises que ce qui était dit du cliché pourrait l’être aussi bien de la valeur dénotative du signe dans la mesure où, comme pour le cliché, l’acquiescement implicite sur la stabilité du lexique à la fois reflète et construit une certaine réalité du monde. Dans cette vision que l’on peut lire comme réduction ou comme élargissement, le cliché ne serait en somme qu’une expression développée et spectaculaire du potentiel idéologique véhiculé par le dénotatif, une célébration triomphante de la doxa. Ceci explique qu’il soit difficile de parler du cliché autrement qu’en le situant dans le cadre d’un débat idéologique et en constatant ses effets. Il en est de la littérature comme de la politique, et la littérature ne tient que de sa capacité à manipuler ou à subvertir cet acquiescement idéologique, et ceci est vrai en particulier pour la littérature moderne et contemporaine, en général peu encline à faire la louange de l’époque. S’il y a fonction poétique du langage, elle ne peut exister que dans la remise en cause nécessairement violente du confort de la doxa.

3 Je voudrais, à partir de ces évidences, schématiser la question qui m’intéresse en réduisant autant qu’il est possible l’importance du contenu et en portant une attention presque exclusive à l’arrangement syntaxique de la phrase, seule possibilité de donner aux mots la chance de changer de sens. Pour ce faire, on peut adopter des méthodes
radicales, celles de l'Oulipo, par exemple, ou transgresser le code comme le fait Cummings en brisant l'unité morphologique du signe. Je ne considèrerai ici que des procédures plus traditionnelles, ne mettant en cause la stabilité du signe qu'en rappelant le code. Les écarts à la norme seront ainsi plus mesurables.

4 Avant de proposer à notre réflexion une série de fragments empruntés à différents auteurs rencontrés à l'occasion d'études de textes, je souhaite prendre quelques précautions méthodologiques.

5 La première à l'égard de la linguistique dont je ferai un usage abusif en exploitant les aspects les plus spectaculaires de deux notions, sachant que ces notions donnent lieu à des variations délicates, parfois contradictoires selon les écoles. Il s'agit de l'opposition Rhématique/Thématique telle qu'elle se trouve définie par Adamczewski et Delmas (1982), ou encore Phase 1/Phase 2, formulation qui peut sembler moins cryptique et qui a l'avantage de marquer la hiérarchie des deux mouvements. Adamczewski montre l'importance que joue dans l'analyse des langues l'opposition entre ce qu'il appelle une "saisie" Rhématique non-présupposée : la phase 1, et une saisie Thématique impliquant un pré-construct : la phase 2. Pour le littéraire, la syntaxe la plus facilement repérable correspond à la saisie Thématique. Elle donne lieu, en effet, à des arrangements contraints qui permettent de postuler un acquiescement préalable avant même d'avoir examiné le contenu sémantique. Par contraste, l'ordre Rhématique correspondra plutôt au déploiement prospectif d'une prédication en apparence libre de toute histoire préalable. Parmi les structures désignées comme pré-construites, je retiendrai celles qui me paraissent correspondre à des enjeux facilement argumentables dans le discours littéraire. Ainsi les mots composés, substantifs ou adjectifs, les génitifs en "s" (dits "cas possessif") préférés à la construction correspondante développée en "of", le choix de l'épithète plutôt que de l'attribut, ces exemples correspondant dans le texte à de véritables signaux, et indiquant sans équivoque que quelque chose se trame au niveau du sens.

6 Ma seconde précaution concerne le choix des fragments. Je m'aperçois en effet que tous les extraits choisis correspondent à des moments de vacillement du sens, des moments où le discours de raison fait faux bond. Il s'agira de personnages surpris par le désir ou encore accédant à une confrontation avec la réalité de la mort dans la confusion d'une intériorisation troublée. Je profiterai de cette inquiétude méthodologique pour définir mon hypothèse de travail et en laisser voir les limites.

7 A la suite d'une longue pratique de la lecture de textes pour la plupart du XXème siècle, pratique conduite en collaboration avec un linguiste nous nous sommes aperçus que l'articulation d'une phase sur l'autre correspondait presque toujours à un enjeu décisif dans l'accès à l'interprétation, comme si consciemment ou inconsciemment, selon les cas, se jouait là un débat ontologique ou les fragments d'un tel débat. Bien évidemment la question se pose de savoir si le choix des extraits ne truque pas déjà les données de l'hypothèse et, au bout du compte, tout cela pourrait n'être rien de plus qu'une entreprise paranoïaque pour rationaliser un heureux concours de circonstances.

8 Pour ouvrir le débat et mieux en définir les données et les enjeux, je proposerai un exemple simple emprunté à Ada de Vladimir Nabokov. L'avantage de commencer par Nabokov, est que chez cet auteur “tyrannique”, le lecteur est confortablement guidé jusqu’au point où il doit s’égayer :

He discovered her hands (forget that nail-biting business). The pathos of the carpus, the grace of the phalanges demanding helpless genuflexions, a mist of
Dans cet extrait où Van, narrateur vieilli, raconte avec l’émotion que l’on sait l’histoire de sa propre vie, nous retrouvons le jeune garçon en extase devant les mains de sa compagne. Après avoir introduit l’expérience par une invitation herméneutique faussement naïve, “He discovered her hands”, et avant de basculer dans un délire poétique et de s’émerveiller du pathos des carpes et de la grâce des phalanges, le narrateur, dans une parenthèse, demande à sa partenaire et en même temps au lecteur d’oublier la fâcheuse habitude qu’avait la jeune fille de se ronger les ongles : “Forget that nail-biting business”. Une fois oublié ce disgracieux inconvénient, la célébration pourra commencer et Ada, fidèle un moment à l’amour courtois, pourra célébrer sa longue, longue main blanche : “I love when you kiss my elongated white hand”.

Voici donc, dans cette parenthèse, un exemple de pré-construit : le nom et l’adjectif composé sont pris dans la contrainte d’une syntaxe qui donne à l’expression la forme d’un allant de soi sémantique. Le caractère composé et auto-suffisant de la formule est scellé comme c’est souvent le cas chez Nabokov par une allitération interne. Le lecteur, avant de s’interroger sur le contenu, est donc averti d’une connivence et se retrouve à côté du narrateur et de l’auteur pour stigmatiser cette inesthétique manie.

On aura remarqué, cependant, que “nail-biting business” n’est pas exactement un syntagme figé, c’est-à-dire une formule composée passée dans la langue au point qu’on en oublie les constituants. Elle se donne les allures d’une “set phrase”, mais le mot “business” préféré à “habit”, par exemple, sème le trouble et révèle le subterfuge : il s’agit de “Thématique” en trompe l’œil. En fait, la fonction de la mise entre parenthèses révèle sa fonction rhétorique. Comme les ordres de Barbe-Bleue, elle exhibe les termes de l’interdit, trop soulignés pour être oubliés, et comme le veut la loi, c’est de l’interdit même que naît le désir. Ce que Nabokov donne à lire, dans cette formule, et que le lecteur doit garder en mémoire, c’est la proximité de l’enfance, avec ses angoisses et ses tourments. Il comprendra ainsi pourquoi le mot “pathos” ouvre la description émue d’une main où se lisent sous la chair tendre la fragilité et la grâce des petits os énumérés dans une psalmodie aux accents latins : “the pathos of the carpus, the grace of the phalanges, etc...”, lyrisme précieux se substituant à la trivialité de la parenthèse. Mais pour ce qui nous intéresse ici, c’est surtout au contraste syntaxique que nous prêterons attention, à cette déclinaison de constructions en “of” qui fait suite à l’invitation à la découverte, “He discovered her hands”, sémantisme et syntaxe se conjuguant dans cette exploration clairement Rhématique permise par la mise à l’écart de l’histoire.

Reformulons à partir de cet exemple l’hypothèse selon laquelle se jouerait dans l’articulation du Rhématique sur le Thématique, l’émergence lyrique de la voix s’épanouissant ici dans le poétique. Ce moment où s’ébranlent les certitudes et où se libèrent les pulsions de désir et de mort. L’exemple emprunté à Nabokov, s’il souligne explicitement un enjeu possible de l’usage délibéré du pré-construit comme tremplin pour une syntaxe libre, ne permet cependant pas de théoriser la question. La pression sémantique exercée sur le lecteur est en effet trop forte pour que l’assemblage Acquiescement/Rupture puisse apparaître dans sa pureté formelle. Il s’agit cependant d’un exemple éloquent qui nous aura permis de fixer nos définitions.
Il est sans doute plus délicat de repérer le mécanisme lorsque la lecture n'est guidée par aucun commentaire, comme dans ce court extrait de “So much Water so Close to Home” emprunté à Raymond Carver.

In the end they went ahead and set up the camp. They built a fire and drank their whiskey. When the moon came up, they talked about the girl. Someone said they should keep the body from drifting away. They took their flashlights and went back to the river. One of the men - it might have been Stuart - waded in and got her. He took her by the fingers and pulled her into shore. He got some nylon cord and tied it to her wrist and then looped the rest around a tree.

The next morning, they cooked breakfast, drank coffee, and drank whiskey, and then split up to fish. That night they cooked fish, cooked potatoes, drank coffee, drank whiskey, then took their cooking things and eating things back down to the river and washed them where the girl was.” (Carver, 1985, 236)

Rappelons le motif et les conditions d’énonciation : il s’agit dans cette nouvelle de la trouble aventure de quatre pêcheurs en eau claire qui découvrent en arrivant au bord de la rivière le corps d’une fille nue retenu par des branches. Très vite, le lecteur s’aperçoit que l’intérêt ne vient pas de l’histoire, mais du récit de seconde main livré par l’épouse de l’un des quatre protagonistes. Il ne s’est, semble-t-il, rien passé au bord de la rivière, mais il se passe incontestablement quelque chose dans la tête de la narratrice lorsqu’elle s’efforce de reprendre, à peu de chose près, le récit supposé de Stuart, son mari. Chez Carver, nous le savons, c’est toujours dans cet “à peu de chose près” que se passe l’essentiel.

Il ne s’agit pas ici d’argumenter une interprétation de cette nouvelle, et nous admettrons que le récit de l’épouse, entre plaidoyer et confus e réprobation, laisse apparaître les signes d’un grand trouble, à la mesure du trouble assurément éprouvé par le quatuor lors de ce weekend en compagnie de la fille nue. Rappelons pour la bonne marche de la démonstration que dans le discours de l’épouse, la nudité de la fille est pudiquement évoquée par une litote : “No clothes on her at all” (p. 236). Ni sujet ni verbe dans cette phrase, la narratrice outrée ne pouvant ni ne voulant apparaître à côté de l’insupportable objet du désir masculin. Beaucoup moins outrés, les quatre pêcheurs vont faire le nécessaire pour que le corps ne dérive pas dans le courant : “Someone said they should keep the body from drifting away”.

Pour comprendre l’invitation, et j’ajouterai pour comprendre où se situe Carver, le lecteur n’a pas le choix. Il doit suivre pas à pas le cheminement de la phrase et accepter d’interrompre en route l’impulsion syntaxique qui l’entraîne de “keep” à “from” pour lire derrière la préoccupation manifeste, ne pas laisser dériver le cadavre, le projet plus trouble de garder le corps (“to keep the body”).

On a ici l’exemple d’une lecture exclusivement construite sur la superposition presque imperceptible de deux syntaxes, mais il est difficile d’assigner à “to keep” plutôt qu’à “to keep from” l’une ou l’autre de nos étiquettes. Peut-être pourrions-nous dire que le discours manifeste imprime à la lecture un ordre plutôt Thématique qui n’impliquerait aucune surprise. L’interruption marquée par l’arrêt à “to keep” apparaîtrait donc comme une sorte de lapsus de la narratrice provoquant une réactivation de la valeur absolue de ce verbe dissimulé dans l’expression convenue “to keep from”. Ici, nous quittons cependant la rigueur linguistique pour ouvrir nos deux notions à des prolongements métaphoriques, Thématique devenant l’équivalent de stabilité et de non-ambiguïté, Rhématique ouvrant sur des perspectives plus troubles. Plutôt que de chercher à plaquer
à la lettre les deux termes, retenons surtout l’effet de rupture dessinant deux régimes de lecture, l’un rendant compte des péripéties, l’autre donnant accès, comme par lapsus, au commentaire quasi-inconscient de la narratrice. On peut lire dans ce commentaire livré par la syntaxe, la jalousie confuse qu’elle éprouve à reconstruire la scène en y mêlant sa propre frustration et le désir masculin imaginé et revécu.

On ne prend guère de risques en proposant cette lecture : une fois l’impulsion donnée, Carver en récupère les effets pour dessiner sans ambiguïté le trouble de la narratrice qui ne sait plus très bien qui a fait quoi : “One of the men, it might have been Stuart, waded in and got her. He took her by the fingers and pulled her into shore”. En adoptant le même principe, on verra derrière l’évocation descriptive de la scène, la brutalité sauvage de “got” et “took”, la promiscuité des deux verbes entraînant la lecture vers cette réactivation inconsciente, autre lapsus livré dans l’ordre métonymique du discours. Si l’on a ainsi accepté de lire “he took her” avant de compléter le geste, on pourra reconstruire toute la violence des sentiments confus de l’épouse/narratrice. En même temps que s’imposent les termes sans équivoque d’un viol fantasmé, se dessine la vision troublante et tendre du mari prenant la jeune fille par le bout des doigt, avec une odieuse délicatesse (vision que l’on pourrait qualifier de Rhématique). Dans la syntaxe, le lecteur est ainsi alerté par cette “relance Rhématique” dans l’ordre Thématique de l’anecdotique. En revanche, dans la psyché de la narratrice, c’est l’inverse qui se produit, et l’anecdote n’apparaît que comme surcharge Rhématique au récit latent qui véhicule les termes sans équivoque du désir masculin dans sa cruauté Thématique (pour dire les choses autrement, elle connaît les hommes et tout particulièrement le sien) et la vision troublante et discrète de l’invitation amoureuse, d’autant plus familière que sa formulation paraît empreinte de nostalgie.

Une fois de plus, il a donc fallu que le lecteur résiste à la violence du pré-construit qui entraîne la syntaxe vers l’univoque. A ce prix, il peut accéder à la constante équivoque qui préside au récit se pliant ainsi aux motivations confuses de la narratrice. La difficulté de lire Carver et le charme de son écriture proviennent en grande partie de cette nécessité dans laquelle se trouve le lecteur d’accéder à la violence sourde et à la tendresse des personnages et de s’y identifier au prix d’une sorte de contre-violence à l’endroit de la contrainte exercée par le “Thématique”. On a l’impression ici que les deux “phases” se sont imbriquées dans ce moment de confusion et que notre lecture se construit au moment où la différence entre les deux est difficilement tenable tant syntaxe et sens se trouvent en tension.

Avant d’abandonner provisoirement Carver, arrêtons-nous à cette petite épiphanie du pauvre, moment d’émotion de notre aride citation, pour apporter un peu d’affect dans tout ce formalisme : “When the moon came up, they talked about the girl”. Dans ce simple énoncé prédicatif, nous apprenons qu’à un certain moment de la soirée, la conversation a porté sur la fille. La concordance entre l’apparition de la lune et la conversation (dont nous ne savons rien) est présentée comme un détail anecdotique inscrit dans la chronologie des événements. Le lecteur non dupe reconstruit autour des ingrédients fournis (l’eau, la lune, les hommes, la fille) une symbolique lourdement chargée (nécessairement Thématique) qui interroge la maigreur du “when” exhibé en début de phrase comme seul rapport de causalité entre l’heure et la conversation. On notera au passage l’ambiguïté de ce “came up” qui affecte une neutralité descriptive mais révèle une appropriation implicite en accord avec la charge symbolique de la scène. Le lecteur se trouve donc guidé par une syntaxe ouverte en trompe l’œil et arrêté par une sollicitation
Thématique dont il doit reconstruire les termes pour avoir accès à la psyché de la narratrice. On pourrait parler ici d’une “relance Thématique” qui permet la relecture de la phrase dans le sens d’une ironie au statut toujours trouble chez Carver.

Ce bref passage par Nabokov et Carver a permis de baliser l’espace qui sépare une exploitation stricte des deux définitions d’une appréciation plus large, menacée par le métaphorique. Il a permis aussi d’isoler le même geste de lecture, qu’il soit ostensiblement provoqué comme c’est presque toujours le cas chez Nabokov, ou que la sollicitation puisse passer inaperçue, au point d’exclure le lecteur passif. Pour tenter de théoriser ce geste et d’en saisir les enjeux, il est nécessaire d’examiner quelques variations plus schématiques. La difficulté de l’entreprise tient d’abord à la nécessité de redéfinir pour chaque exemple un contexte particulier qui exigerait normalement une analyse soigneuse. Cette analyse sera considérée ici comme implicite et je me contenterai d’en rappeler les aspects les plus utiles. Avant de passer à cette étude de cas, et pour éviter de donner l’impression d’un inventaire hétéroclite, je voudrais rappeler ce que ces extraits ont en commun. Tous apparaissent à un moment d’opacité du récit, et tous se déroulent selon le même protocole que l’on pourrait sommairement définir ainsi : d’abord, un passage descriptif situant les circonstances anecdotiques et installant personnage ou narrateur dans son cadre référentiel ; puis, au moment où le trouble s’installe, interférence des deux phases, creusant la surface apparentement lisse du texte pour donner lieu à une révélation herméneutique. Dans l’extrait de Couples, de John Updike, un père occupé à enterrer le hamster de sa fille est brusquement saisi par la terreur de la mort. Chez Annie Dillard, révélation du même effroi à l’occasion de la rencontre fortuite avec une vache couchée dans un champ. Chez William Faulkner, dans As I Lay Dying, impossible confrontation de Tull avec le cadavre de Addie Bundren installée dans son cercueil.

Le narrateur de Couples introduit brièvement la scène de l’enterrement du hamster en indiquant que Piet a promis à sa fille “a new hamster and a better cage” :

(….) He buried the old hamster in the edge of the woods, near a scattering of scilla, little lilies of wideawake blue, where the earth was soft and peaty. One shovelful did for the grave; two made it deep. The trees were beginning to leaf and the undergrowth was sketchy, still mixed, its threads of green, with winter-bleached dead stalks, delicate as straws, as bird bones. In a motion of the air, the passionless air which passively flows downhill, spring’s terror washed over him. He felt the slow thronging of growth as a tangled hurrying toward death. (Updike, 1970, 90-91)

Voici déjà l’occasion d’entrer dans la problématique qui nous intéresse : quel lecteur est construit par cette indication ? On voit que “new” et “better”, en position d’épithètes, ont pour effet d’assimiler “hamster” et “cage” dans une commune logique, celle du jouet qu’on va remplacer. Souvent, le plus souvent, l’épithète a cette vertu de prédéterminer le nom, alors que dans un schéma attributif, on prend en considération le nom avant de décider de lui attribuer certaines qualités. Ici, on voit bien que l’effet de cette juxtaposition est de neutraliser la dimension de pathos éventuellement contenue dans la notion de cage, surtout quand le prisonnier est mort. En jouant sur le “Thématique” et en imposant discrètement l’idée d’un hamster neuf, Updike prépare déjà le terrain pour le retournement qui va suivre. Le personnage est aussitôt installé dans une dimension d’insouciance que l’auteur mine déjà, toujours discrètement, en situant la scène à la lisière du bois. Le bon lecteur voit se mettre en place, derrière les éléments réalistes du paysage, un décor symbolique propice aux révélations. Il faudrait sans doute parler ici
d’une sollicitation intertextuelle, équivalent sémantique de ce que nous cherchons à traquer dans la syntaxe.

Le personnage de Piet, lui, n’est pas sensé lire le paysage en termes symboliques et s’attarde à faire de la botanique. Non content en effet de remarquer les scilles, il les redéfinit au passage, leur prêtant une attention à la fois sensorielle et distanciée, les décrivant comme des “little lilies of a wide-awake blue”. Pour qui ne saurait rien des scilles, cette définition serait plutôt “Rhématique” dans la mesure où elle semble témoigner d’un regard attentif aux objets du monde. Pour le personnage, il s’agit d’une fleur connue, et sa redéfinition, lue comme “Thématique”, trahirait plutôt le désir confus de se tenir à distance de ses émotions en les déplaçant sur un objet moins compromettant que le hamster. L’ambiguïté de la situation pourrait se lire dans l’adjectif composé “wideawake” qui imprime son ordre syntaxique dans le sens d’une description réaliste soulignant le bleu exceptionnellement vif des scilles mais révèle le geste inconscient de se détourner de la mort au moment où il s’agit d’enterrer le hamster.

Piet persiste cependant à poser sur le paysage un regard distancié et esthétique, lisible dans l’utilisation métadiscursive de l’adjectif “sketchy” emprunté au champ lexical de l’appréciation artistique : “The trees were beginning to leaf and the undergrowth was sketchy, still mixed, its threads of green, with winter-bleached dead stalks delicate as straws, as bird bones.”

Arrêtons-nous à ce moment décisif du texte, décisif parce que tout se joue dans cette description. Le lecteur suit le regard de Piet au moment où il admire et célèbre les signes discrets du renouvellement de la nature. La syntaxe, paratactique, mime la découverte euphorique des détails jusqu’à cette formule de type pré-construit inscrivant dans une petite vignette les derniers vestiges de l’hiver : “winter-bleached dead stalks”. La syntaxe avoue le caractère délibérément condensé de l’image et en même temps provoque une impression de déjà vu, le lecteur retrouvant avec un plaisir qu’il partage avec le personnage des impressions fugitives de début de printemps. La comparaison “winter-bleached” n’est pas à proprement parler un syntagme figé, mais le trait d’union donne le change et impose l’ordre rassurant de la succession des saisons. La comparaison qui suit, “delicate as straws”, vient redoubler l’auto-satisfaction de Piet d’avoir su remarquer un détail aussi précieux. “As”, toujours plus souple que “like”, et cette paronomase qui ménage le passage de “stalk” à “straw”, vont dans le sens d’une évidente complaisance. “Straw”, il faut bien le dire, n’ajoute rien à “stalk”, et cette insignifiance invite à se tourner vers le poétique plutôt que vers le référentiel. C’est ce que fait Piet en cherchant une autre comparaison plus appropriée pour exprimer l’extrême délicatesse de ces tiges desséchées. Profitant de l’élan donné par la syntaxe, il trouve dans la foulée de la première comparaison cette ressemblance avec la fragilité des os d’un oiseau : “delicate as bird bones”. La formule se refermera encore sur du pré-construit comme si l’analogie s’imposait dans l’ordre de la phrase. C’est pourtant dans cet allant-de-soi inspiré par le descriptif que la sérénité précaire du paysage et du personnage va laisser place à l’effroi.

Au bout de la parataxe rassurante entrecoupée de lieux communs esthétisés, marquée par cette ordonancement du pré-construit, apparaît cette formule qui pointe explicitement vers la mort, avec au bout de la dérive poétique l’allitération lourde des deux “b”. Du coup, l’adjectif “dead”, absorbé par la phrase dans l’évocation des “dead stalks” et vidé de sa violence métaphorique, retrouve rétrospectivement cette violence et c’est la terreur générique de la mort qui s’impose : “spring’s terror washed over him”. Le personnage est littéralement cueilli par cette révélation au moment où il se réfugiait dans la célébration
des signes du printemps, au moment le plus lyrique de son émotion esthétique. Paradoxe insupportable, c'est du printemps même que surgit la mort, de la même façon que le pathos avait surgi chez Nabokov de l'enfance prétendument écartée. Cependant le paradoxe n'est pas développé comme un commentaire contradictoire, mais au contraire proposé dans l'ordre Thématique sous la forme condensée d'un oxymore. Comme si Piet avait toujours su, confusément, que le printemps était porteur de mort.

28 Si j'ai pris le temps de suivre pas à pas l'histoire de cette révélation, c'est pour faire saisir l'enjeu d'une stratégie délicate qui consiste à pervertir de l'intérieur l'innocence syntaxique de l'allant de soi en provoquant du jeu dans l'articulation du Rhématique sur le Thématique, ici en introduisant subrepticement du paradoxal là où l'ordre du monde proposait sa vitalité et sa (fausse) sérénité. Le choix de la formule lourdement Thématique - “spring's terror” - permet d'établir un contraste entre syntaxe et contenu, et littéralement d'imposer l'oxymore comme nécessité à la fois intime et absolue. Après cette révélation on verra presque sans transition l'image du père mort de Piet glisser sur toute la scène : “His father's green fond touch” (Updike, 1970, 91). Il faudrait encore s'attarder à cette formule qui conjugue les deux régimes syntaxiques, “fond” venant ajouter au cliché “green touch” une dose d'affect.

29 Je partirai de cette intuition d'un jeu dans l'assemblage des deux régimes pour en proposer une autre modalité chez Annie Dillard :

This is limestone country. That means the dairy farmers lose a cow every few years; the cows, poor things, fall through their pastures when the underground roofs collapse. They break their legs or worse and die there of shock, i guess, or blood loss, or thirst, or else the farmers shoot them there. I once saw one of these cows which had fallen through. (Dillard, 1982, 166)

30 La nouvelle s'ouvre sur une petite leçon de géographie humaine dans laquelle le lecteur apprend sur le mode didactique que les éleveurs de vaches laitières de cette région calcaire perdent une vache de temps en temps parce que le sol se dérobe sous leurs pas. La narratrice manifeste un apitoiement convenu (“poor things”) et précise que l'accident se produit lorsque “the underground roofs collapse”. Inscrite dans le déroulement d'une démonstration causale, la formule est d'abord saisie dans l'ordre syntaxique imprimé par la phrase. Le lecteur accepte sans sourciller l'explication. Ce n'est qu'à seconde lecture ou a posteriori que l'association choquante de “underground” et de “roof” sème le désordre dans l'ordonnance syntaxique. Ce qui se passe cette fois c'est une remise en cause du dénotatif qui veut qu'un toit protège des intempéries et soit de ce fait plutôt en-dessus qu'en-dessous. En même temps que le sol anecdotique de la prairie se dérobe, la stabilité lexicale du monde se défait, préparant l'identification de la narratrice à cette vache morte qui de “poor thing” va s'incarner dans un “she” beaucoup plus compromettant. En filant la métaphore, on pourrait dire que le lecteur (en même temps que la narratrice) ne peut plus s'abriter sous les certitudes lexicales que l'ordre Thématique est sensé proposer et s'expose aux dangers du Rhématique, faisant en l'occurrence l'expérience par procuration de ce que peut être la mort, seul événement, si l'on peut dire, absolument Rhématique puisqu'on ne meurt qu'une fois (il s'agit là, bien entendu d'un usage excessif de la notion).

31 En y réfléchissant, j'en viens à me demander si l'oxymore dont nous avons rappelé la fonction à l'occasion de l'association apparentement scandaleuse de “spring” et “terror” et que nous venons de retrouver dans ces “toits souterrains” ne serait pas, dans une perspective rhétorique, une figure privilégiée ou la figure privilégiée de l'articulation des
deux phases. Car en effet, l’oxymore n’est rien d’autre que la réconciliation paradoxale dans la syntaxe de deux termes sémantiquement contradictoires, ce moment de la phrase où le discours porteur de la doxa vient buter sur une information radicalement nouvelle qui retourne les certitudes métonymiques et ouvre sur le vertige métaphorique. Il est sans doute symptômatique que l’émotion irrépressible et contenue de Van au moment où il prend le poignet de Ada s’exprime aussi par des oxymores qui le transforment en médecin mourant ou en forcené tranquille.

La sollicitation est cependant en général beaucoup plus discrète, et l’interférence des deux phases se joue le plus souvent sans passer par le sémantisme. Nous avons abordé avec Updike et Dillard la question du descriptif en laissant supposer que dans un cas comme dans l’autre, une attention Rhématique, c’est-à-dire une curiosité sans préjugés face au monde, semblait détourner l’attention du lecteur (en même temps que celle du narrateur ou du personnage “focal”), le Thématique faisant inopinément retour pour redresser la lecture vers le lieu du trouble. Demandons-nous maintenant, dans une perspective strictement syntaxique, s’il est possible d’établir une corrélation entre parataxe et hypotaxe et le fonctionnement relatif de nos deux phases.

Il semble que la parataxe, en général associée au métonymique, corresponde le plus souvent au déploiement du réel, dans le sens du “tout dire, tout décrire” de Zola. La description des scilles chez Updike, la leçon d’observation de Dillard iraient dans le sens de cette volonté conscience ou non de saturer de détails la stabilité du terrain comme pour rendre la révélation plus surprenante. Même volonté chez la narratrice de Carver lorsqu’elle redonne avec minutie le programme des quatre pêcheurs sans épargner un seul détail de leur routine quotidienne : “The next morning, they cooked breakfast, drank coffee and drank whisky and then split up to fish”. Ici, le choix de la parataxe semble correspondre à un rythme Rhématique et c’est au lecteur constatant le caractère peu novateur des activités évoquées, de rétablir leur caractère Thématique de stéréotypes (mise à part l’absorption de whisky au petit matin). C’est ce réajustement qui permet de repérer la tension entre syntaxe et contenu et de lire derrière la description les signes d’un désordre. On peut faire la même analyse chez Dillard lorsqu’elle énumère les causes possibles de la mort des vaches prisonnières du sol effondré de leur prairie : “They die there of shock, I guess, or blood loss, or thirst, or else the farmers shoot them there”.

Pour résumer, on pourrait parler de l’effet de liste avec tout ce que cette mise en ordre implique de rationnel et d’euphorique, hors de toute question de contenu. Il n’y a pas en fait de contradiction entre cet usage Rhématique de la parataxe et la présence de moments hypotactiques accentuant la volonté (inconsciente ou non) de rationnaliser. Symptomatiquement, le “and” de liaison se confond facilement avec un “and” de subordination. De même, pour le déploiement du réel sous la forme déjà signalée, “N of N” (Nom de Nom !) par une mise en place progressive des relations par opposition au caractère composé de la structure “N’s N”.

C’est au moment où ce parcours paratactique faillit à sa vocation de mise en ordre que les choses se compliquent. Dans son plaidoyer ambigu, l’épouse mortifiée consacre une énergie démesurée à redécrire les mêmes gestes : “That night, they cooked fish, cooked potatoes, drank coffee, drank whiskey, then took their eating things and cooking things back down to the river where the girl was”. Le descriptif bascule dans le bavardage et la liste des travaux domestiques de ces pêcheurs propres vient buter sur le scandale de la fille nue qui réapparaît comme par hasard en trois petits mots au bout de la ligne. Pas tout à fait par hasard, car “back” dissimulé comme un lapsus aurait dû nous prévenir que
le lieu d’origine des repérages n’a jamais été le camp de base de nos innocents pêcheurs, mais bien le lieu de leurs fantasmes.

36 La description a révélé ici son caractère compensatoire de logorrhée, le Rhématique échouant dans le répétitif et avouant l’imposture du récit édifiant. Même rupture de contrat chez Dillard, si l’on veut bien s’apercevoir que la liste des fins possibles des malheureuses vaches n’est là que pour noyer dans le nombre l’angoisse ouverte par le verbe “to die”, angoisse que révèle l’apparition discrète du sujet dans un “I guess” phatique et superflu qui revêt dans la phrase une ampleur herméneutique.

37 On pourrait presque formuler l’hypothèse que c’est au moment où la syntaxe Rhématique (parataxe descriptive) s’enfonce dans le Thématique (entraînant la lecture dans une redite logorrhéique), que la psyché du personnage focal ou du narrateur perd ses marques et débouche sur une confrontation Rhématique/Thématique qui ne fait plus sens. Le discours viendrait donc buter sur un vide à combler, confrontation vertigineuse avec l’indicible, dans un retour aux origines pré-verbales où rien ne ferait encore sens.

38 On rejoint ici un débat essentiel que Theodor Adorno a cherché à théoriser en définissant en termes linguistiques les choix de l’écriture poétique de Hölderlin. Dans cet essai intitulé “Parataxe”, Adorno explique les raisons du renoncement de Hölderlin à la périodicité syntaxique de type cicéronien et sa quête d’un langage poétique “qui ébranle la catégorie du sens”. La manière dont se trouve définie la fonction du geste poétique pourrait servir de légende à l’impossible confrontation dont nous venons de parler : “Pour autant qu’il est conceptuel et prédicatif, le langage s’oppose à l’expression subjective et grâce à sa généralité, il ramène ce qui doit être exprimé à du donné, à du connu. C’est contre cela que se révoltent les poètes. Sans cesse, ils voudraient incorporer le sujet et son expression au langage jusqu’à la mort de celui-ci” (Aderno, 1984, 336-337).

39 En choisissant la parataxe, le poète se donne un instant l’illusion d’échapper à ce déterminisme de la langue ; c’est ce qu’Adorno appelle “la révolte paratactique contre la synthèse”, mais cette révolte, nécessairement, “trouve sa limite dans la fonction synthétique du langage en général” (ibid.). D’où la nécessité chez Hölderlin d’un geste plus compromettant qui nous entraînerait dans un autre débat.

40 En guise d’exercice d’application, et avant d’essayer de conclure sur la validité de l’entreprise, on trouvera conjuguées dans cette scène de *As I lay dying* les différentes stratégies successivement définies.

> They had laid her in it reversed. Cash made it clock-shaped like this

![](image)

with every joint and seam bevelled and scrubbed with the plane tight as a drum and neat as a sewing basket, and they had laid her in it head to foot so it wouldn’t crush her dress. It was her wedding dress and it had a flare-out bottom, and they had laid her head to foot in it so the dress could be spread out, and they had made her a veil out of a mosquito bar so the auger holes in her face wouldn’t show. (Faulkner, 1963, 70)

41 Tull, l’un des narrateurs de l’histoire, raconte le moment où il se prépare à pénétrer, avec les autres, dans la chambre où repose Addie Bundren, sur l’invitation de Anse debout à la porte. Il a déjà exprimé ses angoisses ontologiques quelques pages plus tôt en répétant que “ça lui flanque la trouille” et l’évocation désordonnée des personnages qui vont et viennent et hésitent à entrer, dans une déclinaison de pronoms anaphoriques où l’on ne sait plus très bien qui est qui (“I”, “he”, “they”, “we”) construit dans la difficulté à lire l’instabilité des repérages ressentie par Tull.
Le jeu, si l’on peut dire, dans toute cette affaire, va consister pour le narrateur-personnage à refuser de prononcer le mot “coffin”, de nommer cet objet, ce qui signifierait accepter une confrontation qu’il n’est pas en mesure d’assumer. Pour dire les choses autrement, Tull refuse (inconsciemment mais vigoureusement) de traiter cet objet comme s’il était passé pour lui du côté du thématique, c’est-à-dire du connu, le maintenant avec une évidente mauvaise foi (toujours inconsciente) du côté du Rhématique. Le cercueil restera donc “it”, l’objet immembrable, d’un bout à l’autre de la description, et que le lecteur ne s’y trompe pas, l’objet dessiné au beau milieu de l’extrait n’est pas un cercueil, mais une horloge de campagne renversée.

Tout le passage est organisé autour de ce pictogramme trompeur et se développe selon une structure syntaxique répétitive reprenant presque dans les mêmes termes la même formule : l’évidente similitude des trois phrases impose leur rapprochement et trahit la dérive que nous venons de qualifier de logorrhéique :

“They had laid her in it reversed”
“and they had laid her in it head to foot”
“and they had laid her head to foot in it”

Première remarque : avec ce “they” réitéré, on comprend que la mort n’est pas l’affaire de Tull mais l’affaire des autres.

Seconde remarque : on constate dans le changement de “reversed” à “head to foot” que la distance que Tull place entre lui-même et le cercueil et son occupante s’est réduite dans le passage d’un terme abstrait à un cliché clairement métonymique. Le syntagme “head to foot” n’est certes qu’une reformulation de “reversed”, mais on voit bien que le désir de ne pas vouloir se sentir concerné de trop près n’est guère tenable et que le cadavre, subrepticement, surgit. La tension de cette situation peut s’exprimer dans les termes qui nous sont maintenant devenus familiers : Tull cherche à se maintenir en équilibre avec une inconsciente mauvaise foi entre ce que les circonstances l’obligent à contempler et ce qu’il ne veut pas voir ; c’est pour cette raison que la formulation adopte un rythme Rhématique, mais que les termes en sont Thématiques. On ne peut en effet parler d’un envers que si l’on postule un endroit. En l’occurrence, rien ne sert de prendre la mort à rebours.

On notera enfin, en revenant aux trois petites formules presque identiques, que le “it”, tenant lieu de cercueil, finit par contenir l’ensemble syntaxique, le cadavre trouvant en quelque sorte sa place dans l’espace construit pour lui, l’ordre de la mort s’imposant enfin aux tergiversations du narrateur.

Revenons maintenant à ce mystérieux pictogramme qui n’est pas un cercueil et à la description soigneuse qui lui sert de légende : “Cash made it clock-shaped like this with every joint and seam bevelled and scrubbed with the plane, tight as a drum, neat as a sewing basket”. Tull, au rythme de la parataxe, explore l’objet qui se trouve devant lui et qu’il désigne du doigt au lecteur. On peut parler ici de discours Rhématique, même si le narrateur a assisté à la fabrication du cercueil. En effet, ce n’est plus tout à fait du même objet qu’il s’agit ; la description du cercueil dorénavant occupé est une redécouverte, et la syntaxe en mime l’exploration. Cependant, la référence à Cash et aux gestes de l’artisan, à la manipulation compétente des outils, transforme l’objet menaçant en un beau travail d’ébénisterie. On retrouve là les vertus euphoriques du descriptif, et on a une fois de plus l’impression que les termes de la description empruntent au régime Thématique. Ce qui manifeste le trouble de Tull, c’est encore la différence entre les deux phases à peine visible dans leur simultanéité.
Cette différence est marquée de manière spectaculaire dans l’emboîtement des deux comparaisons au seuil de la description : la première ne se désigne pas comme telle et indique que l’objet posé là a la forme d’une horloge. “Clock-shaped” est une formule pré-construite qui littéralement permet à Tull de reconstruire le cercueil selon une imagerie familière. Au cas où le lecteur ne saisirait pas exactement à quoi ressemble une horloge, on lui fait un dessin, ici, maintenant dans le présent de la narration et celui de la lecture. Et il se trouve que le meuble, comme pour satisfaire aux commodités de la typographie, se renverse à l’horizontale et que l’innommable objet resurgi comme comparant est ce que la doxa appelle un cercueil.

On a bien l’impression, en appréciant ce jeu, que Faulkner énonce, par la bouche d’un personnage simple garant du bon sens paysan, une petite méditation sur les pouvoirs et les limites du dénotatif. En refusant de nommer l’objet, disons en refusant de nommer métonymiquement la mort, Tull manifeste son caractère d’absolue étrangeté ou du moins le besoin pathétique de faire comme si tout cela lui était étranger. D’où cette confrontation exploratrice et Rhématique à l’objet inconnu aboutissant à un degré zéro de la représentation dans ce “pictogramme”. Cependant, ce que Tull s’obstine à lire sur un mode exploratoire (donc Rhématique) est tristement familier (donc Thématique) pour le lecteur, et c’est encore de l’évident contraste entre les deux régimes que naît la violence de la confrontation à l’inéluctable.

En partant de cet exemple particulièrement spectaculaire, essayons de reprendre l’affirmation posée au début de façon quelque peu péremptoire comme quoi la question du cliché ne serait qu’un cas particulier de celle plus large des rapports entre les signes et le monde. Nommer, c’est donc admettre implicitement que l’on reconnaît. Il y aurait donc théoriquement incompatibilité entre le geste de nommer et celui de découvrir, le Rhématique correspondant alors à un geste de liberté et d’innocence lyrique voué à l’échec, puisque nécessairement rattrapé par le Thématique ou perverti par lui. La différence essentielle entre les deux régimes ne serait donc pas affaire de sémantisme, mais bien affaire de syntaxe et de contraste, et cette Phase I marquerait donc la trace d’un mouvement d’indépendance qui, pour dire les choses de manière positive, ouvrirait la voie au poétique, à la recherche d’un autre langage.

Conséquence de cette différence, pourrait-on dire que le régime Thématique est essentiellement de type métonymique et le Rhématique de type métaphorique, même si la frontière entre les deux phases peut être traversée par d’audacieuses métonymies et des métaphores-clichés. D’où l’importance pour le littéraire de cette frontière portant des noms différents selon l’approche choisie : Thématique/Rhématique, hypotactique/paratactique, métonymique/métaphorique, référentiel/poétique, lapsus/condensation, névrose/psychose. (Il s’agit là de questions, posées selon une ordonnance qui ne respecte pas la hiérarchie inverse, Rhème/Thème, Phase 1/Phase 2, qui logiquement marque la réflexion linguistique). Regardons, par exemple, les deux comparaisons qui viennent spontanément à l’esprit de Tull après qu’il a décrit comme un beau meuble le cercueil où repose Addie : “Tight as a drum”, “neat as a sewing basket”. Ces deux formules s’inscrivent dans l’exploration Thématique de l’objet non nommé avec cet usage d’attributs célébrant sa perfection et l’euphorie de la dire. Dans le droit fil de cet enthousiasme ébéniste, il faut bien le dire déplacé compte tenu des circonstances, deux clichés se greffent sur les deux attributs, dont le motif avoué est heuristique : souligner par une référence à la doxa le bien fondé de cette admiration. On voit en même temps que le texte vacille entre les deux régimes, puisque du Thématique vient au secours du
Rhématique comme pour cautionner le personnage dans son refus de regarder la mort en face. Le brouillage des deux régimes est une fois de plus source et symptôme du trouble et les comparants rassurants livrés par tout ce préconstruit : l’horloge, le tambour et la boîte à ouvrage retrouvent leur vivacité métaphorique et symbolique pour ramener le regard du personnage vers la mort et la morte. Comme si ces lapsus apparus dans le champ métonymique se rejoignaient ou se condensaient dans la verticalité du texte pour ramener personnage et lecteur à l’essentiel.

CONCLUSION

Après que nous nous sommes efforcés, dans une abstinence qui m’étonne moi-même, de ronger l’articulation Thème/Rhème en se privant du plaisir de savourer la chair qui l’enveloppe, je me demande ce qu’il est utile de retenir de l’expérience.

Les deux notions sont apparues à plusieurs reprises difficiles à cerner, même si les deux gestes qu’elles désignent correspondent clairement à deux manières différentes d’envisager le monde. En effet, il est parfois difficile de décider de la limite entre les deux régimes parce que l’installation exclusive dans l’un ou l’autre est difficilement tenable. Sauf à basculer résolument dans le poétique de type surréaliste en renonçant à la fois à représenter et à figurer, le Rhème est toujours rattrapé par le Thème, et la voix qui se veut libre n’est sans doute lyrique que de se vouloir telle. Cependant, même si la définition des deux “phases” est relativement labile, elle correspond à deux mouvements syntaxiques aisément différenciables. Et indéniablement, beaucoup se joue dans cette différence.

Il semble que la manière la plus simple de repérer les moments de friction entre les deux phases consiste à reconnaître et exploiter ces marques syntaxiques faciles à identifier comme pré-construites. De là, par différence, le Rhématique apparaît et il suffit de se demander dans quel sens l’assemblage “travaille”.

Se pose enfin une question de terminologie. Comme je l’ai indiqué au début, on nomme de façons différentes ces deux notions que, fidèle à la méthode Coué, j’ai obstinément gratifiées d’une majuscule, selon la chapelle linguistique à laquelle on appartient. En outre, l’usage du mot “thème” est trop marqué dans les études littéraires pour que l’on puisse se permettre la moindre ambiguïté, même si l’on peut trouver des parentés entre l’usage classique du terme et cette acception particulière. Peut-on se contenter alors d’utiliser la notion de pré-construit et à partir de là décrire les stratégies auxquelles donne lieu l’articulation des deux régimes sans mentionner le mouvement sous-jacent qui donne l’impulsion ?

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NOTES

1. Voir les Actes de ce colloque publiés dans GRAAT n°16.
2. Il s'agit de Gérard Deléchelle, professeur à l'Université de Tours, à qui toute cette réflexion doit beaucoup.

RÉSUMÉS

Au cours de nombreuses études de textes conduites avec la préoccupation constante d'associer Littérature et Linguistique, il nous est apparu que le choc de deux rythmes syntaxiques, que l'on peut sommairement schématiser comme pré-construit et prédicatif, s'accompagnait d'enjeux décisifs touchant à la dimension de l'affect.

Il s'agira ici de tenter de théoriser ce choc, ou l'articulation de ces deux "phases", ou encore l'empilement d'une phase sur l'autre, à partir de quelques fragments choisis. L'usage quelque peu terroriste des deux notions proposées dans le titre, "Rhématique et Thématique", ne vise qu'à souligner avec obstination l'esprit de système qui préside à la tentative.
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