

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iv
CHAPTER	
I. AN INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART ONE	
THE NARRATIVE SUBJECT	
II. POINT OF VIEW.....	6
III. VOICE.....	34
PART TWO	
THE NARRATIVE OBJECT	
IV. CHARACTER.....	63
V. PLOT.....	91
VI. PROGRESSION.....	114
VII. A CONCLUSION.....	153
WORKS CITED.....	155

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	The Distinction Between the Focalizer and the Focalized.....	14
2.	External and Internal Focal Points.....	15
3.	External and Internal Focalization.....	15
4.	The Character is the Focalized.....	16
5.	The Character Becomes a Focalizer.....	16
6.	The Narrative Sequence in <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i>	103
7.	Some Inciting Events in <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	105
8.	The One Complete Sequence in <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	109

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION

With this dissertation, and using a rhetorical approach, I hope to improve upon narrative terminology by presenting alternative ways for understanding and discussing narrative. *A rhetorical approach* views meaning as the result of a collaboration between the strategies employed by authors in a text and the response to those strategies in readers. Currently, high school and college English classes do their students an injustice by perpetuating the use of archaic terms such as “first-person” and “third-person” and by failing to make distinctions between point of view and voice, between character functions and traits, and between the chronological order of plot and the artistic order of progression. As an undergraduate, I was taught the Periodical Table of Elements but not the elements of narrative, and I was an English major. As a teaching assistant, I once asked a colleague to teach a class for me while I went out of town. When I returned, my colleague admitted that she had no idea what she was teaching my students, for she had never before heard of round and flat characters. How can a graduate student of the American novel make it through a bachelor’s and a master’s degree and into a doctoral program and remain unfamiliar with basic terms describing narrative structure? I feel it is my mission--and “mission” may seem rather strong here, but that is how I feel--to make a variety of narrative strategies more accessible to both the teacher and the student of literature. With this project, I write primarily to other narratologists in that I both defend and attack different concepts as I assert my own. However, in trying to pool

together the various terms, picking and choosing those that are most precise, I offer a secondary audience of teachers a rhetorical pedagogy for narrative studies. My project attempts to both improve the distinctions made by theorists before me and illustrate those distinctions in applications to ten specific novels, applications that exemplify how such a rhetorical pedagogy can be manifested in student writing.

If the elements of narrative are taught at all, they usually include point of view, plot, character, setting, symbolism, and theme. The points of view generally include two persons--first and third--and two levels of perspective--limited and unlimited omniscience. Most narratologists today agree, despite the durability of these vague terms, that narrative perspective and voice are complex concepts that require greater variety than these archaic ones suggest. For example, what would you call a narrator who constantly refers to himself but who is absent from the story he tells? First-person? Third-person? How about a dramatized heterodiegetic narrator? If you think that phrase will be too difficult for your average high school or undergraduate student, I'll introduce you to my toddler nephews who can pronounce the name of every dinosaur known to humanity. What I mean to say here is that there are more precise narrative terms out there to be used by students and teachers--terms that identify more than two or three kinds of narrators and that define characters in other ways than by their functions--, and although it is my goal in this work to improve upon many of them, teachers seem reluctant to introduce them to their students because they appear complicated. Are English students so very hard to recruit that we must protect them from complicated terms? During my experience as an adjunct professor, I have noticed that English

majors, particularly on the graduate level, are a dime a dozen. I am not arguing that we should reduce the number of English majors by scaring them off with "complicated" terms; I am saying that English departments can stop treating their majors so delicately because the drought was over long ago.

Two parts organize the dissertation: "The Narrative Subject," developed in two chapters, and "The Narrative Object," developed in three. Each of the chapters concludes with applications of its concepts to two novels. The narrative subject involves the narrating agent, both its point of view and its voice. Chapter II distinguishes between point of view and voice, and it challenges the use of space and time metaphors by defending diegetic levels and an improved concept of focalization, which provides the approach to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* and Margaret Drabble's *The Gates of Ivory*. Chapter III exposes problems in the person distinction and provides new ways for classifying narrators, such as those who are reliable but dissonant to the implied author, and those who are artificial. The chapter ends with applications to Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* and John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Chapter IV defines character, divorcing it--once and for all--from the concept of plot. A discussion of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* provides a diachronic analysis of character followed by a discussion of Margaret Drabble's *The Realms of Gold* which presents a synchronic one. The fifth chapter asserts that models such as the Freytag Pyramid and function analysis can lead to thematic interpretations, and it illustrates this assertion with plot analyses of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. The concept of progression in the sixth chapter shows how

order and pace can suggest thematic undertones in narratives. Applications to Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* and John Fowles's *The Collector* provide examples. Setting and symbolism are important narrative strategies that I do not address in this dissertation simply because I have nothing to add to previous discussions of them. Theme is also an element traditionally treated alongside point of view and the other strategies, but I see theme, not as a narrative strategy, but as an effect achieved by strategy.

PART ONE
THE NARRATIVE SUBJECT

CHAPTER II

POINT OF VIEW

Point of view describes the relationship between narrators and the stories they tell, and, until recently, it has been reduced to person--first or third--and perspective--limited or unlimited omniscience. Recognizing that these few terms fail to adequately represent the complex and varied relationships that occur in narratives, critics argue about the metaphors and terms we should use to describe them. Such is the case in Harry Shaw's essay "Loose Narrators" in the May 1995 issue of *Narrative* where he exposes problems in the "crisp"¹ distinction between "story space" and "discourse space" in Seymour Chatman's *Coming to Terms*. Shaw argues that particularly "vibrant" (99) narratives and narrators "wishing to enter the historical world of the characters" (104) seem to elude the metaphor of a "membrane" (Chatman 144) separating narrators and scenes. Chatman defends his position in the October 1995 issue of *Narrative* which includes a subsequent response by Shaw. While Chatman holds to his distinction, emphasizing that it allows us to describe more pointedly the "genuine exceptions" (305), Shaw claims that he did not intend to imply that the distinction should be abolished or that it is not important (309), but rather that it fails to adequately describe all narratives. My purpose in this chapter is to describe more pointedly the relationships between narrators and characters by exposing problems in the models of both Shaw and Chatman

and by defending an alternative metaphor, known as focalization, which has already been developed by Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal among others.

I specifically wish to address two of Shaw's arguments: one involves the energy and vividness of a scene, and the other involves the "historicity" of a narrator. Shaw suggests that at times a narrator seems to enter story space as if she is "*imitating the role of someone who has happened upon a scene, is struck by it, and possesses the rare facility of being able to capture it in a spontaneous, instantaneous image that crystallizes the experience . . . it embodies*" ("Loose" 99). This claim does not seriously challenge Chatman's distinction between the two spaces. I may *imitate the role of the boy in the bubble*, but I am never actually *inside* the bubble, and the fact that I am *imitating*, as Shaw himself has argued ("Thin Description" 309), means that I am fully *aware* that I am not inside the bubble. Perhaps Shaw simply points out that some narrators *seem to appear as though they invade story space*. If so, who would argue otherwise? Is that not, after all, the great thing about fiction? Its illusiveness?

In addition, Shaw does not suggest that the characters in the scene *imitate the role of people who suddenly recognize someone who has happened upon them, or is imitating the role of someone who has happened upon them*. In order for Shaw's description of the *appearance of a story-space-discourse-space invasion to be complete*, people on both sides of the border ought to have equal access to the recognition of--or the pretense of recognition of--the invasion. In other words, if discourse is not separated by a membrane of sorts so that the narrator can exist in the same realm with the characters in the story, the characters, then, should be able to see the narrator, to interact with him. In Shaw's

scenario, the narrator appears privileged, as if one of those one-way mirrors psychologists use to observe their subjects prevents the characters from noticing the narrator. In other words, there seems to be no *mutual* sharing, or an imitation of a mutual sharing, of the same space. For example, in the muffin scene from Dickens's *Dombey and Son*--much discussed in the Chatman-Shaw debate--Son remains "tucked up warm" in his little basket while the narrator makes his muffin analogy, and Dombey does not wonder at the stranger who has come to contemplate them.

This absence of reciprocation also challenges Shaw's claim regarding a narrator's "historicity." For example, when Shaw discusses passages from George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*, he asks if the narrator's "emotional engagement" implies that "she is edging toward story space" ("Loose" 106). Again, *edging toward* and *invading* are not the same thing, but suppose Shaw means that story space is invaded by the narrator. Even then, Tina, who the narrator describes as carrying overwhelming burdens, and who then would be sharing the space with the narrator, seems unaware that a sympathetic presence shares them:

In that summer, we know, the great nation of France was agitated by conflicting thoughts and passions, which were but the beginning of sorrows. And in our Caterina's little breast, too, there were terrible struggles. The poor bird was beginning to flutter and vainly dash its soft breast against the hard iron bars of the inevitable, and we see too plainly the danger, if that anguish should go on heightening instead of being allayed, that the palpitating heart may be fatally bruised. (147)

As in the muffin scene, this passage quoted by Shaw in "Loose Narrators" illustrates a narrator drawing an analogy, but, as in the muffin scene, Tina takes no notice of another person there. The narrator may be emotionally engaged in Tina's historical element, but

she does not share Tina's story space. In fact, Tina's loneliness is emphasized by the absence, in this passage, of a sympathetic presence.

Of course, the narrator could invade Tina's space without her awareness if characters lack the independent agency of real people. But if we consciously describe the phenomenon that Shaw means to pinpoint in "Loose Narrators" with this kind of relationship between a powerful narrator and a fictive character, then the illusion of fiction is broken, and the invasion of story space draws attention to itself. I do not believe that Shaw means to suggest that Tina's narrator and the narrator of Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* or of Julio Cortázar's "Continuity of Parks" have this artificiality in common. Therefore, Shaw does not convince me that narrators metaphorically appear to share story space with characters because he does not establish that the recognition of the invasion by narrators is reciprocated by characters or explain why such a recognition would not occur between people sharing the same space. Even a fly on the wall is usually eventually noticed by those in the same space with it. But Shaw does not want a fly or any other dehumanized teller; he wants a human. And a human on the wall would definitely attract a character's attention.

Shaw seems concerned with energy and history, but Chatman's distinction is not about either of those. It should be permissible for Chatman to define a particular element of fiction without having to explain how scenes are more or less energetic or vivid, or how narrators more or less long for the historical setting of their scenes. But Shaw's agenda appears to involve a challenge to more than Chatman's space distinction. He seems adamantly against a precise terminology for describing narrative. He appears

concerned that the majestic illusiveness of fiction will fade in the “crisp” dissection. He says that he “prefer[s] to view analytical terms as provisional and shifting, as a set of approximations” (“Thin” 312). A homogeneous vocabulary for the study of narrative could be nothing but entirely arguable and debatable in its application to specific texts. But we need a vocabulary before we can approximate, although it may include synonymous terms such as “story,” “plot,” and “fabula.” We may continue to argue about the terms, but we should still have them, and they should be as accurate in their meaning as possible.

It is this hope for precision that brings me to Chatman. Obviously my purpose is not to complain about his story-space-discourse-space distinction. Like Shaw, however, I see problems with the metaphor, not because I think it fails to recognize particularly energetic scenes or historical connections between narrators and characters, and not because I think the division renders a kind of cold objectivity in the discussion of narrative, but because space metaphors, like time metaphors, fail to adequately describe the relationships between narrators and their stories.

Although Chatman, in *Coming to Terms*, more specifically discusses the spatial boundaries between characters and narrators, he refers to the temporal ones briefly when he describes the narrator in *Dombey and Son*. Chatman explains that the narrator “resides in an order of time and place different from that occupied by the characters; his is a different ‘here-and-now.’ And that’s true for every narrator, no matter how minimal his/her/its distance from the ‘here-and-now’ of the story” (142). Chatman argues that, because of these spatio-temporal differences, the narrator is not to be imagined as an

“observer” of the scene (142). But how temporally separate are story and discourse during simultaneous narration in which the narrator uses present tense to describe the events of a story? Consider, for example, Chekhov’s “Children” from *The Cook’s Wedding and Other Stories*:

Papa and Mama and Aunt Nadya are not at home. They have gone to a christening party at the house of that old officer who rides on a little grey horse. While waiting for them to come home, Grisha, Anya, Alyosha, Sonya, and the cook’s son, Andrey, are sitting at the table in the dining-room, playing at loto. . . . The table, lighted by a hanging lamp, is dotted with numbers, nutshells, scraps of paper, and little bits of glass. (25)

Although a membrane of some sort still separates the two diegetic levels, do they not coexist in the same time? And could we not imagine in such a case that the narrator, on the opposite side of the membrane from the scene, is capable of--no, *must be capable of*--witnessing it if he is to accurately “report” it?²

It may seem safe to say, then, that story and discourse may share the same temporal plane but not the same spatial one. But one may imagine another Dickens text, *A Christmas Carol*, in which the ghosts of Christmas past and future and Ebenezer Scrooge share the same space as characters who do not see them while existing on different temporal planes. Imagine a similar relationship between narrators and characters. I argued earlier against Shaw’s notion of “loose narrators” that narrators and characters must mutually recognize an invasion of story space, but what if they share separate temporal planes while existing in the same space? Both posterior and anterior narration can be viewed through this metaphor. Imagine a narrator at the scene he or she

describes but existing in a different time. Character recognition of the narrator's presence would no longer be a factor. Has story space been invaded?

Perhaps a less confusing metaphor for distinguishing between discourse and story is Genette's concept of the three diegetic levels: extradiegetic, diegetic, and metadiegetic. The word "level" is not necessarily a temporal or a spatial metaphor, although one can progress to later levels in a sequential task and take elevators to higher and lower levels in a building. With these three levels, *narrating* remains distinct from *narrative* in that the first occurs on the *extradiegetic level* while the second is the sum of all three. It is less ambiguous to say that an extradiegetic narrator does not function on the diegetic level than it is to say that it does not penetrate story space. Exceptions to this general rule of narrative levels are called *metalepses* which occur when narrators or characters on one diegetic level appear on another, as in Cortázar's "Continuity of Parks" (*Narrative Discourse* 234-35). In "How Loose?" Chatman describes the metalepsis which occurs in Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* when the narrator recognizes himself in the story and then suddenly becomes a homodiegetic narrator (304-305).

To further illustrate the subsequent confusions that result in using the space metaphor, let us consider Chatman's replacement for "point of view." In order to distinguish between story space and discourse space, Chatman introduces the terms "slant" and "filter" as more precise replacements for the "points of view" of narrators and characters. A narrator residing in discourse space provides the "slant" or "angle" to the story, while some of his or her information may be "filtered" through one or more characters existing within the story space (143). If "filter" means a porous mechanism

that allows some things and not others to pass through, like a coffee filter or an air filter, then I imagine a discourse which is "filtered" through a character as one that is somehow incomplete, not wholly the narrator's discourse. Chatman, I believe, with the term "filter," empowers characters with the ability to silence some of the narrator's discourse. This is not a bad thing. However, the threatening implication to Chatman's distinction is that if characters are "filtering," then the narrating is passing through the "story space" like water passes through a coffee filter. This filtering confuses the when and where of the story, in my opinion, more than the "point of view" metaphor Chatman wishes to right.

Chatman argues in *Coming to Terms* that the phrase "point of view" has multiple meanings such as "perspective," "stance," and "interest" (140-41). He maintains that the mental functions of narrators and characters are different, and so one term, such as focalization, should not be used to describe both (141). But I believe a modification of the way we have been using the term focalization would answer Chatman's concerns.

Genette, like Chatman, makes the distinction between point of view and voice, describing the "confusion between the question *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?*" (*Narrative Discourse* 186). He differentiates between, for example, the narrator of William Golding's *Pincher Martin* and Chris, the character from whose point of view we see most of the story. However, another distinction becomes obscured in Genette's discussion: the difference between *point of view* and *focal point*, or the difference

between seeing *from the perspective of a character* and having that character be the focal point *from a perspective outside of the character* (Figure 1).

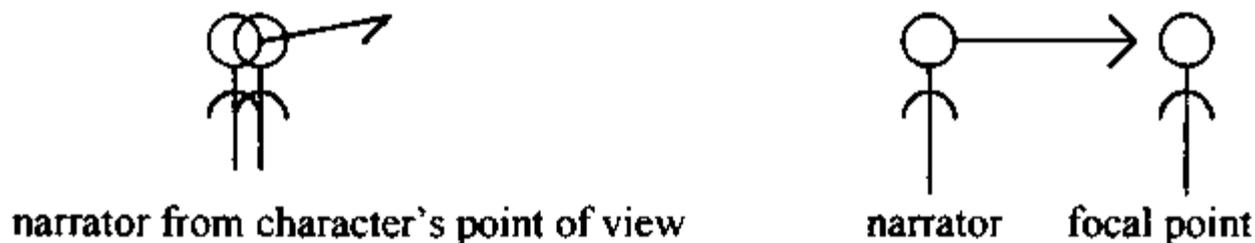


Figure 1
The Distinction Between the Focalizer and the Focalized

This distinction becomes confused because Genette uses the concept of focalization to describe the focal point of a narrative and not the point of view. He defines *internal focalization* as the instance when “the focus [or focal point] coincides with a character, who then becomes the fictive ‘subject’ of all the perceptions, including those that concern himself as object” (*Revisited* 74) (Figure 2). He describes *external focalization* as the circumstance when “the focus [or focal point] is situated at a point in the diegetic universe chosen by the narrator, *outside of every character*, which means that all possibility of information about anyone’s thoughts is excluded” (75). He says in *Fiction and Diction* that external focalization “consists in abstaining from *any* intrusion into the characters’ subjectivity, reporting only their acts and gestures as seen from the outside” (66). Genette’s concept of external and internal focalization can be illustrated thus:

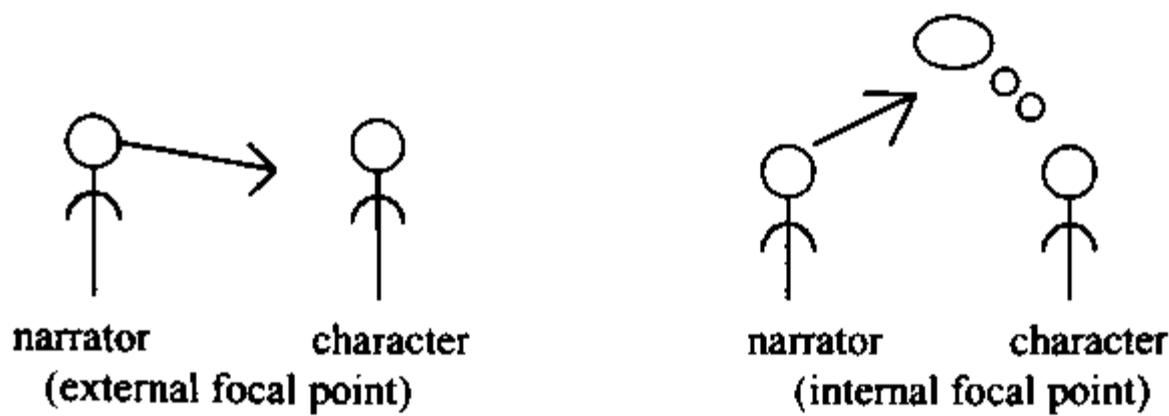


Figure 2
External and Internal Focal Points

While Genette's concept may answer the question *what is the focus of the narrative?*, it does not answer the question he originally suggests needs answering in *Narrative Discourse: who sees?* (186). In the above illustrations, it is the narrator who sees. Two other possibilities exist (Figure 3).

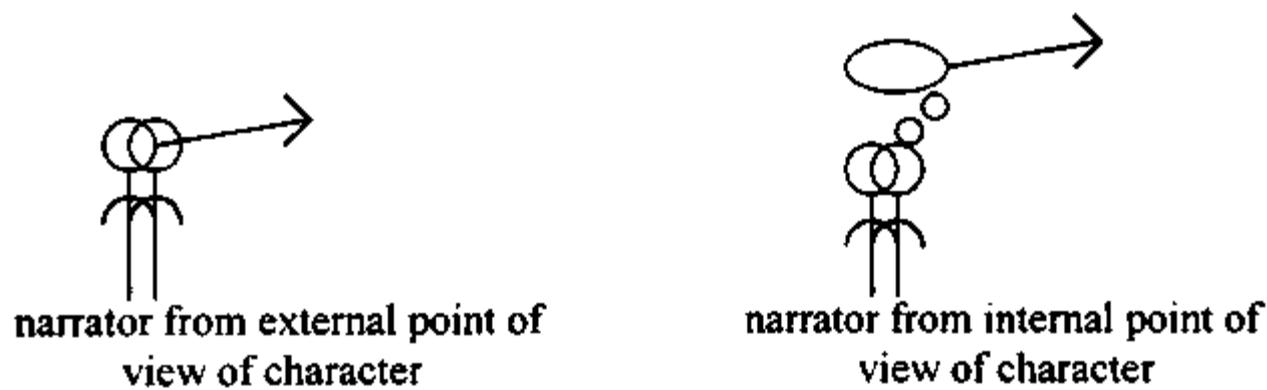


Figure 3
External and Internal Focalization

Focal point differs from point of view in that the narrating includes references to that character which keep the perspective outside of the character. For example, if a narrator were to say: "She saw the wild horse," the relationship would be illustrated thus (Figure 4).

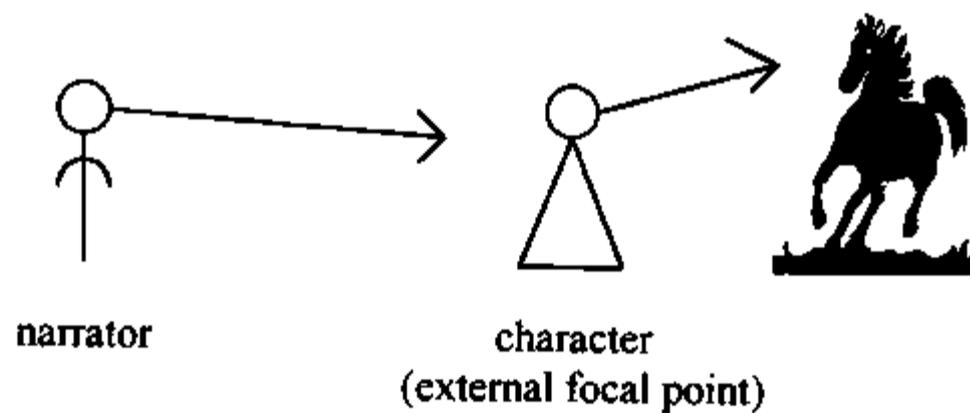


Figure 4
The Character is the Focalized

If the narrator were to say: "The wild horse came into view," the relationship would be illustrated in this way (Figure 5).

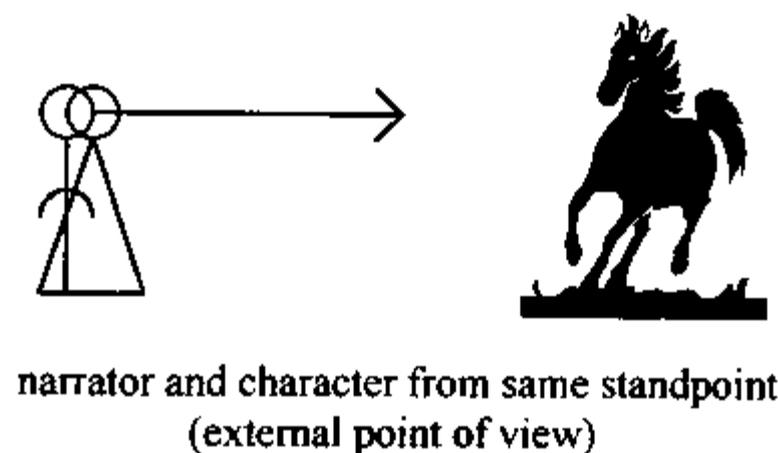


Figure 5
The Character Becomes a Focalizer

So, in the first case, the narrating object (or focal point) is the character--her physical act of seeing the wild horse--through the single vision (or angle or slant) of the narrator, and the narrator, as Meike Bal has clarified, is the *focalizer* (106). In the second case, the narrating object is the character's view of the world--from her physical standpoint--through the double vision (or perspective) of the narrator and character, so the character

becomes a *focalizer* and her view of the world, specifically the wild horse, is the *focalized* (Bal 106). The same distinction can be made between “She thought, ‘What a beautiful wild horse’” and the character’s untagged thought “What a beautiful wild horse.” To limit the concept of focalization to describing internal and external focal points is to fail to describe *who sees* or *whose point of view orients the narrative perspective*.

Mieke Bal differentiates between the focalizer and the focalized, or the subject and the object, or the seer and the seen, and she explains that both narrators and characters can be focalizers. She signifies character focalizers with “CF” and narrator focalizers with “EF” (because they are *extradiegetic focalizers*). Her formula can track the shifts in focalization from sentence to sentence or from phrase to phrase. With Bal’s formula, a character can change from being a focal point (or the focalized) to being a focalizer within a few words:

She felt the clammy soft hand of the youth.

Although the referent “she” focalizes the character, the rest of the sentence appears to be information that comes from the character’s standpoint; thus, the focal point shifts from the character “she” (focalized by the extradiegetic narrator) to the youth’s hand (focalized by the “she”).

So how do we apply focalization in a broad way so that we can avoid diagramming every sentence of a novel?

First, we distinguish between types of focalization. A narrator who tells a story without the points of view of other characters presents a *nonfocalized* story (this occurs

when a character or characters remain focal points and are never focalizers; the narrative is only focalized extradiegetically). We can also say that a nonfocalized text employs *zero focalization* (*Narrative Discourse* 189). Second, when a narrator focalizes either externally or internally through a character, even if that narrator frequently refers to that character, we should call this a *focalized* story. Third, borrowing from and modifying Genette's terms, we can distinguish between *fixed* and *variable* focalization (*Narrative Discourse* 189-90). Fixed occurs when a single diegetic character functions as a focalizer, such as Stephen in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Here the use of fixed focalization enhances the theme of the solitary individual alienated from the rest of humanity. Variable occurs when two or more diegetic characters alternately function as focalizers, such as in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, where the perspective alternates between that of Rosemary, Nicole, and Dick among others to create a decentered text about the decentered personality and the crumbling national identity in America. Variable focalization also occurs in Margaret Drabble's *The Gates of Ivory*,³ in which the sense of a fragmented and arbitrary world is undercut by a prevailing and perhaps fatalistic sense of structure. These categories--zero, fixed, and variable focalization--can be applied to an entire novel in a general way so that the label represents a novel's predominant use of point of view.

In other words, if we understand, for example, that *The Gates of Ivory* uses variable focalization, then we understand, even if there may be some sections which appear fixed or nonfocalized, that the narrator has greater privilege than those who predominantly focalize through one character. The narrator employing variable

focalization has greater privilege because he or she can present the reader with various diegetic perspectives. We should accept focalization as a privilege because, except for the homodiegetic narrator who focalizes through a younger version of himself or herself, it cannot occur--unless it is conjecture and speculation--outside of narrative. The most privileged narrator, then, is that of the variably focalized text while the least privileged is that of the nonfocalized text. An example of the latter occurs in Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* where a heterodiegetic narrator speculates from a considerable temporal and spatial distance the motives of Billy, Claggart, and Captain Vere.

Narratives told by heterodiegetic narrators may employ variable, fixed, or zero focalization, but texts told by homodiegetic narrators cannot employ variable focalization. And the fixed focalizer employed by homodiegetic narrators is limited to that version of himself or herself that exists in the story. Exceptions may occur with artificial narrators who foreground the synthetic component of their stories.

It is through focalization that texts create the illusion that narrators share the same space as the characters. Narrators appear to be so close, in fact, that they seem to inhabit the bodies and minds of characters. This is why Genette's diegetic levels describe better than spatial or temporal metaphors the relationships between narrators and scenes.

So, basically in accordance with the limitations Chatman seems to have wanted to put on narrators, extradiegetic narrators generally do not exist on or in other diegetic levels; however, in accordance to what Shaw seems to have wanted to emphasize, the focalization employed by extradiegetic narrators provides the immediacy of perception that makes them appear as if they do.

Variable Focalization in Fitzgerald's
Tender Is the Night

F. Scott Fitzgerald's psychoanalytic novel *Tender is the Night*, published in 1934, employs variable focalization by a heterodiegetic narrator to expose the differences between the way readers see characters and the way characters see themselves.

Fitzgerald further demonstrates the distortion of the self with the differences between characters and the way they represent themselves in speech, which creates a split in their identities and undermines them as completely integrated personalities. In Fitzgerald's novel, this splitting or decentering occurs on two levels: the personal and the national.

The splitting of identity manifests itself in Fitzgerald's text on a personal level as characters grope for a self-image which the reader discovers to be false. At one point in the novel, Rosemary, the focalizer, briefly becomes conscious of the split: "Rosemary had the detached false-and-exalted feeling of being on a set and she guessed that every one else present had the feeling too" (71). Despite brief moments of this awareness, characters attempt to piece together a unified identity. As Rosemary momentarily senses, such an identity is a fantasy she creates and performs as if "on a set."

Rosemary is introduced to us as a young girl in whom her mother "had cultivated an idealism" (11) and who is "as dewy with belief as a child" (33). Rosemary's mother wishes to "wean" (11) this "lovely child" (62), to "launch her out and away" (23). Rosemary, recognized by most from her film "Daddy's Girl," becomes disturbed in her sleep by her mother's "final severance of the umbilical cord" (39). Yet we discover from

Collis a moment that destructs this child-like image--a moment that continues to haunt Dick for some time and seems to be an attempt on Rosemary's part to construct an image of herself that men will find attractive: "--Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?" (88). When Rosemary propositions Dick, she is again momentarily aware of her decentered and created identity, as the following passage, in which she is the focalizer, demonstrates:

She [Rosemary] was astonished at herself--she had never imagined she could talk like that. She was calling on things she had read, seen, dreamed through a decade of convent hours. Suddenly she knew too that it was one of her greatest roles and she flung herself into it more passionately. (64)

Rosemary reconstructs herself with how she chooses to see herself and how she chooses to perform that image. With nonfocalized passages, the heterodiegetic narrator, dissonant in its relationship to Rosemary, reminds us of her performance: "Rosemary reconstructed herself once more as they got out of the taxi in the Rue Guynemer, across from the Luxembourg Gardens" (67); she reconstructs her identity with what she says about herself, especially to Dick: "'Oh, don't tease me--I'm not a baby'" (65), which, as we see with her mother's attempts to "wean" her, is not true at all.

As the focalizer, Dick, likewise, attempts to construct an image of himself that falls short of what we come to know of him through other focalizers. He tells Franz that he wants to become a "'good psychologist--maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived'" (130-31), and he explains to Rosemary that he is a "'doctor of medicine'" but is "'just not practicing'" (62). Yet, we learn that up to this point he has never been practicing (unless you include his letters to Nicole) and that he never becomes a good psychologist.

he fails to "cure" the young hispanic homosexual (245), he cannot help the bandaged woman (184-86), and Nicole must finally leave him to overcome her madness. In addition, Dick, like Rosemary, is an actor, as Rosemary exclaims: "'Oh, we're such actors--you and I'" (205). Dick performs most often for Nicole, as the heterodiegetic narrator informs us in the following passage:

All night in Paris he held her in his arms while she slept . . . in the early morning he broke in upon her confusion before it could form, with words of tenderness and protection. . . . Before she awoke he had arranged for everything at the phone in the next room. Rosemary was to move to another hotel. (165)

One part of Dick's image arranges for a more convenient affair with Rosemary while a conflicting one tenderly holds his wife in his arms. Nicole sees past his performance later when he names her suspicion a "delusion" and she responds: "'It's always a delusion when I see what you don't want me to see'" (190). The real "delusion," of course, is the image of Dick as a faithful husband. Jacques Lacan's example of the liar makes clearer this distinction with the apple-thief who utters: "I did not steal those apples" (15).

We see a similar performance by Nicole as she attempts to piece together an image for Dick in her letters. She claims that the only thing wrong with her is that she "think[s] one thing today and another tomorrow" (122). She struggles with fragments to create a unified picture: "I've thought a lot about moonlight" (120), "I could be useful interpreting" (120), "I grew sicker" (121), "I am broken and humiliated" (121), and "I am pretty strong" (122). No unified identity emerges despite her efforts to communicate who she is, and so, according to psychological standards, she is unhealthy. Lacan

explains that the unified self-image is a prerequisite for success in society. for in constructing the self, one recognizes "other" and society is born (18).

As characters grope for fragments with which they might construct a self-image, symbolism in Fitzgerald's text points to a similar groping for an American identity. Fitzgerald reveals how post-World-War-I America, and essentially all Western Civilization, must adjust to a severe change from a primarily rural economy to an urban industrial one. In addition, Fitzgerald suggests that the nation as a whole faces the collapse of the white patriarchy that has dominated the national identity before and during World War I.

Nicole's wealth symbolizes the "boom" in prosperity in America in the twenties, and Dick's not knowing what to do with it parallels the older generation's similar uncertainty. Nicole is directly associated with America: "The trio of women at the table were representative of the enormous flux of American life. Nicole was the granddaughter of a self-made American capitalist and the granddaughter of a Count of the House of Lippe Weissenfeld" (52). She is also described as the "product" of industrialism:

Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories . . . and as the whole system swayed and thundered onward it lent feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buying. . . . She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom. . . . (54)

Nicole, the "product" of industrialism, contains "her own doom" because she cannot keep up with the changing fragments of identity: "I am broken and humiliated," "I am

pretty strong," "I could be useful interpreting." Fitzgerald's depiction of the growing materialism in America exemplifies the swift current of change, and we see such materialism in the way Nicole spends money: "She bought colored beads, folding beach cushions, artificial flowers, honey, a guest bed, bags, scarfs, love birds, miniatures for a doll's house. . ." (54). Evidence that Fitzgerald sees America decentering or splitting from itself occurs when he compares the French train which "was part of the country through which it passed" (12) to American trains which "were absorbed in an intense destiny of their own" (12) and, thus, disconnected from the country through which they travelled.

Nicole's alignment with America raises Dick's fall, which comes from his inability to conquer her, to a more symbolic level as well. Dick represents the white patriarch that dominates America through World War I, a representation evoked by his association with traditional figures of male authority: His use of a megaphone while speaking to Nicole from his house recalls an image of a director (25). We see him as a military figure when he reflects upon his "carnivals of affection . . . as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy a blood lust" (26). He is a captain, a doctor, a scientist, a scholar, a husband, a father, a lover. He might also be associated with a monastery by his time of work in isolation and by his father's position as a priest. Moreover, his name, Dick, serves as the ultimate phallic characternym.

Furthermore, Tommy Barban, "the end product of an archaic world" (35), who is "less civilized" (17), or a barbarian as his name suggests, eventually takes possession of Nicole, or America. This marks the collapse of what Fitzgerald sees as the "ordered" or

“established” American identity as Nicole embraces “the anarchy of her [new] lover” (295). Nicole, or America, continues to struggle with the construction of a unifying identity as an old one deteriorates. Just as Nicole has been “split” by the violation by her father, America has been split by the violation of war and the subsequent industrial boom.

Dick, the symbol of the once established order, appears at the center on the beach front and gradually becomes displaced. He constructs himself as a center by surrounding himself with people like Rosemary and Nicole who initially peripheralize themselves around him. He is likened to a performer “giving a quiet little performance for his group” (4); and later: “Even the children knew that excitement was generating under that umbrella and turned toward it--and it seemed to Rosemary that it all came from the man in the jockey cap [Dick]” (9). Rosemary desires to live in the world of Dick’s eyes (10) and believes he must know everything (29). Both Rosemary and Nicole “preserved their individuality through men and not by opposition to them” (52). However, Dick gradually fades from their center. Rosemary finds Nicotera and Nicole finds Tommy. Dick says: “I guess I’m the Black Death . . . I don’t seem to bring people happiness anymore” (220). Dick becomes less adept at showing off for young women, as we see in his failure to successfully ski for Rosemary and Nicole when had done so well two years before (281). Likewise, his failure as a doctor becomes more apparent to him in successive disappointments. The last remnants of his constructed identity shatter at the death of his father (248). By the end, he is alone and alienated, and his picture of who he has been is blurred. He imagines that the deep love he once believed he felt for Nicole was never

there when he considers her departure a "finished" case (299). This seems reciprocated by Nicole as, in the last few lines of the novel in which she is the focalizer, she has found Nick to be little more than a note post-marked from Hornell, "which is some distance from Geneva and a very small town" (313). The once dominating presence of Dick has become reduced to an insignificant dot. We see, in Lacanian terms, the "stripped constituted ego," or the fallen power structure of America, that must now be rebuilt (11).

Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, then, is a psychoanalytic study, a critique of American culture, and a masterful illustration of the way focalization can be used to complement the theme of a narrative. Fitzgerald's own battle with his wife's mental illness (Introduction vii) explains his interest in psychoanalysis; thus, it would not be farfetched to conclude that Fitzgerald introduces to the literary world what Lacan later articulates for the scientific. Fitzgerald diagnoses America with the same formula he uses to diagnose his characters, and the prognosis, in his eyes, is glum: a growing materialism disperses the established power structure and leaves a barbaric and decentered America in its wake. America is in the dark, so to speak, and the night, a vulnerable time, is "tender."

The narrative itself is "barbaric" in design as Dick's perspective is undermined through variable focalization by the perspectives of what might have been marginalized characters. Although a single undramatized heterodiegetic narrator tells this fragmented tale, several points of view interlock narrative technique and theme to reveal the decentered person, the decentered nation, and the decentered text.

Focalization in Margaret Drabble's
The Gates of Ivory

Like Fitzgerald, Margaret Drabble uses focalization to achieve a thematic end, but the theme in her novel *The Gates of Ivory* is altogether different from that in *Tender Is the Night*. Drabble's text is focalized through the perspectives of several characters, by the voice of a single heterodiegetic narrator. But that narrator is not the only voice in the novel. Although I will deal more specifically with voice in the next chapter, it cannot go unmentioned here. Hattie, unlike the other characters who are focalizers, or seers, actually speaks to us as a homodiegetic narrator. Furthermore, the heterodiegetic voice appears to be an artificial narrator.⁴ Drabble's coupling of multiple narrators with variable focalization further complicates the structure of her novel, a structure which has been misunderstood to the degree that questions of genre arise. Drabble acknowledges the genre issue with the first line: "This is a novel--if a novel it be . . ." (3). Yet her use of variable perspective and voice asks the same of us as Stephen's manuscript asks of Liz Headland. Drabble's use of focalization and voice appears arbitrary as the text jumps from one perspective to another, but, as paralleled in Stephen's like manuscript, some kind of fatalistic sense is there to be made.

Stephen's manuscript-package appears to be a hodge-podge of scraps: "Liz Headland was surprised to come across a package containing part of a human finger bone. . . . She gazed at the rest of the package. . . . Wads of paper, notebooks, newspaper clippings, a complex presentation" (4-5). Drabble's narrative is, likewise, a "complex presentation" of ninety-one sections from various points of view. In addition

to the two voices—the artificial heterodiegetic voice and the homodiegetic voice belonging to Hattie—the sections incorporate various points of view: some sections are variably focalized, revealing the thoughts of several characters in a single section; other sections appear fixed in focalization, where only one character focalizes the narrative; and still other sections are nonfocalized where dialogue is reported—as in a play, no thoughts, except through spoken dialogue, are revealed.

The heterodiegetic voice begins the book with “This is a novel . . . about Good Time and Bad Time” (3) and ends it with “He [Mitra] has not been told that he is living at the end of history” (462). This voice is conscious of her role in the book, conscious of our existence in so far as any reader exists. She says, perhaps to pull us out of the novel and to call attention to its structure: “Picture Stephen Cox and comrade Hattie Osborne” (33). She blurs the boundaries of fiction and reality by relating historical information plainly:

There are roughly 25,000 Vietnamese refugees in Britain and some 400 Cambodians. Home Office policy originally dispersed them in small settlements throughout the country. . . . But they tended to drift together again, in waves of secondary migration. (199)

This self-conscious voice finds it unnecessary to weave the facts into fictional scenes. She “tells” rather than “shows,” if you still believe in that distinction,⁵ and she promises us that, despite the fragments of her tale, “it links. You wait” (158). But her voice—because it shares the novel with Hattie’s and because it focalizes itself through numerous other points of view—sounds like one among many with neither more nor less power to provide the narrative perspective.

Hattie's voice, which appears in eight of the ninety-one sections, is distinct from the heterodiegetic voice in that it exists on the diegetic level, or the level of the story:

I've never much liked Liz Headland. I've no reason to. For one thing although I've been introduced to her a hundred--well, at least a dozen times, she never has the slightest notion who I am, and always looks quite blank and bored at the very sight of me. (26)

Hattie's diction is also different from that of the heterodiegetic narrator. Although the heterodiegetic narrator is sometimes serious and sometimes flippant, her diction is not quite as colloquial and informal as Hattie's: "I only met Brian once, and I thought he was a crashing bore. And Alix Bowen is one of those women who always make me feel really uneasy. I mean, she is so *fucking* nice" (26). But, unlike the heterodiegetic narrator, Hattie cannot focalize through other characters in the story, and it is with the multiple uses of focalization that Drabble creates the sense of disunity in the narrative. If we treat the sections divided by asteriks (*) separately, we can see the multiple levels of focalization at work. Variable focalization occurs in seventeen of the ninety-one sections, beginning with the third section which alternates between the points of view of Liz and Alix:

Neither Liz nor Alix found it easy to remember exactly when Stephen had departed. Their own lives were so busy and so piecemeal that markers disappeared into the ragged pattern. Neither kept a journal, so each, separately, was reduced to looking through old engagement books to see if Stephen's name was mentioned. Liz, poring over the notation and logging of old dinners, parties, theatre visits, committee meetings and foreign trips, marvelled at her increasing ability to forget whole swathes of time. (11-12)

The narrative continues to present the internal perspective of Liz before it moves more closely into Alix's, making her a focalizer: "Alix Bowen was able to be more precise

about dates than Liz, because she had Brian and her son Sam to confirm them" (16). and later in the section: "Alix had not remembered this [episode with Stephen] but did not dispute it. She thought they had had *osso buco* for supper" (16). The sixteen subsequent sections that employ variable focalization include the perspectives of Stephen, Brian, Hattie (yes, she is a focalizer for the heterodiegetic voice), Esther, Robert, the French woman, Konstantine, Alan, Jack, Akira, Miss Pomtip, Charles, Yukio Tanuka, and Mme Mourre.

Thirty-eight of the ninety-one sections employ fixed focalization so that only one diegetic character functions as a focalizer. Thirteen of those thirty-eight are focalized through Liz, twelve are focalized through Stephen, and four are focalized through Mme Akrun. The rest of the focalizers include a smorgasborg of characters such as Edith Cox, Ruby Fox, Rose Vassiliou, and Angela Whitmore Malkin among others. The latter's section, brief enough to quote here, provides an example of how limited focalization works in a single section:

Angela Whitmore Malkin, mother of murderer Paul Whitmore, is walking with her favoured dog along a cart track in Upper Hartdale. She is in a vile mood, and she cuts at the heads of teasels irritably with her stick. Things look worse than they have ever looked. The Doctor and the Colonel are out on bail, but she fears that they have gone too far this time. They will get put away, and then what will become of her? She blames that interfering Bowen woman. Nothing has gone right since she came poking her nose into Angela's affairs. The Doctor and the Colonel have turned on Angela. They have turned very nasty. They blame her for attracting the attention of the police. She blames Alix Bowen. Shall she pen her another poisoned letter? What is the point? Now, if she could get at that pig son of hers, that would be worth doing. But there is no way. He is locked up, the pig boy.

Her stout shoes tramp on across the frozen mud. The bull mastiff scents a rabbit, and lunges for freedom. She shortens his studded leash. 'To heel, Trojan,' she commands, and the dog cringes and sulks. (344)

The heterodiegetic narrator's use of fixed focalization here is quite different from her use of zero focalization in other sections, particularly three of the ninety-one. One excerpt from a nonfocalized section provides a clear example:

'Oh,' says Esther. 'I see.'
She picks up the dish and gingerly touches its fine glaze.
'Perhaps,' she says hopefully, 'it might be fake?'
'Not a chance,' says Robert. 'Just look at it. Not a chance.'
And they gaze at the river god and the wolf and the babes.
'I must say,' says Esther, 'the Renaissance really *was* rather a good period, wasn't it? I mean, I'd *rather* have that than a decorated skull or pig's bone, wouldn't you?'
'Yes, indeed,' says Robert. He puts his arm around her shoulders.
(117-18)

The complete lack of focalization by a diegetic character in this section reads like a Hemingway story, in what is sometimes called the "dramatic point of view."⁶ The heterodiegetic narrator seems to report what she sees happening between Robert and Esther as she sees it, without access to their minds, or without stepping into their shoes. The only focalizer in this section is the heterodiegetic narrator.

Drabble further complicates her narrative with stories within the stories. For example, Liz functions as the focalizer of Ho Chi Minh's writings, Maulraux's *Memoires*, and the writings of an American journalist (142-43). The narrator confirms that "There are many more anecdotes about boiled heads, devoured livers, rapes, and bayonetings" (143). Liz also focalizes the stories of Chet and Cathy as they are told to her while she suffers something like toxic shock syndrome (402-408). The story-within-a-story is probably best exemplified by the heterodiegetic narrator who focalizes through Charles:

her while she suffers something like toxic shock syndrome (402-408). The story-within-a-story is probably best exemplified by the heterodiegetic narrator who focalizes through Charles:

[Charles] is telling Marcia about the first time he met [Liz], thirty-odd years ago. . . . He had met her at a noisy party in Greenwich. . . . He had spent the evening telling Liz about the death of his wife, about his three little motherless boys. (456)

Here we have a narrator telling us about Charles telling Marcia about the time he was telling Liz a story. So not only are there numerous focalizers, but there are numerous stories as well.

Let me leave this discussion by reiterating the point that focalization can be used strategically to provoke thematic rhythms in the text. Stories, for Drabble, become the equivalent of bones, artifacts archeologists use in their efforts to piece the past together, in their efforts to understand themselves. Mme Akrun "tells Stephen the bones of her story" (152), and Stephen wants her to tell him her story, to "flesh out the dry bones" (152). The cover of the Penguin paperback edition illustrates the story-bone connection with a skull that sits on top of a stack of manuscripts. Drabble's multiple uses of focalization invites the reader to piece together the various perspectives like an archeologist on a dig, like we piece together the various stories of people in our lives. Drabble's novel is about story tellers and readers both of narratives and of life experiences.

Notes

¹ Shaw actually uses the word "crisp" in his later essay "Thin Description" published in *Narrative*, October 1995, page 308, in which he defends the earlier essay.

² Chatman prefers "report" to "contemplate" when describing the narrator's particular function in the muffin example from Dickens's novel (*Coming to Terms* 141-42), and Shaw questions this preference in his "Loose Narrators." It seems to me that narrators can be capable of contemplation, even in posterior narration; for, after all, narrators can *imagine* scenes before them as they tell them, even without sharing the same "here-and-now," and, in their act of telling, may contemplate certain aspects of scenes. We contemplate episodes in our past all the time, do we not?—even in, or especially in, the process of recounting those personal episodes to other people. What I mean to say is that the act of contemplation does not require an immediate observation of the subject being contemplated. One may contemplate the future of a democratic nation, the progress of AIDS research over the next few decades, a movie one saw two months ago.

³ I suggest that we discard "multiple" focalization, which Genette distinguishes from "variable," because there is almost always a chronological overlap in variable perspectives, and the difference may not be significant in a broad application to a novel.

⁴ See my discussion of artificial narrators in the next chapter concerning voice.

⁵ Booth argues against this distinction in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* pp.3-16.

⁶ The dramatic point of view is defined in *Fiction: A HarperCollins Pocket Anthology*, p. 15.

CHAPTER III

VOICE

Of all the terms that describe voice, both old and new, none are more useless than those that identify person, for all narrators implicitly, if not explicitly, speak from an "I" (Cohan and Shires 92). Person refers, not to the *narrating* subject, but to the *narrated* subject, and, as Jacques Lacan maintains in his psychoanalytic theories, the narrating and narrated subjects are not the same. The apple-thief illustrates the difference: "I did not steal those apples." The *narrating* subject is indeed an apple thief; the *narrated* one is not (15). To identify the sentence as a first-person narrative is to describe the subject of the story, or in this case the lie, and not the narrator of it. Consequently, confusion arises in our attempt to diagnose narrators who narrate some sentences in first-person while the story itself seems to be about someone else. An example occurs in John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*: "I exaggerate? Perhaps, but I can be put to the test, for the Cobb has changed very little since the year of which I write; though the town of Lyme has, and the test is not fair if you look back towards land" (10). Although the narrator of Fowles's novel speaks in first-person, he exists on the extradiegetic level and not as a character in the story. (I will address the narrator's diegetic appearances shortly.) Genette terms these types of narrators *heterodiegetic* (245) or *different from the story*, and he terms those who do appear as characters in their own stories *homodiegetic* (245), or *same as the story*. So the narrator of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*--or of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*--is *heterodiegetic*, whereas the narrator of

Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*--or L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*--is *homodiegetic*. Genette further describes those homodiegetic narrators who are the protagonists of their own stories as *autodiegetic* (245), which more specifically labels the narrators in Hemingway and Hartley's novels. The narrator of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, however, depending on your view of Nick's role, might be termed more broadly *homodiegetic*.

Since I have spent some time arguing the difference between the *narrating* and *narrated* subjects, or the *extradiegetic* and *diegetic* levels, it may seem contradictory that I am calling a certain breed of narrators *the same* as their stories with the term *homodiegetic*. According to my Lacanian argument, all narrators are strictly heterodiegetic. But although the terms *autodiegetic* and *non-autodiegetic* more accurately describe narrators' relationships to their stories (for *auto* means *self*, and we can have many selves that are not the same, such as myself as a child and myself as an adult), Genette's terms have already so fully infiltrated our studies and are so much easier to say that, as long as we remember they mean something other than their literal root expression, they can remain adequate descriptions of voice. I have entertained other possibilities, such as *inside* and *outside* and *self* and *other*, but the metaphors lack as much precision as Genette's.

The terms *heterodiegetic* and *homodiegetic*, however, should not be considered by narratologists to be absolute labels not subject to debate; the contrary is true. For example, there are two brief moments in Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* when the narrator appears as a character in the story. The first occurs on the train when a

bearded man sits opposite Charles, giving him a look “with its bizarre blend of the inquisitive and the magistral; of the ironic and the soliciting” (319). The look asks the questions “Now could I use you? Now what could I do with you?” (317). He appears again toward the end of the novel: “The once full, patriarchal beard of the railway compartment has been trimmed down to something rather foppish and Frenchified” (362). Here, he turns back his timepiece fifteen minutes, perhaps to allow the scene between Sarah and Charles to recur. Although the narrator appears only for these two brief moments on the diegetic level, they may be sufficient to define him *homodiegetic*. An alternative is to label the appearances as metalepses, as I do in Chapter Two. Fowles’s novel is not the only narrative which presents us with an ambiguous narrator.

Consider Sherwood Anderson’s “Death in the Woods”:

There was such an old woman who used to come into town past our house one summer and fall when I was a young boy and was sick with what was called inflammatory rheumatism. She went home later carrying a heavy pack on her back. Two or three large gaunt-looking dogs followed at her heels. (1211)

Here the narrator depicts a scene as he remembers it, and--although he does not appear to be the protagonist, or *autodiegetic*--his presence in the story as a young boy whose home the old woman passes characterizes him as *homodiegetic*. Yet, the rest of the story contains scenes at which he could not have been present:

She managed to get out of the house without her employer seeing, but when she was getting into the buggy he showed up. It was almost dark, and he just popped up suddenly at the horse’s head. He grabbed the horse by the bridle and Jake [the employer’s son] got out his buggy whip.

They had it out alright! The German was a tough one. Maybe he didn’t care whether his wife knew or not, Jake hit him over the face and shoulders with the buggy whip, but the horse got to acting up and he had to get out. (1212)

The narrator admits his absence: "(I wonder how I know all this. It must have stuck in my mind from small-town tales when I was a boy)" (1212). However the narrator knows the details of the story, his absence clearly defines him as *heterodiegetic*. Most of the story continues with scenes from the old woman's life at which the narrator could not have been present, but the narrator appears diegetically as a young boy—as he does at the beginning of his tale—at the death of the old woman: "Now the crowd of men and boys had got to the clearing. Darkness comes quickly on such winter nights, but the full moon made everything clear. My brother and I stood near the trees beneath which the old woman had died" (1218). One solution would be to identify narrators of passages rather than those of entire novels, but that seems rather tedious—similar to the tiresome diagramming of focalization shifts within sentences. I propose that our naming be based on something simpler: if the narrator seems consistently present as a diegetic character throughout most of the story, then he is clearly *homodiegetic*. Part of the task of defining the narrator, then, will be defining the story; in Anderson's "Death in the Woods," one must decide whether the story is really about the old woman or about the narrator's attempt to piece together a story: "The scene in the forest had become for me, without my knowing it, the foundation for the real story I am now trying to tell. The fragments, you see, had to be picked up slowly, long afterward" (1218). The narrator later admits that it was not the old woman but he who had a "mystical adventure with dogs in an Illinois forest on a clear, moonlit winter night" (1218) and that he, not the old woman, worked for a German, along with a girl who was afraid of her employer (1218). Clearly, terms such as *heterodiegetic* and *homodiegetic* take none of the complexity of literary

analysis away from readers and critics. A further example of the controversy over which readers can debate is the narrator of *The Great Gatsby* to whom I earlier referred as *homodiegetic*. One may argue that Nick is the protagonist of his own story, or *autodiegetic*, and still another may argue that he is absent from most of the scenes he tells from Gatsby's life and is therefore *heterodiegetic*. These terms are not meant to limit readers and their interpretations; they are meant to improve upon the ways readers discuss narrative.

Voice involves more than the hetero-homo-diegetic question. Several pairs of terms that are used to describe a narrator's role as witness to the diegesis and as a character in the extradiegesis have evolved, and these pairs are similar to one another but decidedly distinct. These pairs include Booth's *dramatized* and *undramatized* (151-52), Chatman's *overt* and *covert* (197), Dorrit Cohn's *dissonant* and *consonant* (26), and Booth's *reliable* and *unreliable* (158-59). Booth defines *dramatized* narrators when he says that "even the most reticent narrator has dramatized himself as soon as he refers to himself as 'I,' or, like Flaubert, tells us that 'we' were in the classroom when Charles Bovary entered" (152). Booth goes on to explain that some dramatized narrators appear as vividly as the characters whose stories they tell, while others give only a hint of who they are. Still others, the *undramatized*, never refer to themselves explicitly or develop their personalities through their telling (151). Booth states that these types of narrators remain indistinct from the implied author, or "the implicit second self" (151) an author creates in his or her text. Chatman's terms *overt* and *covert*, on the other hand, derive their meaning less from self-reference or personality development than from the

"obtrusiveness" of the narrator "through various kinds of commentary--interpretation, judgment, and generalization" (197). The *overt* narrator ranges from the most obtrusive to the one who simply tells us more than the characters tell or think themselves (197). For example, nonfocalized texts often employ overt narrators because no character functions as the focalizer behind which the narrator can hide. The covert narrator effaces himself behind his focalizers and makes it difficult for us to distinguish his or her particular "slant" from that of the characters (197). Ernest Hemingway's stories take exception to this, particularly "Hills Like White Elephants," where a covert narrator does not employ focalization to create what has been traditionally called the *dramatic point of view*. With the *covert* narrator, we have a sense of "a shadowy narrator lurking in the wings" (197). Clearly, *dramatized* and *overt* narrators and *undramatized* and *covert* narrators have something in common though they are not exactly the same. Chatman's terms are similar to yet different from a third set of terms--Cohn's *dissonant* and *consonant*. Cohn's dichotomy can be distinguished, not--as with Chatman's--by self-reference or by an emerging personality, but by whether or not the interpretations, judgments, and generalizations of the narrator square with the sentiments of the protagonist. *Dissonance* is achieved "by a prominent narrator who, even as he focuses intently on an individual psyche, remains emphatically distanced from the consciousness he narrates" (26), while *consonance* is achieved by "a narrator who remains effaced and who readily fuses with the consciousness he narrates" (26). An attempt to synthesize these terms would be problematic despite their close proximity in meaning. To illustrate, a *dramatized* and *overt* narrator could be *consonant* with the protagonist, even though

one would think Chatman's *overt* and Cohn's *dissonant* to be semantically similar. Vladimir Nabokov's Humbert Humbert of *Lolita* exemplifies this case, for Humbert Humbert dramatizes himself and is overt in his judgments and generalizations, but he is also consonant with himself as narrated subject. He, in other words, is like the apple thief who says "I did steal those apples." Not all dramatized and overt homodiegetic narrators are consonant, however. Consider Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* where an older Charles, fully dramatized and overt, narrates the story of a younger and very different Charles not yet converted to Catholicism. Similarly, although Booth's *dramatized* and Chatman's *overt* seem synonymous, an *undramatized* narrator can also be *overt*. The heterodiegetic narrator of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* never refers to herself or develops her character outside of her judgment upon the conventionality and closed-mindedness of the characters. But we might say her judgment upon her characters dramatizes her, thus providing another example of how far these terms are from destroying the freedom of readers to exercise their powers of interpretation.

According to Booth, when the narrative voice appears to be a spokesperson for the implied author, then it is a *reliable* narrator; when it does not, then it is *unreliable* (158-59). But I would argue that the relationship between narrator and implied author is best described by Cohn's terms *dissonant* and *consonant* (26). We ought to say that narrators are consonant with their implied authors when they function as spokespeople for them and that they are dissonant to them when they do not. I say this because we need to differentiate *narrators who are dissonant to implied authors* from *narrators who*

cannot get the facts of their stories straight. We need this distinction because, even though, generally speaking, unreliable narrators are also dissonant to their implied authors, reliable narrators--those who get the facts right--are sometimes not spokespeople for their implied authors. For example, if you interpret Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* as a narrative in which the narrator faithfully reports what, in the context of Swift's imagination, really happens (as opposed to a narrative in which its narrator suffers delusions or has a dream), then Gulliver gets the facts of his story right despite his ignorance of the text as a satire. So Gulliver is *reliable* in his ability to tell of his adventures, and he is *dissonant* to the implied author because he knows and understands much less than the implied author. Likewise, Whitey, in Ring Lardner's "Haircut," seems to reliably tell the facts of Jim's story, but his attitude about Jim is clearly dissonant to the implied author. Gulliver and Whitey are different from the unreliable narrator of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" who says that she lives in a colonial mansion although her speculation that her room was once a nursery and a gymnasium for boys because of the barred windows, nailed-down bed, and "rings and things" (5) on the wall indicates that she has been committed to more than a metaphorical institution. Gilman's narrator gets the facts wrong in that she sees the asylum to which her husband has brought her as a vacation home. Yet she exemplifies how we can characterize voice in degrees of consonance and dissonance, for although Jane questions the treatment of mental illness, the stifling of creativity by science, and the dominance of husbands over their wives which makes her decidedly consonant with

the implied author, her submission to them, which drives her mad, makes her dissonant to some degree.

A narrator's unreliability is not always obvious, and whether or not the voice is an ironic one becomes a matter of interpretation. Such is the case with Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*. In the section that follows, I argue the unreliability of that narrative voice.

In addition to the reliable and unreliable voice there is what I call the *artificial*, which is defined less by a narrator's relationship with the story than by his or her relationship with implied readers.² The implied author who employs *unreliable* narrators asks us readers to suspend our disbelief and imagine that a story occurred but that it cannot be successfully reported by the narrator. In such a case, our relationship with the implied author is primary and something like two intimate friends tolerating the inadequacies of a third as he tries to tell us something about which we both realize he knows very little. The implied author who employs the *artificial* narrator, on the other hand, invites us readers to *maintain* our disbelief and to knowingly delight and participate in a construct--not one lost to history, but one that never takes place except through a self-conscious invention. In this case, our relationship with the implied author is secondary to our relationship with the narrator. The narrator and we are like friends playing a game together, and some narrators invite us to participate more actively in their games than others. Thus, the narrator of Anderson's "Death in the Woods" is an artificial narrator because he admits that he has pieced together the story of the woman based on his own experiences, and he elaborates to us readers how and why he has done so.

Artificial narrators may or may not be spokespeople for their implied authors. The narrator of "Death in the Woods" seems indistinct from the implied author, but the narrator of *Lolita* is clearly not Nabokov's "second self." Humbert Humbert, like the narrator of "Death in the Woods," acknowledges the artificiality of his story when he declares: "Please reader: no matter your exasperation with the tenderhearted, morbidly sensitive, infinitely circumspect hero of my book, do not skip these essential pages. Imagine me; I shall not exist if you do not imagine me. . ." (129). This is quite unlike the narrator of *Pale Fire* who thinks too highly of himself as a literary critic. Like the newspaper clipping in *Billy Budd, Sailor* and Miranda's journal in John Fowles's *The Collector*, the poem Nabokov's narrator interprets--written by a character known as John Shade--functions as an unmediated text by which we can observe the fallacies of the voice which attempts to mediate it. And like the narrator of *Lolita*, the narrators of *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* knowingly invite us to play in their imaginative worlds. The narrator of *Pierre*, quite different from that of *Billy Budd, Sailor* who insists that his story is based on fact, openly admits: "I write precisely as I please" (244). Similarly, the narrator of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has none of the perverse incompetencies of Frederick Clegg (at least, no apparent ones). Although I conclude this essay with an in-depth discussion of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the following passage is a brief example of its artificial voice:

The novelist is still a god, since he creates (and not even the most aleatory avant-garde modern novel has managed to extirpate its author completely); what has changed is that we are no longer the gods of the Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing; but in the new theological image, with freedom our first principle, not authority. (82)

The artificial narrator is not simply one who is *self-conscious* of himself or herself as a narrator, for many narrators, like Gulliver in *Gulliver's Travels*, realize that they are telling a story, but they remain the typical *reporting* kind of narrator. Fowles's narrator admits that he has made up his tale even though most of the time he creates an illusion to the contrary.

The following discussions of Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* and of Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* demonstrate how considerations of voice can be applied in an analysis.

Melville's Man of Conjecture in *Billy Budd, Sailor*:
(An Inside Narrative)

Not all critics distinguish between Melville and the overt narrator who adamantly claims that his story of Billy Budd has "less to do with fable than with fact" (75). Warner Berthoff maintains that "the author speaking in his own voice [seems to] obstinately disregard . . . objective representation and dramatic climax" (116). Robert Merrill claims that "authorial analysis limits the various meanings we can legitimately derive from the novel's action" (284). But Joseph Schiffmann notes that if we take the narrator seriously and align Melville with what appears to be the narrator's "testament of faith," then *Billy Budd, Sailor* is unlike anything Melville has written (130). It seems highly unlikely that the ironic wit present in virtually every other work should not find a place in this one. And if we do search for irony in *Billy Budd, Sailor*, we see it all too obviously in its narrative voice: for the narrator bent on telling the facts appears to speculate both the

thoughts and the actions of characters which he cannot himself verify. As he says of the closeted interview between Billy and Captain Vere: "Beyond the communication of the sentence what took place at this interview was never known. But some conjecture can be made" (63). Likewise, he can "essay" but "never hit" Claggart's "portrait" (20), and he must surmise why Billy decides to follow the afterguardsman in the night: "However it was, [Billy] mechanically rose" (35). A closer look at the narrator's language shows that there is really nothing he can tell us apart from speculation and conjecture (Evans 327), and what Melville achieves with such an incompetent spokesperson is an ironic parody of the "inside narrative."

The narrator's language is filled with what Edward Cifelli calls "or and may/might constructions" (464) the first of which the narrator uses to present alternatives that contradict one another. We are told, for example, that "either through stoic self-control or a sort of momentary paralysis induced by emotional shock, [Vere] stood erectly rigid as a musket in the ship armorer's rack" (71). The first proposition portrays Vere in complete command, a "stoic" command. The second shows a Vere completely out of control, victim to "emotional shock." An example of the narrator's use of *may* occurs when he guesses at the cause of Vere's "unobtrusiveness of demeanor" (17) which he says "may have proceeded from a certain unaffected modesty of manhood" (17). But *may* always implies an unstated alternative. If I were asked by the university administration why a student repeatedly failed his exams and I could only speculate with "Perhaps he was ill," or "He may have family problems at home," or "Possibly he has no self-discipline," surely my guesses would not be taken seriously or serve as grounds for

some kind of action to be taken against the student. Why should the narrator's speculation be taken any more seriously? His position as narrator does not automatically guarantee him a privileged point of view. In fact, what has been called an authorial obtrusiveness by Berthoff is actually a dramatization of the narrative voice, and that dramatization makes the narrator a character whose words, like those of any other character, are subject to scrutiny in an analysis.

Consider the questions the narrator asks which he either fails to answer--because he presumes that only a single possibility is evident--or answers, but with a series of guesses similar to the ones I give in my example of the failing student. The first case is illustrated when the narrator asks: "And what could Billy know of man except of man as a mere sailor?" (39). He seems to expect us to assume that sailors live sheltered lives that keep them innocently ignorant of the darker side of humanity, but in *Redburn* and *White Jacket* Melville depicts boys whose lessons of life come from their experiences aboard. Lyon Evans suggests that when the narrator asks why Billy follows the afterguardsman, he considers four possibilities: that Billy is too good-natured to say no to the afterguardman's request, that his blood was too warm not to go along, that he was too innocent of anything dishonest or unnatural, and that he was too sleepy to know better. Following these strong defenses of Billy's action comes the narrator's admission that he does not know why Billy follows the afterguardsman (Evans 341): "However it was, he mechanically rose" (35).

The narrator further appears unreliable in that he bases information on hearsay--supposed "facts" of which he has no immediate knowledge himself. The Captain's death is one example:

Not long before death while lying under the influence of that magical drug which, soothing the physical frame, mysteriously operates on the subtler element in man, he was heard to murmur words inexplicable to his attendant: "Billy Budd, Billy Budd." That these were not the accents of remorse would seem clear from what the attendant said to the *Bellipotent's* senior officer of marines who, as the most reluctant to condemn of the members of the drumhead court, too well knew, though here he kept the knowledge to himself, who Billy was. (76)

Vere's words filter through an attendant and an officer before they ever reach the narrator. With so many of the details contingent upon the possibility that the narrator's speculations are correct and so many more details derived from what other people said, as John Samson asks, "what, finally, *is* the story. . . ?" (229).

Further evidence of the narrator's incompetency appears in his attempts to associate Billy and Claggart with mythological characteristics representative of good and evil. The narrator compares Billy to Apollo, the Handsome Sailor, Adam, and more specifically Christ, and the evidence he proffers to justify these associations is less than solid (Samson 225). For example, we are told that the crew aboard the *Rights-of-Man* do odd jobs for Billy out of love (5). They wash his clothes, darn old trousers, and build him a chest (5). But if Billy were like Christ, he would be their servant. Ironically, it is after Billy's display of violence that the crew performs their favors, indicating that they may do them out of fear, not love. Billy answers Red Whiskers's blow with a "terrible drubbing" that "astonishes" Red Whiskers so that he comes to "love" Billy (5). Although

the narrator presents no evidence that Red Whiskers is a threat to anyone else, he seems content with his conclusion that the "drubbing" was good for everyone. Yet the narrator does not recognize that if Billy is a fighter, he fails to resemble Christ, who would have turned the other cheek. Evans points out that the narrator similarly undermines his Christ analogy when, after claiming that Billy's "apprehension as to aught outside of honest and natural was seldom very quick" (35), he suggests that Billy "recoils" from the message of the afterguardsman which "he instinctively knew must involve evil of some sort" (36) (Evans 331).

The narrator's characterization of Claggart proves equally untrustworthy (Evans 333), for the narrator admits: "his portrait I essay, but shall never hit it" (20). Immediately following this admission of Claggart's mysteriousness, the narrator takes steps to indict him as defective, criminal, naturally depraved--in essence, an apostle of, if not himself, the arch interferer. The narrator begins with physical descriptions to intimate flaws in Claggart's character. Claggart's chin recalls Titus Oates and the Popish Plot (20), and his complexion, pale from "official seclusion from sunlight" (20), seems to "hint of something defective or abnormal" (20). "Official seclusion" points to the fact that Claggart's skin is pale because he is doing his job, but the narrator wants to read something negative into it, unlike Billy's speech impediment which the narrator claims as "evidence . . . that [Billy] is not presented as a conventional hero" (11). In other words, Claggart's pale skin implies something abnormal whereas Billy's speech problem makes him just like the next guy. The narrator's bias against Claggart becomes more prominent with the detailed explication on the impressment of criminals which follows

Claggart's sketch, indicating that Claggart, with his defective complexion and unknown background, could likely be a criminal himself (21-22). Imagine if the narrator had described Billy—who gives a bully a “terrible drubbing,” who has a paralyzing speech defect, and who has, like Claggart, a mysterious background--and followed his sketch with a similar description of the impressment of criminals. The implication that Billy is one such criminal would have perhaps been more convincing. Samson points out that Claggart and Billy have similar qualities (226). The narrator admits that no “fact” indicts Claggart (20), that he “looked like a man of high quality, social and moral” (20), and that his high position “opened to the invidious a vague field for unfavorable surmise” (21). The only “fact” the narrator reports is Claggart's quick advance up the chain of naval positions (20), equally, if not more, attributable to exceptional intelligence and hard work than to an evil of some sort. Yet the narrator downplays Claggart's positive qualities and emphasizes the testimony of one old man, the Dansker, to find fault with Claggart (Evans 334). The authority of the Dansker, however, is undercut by an earlier statement that his gossip about Claggart is unreliable: “But the less credence was to be given to the gun-deck talk touching Claggart, seeing that no man holding his office in a man-of-war can ever hope to be popular with the crew” (22). As a last recourse, the narrator launches a thorough explication proclaiming Claggart's “depravity according to nature” (29) which he qualifies by saying it “by no means involves Calvin's dogma as to total mankind” (29). The narrator makes the insinuation with an omniscient authority that cannot be his even if he were a reliable narrator of facts. The narrator comes up with this description as a possible explanation for Claggart's being “down” on Billy. First of

all, we have no proof that Claggart is indeed "down" on Billy, and, second of all, it seems a mighty leap, if he is, to assume it is because of a "natural depravity."

Claggart does, however, accuse Billy who appears innocent, but we must remember that, as master-at-arms, it is Claggart's duty to report any suspicious behavior. Because Claggart's informer fabricates stories to win his favor (33), because Billy does follow the afterguardsman, and because the afterguardsman speaks cheerfully to Billy whenever they meet afterward, Claggart may have reasonable grounds to suspect him. For all the narrator knows, Billy could well be involved in a mutiny, and may even be its initiator. As Claggart points out: "Not for nothing does [Billy] insinuate himself into the good will of his shipmates" (45). We are also told that something about Billy "provoked an ambiguous smile in one or two harder faces among the bluejackets" (8). A number of possibilities present themselves as the cause of Billy's behavior and of the reaction he solicits in others, but the narrator seems bent on seeing the cause as "that humane look of reposeful good nature which the Greek sculptor . . . gave his heroic strong man, Hercules" (8-9).

The narrator's unreliability extends beyond his inadequate descriptions of Billy and Claggart. The part of his narrative of "facts" that is most difficult to believe is his description of Billy's apparent physical states before and after his death. We are told that the tension and agony experienced by Billy before the drumhead court "survived not the something healing in the closeted interview with Captain Vere" (67). If Billy is "nonplussed . . . evincing confusion . . . [and] evidence of hidden guilt" (56) before the interview, no trace remains, for, after, he is "without movement" as if "in a trance" (67):

Without movement, he lay as in a trance. That adolescent expression previously noted as his, taking on something akin to the look of a slumbering child in the cradle when the warm hearth-glow of the still chamber at night plays on the dimples that at whiles mysteriously form in the cheek, silently coming and going there. For now and then in the gyved one's trance a serene happy light born of some wandering reminiscence or dream would diffuse itself over his face, and then wane away only anew to return. (67)

Billy is also without movement after his hanging. When the purser suggests to the surgeon that Billy is “a testimony to the force lodged in willpower” (71), the surgeon explains that because spasms occur in the muscular system, the “absence of that is no more attributable to willpower as you call it than to horsepower” (71). The implied author seems to speak to us through the surgeon when he says that the event is described as a “phenomenon” only “in the sense that it was an appearance the cause of which is not immediately to be assigned” (72). When the purser continues to question the surgeon, asking “was the man's death effected by the halter, or was it a species of euthanasia” (72), the surgeon responds that euthanasia “is something like your *willpower*” (72), as though the purser means the term in its old sense, as simply an easy and painless death. However, the term had already taken on its most recent meaning, the action of *inducing* an easy and painless death by 1869, almost twenty years before Melville wrote *Billy Budd, Sailor* (*Oxford English Dictionary* 444). If the purser means euthanasia in its modern sense, the surgeon gives him no time to clarify himself, for soon after his willpower comparison, he excuses himself “abruptly changing his tone, ‘there is a case in the sick bay that I do not care to leave to my assistants’” (72).

That something "not immediately to be assigned" takes place is indicated by the "special orders," "invisible precautions," and "special reasons." The surgeon tells the purser that he himself directed Budd's procedure "under special orders" (71). In addition, we are told that the transfer of Billy from Vere's quarters "was effected without unusual precautions--at least no visible ones" (65). Finally, "for special reasons," the mainyard is assigned for the execution instead of the foreyard, the usual location (70). The purser's question about euthanasia, a term which already possessed its modern meaning, the surgeon's fishy behavior, and the "special" and "invisible" proceedings surrounding Budd's death all signal something other than what the narrator reports.

It seems highly likely that Billy's serene "trance" before his execution and his lack of spasms during can be explained by the possibility that Billy either had given himself or was given opium. If so, the supernatural mysticism attributed to Billy's death by the narrator who explains Billy's condition before and during the execution with Christian ideology would possess quite an ironic twist, the kind of twist we see in most of Melville's works. Melville was acquainted with the use of opium, which, by his time, was considered "an indispensable companion for the voyager to tropical climes" (Marks 33). John Woodall's *Surgeon Mate* recommended laudanum--opium dissolved in alcoholic spirits--as a standard painkiller for wounds (Marks 33). Evidence attesting to Melville's knowledge of opium occurs with the description of Vere on his deathbed "under the influence of that magical drug which soothing the physical frame mysteriously operates on the subtler element in man" (76). Furthermore, a prominent doctor gained international recognition for an epidemiological pamphlet he published which included

the medical use of opium, and his name remained prominent during, and sometime after, Melville's years afloat; the doctor's name was William Budd (Marks 34).

Melville's narrator attempts to assimilate the characters into types and the actions into myths (Samson 227). Billy becomes the Christ; Claggart, the false accuser, or the Iago; Vere, God the Father. Billy's death becomes for the narrator something like Christ's crucifixion. But, as the narrator assimilates with speculation and conjecture, the real story of Billy Budd is left untold. The irony that emerges through the narrator's contradictory remarks often hints to us that the real story of Billy is something closer to what the "News from the Mediterranean" reports. Melville's unreliable narrator becomes a symbol--which is ironic in its own right because of Melville's intention to deconstruct symbols--for the inability of all "reporters of fact" to tell, with any real accuracy, the histories of their subjects.

The Voice of Darwinism in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Darwinism is more important to John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* than critics have thus far recognized in their critique of it as a historical novel, as an experimental novel, or as some combination of both.² Fowles employs an artificial narrator to demonstrate the evolution not only of nature and its inhabitants, but also of the art and customs of the most intelligent of its inhabitants. Although evolution means change, Fowles illustrates, in accordance with Darwin's theory, that everything possesses, inescapably, some part of its ancestry and that although change is inevitable, it

is less a matter of emancipation than one of adaptation. Consequently, the experimental novelist cannot fully extricate himself from his Victorian roots, nor can he take credit for the apparent freedom of his innovative narrative: like every other species, the novelist evolves from the past and into the future without much choice of his own.

The Darwinian concept appears early in the novel in a conversation between Charles and Ernestina just before they meet Tragedy on the Cobb:

“Your father ventured the opinion that Mr. Darwin should be exhibited in a cage in the zoological gardens. In the monkey house. I tried to explain some of the scientific arguments behind the Darwinian position. I was unsuccessful. *Et voilà tout.*”

“How could you--when you know Papa’s views!” (12)

Charles is not a serious Darwinist, for the narrator tells us that Charles “had not really understood Darwin” (45). The generation before Charles--represented by Ernestina’s father--understood him even less. But the twentieth-century novelist seems to have evolved into quite a knowledgeable Darwinist, as he illustrates with his discussion of *nulla species nova*, or the concept that “a new species cannot enter the world” (45). The narrator, despite his Darwinian sympathies, maintains that “*nulla species nova* was rubbish” (45) and suggests that “if a new species *can* come into being, old species very often have to make way for them” (45). The narrator confirms this sentiment when he says that Charles “soon held a very concrete example of it in his hand” (45). But it is not just Charles who holds an example, for as we turn the pages of Fowles’s novel, we hold a concrete example of it in our own hands: the Victorian novel has had to make way for the new novel, and all we have read up to Chapter Thirteen has been a kind of fossil of an extinct creature, or the part of the old that has survived in the new, like the ape in the

man. The epigraph of Chapter Three, taken from *The Origin of Species*, explains: "the chief part of the organization of every living creature is due to its inheritance" (15). Some critics interpret Fowles's novel as "participatory art," a manifestation of his new reader-response theory.³ But this new kind of art evolves from the Victorian tradition, and most of the art from that tradition demanded from its audience only the submissive absorption of whatever the omniscient narrator decreed. Through natural selection, the more innovative narrative styles emerge, but not without some scent of the Victorian about them. The change is gradual, which is verified in Fowles's depiction of his characters, including his narrator, who appear in different stages of an evolutionary process.

We find Mrs. Poulteny between the prudent puritanism of the early part of the Victorian Period and the extravagant pomposity of the latter part:

With the vicar Mrs. Poulteny felt herself with two people. One was her social inferior, an inferior who depended on her for many of the pleasures of his table . . . ; and the other was the representative of God, before whom she had metaphorically to kneel. So her manner with him took often a bizarre and inconsequential course. It was *de haut en bas* one moment, *de bas en haut* the next; and sometimes she contrived both positions all in one sentence. (24)

The prudent puritanism in her fears God and forces her to "cautiously examine[] her conscience" (24); but the extravagant pomposity in her manifests itself in her hoarding of wealth (24) and in the sharp, unmerciful edge of the tone with which she, like most upper middle class ladies of her day, speaks to her servants. As the narrator explains: "what drove the new Britain was increasingly a desire to seem respectable, in place of a desire to do good for good's sake" (17). But evolutionary change is not exclusively for the rich

in Fowles's novel, for Sam Farrow, Charles's servant, also represents a move from one kind of species to another: the move from a member of the lower class to one of the middle class. Although later in the novel his transition is completed when he takes a job with Mr. Freeman's company and moves his new family into a house of its own, the change is noted much earlier by the narrator as something not specific to Sam's individual case:

The mid-century has seen quite a new form of dandy appear on the English scene; the old upper-class variety, the etiolated descendants of Beau Brummel, were known as "swells"; but the new young prosperous artisans and would-be superior domestics like Sam had gone into competition sartorially. They were called "snobs" by the swells themselves; Sam was a very fair example of a snob, in this localized sense of the word. He had a very sharp sense of clothes style--quite as sharp as a "mod" of the 1960s; and he spent most of his wages on keeping in fashion. And he showed another mark of this new class in his struggle to command the language. (39)

The narrator goes on to explain that Sam Farrow is different from the Sam Weller as he is portrayed decades earlier in Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* in that the latter "was happy with his role" (40) while the former "suffered it" (40). There remains something of the Cockney in Sam Farrow--his wrong a's and h's--but he and his class, according to Fowles, are in a continuous flux as they adapt to the changing economy of their time.

Ernestina represents a more advanced example of this economically adapting species to which Sam belongs, for, though her father is very wealthy, her grandfather had been a draper, and one can see that Sam's progeny have a similar chance to aspire to Ernestina's class. And Ernestina's change, like Sam's, appears intrinsically connected to fashion. As part of the "revolt against the crinoline and the large bonnet" (10), she

dresses a little too sharply for the small town of Lyme, and, although she has "exactly the right face for her age" (26), there is "a minute tilt at the corner of her eyelids, and a corresponding tilt at the corner of her lips" (27) that the "orthodox Victorian would have perhaps mistrusted" (27). The narrator explains that she "was so very nearly one of the prim little moppets, the Georginas, Victorias, Albertinas, Matildas and the rest who sat in their closely guarded dozens at every ball; yet not quite" (27). Likewise, it is Ernestina who effects the change in Aunt Tranter's house which is "inexorably, massively, irrefutably in the style of a quarter-century before" (27). Like Ernestina, who is part Victorian and part modern--like the novel itself--Mrs. Tranter's house is in transition, as it has an "emphatically French" room of the modern taste amid the old furniture and decor of two and a half decades before. But if Ernestina represents the evolving economy and fashion, she remains an archaic species when it comes to female sexuality and the New Woman. For "whenever the physical female implications of her body, sexual, menstrual, parturitional, tr[y] to force an entry into her consciousness" (29), she simply tells herself "I must not" (29). Sarah, on the other hand, represents the more emancipated woman who refuses to submit to the typical female dependence on male authority. It seems significant that we witness submission in Sarah only when she serves a female employer--Mrs. Poulteny. Otherwise, she seems bent on destroying the male fantasy of provider and protector when she undermines Charles's engagement to Ernestina and thus opens his eyes to the trappings of their time, social and moral. But Sarah remains far from the liberated woman of the twentieth century, for she must pay

the price of her reputation to find the economic freedom she desires outside of matrimony.

Charles, not coincidentally named for Charles Darwin, undergoes his own evolution. Already representative of a change in process, he is the rising scientific element at a time when Darwinism is not popular; but he is an "ungifted scientist" (45), and his comic attire--canvas clothes and heavy boots--which he wears to play the part of the good paleontologist, makes him a caricature not too unlike his grandfather who "had devoted a deal of his money and much more of his family's patience to the excavation of the harmless hummocks of earth that pimpled his three thousand Wiltshire acres" (16). Charles, like his grandfather, is interested in relics, which the narrator describes as "the Linnaean obsession with classifying and naming, with fossilizing the existent" (45). So, despite Charles's discipleship to the innovative ideas of Darwin, he continues, like his predecessors, to look to the "reassuring orderliness in existence" (45) rather than to the unassuring mysteriousness of the future. His change is perhaps greater as a social being than as a scientist, for he begins along the traditional path toward marriage and a leisurely profession, but we see him adapt to a growing discontent inside him. Slowly, Charles is becoming something like the modern man who pursues his own path, often against tradition and expectation.

The artificial narrator unifies the Darwinian theme. He, too, is not immune to change. Like the characters he invents, he is both a product of the past and a creature of adaptation. Without the ability to adapt, the narrator could not survive natural selection. So, in Chapter Thirteen, in an attempt to extend beyond his Victorian "inheritance," and

fully acknowledging the experimental novelists with whom he must compete, he addresses us, as he must, and admits the artificiality of his enterprise:

I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters' minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in (just as I have assumed some of the vocabulary and "voice" of) a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word. (80)

It is not "a novel in the modern sense of the word" because it is intrinsically connected to a literary tradition despite its self-consciousness. The narrator seems to imply less that his novel is not a modern one and more that modern novels, despite their rejection of convention, cannot help but contain, like his, some part of their ancestry known as convention. The apparent lack of freedom in such an implication finds further proof in the narrator's admission that "When Charles left Sarah on her cliff edge, I ordered him to walk straight back to Lyme Regis. But he did not; he gratuitously turned and went down to the Dairy" (81). Despite his claim that he is a god of "the new theological image, with freedom our first principle, not authority" (82), his characters--and we readers--are no more free than he. As I have shown, the characters cannot fully escape their "inheritance," just as the narrator-novelist cannot escape his. Mrs. Poulteny's religious convictions cannot save her from her pompous heart; Sam's ascent up the economic ladder does not exempt him from his role as Charles's servant; Ernestina's tilt in her eyes and lips does not help her escape from her inherited sexual frigidity; Sarah's ambition for economic freedom must be paid for with traditional subservience; and Charles's freedom

from social tradition is bought at the price of a painful lesson he must endure because of his Victorian impulses. Critics who will have us believe that Fowles's novel "Is about freeing modern humanity" (Huffaker 92) have missed the crucial point that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* strives to make: that none of us are free, that freedom is an illusion like fiction, and that we are "all in flight from the real reality" (82) which is this lack of freedom. The narrator implores us: "I would have you share my own sense that I do not fully control these creatures of my mind, any more than you control--however hard you try, . . . --your children, colleagues, friends, or even yourself" (82). The world is too much with us, both the burden of the past and the pressure of the future. God may not be "Omniscient and decreeing" (82), but neither are the rest of us--novelist, character, reader, or otherwise.

Notes

¹ The implied reader is the audience for whom the text seems to be written. It is different from the *narratee*. The narratee exists on the diegetic level with the narrator, and he or she or they may be dramatized or undramatized. An example of a narratee occurs in Nabokov's *Lolita* in which Humbert Humbert continually addresses a jury. The concept of the implied reader can be easily understood when one considers that the implied reader of children's literature will be drastically different from that of the *Wallstreet Journal*. An adult may read his daughter's story book, but he is not the implied reader. My eight-year-old nephew might read my *Wall Street Journal* to practice his pronunciation of certain words, but he is not the implied reader of that text.

² Susana Onega, in *Form and Meaning in the Novels of John Fowles*, argues against the accusation of critics that Fowles imitates old conventions "to cheat us into accepting them as new" (70), and William Palmer, in *The Fiction of John Fowles: Tradition, Art, and the Loneliness of Selfhood*, maintains that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* dramatizes Fowles's "new theory of participatory art" (65). In *Understanding John Fowles*, Thomas C. Foster claims that Fowles exploits the form of the Victorian novel and shows his novel "to be solidly in the postmodernist camp" (67).

³ See above note.

PART II
THE NARRATIVE OBJECT

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTER

One of the many ways we can talk about character is to talk about *function*, which is the method formalists and structuralists generally use in their approach. A.J. Greimas's functions include senders, receivers, subjects, objects, helpers, and opponents; his method involves identifying a subject, such as a prince who tries to rescue and marry a princess, or object, captured by an evil-doer, or opponent. Mieke Bal uses the term *actor* in place of *character*, which emphasizes characters as makers and doers. She says: "In some fabulas there are actors who have no functional part in the structures of that fabula because they do not cause or undergo *functional* events. Actors of this type may be left out of consideration. . . . Well-known examples are the porters and maids who open front doors in many nineteenth-century novels. Such actors act . . . , but their action does not belong to the category of functional events" (25). Bal defines a functional event as a change from one state to another that involves both a choice made by an actor and a confrontation between that actor and another (an actor is not necessarily human). In other words, character is inextricably tied to events, or to plot, or to what James Phelan calls *progression* (ix).

Such an approach does provide a valuable method for fiction analysis, particularly when we (and our students) confront ambiguous texts. Beginning our analysis of a narrative by identifying its protagonist--necessarily a function-based noun--can help us to sort through the muck. When we perceive a particular character as the protagonist, we

establish a course of meaning for the entire narrative, for our conception of the protagonist will invariably limit our possible conceptions of the central conflict--its climax and resolution--and this will, in turn, limit our interpretation of the story's symbolism and theme. Consider Robert Coover's *The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.* If we identify Henry as the protagonist, then the novel's central conflict must involve his struggle with someone or something--with obsession, insanity, modern mundanity, the forces of self-created systems, fate, old age, impotence, death. But if we identify Damon Rutherford or Jack Casey as our protagonist, the central conflict of the novel cannot be Henry's struggle with old age, etc.; the struggle must revolve around the protagonist. With Damon as our protagonist, our central conflict might involve his struggle against the antagonistic Henry, the historian, giving us an entirely different reading. Suppose, for example, that Henry represents God. With Henry as the protagonist, we see a God who loves His creatures but who cannot break the rules He Himself created without resorting to a miracle involving a sacrifice. Jack Casey dies so that Damon Rutherford can live and so that the rest of the game/creation can continue to have meaning for Him. With Damon as our protagonist, however, we see God portrayed as an antagonistic force in our lives who limits our potentials--or free will--as the angel Lucifer was limited with a rigid system of cause and effects that are governed by chance, like the roll of the dice (Why was God God and not Lucifer? or Henry Henry and not Damon?). We might further interpret social conditioning, heredity, and evolution as some of the manifestations of a governing chance. Nevertheless, the course of our meaning-making will depend on the character we identify as our protagonist. Other

examples include Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In the former, we might consider Billy our protagonist, a boy up against the hardships and injustices of life as a sailor. I believe a more convincing case can be made for Claggart whose antagonist, history (represented by the narrator), twists the facts of Billy's trial, sentence, and execution to falsely condemn Claggart. Likewise, if we name Nick the protagonist of Fitzgerald's novel instead of the more popular Gatsby, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg represent more than the gigantic eyes of capitalism watching over the "solemn dumping ground" (26) of industrial America; they become the eyes of the aging and powerless observer who cannot change the tragedy he witnesses around him.

While in the process of choosing a protagonist among the characters in a narrative, we contemplate their relationship to time: whether they experience change and can be called *dynamic*, or whether they do not and should be called *static*. Clearly, in order to define a character as the protagonist, the character needs to be one who undergoes some kind of change, particularly since a protagonist faces an antagonist and is either partly or entirely defeated by or victorious over it. And such a change can be either of two terms defined by Scholes and Kellogg: "developmental"--a character's progress along an ethically-based plot-line--and "chronological"--a character's gradual shifts through time (169). We also contemplate a character's relationship to time in that, generally speaking, a protagonist, as the central character in a narrative, appears or exists in the majority of the scenes.¹ In other words, we readers spend more time with the protagonist than we do with any other character in the story. For these reasons, one can see why narratologists would consider a theory of character based on *function*, and why

Henry James's what-is-character-but-the-determination-of-incident-and-vice-versa line is so often quoted. Unfortunately, critics often view character as a function of plot so that plot becomes a more frequent subject of analysis. But I do not wish to talk about plot in this chapter. I will save that for the next. Here, I want to talk strictly about character and the phenomenon readers experience when they develop relationships with characters. I want to divorce, once and for all, the notion of character from that of plot.

In order to explain the difference between the two, I need some music. Imagine a melody. If I were to change its key, the individual notes would be nothing like those in the original, and yet you would certainly recognize the similarity between the two; indeed, the melody would be the same. But suppose I kept the same individual notes of the original and changed their order. Even though the parts of the two would be identical, their ordering would render the melodies different, and their similarities would be unrecognizable.² Character *traits* are like the individual notes and the ordering of those traits through time is the *progression*. Similarly, individual moments in the story--such as its climax or its inciting event--can be extracted for the sake of analysis, and those moments comprise the plot diagram, which is chronological; their ordering by the narrator through the time it takes us to read the story comprises its progression. Therefore, character and plot are each tied to the progression of a narrative to some degree, but they can each be separately considered in an analysis. This is not to say that they never overlap. Clearly, a character's action can both imply a trait and form part of the plot, but we can talk about that trait without referring to the significance of the action to the plot. For example, we can characterize Mama in Alice Walker's "Everyday Use"

by her decision to give Maggie the quilts without identifying her decision as a turning point, climax, or other plot element. In other words, we can create two boxes, and in one we put our inventory of traits (some of which will be implied by actions) and in the other our inventory of functional events (moments which contribute to the change from stability to instability to stability). But the individual box of traits possesses *merely traits*, not character, for character denotes a wholistic understanding which cannot come into being outside of the context of the order or progression; a different order would render an entirely different melody or story.

Before I explain the connection between character and progression, I should define the term *trait*. Chatman quotes several useful definitions including one by J. P. Guilford who views a trait as a way one individual can be distinguished from another (121). But Chatman eventually develops a more useful definition of his own when he considers the differences between both actual traits and the culturally coded names we give to them and actual traits and the habits that may or may not be characteristic of them:

... a trait may be said to be a narrative adjective out of the vernacular labeling a personal quality of a character, as it persists over part or whole of the story (its "domain"). Just as we define "event" at the story level as a narrative predicate (DO or HAPPEN), so we can define "trait" as the narrative adjective tied to the narrative copula when that replaces the normal transitive predicate. The actual verbal adjective, of course, need not (and in modernist narratives will not) appear. But whether inferred or not, it is immanent to the deep structure of the text. (125)

I would further distinguish between *trait* and *character* by maintaining that the former is a *part* or *component* of a larger whole and the latter is that larger *whole*. My distinction

between trait and character is similar to Phelan's distinction between "dimension" and "function" in that the former is an "attribute" that can be considered synchronically while the latter must be considered as part of the narrative's progression (9). Dimensions, Phelan says, are converted through the progression into functions (9). My distinction is different from his in that traits can be converted into character through the progression while functions can be converted into a fabula through the same process.

It is important to note that we do not immediately discern the parts when it comes to character. We typically view them wholistically, and we modify our wholistic image of them as new information challenges the gestalt. In other words, the progression continually suggests character gestalts to its readers and, in the same way, continually destroys them. This process is similar to the one described by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*. According to Barthes, readers experience an oscillation between eros and thanatos as the text and they co-create pleasing structures and solutions, and the text, concurrently, presents uncomfortable but equally pleasing enigmas (8). Bakhtin also describes "centripetal" and "centrifugal" forces in a text, or a narrative's tendency to cohere and to break apart (xviii). In a strict sense, *characterization* is such a process, inextricably connected with a narrative's *progression*. Such a process in a work of fiction can only be analyzed *diachronically*, or through time. *Character*, however, what Chatman calls a "paradigm of traits" (126), can be analyzed *synchronically*, or outside of a narrative's *progression*, but only retrospectively, after the character has been characterized through time. A *theory of character* should, in a loose sense, involve both types of analysis, so that, without necessarily distinguishing between *character* and

characterization, one could say, without being inaccurate, that he or she will conduct either a diachronic or a synchronic study of character. Examples of both types of character analysis follow this discussion.

My suggestion that *characterization* is a process can be illustrated by the fact that the overall image a reader is left with by the end of the narrative will not depend on an inventory of the character's traits, but on the order in which those traits are presented. For example, when I read "Mary was tall," I see a whole person, not just "tallness," and, in my mind, that person is also lanky and plain-looking with dark, shoulder-length hair and fair skin. She wears conservative clothes and spectacles, and she is walking, though I have not yet been told whether she is sitting or standing, in motion, or quite still. I see her walking alone on a sidewalk in a residential area. She is smiling, but sheepishly. She slouches as though she wishes she were not tall. She is carrying a newspaper, and a dog in the yard across the street is watching and wagging his tail at her.

What I mean to say is that readers see more than the individual traits. If next, I were to read "Mary was blonde," then immediately the dark hair would lighten in my mind, and the spectacles might also disappear. But had I been told "Mary was blonde" *before* I was told "Mary was tall," my gestalt of the character would be completely different. I would have seen her as more robust in figure and straighter in posture. Her clothes would have been different, too. I do not mean to suggest that blondes have better postures and wardrobes than brunettes; it is simply that "tallness" calls to mind a certain bookish type. If I would have read "Mary had dark hair" before I read "Mary was tall," I still would have imagined someone other than the lanky, slouching, fair-skinned girl. I

would have seen a darker skinned woman walking with a more sensual gait than the lanky Mary. The point is that the very first gestalt is the most important because it forms the base on which all future alterations will be made. After changing the tall lanky brunette to a blonde and then perhaps to a quite obese Mary, the original bookishness somehow remains in the gestalt unless directly challenged, because my first encounter was with tallness.

Thematizing Mary is not a bad thing. In fact, writers of fiction depend upon readers to form gestalts so that their characters will seem real. Readers must fill in the gaps between tall and blonde and obese by calling on their experiences with *types*. And, as I said before, these types are created and destroyed as the progression unfolds. But without the gestalt, Mary would simply be a list of adjectives and not a person we can get to know. Virginia Woolf's description of Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown in her essay bearing that title exemplifies the necessity of thematizing:

One night some weeks ago, then, I was late for the train and jumped into the first carriage I came to. As I sat down I had the strange and uncomfortable feeling that I was interrupting a conversation between two people who were already sitting there. Not that they were young or happy. Far from it. They were both elderly, the woman over sixty, the man well over forty. They were sitting opposite each other, and the man, who had been leaning over and talking emphatically to judge by his attitude and the flush on his face, sat back and became silent. I had disturbed him, and he was annoyed. The elderly lady, however, whom I will call Mrs. Brown, seemed rather relieved. She was one of those clean, threadbare old ladies whose extreme tidiness—everything buttoned, fastened, tied together, mended and brushed up—suggests more extreme poverty than rags and dirt. There was something pinched about her—a look of suffering, of apprehension, and, in addition, she was extremely small. Her feet, in their clean little boots, scarcely touched the floor. I felt that she had nobody to support her; that she had to make up her mind for herself; that, having been deserted, or left a widow, years ago, she had led an anxious, harried life, bringing up an only son, perhaps. who, as

likely as not, was by this time beginning to go to the bad. All this shot through my mind as I sat down, being uncomfortable, like most people, at travelling with fellow passengers unless I have somehow or other accounted for them. Then I looked at the man. He was no relation of Mrs. Brown's I felt sure; he was of a bigger, burlier, less refined type. He was a man of business I imagined, very likely a respectable corn-chandler from the North, dressed in good blue serge with a pocket-knife and a silk handkerchief, and a stout leather bag. Obviously, however, he had an unpleasant business to settle with Mrs. Brown; a secret, perhaps sinister business, which they did not intend to discuss in my presence. (190)

Despite the allegorical function of this passage in response to Arnold Bennett's criticism of Woolf's use of character, and despite the fact that it is authored by Woolf, her encounter with the passengers and her inferences about them are not unlike what readers experience with fiction. Woolf thematizes Mrs. Brown's tidiness as "One of those clean, threadbare old ladies" of poverty. And she sees Mr. Bennett as "a man of business" because he is "dressed in good blue serge." She draws on her knowledge of types to understand these two people as something more than their parts. This long passage was worth quoting because, ironically, it demonstrates that the thematizing we readers do of our fictional characters is mirrored in our real-life experiences with people.

We not only thematize characters in fiction and people we meet outside of fiction, but, as Lacan maintains, we also thematize ourselves. Lacan's psychoanalytic theory explains the ego as *constituted* or constructed by the subject. The subject's understanding of self is an imaginary gestalt that he or she begins to create in childhood during what Lacan calls the "mirroring phase":

Through his perception of the image of another human being, the child discovers a form (gestalt), a corporeal unity, which is lacking to him at this particular stage of his development. . . . this primordial experience is

symptomatic of what makes the *moi* an Imaginary Construct. The ego is an *Idealich*, another self, and the *stade du mirror* is the source of all later identifications. (160)

Ironically, our understanding of a fictional character may be less thematic than our understanding of real-life people, including ourselves, for in fiction we often have access to a kind of information that in real life requires speculation.

In *Reading People, Reading Plots*, Phelan distinguishes between the synthetic, the mimetic, and the thematic, and he explains how each of these components of character can be more or less apparent. The *synthetic*, he says, is the "artificial" component: "Part of being a fictional character, in other words, is being artificial . . . , and part of knowing a character is knowing that he/she/(it?) is a construct" (2). John Fowles foregrounds the synthetic component of his characters in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.³ The *mimetic*, according to Phelan, is the component of character that gives us a sense of a real person (2). The characters whose company we enjoy keeping because a part of us believes they are real, such as Charles in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, exemplify this concept. The *thematic*, Phelan explains, is that part of character that represents something other than itself, that makes it symbolic. Young Goodman Brown's wife, Faith, illustrates this component. Like me, Phelan believes that thematizing is an activity that is not limited to the world of fiction, for he says:

It seems to me that our understanding of people in life also commonly has a thematic component: we see the traits that others possess as defining a type of person or a set of ideas and attitudes that are not peculiarly their own. We say, "He's a sixties flower-child," or "She's a radical feminist," and imply that the identities of these people can be summed up by a set of ideas or values associated with those descriptions. (13)

Phelan warns us, however, to avoid over-thematizing: "Indeed, we label those who leap from skin color or sex to assumptions about a person as racist or sexist" (13). This is where my theory of character differs from Phelan's. I do not believe we can control the extent to which we thematize characters. In fact, I believe that texts depend on our thematic interpretations of characters so that they can destroy and reshape them. Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* is an example. If we did not tend, like the narrator, to read Billy as a Christ figure, Melville's irony would lose its edge.⁴ In this way, the reader of a text is a creator while the text itself is a destroyer. If characters are going to escape easy, cliché representation, then it is primarily the text's responsibility--or the author's--to make it happen by challenging the gestalts that readers build. A successful narrative, then, in my opinion, creates mimetic characters for readers by mirroring the process we undergo when we become familiar with real people. The process happens in levels, from the first impression to the last as the most general gestalt is destroyed and the more modified, specific one emerges, like the Phoenix. In other words, in my mind, the *thematic* component of character is not separate from the mimetic or from the synthetic, for it is an integral part of both components. And the *synthetic* is not different from the *mimetic* in that the latter points to real life while the former acknowledges a character as a construct; rather, the *synthetic* refers to an author's literal construction of a character and our sense of it, while the *mimetic* refers to the end result of a process, between reader and author (or text), of creation and destruction of character gestalts.

Although our experience with character as readers of a given text depends on the progression and is, thus, diachronic, our analyses of character as critics of a given text, as

stated previously, can be either diachronic or synchronic. To illustrate, consider once again our box of traits (versus our box of plot elements). As critics, we can assert something about character by viewing the traits in the order the narrative presents them. I take this diachronic approach in my analysis of Graham Greene's whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*. A synchronic approach to character, however, requires us to sort through the traits in the box and deal with them individually in a non-cumulative fashion. In this way, traits (not character) can be divorced from progression. This synchronic approach is the one I take in my analysis of Margaret Drabble's *The Realms of Gold*.

An Orthodox or Iconoclastic Greene? A Diachronic Analysis of the Whisky Priest

Graham Greene has been described by his critics as "a thorn in the side of [Roman Catholic] orthodoxy" (De Vitis 40). The Holy Office condemned *The Power and the Glory* "because it was 'paradoxical' and 'dealt with extraordinary circumstances'" (Greene, *Ways of Escape* 90). *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* accuses it of asserting a "situational ethics" with the voice of humanism (268). The novel portrays a priest--albeit a weak one--who continually risks his life under governmental persecution to minister to his growing parish the sacraments. A close analysis of the whisky priest's character development reveals Greene's assertion that the priest finds saintliness in spite of, not because of, his own human frailty.

The novel begins with Mr. Tench as focalizer because it is important that we see the protagonist before we know him as a priest. It is important because the noun *priest*

calls to mind traits not unlike those he possesses on the anniversary of his ordination ten years before. He has changed since then, and this new image of a "shabby" (9), "small man" (9) with a "round and hollow face" (9) in a state of "unstable hilarity" (9) must impress upon us a gestalt that is more human, more common, and more pitiful than what we typically associate with *priest*. Consequently, we do not react to his drinking in a way that we might knowing his vocation. Where we might have been appalled, we are merely surprised. The negative qualities "death-like" (14), "bitter" (17), and "unwilling" (17) foreground the more priestly qualities "faithful" (15), "grateful" (17), and "submissive" (15) so that we see a sinful man with unusually Christian qualities instead of a Christian man with unusually sinful ones.

When we do discover the priest's vocation, it is only after we witness his sacrifice. He gives up the certain escape to Vera Cruz to help a woman who "'will be no more dying than [he is]'" (17). His generosity and selflessness in the face of human need surprise us and become more important to us than his self-indulgences in between moments of ministry.

After our introduction to the whisky priest, we read portraits of the lieutenant, Juan, and Padre José consecutively. The first two appear idealistic: the lieutenant has "something of a priest in his intent observant walk" (24)--not like our whisky priest, but like he was ten years before. Juan, the model of saintliness set to Luis by his mother, possesses none of the weaknesses of the small man with the round and hollow face, and we suspect, like Luis, that Juan has been fictionalized to no small degree. Padre José, however, stands at the opposing extreme: a man who has compromised his calling and

abandoned his faith. Under the light of this dark foil, we begin to consider that our whisky priest's undying loyalty in the face of extreme adversity, an adversity unfamiliar to Juan, is something to be admired: "... it's my duty," he says, "not to be caught. You see, my bishop is no longer here. . . . This is my parish" (40).

When asked by an old man to say a prayer over his daughter's grave, Padre José replies "It's impossible" (48). The mother cries and the father calls out "... there is no one else" (49), but José entreats them, "Leave me alone. . . . I am a coward" (49). Padre José also refuses to hear the whisky priest's confession, the confession that would save him from eternal damnation (205). José's actions recall Satan's refusal to serve and starkly contrasts the other priest's obedience. The whisky priest, at moments, contemplates leaving so that his congregation might be safe from the government and free from the poor example he portrays of priestliness, but he concludes that it is his duty to stay: "He was the only priest the children could remember: it was from them they would take their ideas of the faith. But it was from him too they took God--in their mouths"(65). He recognizes his ability to carry out God's will, and, in spite of himself and of the government's resistance, he embraces it. He weeps with fatigue when, after escaping from the banana station to another dilapidated town, he is asked to hear confessions: "Can't you let me sleep for five minutes?" But he hears the confessions without sleep: "I am your servant" he says, weeping (45). His own soul is less important to him than the soul of others; in fact, he risks dying in a state of mortal sin when he purchases wine from the Governor's cousin--wine which he intends to use in the Mass--and then watches miserably as the Chief of Police quickly drains both bottles

(107-15). Of his daughter, he prays: "O God, give me any kind of death--without contrition, in a state of sin--only save this child" (82). And when the half-caste beckons him from his journey of escape to Las Casas, he gives up the possibility of absolution from another priest in order to absolve the American murderer from San Antonio. He implores the dying American: "You believed once. Try and understand--this is your chance. At the last moment. Like the thief. You have murdered men--children perhaps. . . . You can drop it all here, in this hut, and go on for ever . . .' he felt sadness and longing at the vaguest idea of a life he couldn't lead himself . . ." (189). He desperately offers the American a chance at eternal life, something he believes he will never attain.

Despite the priest's calling to serve God's will, he is plagued with human weaknesses. While hiding at the banana station, he asks Captain Fellows for a little brandy, and Fellows says to himself, "What a religion. . . . Begging for brandy. Shameless." (38). In Concepción, the lieutenant does not suspect the priest because Brigitta identifies him as her father (76) and, ironically, the sin saves him from execution. He thinks to himself, "He was a bad priest, he knew it. They had a word for his kind--a whisky priest, but every failure dropped out of sight and mind: somewhere they accumulated in secret--the rubble of his failures. One day they would choke up, he supposed, altogether the source of grace. Until then he carried on with spells of fear, weariness, with a shamefaced lightness of heart" (60). He does not condone his behavior; he is altogether ashamed. In fact, in a conversation with Mr. Lehr, he both defends the orthodoxy of the Church and condemns his own dissent when he explains the purpose of fasting: ". . . discipline is necessary. Drills may be no good in battle, but

they form the character. Otherwise you get--well, people like me.' He looked down with sudden hatred at the shoes--they were like the badge of a deserter. 'People like me,' he repeated with fury" (163). Unlike the perfect Juan in Luis's storybook, the whisky priest cannot ascend to a holy level above the rest of humankind.

Greene implies that the whisky priest serves God's purpose inspite of his sins. This is where critics argue Greene's iconoclasm. Critics maintain that without embracing the sins of humanity, the priest could not embrace God's will, and so the one, ironically, undermines the other (*The New Catholic Encyclopedia* 268). Critics who argue this approach misunderstand the implication of the contrast between the whisky priest and what he was ten years before:

. . . you could read into the smudgy photograph a well-shaved, well-powdered jowl much too developed for his age. The good things of life had come too early--the respect of his contemporaries, a safe livelihood. The trite religious word upon the tongue, a joke to ease the way, the ready acceptance of other people's homage . . . a happy man. (22)

The priest of the old days "dressed in black and wore Roman collars and had soft superior patronizing hands" (62). Back then, he "had hated poverty like a crime" (67) and he understood that a priest should be "rich and proud--that was called having a vocation" (67). The whisky priest seems to recognize that he has changed for the better. When he dreams of a scene similar to what he experienced in the old days, he "remembered with appalling suddenness that he oughtn't to be there [in the scene] at all" (86). And while he is in prison with the pious, judgmental woman, he reflects that "he would have known what to say to her in the old days, feeling no pity at all, speaking with half a mind a platitude or two" (132). Even if the priest does not recognize that he has

changed for the better, clearly, Greene means for us to. The priest is able to serve God's purpose better as a drunk who has broken his vows of celibacy. But Greene does not absolve the priest of sinfulness; he simply compares two states of mortal sin. The priest of the old days was a sinner of pride, gluttony, and greed. He lacked compassion and sincerity. The whisky priest is a sinner of lust and drunkenness, but he has the compassion and the sincerity of heart that make him a better priest. He was still *human* in his earlier states of sin. In fact, pride, gluttony, and greed are three of the seven deadly sins to which no human is immune from temptation. Becoming a sinner of lust and drunkenness makes him no more *human* than before. And it is important to note that Greene portrays other characters in the novel who, despite their *humaness* and their potential to serve God, fail. Padre José, humiliated day and night by the ridiculing cries of children, is no less human than the whisky priest; nor is the pious woman who shares the prison cell with the rest of humanity—if nothing else, the experience in the cell should have made her more sympathetic, but she cries to the priest as she scuttles off to freedom: “The sooner you are dead the better” (131).

The fact that the priest continually worries about his state of mortal sin and his impending death contradicts the claim by the Catholic Church that Greene portrays a “situational ethics” (*The New Catholic Encyclopedia* 268). Despite the inaccessibility of a priest, he can be absolved from mortal sin before his death if he says a perfect act of contrition. A perfect act of contrition requires the sinner to be truly sorry and to make an honest attempt to avoid sin. We see the priest attempt to do this the night before his execution. He tries to name his sins, “I have lain with a woman” (207), because,

according to Catholic doctrine, one must name and identify one's sin in order to forgive oneself. But the priest fails in his attempt, for "Without thinking what he was doing, he took another drink of brandy" (207). He tries again, but the "words were becoming formal again, meaning nothing. He had no confessor to turn his mind away from the formula to the fact" (208). It is not until the morning of his execution when the whisky flask is dry that he makes his reconciliation. He begins to say the formulaic words, but his mind becomes confused (210). In place of the formula comes a heartfelt sorrow, an "immense disappointment" that he must "go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all" (210). He regrets that he could not have been a saint, for he now feels he could have done it. He feels sorry that he did not have "a little self-restraint and a little courage" (210). Of course, we understand that his wish to have been saintly is unrealistic. No human being could endure what he endures without sin. No human being could live any kind of life without sin, which explains why Christ had to be born a man and to die a man's death. But every perfect act of contrition entails the same paradox: one sincerely resolves to avoid sin in spite of the impossibility of fulfilling the resolution. The priest's ability to reconcile in that moment of sincere regret and disappointment is foreshadowed when he encourages the American from San Antonio: "Try and understand--this is your chance. At the last moment. Like the thief" (189). We recognize the priest's reconciliation and realize that he does not go to God empty-handed.

The priest's ability to carry out God's purpose in spite of himself is similar to what Duane Simolke describes in his essay "Teachers as Victims in *Winesburg, Ohio*." Simolke argues that, of Sherwood Anderson's characters, the teachers are no less

“grotesque,” but, even though they are made into objects by most of their students, they are able to inspire one writer, George Willard, to “speak for the silent and rejected people across America” (37). What one must understand is that these teachers do not inspire *because of* their weaknesses. Their dysfunctionality is a part of the world in which they must live, not a part of their mission as teachers. Like Anderson’s teachers, the whisky priest inspires and affects people in his congregation: Mr. Tench tries to reconcile with his wife (45-46), Luis spits on the lieutenant’s gun (220), and the lieutenant contemplates the priest’s discussion of modern miracles: “No pulse, no breath, no heart-beat, but it’s still life--we’ve only got to find a name for it” (202).

Sexual Politics in Margaret Drabble’s
*The Realms of Gold: A Synchronic
Analysis of Character*

In *Sexual Textual Politics*, Toril Moi describes Hélène Cixous’s desire to deconstruct the binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity and presents Cixous’s list of “patriarchal binary thought” (i.e., Activity/Passivity, Sun/Moon, Culture/Nature) (104). Cixous’s very act, however, of labeling a phenomenon “patriarchal” or “phallogentric” ironically implies a masculine category in opposition to the feminine. (And to call our language “phallogentric” is to pretend that women have not been speakers, writers, and abusers of language right alongside men. Women, for example, must have contributed to what has come to be called the Great Vowel Shift. True, men have held privileged positions as language-makers, but so, too, have women. For example, American women must have had a larger influence on the English language

prior to industrialization when they taught their children in the home and in schools while men worked on the farms and in the fields. In addition, during both world wars, while men were off speaking with weapons, it must have been the women left behind who spoke with words--often new ones, to describe the new feelings, tragedies, strategies, and their growing participation in the industrial revolution. But that is a whole other paper.)

Before we can deconstruct bipolar oppositions, we must recognize that masculine and feminine symbols like other traditional symbols possess dualities which deconstruct themselves. For example, fire and water, usually considered bipolar opposites, both represent life (warmth and rebirth) and death (destruction and erosion or suffocation). Similarly, masculine and feminine images can both equally represent life or death, civilization or nature, lightness or darkness. Just as a feminine image might suggest the chaos or mystery of nature that must be structured by the scientific masculine, so too might the masculine image denote the primitive beast that must be tamed by the moral values or by the beauty of the feminine. (But this, too, is a whole other paper.)

Margaret Drabble, initially condemned by feminists as being a "women's writer" (Myer 13), is later applauded by feminists for what they see as a "celebration of female power" in *The Realms of Gold* (Moran 9). Such a view appears highly problematic when one considers that female characters in the novel, such as Great-Aunt Con, Janet Bird, and Natasha Ollerenshaw, lead less than liberated lives. Even the confident career woman, Frances Wingate, the heroine of the novel, concludes that "what every woman wanted was a man" (195). Drabble says in an interview that Frances was not intended to be the exemplary liberated woman but "simply a lucky person" (Moran 11).

Frances Wingate does not emerge as an essentially feminist character, but as an essentially human one. As Lynn Veach Sadler remarks, “. . . the human perspective, rather than the male or female, is uppermost in [Drabble’s] novels” (89). Drabble, wittingly or not, subverts feminine and masculine bipolarity, not by reversing the hierarchy and creating powerful female characters who confiscate the position of males, but by creating male and female characters who mirror one another. As Sadler describes, the novel “interchange[s] human problems among males and females” (67). Gender polarity breaks down as a female character possesses traits that are closely mirrored by the traits of a male character, and vice versa. This occurs across all levels of character development: among the background, secondary, and primary characters.

Two background characters of the opposite sex, Patsy Cornford, a Department woman, and Emilio Spirelli, an anthropologist, can both be described as *attractive* and *promiscuous*. Patsy “was sitting very elegantly on a kind of bathmat” (243) and “looked very nice” (243). She “hadn’t got even a suggestion of fat” (244). Spirelli sits beside her “hardened and fit” (244) and “his arm was amazingly strong” (244). Frances admires Patsy when she “wander[s] about naked, wrapped in a towel” (253), envying “to the point of anxiety” (253) her “full, round, firm [breasts]” (253). In a similar way, Frances is anxious to be “touched by so nearly naked a man [as Spirelli]” (244) when he pulls her from the pool. Though Patsy is “highly intelligent” (254) and Spirelli is “distinguished” (244), they both are sexual predators who easily “transfer their allegiances” (277).

Mirroring also occurs with at least two sets of secondary level characters: David Ollerenshaw and his Great-Aunt Con and Stephen Ollerenshaw and Janet Bird. Unlike

Patsy and Spirelli, David and Aunt Con isolate themselves from tribal activities. They can both be described as *antisocial, primitive, eccentric, and ill-fated*. David “like[s] the complete isolation” (143) and feels that “[t]o be completely free of all human contact [is] in itself a pleasure” (143). He enjoys company occasionally, but believes that “solitude ha[s] its own quality” (143). The narrator describes him as “indefinably odd, with the oddness of one who spends much time alone” (190) and Frances wonders how David can live alone “[f]rom choice, pure choice” (321). Likewise, Aunt Con lives alone a few miles from Eel Cottage (284). Since the death of her parents, she keeps herself shut away in her cottage, and “nobody saw her much, she didn’t like people calling on her” (290). In fact, the town views her as “a witch . . . [who] chased intruders from her overgrown premises with dogs and curses” (288). Janet Bird does not visit her Aunt Con but once because she believes that she, like her cousin David, wants to be alone and feels that ““people should mind their own business”” (300).

David and Aunt Con’s desire to be alone may account for the implication that they will experience similar ends. Just as Aunt Con is “as mad as a hatter” (276), David suffers a “nervous breakdown” (267). Similarly, David believes in the “illimitable” resources of the earth (50) and has complete confidence when he drives instead of flies across Europe and the Sudan to Adra. Aunt Con, too, relies on the “illimitable” resources of the earth until a broken leg prevents her from harvesting them (301). Moreover, David’s decision to put his friend Banks on his insurance form so that he, rather than his parents, would be informed of his “dessicated corpse” (143) recalls Aunt

Con's fate and the fact that he is "likely to die, like Constance, quite alone, and quite unmissed" (359).

The other set of secondary characters, Stephen Ollerenshaw and Janet Bird, unlike David and Aunt Con, are not isolated by choice, but by the alienation of their spouses who leave them with babies with which they both become obsessed. They can be described as *abandoned, paranoid, overprotective, and self-destructive*. Stephen is described as taking his infant girl "as seriously as a mother octopus" (11) which, as we are told early in the novel, dies after giving birth (4). Likewise, Janet's infant boy is described as a "baby octopus" (140) which implies that Janet, like Stephen, is a mother octopus. Both appear frightened of harming their infants. Stephen "visit[s] the doctor frequently with small complaints [about his baby]" (361) and eventually kills himself and his baby because he believes that "[t]here was no escape from this fragility, this soft and bloody beating, these small bones, this perishable flesh" (216) and that "[s]urvival was a miracle" (216). With similar paranoia, Janet fears bathing her baby that she might drown him (162) and does not allow him to crawl "on a less than spotless floor" (132). She is "terrified of germs" (146) and believes that she "won't do" as a mother (137). Janet explains to Frances: "'Sometimes I wonder what will happen to my baby. . . . It's such a responsibility, trying to bring up a baby. Sometimes I feel like giving up'" (338).

Their preoccupation with their infants' mortality lead Stephen and Janet to think often of death. As Stephen ponders Freud's notion of the "death wish" with Frances and Hugh, Janet longs for "a cataclysm, a volcano, a fire, an outbreak of war, anything to break the unremitting nothingness of her existence" (135-36). Additionally, Janet

wonders what attracts her to subjects like the holocaust: "The death and the destruction?" (137). The narrator confirms that while "Janet Bird . . . brooded over the fate of the Jews, [Stephen] . . . brooded over illness and death" (363) and thus makes a direct comparison between the two. Just as Janet wonders at the "amazing splendor" (158) of a leaf, "turning and twisting and tugging at its stalk, in a frenzy of death" (158) which she likens to the soul leaving the body (158), Stephen experiences a revelation "like a light from heaven" (164): the knowledge that "[i]t was better to be dead than alive" (164). The fact that Stephen shares Janet's fascination with death or has himself a death wish is manifested in his eventual suicide and murder of his baby. Furthermore, Janet's reference to a scene from John Updike's *Rabbit Run* (162)--in which a mother drowns her baby--implies that Janet ponders, as she ponders stabbing her husband (161), committing an act as drastic as Stephen's.

The primary characters of the novel, Frances Wingate and Karel Schmidt, more fully developed than the background and secondary characters and, thus, more complex, fail as perfect mirror images of one another, unlike the others. Frances lives in luxury while Karel worries about his bills; Frances is fairly punctual while Karel has a poor concept of time; Frances has divorced while Karel waits for his lesbian wife to make the initial break. And yet even these complex characters have significant parallel traits. They can be described as *past-oriented*, *academic*, *admirable*, and *suffocated by others*. For one thing, they both like to dig up the past--Frances as an archeologist and Karel as a historian--which Frances sees both for herself and for Karel as "a fruitless attempt to prove the possibility of the future through the past" (126). Because of their careers, they

both give lectures at institutions and function as mentors to those interested in their respective subject areas. Frances entertains Hunter Wisbech who admires her "immensely" (45) and Karel must deal with Slater who "[thinks] so much of [him]" (225). Yet both find the admiration of others as exhausting as they do flattering. Frances, over a drink before her lecture in Africa, remarks: "To the gallows I go" (3), indicating that she, in some way, will be executed by the experience. Likewise, Karel dreads his admirers because "[b]etween them, they had made mincemeat of him" (221) and "they made Karel bleed" (221).

Karel feels threatened by his admirers primarily because they need him to the point of exhaustion. They are all "pathetic, sad, depressed and hopeless cases" (221) and Karel cannot help his goodness, cannot help how he is (221): "How could he say no, when the telephone rang, how could he hurry away from the mad and the lonely?" (221). Despite Frances's complaints of Karel's becoming consumed by the needy, she, too, cannot resist the same. For example, Frances, in spite of their initial mutual dislike, must pull Janet from her timid place in the Bird household. When Janet appears unsure of leaving Mark with the baby, Frances says, "in a healthy, bullying tone" (336): "'Of course you could. . . . It's good for one, to get out every now and then. I know what it's like. . . . You ought to make your husband baby-sit every now and then. . . . On principle'" (336). She becomes a counselor for the submissive Janet, a kind of role model. Similarly, it is she that Stephen chooses as his confidant from his youth through his short adult life, and despite the fatigue it brings her, when he comes to visit her in the hospital with his problems and his neuroses, Frances must listen (92). Interestingly, both

Karel and Frances are relieved during moments when they escape their respective needy admirers: "Karel was so relieved to have got rid of Slater that sometimes he toyed with the idea of getting rid of everybody" (226). Likewise, when Stephen must respond to the faint cries of his baby upstairs, Frances "was glad to have been spared" (207), for she "did not feel up to dealing with his problems" (207).

As other critics have noted, fate or luck seems to be a recurrent element in Drabble's novels, which she claims is a reflection of her own life (Sadler 1). Frances and Karel further parallel in that they are both *lucky* as they experience life outside of any apparent system of causation. It is through the bizarre coincidences and chance turns in the novel that Drabble creates the light-hearted mood that dominates the subjects of death and isolation. For example, Karel wins the jackpot (347) and it is through luck that Frances discovers the city of Tizouk (28), the discovery that makes her famous. Also coincidentally, or perhaps fortunately, Frances's female child marries Karel's male child (371). The most entertaining coincidence is perhaps that Frances and Karel both experience teeth problems so that when they are treated they have little artifacts from themselves--and Frances, like the good archeologist, treasures Karel's artifact to the point of wearing his false teeth in her brassière (22).

Ironically, Empedocles, whose philosophy Stephen wants to know, relates significantly to Drabble's mirroring characters of the opposite sex. According to Valerie Grosvenor Myer, Empedocles believed that "[o]riginally animals had a double sex, but were eventually reduced to two sexes" (93). In *The Realms of Gold*, Drabble does not imply that males and females are two halves of the same person seeking to reunite;

rather, she suggests that they are *doppelgangers*, or ghosts of one another; figuratively speaking, male and female characters exist in the state Empedocles describes before the reduction to two sexes, before bipolar oppositions. Drabble, in an entertaining subversion of binary poles, shows that people, male or female, can be happy when single (Patsy and Spirelli) or isolated when single (David and Aunt Con) and happy when married (Frances and Karel) or unhappy when married (Janet and Stephen). No specifically "feminine" or "masculine" character or trait emerges in the novel. Both men and women succeed in careers, devote themselves to their families, take on roles of sexual prowess, self-inflict pain and suffering, cry, become ill, and live happily.

Notes

¹ I define *scene* in the following chapter.

² This example comes from Ehrenfels as described in George Hartmann's *Gestalt Psychology: A Survey of Facts and Principles*, p. 10.

³ Please refer to my earlier discussion of Fowles's novel in Chapter III for a discussion of the narrator and his characters' artificiality or *synthetic* quality.

⁴ Refer to my discussion of Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* in Chapter III.

CHAPTER V

PLOT

In the last chapter, I compared *character traits* to the individual notes in a melody and *progression* to the selective ordering of those notes, or the melody itself. I also distinguished between *character traits*--which can be considered synchronically in an analysis--and *characterization*, which is the diachronic co-creation of character gestalts between a reader and a text and the destruction of those gestalts by the text until a wholistic character emerges through the entire progression. The same distinctions can be made between *functional events* and *progression* and between *functional events* and *plot* (from now on synonymous with *narrative sequence*). Given that an event is a transition from one state to another, a *functional event* is an event that contributes causally to the *plot*. For example, in Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*, the potential for conflict between Billy and Claggart is finally realized when Billy strikes the sergeant-at-arms dead. Billy's action advances the plot; it is a *functional event*. The plot or *narrative sequence* is the chronological sequence of functional events that moves from stability to instability and back to another kind of stability. The narrative sequence begins with an inciting or disruptive event (one of a series of functional events) that creates instability. One or more protagonists struggle to reinstate stability against the forces of an antagonist which may or may not be human. Once stability is achieved either through the victory or defeat of the protagonist, the narrative sequence, or plot, is complete.

The concepts *functional event* and *narrative sequence* can be traced back to Vladimir Propp and Tsvetan Todorov. Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* argues that thirty-one "functions" can describe all Russian folktales, and the first three of the thirty-one follow: "One of the members of a family absents himself from home" (26), "An interdiction is addressed to the hero" (26), and "The interdiction is violated" (27). Todorov, using the term "proposition" in place of "function" to include both events and states, illustrates how propositions combine to form a "sequence" (48). Emma Kafalenos has created a model--drawing from the concepts of both men--demonstrating how the eleven functions she has found common to narrative combine causally to form the "narrative sequence":

- Initial equilibrium [not a function]
- A (or a) disruptive event (or reevaluation of a situation)
- B request that someone alleviate A (or a)
- C decision by C-actant to attempt to alleviate A (or a)
- C' C-actant's initial act to alleviate A (or a)
- D C-actant is tested
- E C-actant responds to test
- F C-actant acquires empowerment
- G C-actant arrives at the place, or time, for H
- H C-actant's primary action to alleviate A (or a)
- I (or I_{neg}) success (or failure) of H
- K equilibrium (119-20)

Both this model and others can be used by readers to isolate functional events and to designate them in a position in the narrative sequence. Such models should identify the *inciting event*, the *rising action* which may consist of *moments of crisis*, the *turning point*--which may precede or follow the *climax*--, the *falling action*, and the *resolution* or *dénouement*--the reinstatement of stability.

Readers use these and other models, usually unwittingly, to infer functional events and their chronological, causal order in a narrative sequence--often from a progression that is far from chronological, as in Alain Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie*. The reader engages in a process similar to the process of characterization. The reader and the text co-construct the chronological and causal functions of the story as the text continually deconstructs the plot frame. Kafalenos describes this process in "Extended Functions in Kafka and James":

Because Strether, in the opening pages of *The Ambassadors*, is so obviously enjoying the first days after his arrival in Europe, readers who know from experience that narratives tend to begin at a period of equilibrium, or at a moment of disruption that creates imbalance, initially interpret the opening scene as an equilibrium that is about to be disturbed; they expect an event that by disrupting the apparent equilibrium will motivate the action of the novel. James's first sentence both responds to and defers this expectation. . . . Recognizing that Waymarsh's delay is not the motivating disruption we anticipate, we read on to find one, only to discover that such an event has already occurred and that Strether has come to Europe, at Mrs. Newsome's request, to rectify it: to remove her son Chad from the arms of a foreign woman and send him back to Woollett to the bride his mother has chosen. (118-19)

Kafalenos further explains that, as readers of James's novel, "we are beginning the process of constructing the novel's *fabula*, the chronological account that readers create by arranging in temporal sequence the events that are revealed by the *sjuzhet*, the text we read" (120).¹ The process continues until the final pages when even then we often reconstruct the plot, as in Edith Wharton's "Roman Fever." The knowledge that Barbara Ansley belongs to Delphin Slade forces us to revise the entire *fabula*.

Some texts, what Umberto Eco calls "open texts" (34), make it possible for different readers to construct different narrative sequences, and this, in turn, makes it

possible for readers to develop different thematic conclusions. Wharton's "Roman Fever" may prove "open" in our determination to identify the plot. We must decide whether the story consists of one--what we might call *monosodic*--or two--what we might call *polysodic*--narrative sequences. We could argue that a single sequence begins with Alida's letter and ends with her discovery that Barbara belongs to Delphin. But the story more clearly possesses two: the first begins with Alida's letter and ends with Grace's marriage to Horace; the second begins with Alida's reevaluation and decision to confess to Grace that she wrote the letter and ends with Grace's declaration about Barbara's father. If we interpret the story as polysodic and consider the second sequence the main plot, the irony that the two friends know one another very little becomes foregrounded. On the other hand, if we view the story as monosodic, the trickery and deceit between friends and the consequences seem to be the thematic focus. The number of sequences in a narrative is subject to scrutiny by readers. Of course, my suggestion that one narrative structure implies certain thematic conclusions over others can be challenged by other readers, but my examples should show how an analysis of plot structures can lead to interpretations of theme.

A greater understanding of polysodic narratives can further our thematic possibilities. For just as the *number* of sequences can affect theme, so can the way these multiple sequences are combined. Todorov identifies three possibilities: linked, alternated, and embedded. Narrative sequences that follow one after the other, as in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, are linked. When parts of one sequence are alternately told with parts of another, we have an alternated polysodic narrative. This occurs in William

Golding's *Pincher Martin* where the events of Chris's struggle to survive alternate with earlier events in his life. Embedded narratives contain a sequence that is interrupted by an entire second sequence before it resumes, as in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House* where Tom Outland's story comes in the middle of the professor's. To Todorov's three I wish to add a fourth: the implicitly embedded polysodic narrative; for, although Tom Outland's story appears directly in the discourse, some sequences are implied as in "Roman Fever." An implicitly embedded sequence makes the task of constructing the plot and subplot more difficult for the reader in that it usually requires greater revision, retrospection, and deferred judgment. This is especially true in "Roman Fever" where our judgments are deferred until the discovery at the end.

Although the monosodic-polysodic distinction proves more useful in our evaluation of shorter fiction, these terms can be applied to our discussions of plot lines (combined sequences that form a main or sub-plot) and to isolated sections in longer fiction. For example, several secondary and incomplete plots are suggested in Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, but the main sequence surrounding the whiskey priest is decidedly monosodic. Conversely, the plot line surrounding Charles in Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, when distinguished from Sebastian's or Julia's, is clearly polysodic. The same is true of the plot line surrounding Paul in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*.

The following analyses of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* exemplify how considerations of plot can lead to thematic conclusions.

Vonnegut's Real Story in
Slaughterhouse-Five

Kurt Vonnegut critics discuss the obvious subversion of novel conventions in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, particularly that of plot: "The structure of Billy's adventures proceeds by associations rather than clock time and causality. . . . the narrator offers no linear connections in any logical sequence" (Schriber 180-81). William Rodney Allen claims that Vonnegut "gives away what would be the traditional climax of his book--the execution of Billy's friend Edgar Derby 'for taking a teapot that wasn't his'--in the novel's first paragraph" (84). Allen maintains that Vonnegut similarly undercuts the suspense of the novel's moments of crisis by narrating their outcome in advance. We learn early on that Tralfamadorians will kidnap Billy, display him in their zoo with Montana, and teach him their views of the universe. We also discover that Billy will survive a plane crash and that Paul Lazzaro will kill him on February 13, 1976, forty-one years to the day after the bombing of Dresden. As Allen points out, we even learn how and when our universe is to be destroyed (85). So if we are given all the resolutions to the novel's tensions near its beginning, then what propels us through the pages to its end?

Wayne D. McGinnis argues that "*Slaughterhouse-Five* is a novel without climaxes, since its real subject matter and formal arrangement is renewal. In this sense it is like the Tralfamadorian novel, a novel without beginning, middle, and end, without suspense and without a moral" (120). But what McGinnis and others fail to see is the linear narrative sequence surrounding not Billy, but the novelist-narrator as a protagonist against the antagonistic trappings of the novel.

The novelist-narrator is presumably a representation of Vonnegut himself since the book is dedicated to two of the narrator's associates: Mary O'Hare, the woman who warns him against glorifying the war, and Gerhard Müller, the cab driver in Dresden who takes him and his buddy, Bernard O'Hare, back to the slaughterhouse. The narrator introduces the conflict right away. He has been wanting to write a book about Dresden, but he has not been able to before now, and he has recently been inspired by a publisher's generous contract:

I would hate to tell you what this lousy little book cost me in money and anxiety and time. When I got home from the Second World War twenty-three years ago, I thought it would be easy for me to write about the destruction of Dresden, since all I would have to do would be to report what I had seen. . . .

But not many words about Dresden came from my mind then--not enough of them to make a book, anyway. And not many words come now, either, when I have become an old fart with his memories and his Pall Malls, with his sons full grown. (2)

The narrator's antagonist--the trappings of the novel--manifests in three forms: Mary O'Hare, or the warning against the tendency to glorify; the traditional plot form, which has a tendency to glorify heroes; and the psychological distance required to transform experience into the articulated memory.

While the narrator meets with his friend to discuss the Dresden book, the friend's wife, Mary O'Hare, declares to the men: "You were just babies in the war--like the ones upstairs!" (14). She continues:

"You'll pretend you were men instead of babies, and you'll be played in the movies by Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving, dirty old men. And war will look just wonderful, so we'll have a lot more of them. And they'll be fought by babies like the babies upstairs." (14)

The novelist-narrator promises to call his book *The Children's Crusade*, and he portrays Dresden through the eyes of the young boy, Billy Pilgrim, who at one point begins to wear Cinderella silver boots. Billy's connection to the fairy tale reminds us that he is a boy despite the fact that he looks "at least sixty-years old" (150). The youthful image is further perpetuated by Billy's comparison with the Baby Christ:

[Billy] resembled the Christ of the carol:
The cattle are lowing,
The Baby awakes.
But the little Lord Jesus
No crying he makes. (197)

When the colonel of the English infantry arrives at the hospital in Dresden, he exclaims to Derby: "'You know--we've had to imagine the war here, and we have imagined that it was being fought by aging men like ourselves. We had forgotten that wars were being fought by babies. When I saw these freshly shaved faces, it was a shock. 'My God, my God--' I said to myself, 'It's the Children's Crusade'" (106). As the narrator tells us the details of the bombing, he reminds us that the thirty teenage girls "Billy had seen naked were all being killed, too, in a much shallower shelter in another part of the stockyards" (177). The narrator's reminders throughout the novel help him to overcome the tendency to glorify the experience.

The narrator finds, in keeping his promise to Mary, that the novel conventions themselves must be side-stepped because, as Mary Sue Schriber suggests, "they tend to glorify and perpetuate war through happy endings rewarding brave, courageous, and true heroes; beginnings and middles based on causes that lead to reasonable, comprehensible effects" (179). The novelist admits his failure to mold his Dresden experience into

traditional form: "As a trafficker in climaxes and thrills and characterization and wonderful dialogue and suspense and confrontations, I had outlined the Dresden story many times" (5). He tells Mary "I don't think this book of mine is ever going to be finished. I must have written five thousand pages by now, and thrown them all away" (15). He explains to his publisher "It is so short and jumbled and jangled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre" (19). Indeed, as the narrator portrays, there are more intelligent things for him to say about the planet Tralfamadore and its views on the universe than about the massacre in Dresden.

In fact, the Dresden experience seems more fantastic than the Tralfamadorian. Compare Billy's experience in the boxcar across Germany to his experience on the Tralfamadorian saucer. In the boxcar, "Billy had to sleep standing up, or not sleep at all. And food had stopped coming in through the ventilators, and the days and nights were colder all the time" (79). Contrarily, the Tralfamadorians "carried him into a cabin where he was strapped to a yellow Barca-Lounger which they had stolen from a Sears Roebuck warehouse. The hold of the saucer was crammed with other stolen merchandise, which would be used to furnish Billy's artificial habitat in a zoo on Tralfamadore" (77). Which is more fantastic, an alien ship crammed with stolen merchandise from Earth or an Earthling boxcar crammed with other Earthlings?

We should note that the invention of Tralfamadore belongs to the narrator and not to Billy. The narrator says early in the book that he wishes time would pass, but "[t]here was nothing I could do about it. As an Earthling, I had to believe whatever clocks said--and calendars" (20). Robert Merrill and Peter A. Scholl correctly assert that "Vonnegut

undermined the reality of [Billy's] experience on Tralfamadore" (145). Merrill and Scholl explain that Billy discovers several books by Kilgore Trout that expose that his outer-space experience "is something less than original" (144-45). They quote the Trout text presented in Vonnegut's novel that tells of an Earthling man and woman kidnapped and placed in a zoo by aliens from the planet Zircon-212 (Vonnegut 201). But Merrill and Scholl are wrong when they conclude that "Pilgrim gets his 'idea' for Tralfamadore from Kilgore Trout" (145), for it is the narrator, not Billy, who has created the Tralfamadorian world just as he has created the Dresden one where black and orange stripes on a German boxcar resemble stripes of the same color on a wedding tent. It is important that the narrator be credited for inventing both, otherwise the juxtaposition of history and fiction and their ultimate subversion cannot be viewed as the narrator's attempt to articulate his own experience.

The narrator's decision to tell about Dresden through the eyes of Billy exposes further problems in the novel's conventions than those regarding distinctions between fact and fiction. The narrator wishes to distance himself from the experience by using the persona of a heterodiegetic narrator (traditionally termed third-person) with the ability to focalize through Billy's perspective. Yet, in direct opposition to this narrative voice is his need to tell us that *he*--the narrator, not Billy--was there. He says, after the American colonel tells Billy to call him "Wild Bob," "I was there. So was my old war buddy, Bernard V. O'Hare" (67). Similarly, when Billy walks the prison grounds at night to urinate, he finds the latrine crowded with sick Americans, and the narrator explains:

An American near Billy wailed that he had excreted everything but his brains. Moments later he said, "There they go, there they go." He meant his brains.

That was I. That was me. That was the author of this book. (125)

Later, the narrator tells us of Billy's arrival in Dresden: "Somebody behind [Billy] in the boxcar said 'Oz.' That was I. That was me. The only other city I'd ever seen was Indianapolis, Indiana" (148). Finally, the narrator reminds us one last time at the end of the novel that as Billy and the others "were being marched into the ruins by their guards" (212) after the destruction of Dresden, "I was there" (212). He tells us:

I was there. O'Hare was there. We had spent the past two nights in the blind innkeeper's stable. Authorities had found us there. They told us what to do. We were to borrow picks and shovels and crowbars and wheelbarrows from our neighbors. We were to march with these implements to such and such a place in the ruins, ready to go to work. (212-13)

The narrator transfers the heterodiegetic relationship into a solidly homodiegetic one though to do so violates the traditional forms of narrative voice. Like the artificial narrator of Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, his story is more about his writing than about what he is writing, because, as he says, "there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre" (19).

The novel's lack of chronology and causality in the novelist-narrator's story of Billy is replaced by the chronological and causal links in the functional events surrounding the narrator's own long-desired accomplishment. Like Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, the narrator feels compelled to tell his story. Unlike the mariner, however, the words do not flow forth poetically during a mesmerizing stupor, nor does an audience find itself captive. Mary O'Hare is not the only one who doubts the narrator's project.

Harrison Starr, the movie-maker, asks him: ““Why don’t you write an anti-*glacier* book instead?”” (3). Dr. Rumfoord responds in a like manner when Billy finally convinces him that he does not have echolalia and that he really was at Dresden: ““Must we talk about it now?”” (193). Neither the novelist-narrator nor his audience wants to face the story, so the novelist diffuses it into a non-story.

The narrator also presents us with the non-story to show us how the Dresden fire-bombers, their historians, and the Tralfamadorians avoid responsibility by side-stepping causality. The novelist, unlike Billy--who responds to Rumfoord’s claim that Dresden’s destruction had to happen with ““I know. I’m not complaining”” (198)--and the Tralfamadorians--who claim there is no why, that “[t]he moment is *structured*” a certain way (117), and that one should “Ignore the awful times and concentrate on the good ones” (117)--accepts responsibility by complaining, by asking why, and by facing the not-so-good times. As Jerome Klinkowitz maintains, the novel “is . . . the story of [Vonnegut’s] writing this book . . . a book that manages a new relation between the world of the actual and that of the mind creating a world through its power to imagine and utter” (64). The novelist-narrator overcomes the challenges posed by the conventional novel with his “new relation between” the “actual” and “created” worlds, and he further juxtaposes the Dresden world with the Tralfamadorian to show that the actual and the created are not much different--not because they both deserve glorification, but because they are both fantastically strange.

The narrative sequence, then, according to Kafalenos's model, would appear thus:

- a the novelist reevaluates his failure to write the Dresden book, his desire to tell us that he was there
- B Seymour Lawrence gives the novelist a three-book contract, implicitly requesting that he alleviate a
- C the novelist responds "O.K., the first of the three will be my famous book about Dresden" (18)
- C' the novelist meets with O'Hare to discuss the war and to plan a journey back to Dresden
- D the novelist is challenged by the trappings of the novel
- E the novelist creates an anti-story to avoid the glorification of war, to subvert fact and fiction, and to both maintain and violate his psychological distance
- F the reader, a kind of helper in the way the wedding guest is a helper to the ancient mariner, gradually recognizes the novelist's use of Billy as both a vehicle for and a foil to the novelist's feelings
- G the novelist's message "I was there" culminates through his vehicle, Billy, who has the opportunity to tell a historian, Dr. Rumfoord, writing about Dresden
- H the novelist tells the symbolic historian through his vehicle "I was there"
- I_{neg} Billy's message does not matter
- I but the novelist discards the vehicle and tells us in his closing chapter more succinctly than before that he was there
- K the novel is complete (and is a great success), and equilibrium is restored

Figure 6
The Narrative Sequence in *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Although the world of Billy emerges as a metadiegetic non-story Tralfamadorian-style, the dramatization of the real protagonist, the novelist-narrator, exposes that the real story--the protagonist's writing about Dresden--takes the form of the traditional chronological and causal plot, thus motivating readers toward the end of the novel.

Character Is Life, Plot Is Death

“Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display. . . ?”

Virginia Woolf makes her rebellion against the conventions of realism known in her critical writings, but not because it is not apparent in her fiction. *Mrs. Dalloway* exemplifies Woolf's attempt to subdue the “unscrupulous tyrant who has [the writer] in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest. . .” (219). Clearly, *Mrs. Dalloway* has little that is conventional about it. A plot analysis reveals that the novel consists of at least ten separate events that function as possible disruptive moments beginning what we typically expect to be a central conflict. But the revelation that a story has begun in the conventional way continues to defer itself as potential conflicts either resolve themselves too quickly or get left behind by other sequences, never to be taken up again. The only substantial sequence that resolves itself surrounds Septimus and Lucrezia Warren Smith. The other three substantial sequences surrounding Clarissa, Peter, and Sally concurrently begin and eventually converge but never reach climax. This smorgasbourg of fragmented sequences captures a day in the life of both a community and an individual (Clarissa), and it reveals that most of us rarely proceed through life, even a day of it, along a single plotline. Septimus's sequence finds climax and resolution through his death because death is the only way stories end. Woolf suggests that as long as one is alive, one continues to engage in multiple unfinished stories.

At least ten possible inciting events occur in the following order:

1. Clarissa prepares for a party she will have this evening (3).
2. Clarissa reevaluates her relationship with Peter (4).
3. A motor car drives through with a mysterious person (14).
4. Septimus has said he will kill himself (16).
5. An aeroplane makes letters in the air that are difficult to read (20).
6. Lady Bruton invites Richard and not Clarissa for lunch (29).
7. Clarissa reevaluates her love for Sally Seton (31).
8. Richard wants to tell Clarissa he loves her (114).
9. Clarissa and Miss Kilman have an encounter (124).
10. Elizabeth takes the omnibus and it grows dark (138).

Figure 7
Some Inciting Events in *Mrs. Dalloway*

The narrative introduces each of these events as though it will begin the central conflict our reading eyes are trained to expect. Even the sequences that become trivial to the novel seem significant at first. The motor car episode begins thus: “-oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!” (13). The narrative teases us further into suspecting that a central plot is about to unfold: “The violent explosion which made Mrs. Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologize came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement. . . . Passers-by . . . had just time to see a face of the very greatest importance . . . , before a male hand drew the blind. . . .” (14). The car draws attention from all in the town, “rumours were at once in circulation” (14), and “now mystery had brushed them [the townspeople] with her wing” (14). The motor-car episode builds for nearly two pages before it is dropped from the narrative entirely without ever having disclosed the identity of the passenger.

A similar tease occurs a few pages later:

Suddenly Mrs. Coates looked up into the sky. The sound of an aeroplane bored ominously into the ears of the crowd. There it was

coming over the trees, letting out white smoke from behind, which curled and twisted, actually writing something! making letters in the sky! Every one looked up. (20)

The narrative continues to build up the significance of the aeroplane as it does with the motor car: "Dropping dead down the aeroplane soared straight up, curved in a loop, raced, sank, rose. . ." (20). The narrative asks "But what letters?" (20) as though we should pay special attention to them, as though they would reveal an important clue to the novel's progression. "A C was it? an E, then an L?" (20). For nearly two pages, characters struggle to read the mysterious letters in the sky. Mr. Bowley suggests that it is "toffee" (21), but the sequence vanishes like the aeroplane into the horizon, interrupted, like the motor-car passage, by Lucrezia Warren Smith (21).

Four sequences that seem more important than the motor car and aeroplane sequences but less central to the novel than those involving Peter, Sally, and the party make their entrances into the narrative with the same vigor:

"Fear no more," said Clarissa. Fear no more the heat o' the sun;
for the shock of Lady Bruton asking Richard to lunch without her made
the moment in which she stood shiver, as a plant on the river-bed feels the
shock of a passing oar and shivers: so she rocked: so she shivered. (30)

The intensity of this introduction leads us to suspect a host of possible explanations for Clarissa's response. Perhaps Clarissa suspects her husband of betraying her (we have not learned Lady Bruton's age at this point). Perhaps Clarissa suspects that Lady Bruton plans to manipulate and destroy the Dalloways. Perhaps Clarissa believes that Lady Bruton must privately disclose some horrible news to Richard that must not be said to Clarissa or that must be said gently. The narrative inspires a similar chain of questions

within us with Richard's desire to take Clarissa a present and to tell her that he loves her: "Richard had had a sudden vision of her there at luncheon; of himself and Clarissa; of their life together; and he drew the tray of old jewels towards him. . ." (114). The suspense grows: "Richard turned at the corner of Conduit Street eager, yes, very eager, to travel that spider's thread of attachment between himself and Clarissa; he would go straight to her, in Westminster" (115). The narrative continues for four pages before Richard finally meets Clarissa and gives her the flowers (without saying "I love you") (118).

The two other minor episodes involve Miss Kilman and Elizabeth. The vigor with which the first of these two sequences draws our interest relies on earlier reflections Clarissa has on Miss Kilman's character and her daughter's "falling in love" with her (11). Focalized through Miss Kilman, we discover that she and Clarissa, who has made her disdain for the history tutor quite plain to us, are about to meet: "Rage was succeeded by calm. A sweet savour filled her veins, her lips parted, and, standing formidable upon the landing in her mackintosh, she looked with steady and sinister serenity at Mrs. Dalloway, who came out with her daughter" (124-25). Immediately following this description of Miss Kilman's building emotions, we see Elizabeth skate off for her forgotten gloves because "[s]he could not bear to see [the two women] together" (125). As the two face one another on the landing, Miss Kilman, seeking "a religious victory" (125) "glared" and "glowered" (125) while "Clarissa was really shocked" (125). Even though we readers can feel with our fingers that less than half the text remains to be read, we still suspect, though with more than a little skepticism, having

not met with one yet, that this encounter might be the big conflict we have been trained to expect. Yet the tension grows into a battle over Elizabeth quite far from Mrs. Dalloway's landing, and even though Miss Kilman "was about to split asunder" (132) because "the agony [of losing Elizabeth] was so great" (132), the sequence barely closes with the "deserted" (133) and defeated Miss Kilman when a new mystery presents itself while Elizabeth walks the Strand: absorbed, she fails to notice the encroaching darkness (138). The narrative dramatically teases: "A puff of wind . . . blew a thin black veil over the sun. . ." (138). Yet, after an elaborate description of the change from lightness to darkness in the scenery, we are told that "Calmly and competently, Elizabeth Dalloway mounted the Westminster omnibus" (139), and without the opportunity to completely rest our concern for the young girl, the sequence vanishes with the interruption, once again, by the Septimus sequence.

The sequence surrounding Septimus and Lucrezia Warren Smith begins when we learn that Septimus has said that he will kill himself (16) and ends by his making this statement a fact when he jumps from an upstairs window to escape Dr. Holmes (149). Lucrezia functions as the protagonist of the sequence even though we often see Septimus's perspective and sympathize with him. His struggle with war memories, however, remains inaccessible to us. It is Lucrezia's struggle that we understand, and it is her struggle that drives us through the sequence. The complete sequence can be diagrammed thus:

inciting event: A Septimus says he will kill himself
 rising action: C Rezia attempts to prevent A
 C' Rezia requests the help of doctors
 D the doctors become antagonistic, and Septimus's condition
 worsens
 E Rezia tries to help Septimus herself
 turning point: F Septimus responds to Rezia and they share a happy moment
 together
 G Dr. Holmes comes to call on Septimus
 H Rezia tries to keep Dr. Holmes away and to sustain Septimus's
 mood
 climax: I_{neg} Rezia fails to prevent A
 falling action: K Rezia mourns Septimus's death; stability ensues

Figure 8
 The One Complete Sequence in *Mrs. Dalloway*

The fact that this plot is the only substantial one in the novel that resolves itself may indicate something significant about the other substantial sequences that do not find resolution--those concerning Sally, Peter, and Clarissa and her party.

Sally and Clarissa's story, which is technically two sequences as is Peter and Clarissa's, begins with this tease: "But this question of love (she thought, putting her coat away), this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had not that, after all, been love?" (32). Our minds cannot help but race with curiosity at these provocative lines as our eyes race the pages for details. We learn that Sally and Clarissa met at a party, and that "All that evening [Clarissa] could not take her eyes off Sally" (33). After pages characterizing Sally as an unconventional girl who likes to smoke cigars and read Shelley, Clarissa's excitement to be in the same household with her reveals itself in these lines: "'She [Sally] is beneath this roof. . . . She is beneath this roof!'" (34). The suspense heightens at "the most

exquisite moment in [Clarissa's] whole life"(35). She is walking with Sally by some flowers, a little behind the others when "Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally" (35). The sequence ends when Clarissa snaps at Sally for referring to Richard for what seemed to Clarissa the millionth time as "Wickham" (187). But a second sequence begins with Sally's appearance at Clarissa's party, and the unresolved tension from the first presents multiple possibilities for the second, all of which are never realized. Sally appears at the party, Clarissa puts her off to tend to her other guests, and, when Sally is about to give up and leave, Clarissa returns and the novel ends.

Peter and Clarissa's story, like Sally and Clarissa's, consists of two sequences. It begins with Clarissa's recollection of their past relationship prior to her marriage to Richard. She recalls standing at an open window looking at the landscape "until Peter Walsh said, 'Musing among the vegetables?'--was that it? 'I prefer men to cauliflowers'--was that it?" (3). The moment becomes more significant because Clarissa relishes Peter's sayings: "[W]hen millions of things had utterly vanished--how strange it was!--a few sayings like this about cabbages" (4). The line suggests that when Clarissa remembers very little about her past, Peter's sayings manage to remain clear in her mind. This provokes our curiosity about Peter. We immediately desire to know who he is and what it is about him that makes his silly sayings special to Clarissa. After pages characterizing their relationship, this jewel teases us further:

So she would still find herself arguing in St. James's Park, still making out that she had been right--and she had to--not to marry [Peter]. For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in and day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. . . . But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. (7-8)

The narrative leaves Peter's sequence until later in the novel when he returns from India and visits Clarissa. It is this visit that begins the second sequence so that the rest of the first remains implicitly embedded in this second through the characters' recollections. We learn through these recollections that although Peter and Clarissa loved one another, Clarissa married Richard, Peter moved to India, and at least a semblance of stability ensued. The unresolved tension caused by their mutual feelings for one another carry over into this second sequence which barely begins before the novel ends:

Now of course, thought Clarissa, [Peter's] enchanting! perfectly enchanting! Now I remember how impossible it was to ever make up my mind--and why did I make up my mind--not to marry him? she wondered, that awful summer? (41)

Peter returns, Peter ruminates, Clarissa ruminates, Peter comes to the party at Clarissa's bidding, Clarissa puts him off to see to her other guests, and then, when Peter is about to give up, Clarissa comes to him and the novel ends.

The sequences involving Clarissa and Sally and Peter and Sally merge at the party into one grand moment. Indeed, the novel itself seems to us readers to have been one grand moment. The narrative simulates a feeling Clarissa has in the novel:

But [Clarissa] feared time itself. . . and felt often as she stood hesitating one moment on the threshold of her drawing room, an exquisite suspense, such as might stay a diver before plunging while the sea darkens and brightens beneath him, and the waves which threaten to break, but only gently split their surface, roll and conceal and encrust as they just turn over the weeds with pearl. (30)

We, too, experience an "exquisite suspense" because of the multitude of story fragments that, like the ocean in Woolf's metaphor, build and fall and build without end. And all the movement continues even after Septimus's death. His death ends his narrative, but the narratives in the lives of the others never cease to start and stop, and they will continue until they each reach their own ultimate climax. Clarissa seems all too aware of how her own life narrative relates to those of the others: "Did it matter then, she asked herself walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her. . . ?" (9). Clarissa's narrative--which consists of sequences involving Peter, Sally, Mrs. Kilman, her daughter and others--will have its dénouement, as will the narratives of the other characters in the novel, in death. Woolf suggests that life consists of several potential but unrealized plots until death. Consequently, she implies that narrative that focuses on life and the living will foreground character and subvert traditional plot lines.

Note

¹ Kafalenos's terms "fabula" and "sjuzhet," used by many of the Russian Formalists, correspond with Chatman's "story" and "discourse." Interestingly, the Russian Formalists tend to align *plot* and *fabula*, as I do here, while Americans, such as Phelan, tend to align *plot* and *discourse*.

CHAPTER VI

PROGRESSION

Progression, as I briefly explained in the last two chapters, is the selective ordering of character traits and functional events in the narrative discourse, or the extradiegetic level. If traits and functional events are the individual notes in a melody, the *progression* is the placement of those notes in a particular order, or the melody itself. Just as individual melodies vary yet possess enough similar qualities to be grouped into categories (i.e., concertos and sonatas), no two narrative progressions will be identical, but we can categorize them into *types* by comparing the chronological order of a narrative's functional events to the presentational order of those events. In *Time and English Fiction*, David Leon Higdon suggests that such types, or what he calls "time shapes" (4), "may well bear the same relationship to fiction that certain stanzaic and metrical patterns do to poetry and kernel sentence patterns to grammar" (4). This chapter presents a process for identifying progression types after critically evaluating another presented by Genette and Bal, and it draws from Higdon's concepts to explain how types affect our interpretations. After considering the *order* aspect of progression, the chapter continues with a discussion of a second of its aspects: *pace*. The chapter concludes with a discussion of order in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* and of pace in John Fowles's *The Collector*.

Genette offers a method—later taken up by Bal—of diagramming what he terms "anachronies" (40) to denote the relationship between presentational and chronological

order. He marks sections of the presentation with alphabetically ordered letters. He deduces the various chronological stages from the narrative's use of prolepses and analepses and represents them with increasing numbers. To illustrate, Genette presents a passage from Marcel Proust's *Sodome et Gomorrhe* with its presentational order labeled thus:

(A) Swann now found equally intelligent anybody who was of his opinion, his old friend the Prince de Guermantes and my schoolfellow Bloch, (B) whom previously he had avoided (C) and whom he now invited to luncheon. (D) Swann interested Bloch greatly by telling him that the Prince de Guermantes was a Dreyfusard. "We must ask him to sign our appeal for Picquart; a name like this would have a tremendous effect." But Swann, blending with his ardent conviction as an Israelite the diplomatic moderation of a man of the world, (E) whose habits he had too thoroughly acquired (F) to be able to shed them at this late hour, refused to allow Bloch to send the Prince a circular to sign, even on his own initiative. "He cannot do such a thing, we must not expect the impossible," Swann repeated. "There you have a charming man who has travelled thousands of miles to come over to our side. He can be very useful to us. If he were to sign your list, he would simply be compromising himself with his own people, would be made to suffer on our account, might even repent of his confidences and not confide in us again." Nor was this all, Swann refused his own signature. He felt his name was too Hebraic not to create a bad effect. Besides, even if he approved of all the attempts to secure a fresh trial, he did not wish to be mixed up in any way in the antimilitarist campaign. He wore, (G) a thing he had never done previously, the decoration (H) he had won as a young militiaman, in '70 (I) and added a codicil to his will asking that contrary to his previous dispositions, (K) he might be buried with the military honors due to his rank as Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. A request which assembled round the church of Combray a whole squadron of (L) those troopers over whose fate Françoise used to weep in days gone by, when she envisaged (M) the prospect of war. (N) In short, Swann refused to sign Bloch's circular, with the result that, if he passed in the eyes of many people as a fanatical Dreyfusard, my friend found him lukewarm, infected with Nationalism, and a militarist.

(O) Swann left me without shaking hands so as not to be forced into general leave-taking. (41-42)

Notice that each of the lettered levels indicating presentational order are bordered by flashbacks, or analepses, and flash-forwards, or prolepses. The problem, however, is that Genette assumes that the passing of time within each level is perfectly chronological and that no ellipsis, no matter how minor, occurs. Consider level "F" at which Swann refuses to sign Bloch's circular and at which there is a result of Swann's refusal: Marcel's friend make's a judgment about him. The cause and its effect are represented by Genette as though they occur one right after the other without some amount of time in between them. Genette represents Proust's narrative as though Marcel's friend does not ponder over his response to Swann's refusal to sign before making his judgment and as though Swann neither swallows, nor sighs, nor gestures, nor clears his throat in between sentences. Although Proust does not describe such actions, readers generally embellish with details like these in their minds as they co-construct the fabula. Genette, of course, cannot be held accountable for the interpretive variations from reader to reader, but he ought to acknowledge that chronological time can never be perfectly represented in narrative form. The sentence "John ran through the woods and over the bridge until he reached his grandma's house" is a perfect example of the fact that time is inherently omitted in narration. It takes readers seconds to read the sentence, but it presumably takes John much longer to run through the woods. In addition, some time necessarily passes in between the moment John runs over the bridge and his actual arrival at his grandmother's doorstep, and this time is omitted from the narrative. My point is that Genette, in his rather meticulous diagram, does not as meticulously explain how much

time omitted from a narrative defines the omission as an ellipsis that signals a boundary for presentational levels.

His chronological levels prove equally problematic. He labels Proust's passage above thus:

(1) the war of 1812; (2) Marcel's childhood in Combray; (3) a time before the Guermantes soirée, which we can place in 1898; (5) the invitation to Bloch (necessarily later than this soirée, from which Bloch is absent); (6) the Swann-Bloch luncheon; (7) the addition of the codicil; (8) Swann's funeral; (9) the war whose prospect Françoise envisaged and which, strictly speaking, occupies no definite position, since it is purely hypothetical, but which--in order to place it in time and simplify things--we may identify with the war of 1914-18. (42)

With his admission that the war Françoise envisions "occupies no definite position," he admits that his process lacks precision. Consider his anachronic diagram for Proust's passage:

A4-B3-C5-D6-E3-F6-G3-H1-I7-J3-K8-L2-M9-N6-O4 (42)

If we look closely at one chronological level, take level "6" for example, there is a chronological passing of time *within* that level. At "F6" Swann does not allow Bloch to send the Prince the circular, *then* he repeats himself, *then* he refuses to sign it himself. At "N6" we find a summary account of the *result* of the action at "F6." A cause and its effect generally do not occur simultaneously, except through the Tralfamadorian philosophy. Yet Genette's anachrony suggests that "D6," "F6," and "N6," while progressing in presentational order, do not progress in chronological order. Consider an example from Bal who uses a passage from Harry Mulisch's "What Happened to Sergeant Massuro?":

A I saw that he could not take it. With a haggard face he looked at what was left of Massuro. He wanted a *reason*--otherwise, where was he? And the only thing that could pass for reason, with a great deal of good (and occult) faith, was fear. B But there was no fear. Massuro hadn't known what fear was. C I knew Massuro well, in a manner of speaking. D So I shall tell it to you as if you were a friend, Gentlemen, although it's a mystery to me what you will do with the information when you have it.

E Two years ago, when he was posed to my section at Potapégo, I happened to be standing jabbering to the village headman. The truck from Kaukenau arrived, and out of the cab stepped a swarthy, heavily built fellow with a big head, round eyes and thick lips. F Then, suddenly I saw his name in the Major's letter before me again. G "Heintje Massuro!"
(55)

Bal's designation of levels appears arbitrary. Level "B" does not begin after "There was no fear" even though the tense changes with "Massuro hadn't known what fear was." There also seems to be no difference in the omission in time between sentences within level "E" and between the sentences that border levels "E" and "F." Does a less significant amount of time elapse between the moment the narrator jabbers to the village headman and the arrival of the truck from Kaukenau than that time that elapses between the moment the truck arrives and the narrator's sudden vision of the Major's letter? The word "suddenly" would indicate the opposite, for when we say that something "suddenly" happens, we usually mean that very little time has elapsed between the moment it was not happening and the moment it "suddenly" was. Genette and Bal's anachronies, not a little tedious, might be worth executing if they could accurately pinpoint the relationship between chronological and presentational order. And perhaps some modifications would render them useful. Higdon's assertion that time shapes can

provide interpretive clues warrants an attempt to do something toward that end. I submit that we use the pyramid model and/or function analysis to identify functional events and that we compare their chronological order to the order in which the narrative presents them.

Our first task in any analysis would be to determine whether a narrative is monosodic or polysodic--that is, whether a narrative contains a single or multiple narrative sequences. This process was discussed more thoroughly in the previous chapter, but a summary would be useful here. If a narrative has more than one moment when stability is reinstated after it has been disrupted, then it possesses more than one sequence. This is not a clear-cut observation to make, for what appears to be a reinstatement of stability to one reader may appear to be a lull between building moments of crisis in a single sequence to another. For example, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" arguably consists of two sequences. The murder of the old man offers an immense relief to the build that precedes it so that the arrival of the police sparks a second conflict that introduces a new tension, or second sequence. Dividing the story into two sequences makes it possible to argue that the old man functions as the protagonist in the first part of the story and that, once he dies, the narrator becomes the protagonist in the second. If stability is not achieved in a narrative until its resolution, then one sequence structures the narrative. In Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, we feel relief after tense moments throughout the text. With each escape the priest makes from nearly being caught, we experience a lull in the building tension. But I would argue that no semblance of stability is ever reinstated in the novel until its very end, unlike

what we find in Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* in which independent sequences have their own conclusions. Another reader might argue that Greene's novel consists of several such mini-narratives linked together, each with its own inciting event, climax, and resolution. Such an argument would depend on one's ability to defend the existence of more than one instance of reinstated stability. In some cases, a narrative may consist of an incomplete sequence so that stability is never reinstated.¹

If we determine that a single sequence organizes a narrative, then we identify at what point in the plot the progression begins. A progression may begin with the inciting event and proceed chronologically so that the order of the plot and the order of the progression resemble one another, and the narrative begins *ad ovo*. Some background information provided through the reflections of characters or through the metadiegesis--information that does not construct an entire fabula of its own (for then we would have a polysodic narrative) or include functional events--will almost invariably prevent a progression from possessing perfect chronological order, but in our analysis, it is important that we compare the order of *functional events* of the fabula to the way they are presented in the *sjuzet*, so that commentary, descriptions, and events that are not functional to the plot do not distract us with their shifts in tense from our analysis of order. Commentary, descriptions, and events that are not functional are all important to the progression, but they more significantly contribute to the *pace* of a progression, which I will explain further later.

If the progression does not begin with the inciting event of a monosodic narrative, if it begins with a functional event that falls later on the plot line, then we should

determine whether it begins before or after the climax (function H in Kafalenos's model). A progression that begins with a functional event that follows the inciting event but precedes the ultimate climax (between A and H in Kafalenos's model) begins *in medias res*, or in the middle, for the tension remains unresolved. A progression that begins with a functional event that follows both the inciting event and the climax (I or I_{deg} in Kafalenos's model) so that we see the resolution before we see the conflict, begins at the end, or, to keep with the Latin phrasing, *ad fin*.

Polysodic narratives require more of us in progression analysis, for we must identify not only the number of sequences, but also the way in which they are organized. As mentioned in the previous chapter, narrative sequences can be combined in four ways: they can be linked, alternated, embedded, and implicitly embedded. Linked sequences can occur chronologically in the progression as in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, or they can not, as in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. If the inciting event of the first sequence of the fabula is the opening of the progression even if it is implicitly embedded in another sequence as in Wharton's "Roman Fever," then the narrative begins *ad ovo*. If the final sequence of the fabula is the first sequence in the progression, and if it begins after the climax, then the narrative begins *ad fin*. The narrative begins *in medias res* if the progression opens in any other way.

Narratives with alternated sequences are usually comprised of two fabulas a narrator tells concurrently so that part of one is told and then part of the other and so on until both reach their conclusions. When the two fabulas share the same temporal dimension, as when we follow the independent story lines of two different protagonists

whose lives intersect in the novel, such as we find in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, order becomes more difficult to describe. In essence, even if each fabula or plot proceeds chronologically, the progression does not. The introduction of the second fabula takes us back to the starting point of the first so that time resembles a series of slip stitches. Some alternated sequences, however, do not share the same temporal dimension, as in William Golding's *Pincher Martin* where a sequence from Pincher's past alternates with his present sequence of survival. Another example would be the story of a woman dealing with mental illness alternated with a story from her childhood involving sexual molestation. The climax of the first could come as a result of the climax of the second so that the most intense moment--facing the repressed experience--in the first involves the memory of the most intense moment--the violation--in the second. One might argue that such a narrative begins *in medias res*, at some point in between the two temporal dimensions. Another might argue that it begins *ad ovo* in that the character reexperiences the second sequence at the same time she experiences the first.

Embedded polysodic narratives are more thoroughly described in the previous chapter. Cather's *The Professor's House* serves as an example of explicitly embedded narratives while Wharton's "Roman Fever" exemplifies implicitly embedded ones. We can look at the chronological relationship between the encasing sequence and the embedded one. In both of the above examples, the embedded sequence, whether explicit or implicit, occurs in a time before the encasing one. This is the usual relationship between the two sequences.

Variations of these combinations can also occur, for in the middle of one of many alternated sequences can be an embedded one or a series of chronologically linked sequences. As in chemical connections between molecules, the combinations are virtually infinite.

One can further compare the chronological order of the functional events within a given sequence to the way they are presented through the progression. For example, although sequences may be linked chronologically, the independent sequences may possess structures as varied as monosodic narratives. Consequently, we can analyze the order of an entire polysodic narrative, or we can analyze the order of independent fabulas within the narrative. Our discoveries may expose important thematic implications.

Higdon describes differences in philosophical implications between those narratives which proceed chronologically and those that do not. A chronological progression, what Higdon calls "process time" "entails a constant becoming as characters gradually move from one condition to another" (6). The focus becomes "the evolving inner and outer lives of [the novelist's] characters" (6). The evolution, then, whether toward a better or worse condition (in terms of morality, character, wealth, health, professional acclaim, and a host of other possibilities), the "becoming" (6), focuses the narrative and channels thematic conclusions accordingly. Narratives that begin *in medias res* or *ad fin* emphasize a "retrospective" rather than a "process" time, and "[r]ather than *becoming*, retrospective time stresses *being*" (6). This is especially true when narratives begin *ad fin* and a character's state after having experienced the climax is presented to us first and then it is compared to the character's previous state.

As Higdon maintains, "we usually have a young character, naive, expectant, perhaps full of illusions, and an older narrator, knowing his past, experienced, and perhaps stripped of all illusions" (6). The chronological progression reveals thematic implications about human experience, whereas the retrospective progression comments upon human existence. To illustrate, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" basically proceeds chronologically (although our unreliable narrator sometimes unintentionally describes the same things twice presenting them differently--i.e., first the bed is described as having been gnawed presumably by children, and later the narrator admits to biting it herself). The narrator's madness increases through time as she tells her story, and she tells it to us in present tense, which further simulates our role as witness to her process. The cause--the archaic method of treating nervous disorders, the dominance of a husband over his wife, or the stifling of creativity by science to name a few possibilities--and its effect--the progressive madness and eventual split in the woman's ego--are central to the narrative. The thematic conclusions, whether they are derived from a psychological approach, a feminist approach, or a metanarrative approach, will invariably involve the narrator's process of becoming. On the other hand, although retrospective narratives may also emphasize causality--how a character gets from state x to state y--it is the existence of the one state sharply contrasted to the existence of the previous state and our eventual judgment of one as being better or worse than the other that is most central to this kind of narrative. Higdon offers confessions and spiritual biographies as examples. The sentenced man condemned to life in prison may be juxtaposed with the free man before his fall so that the corrupt state foils the innocent. The "saved" man who

has found the mercy and grace of God may be juxtaposed with the sinful, lost soul of a previous state. In L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*, the experienced narrator we come to know in the Prologue contrasts the naive, hopeful, and innocent boy of his childhood. His *becoming* experienced is revealed, but the two states, the innocent and the experienced, like William Blake's "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" printed side-by-side, what it is *to be* one or the other, is foregrounded. Narratives that begin *in medias res* capitalize on the advantages of both forms. Two states of being are juxtaposed, but the progress toward climax emphasizes a segment of the protagonist's transformation. This is the case in Greene's *The Power and the Glory*: the whisky priest sharply contrasts the prideful priest ten years before, yet he continues a humbling, dehumanizing transformation into a physically stripped--but spiritually armed--existence.

Progression analysis, in addition to order, can also involve considerations of a narrative's *pace*. Meir Sternberg explains that in a narrative section (or passage) where the representational time--the time it takes a reader to read the section--appears somewhat equal to the represented time--the time in the life of a character--there is the implication that the section is more central to the work than a section where the two times are incongruent (17). He calls the ratio of representational to represented time the *quantitative indicator* (17). He further explains that because we cannot gauge representational time by timing the various readers as they read a text, and because the times vary from reader to reader so that we could not settle on a precise measure, representational time manifests itself in the textual space it occupies: the number of lines

and pages (14). Genette has developed the same ratio, but he calls it “narrative time to story time” (95), and he classifies it into four cases:

pause: $NT=n, ST=0$. Thus: $NT \infty > ST$
scene: $NT=ST$
summary: $NT < ST$
ellipsis: $NT=0, ST=n$. Thus: $NT < \infty ST$ (95)

These ratios for Genette represent the “duration” or “speed” of a narrative section (88).

According to Sternberg’s quantitative indicator, Genette’s “scene”—that narrative section which in lines and pages seems equal in reading time to the time required for the events in the section to pass—reveals the event or events that are most central to a narrative.

But what neither Genette nor Sternberg consider is the inverse of Genette’s summary, $ST < NT$, what Chatman calls a “stretch” (72), and what I call an “illuminated scene.”

Genette apologizes for the lack of symmetry in his table but maintains that $NT < ST$ has no real value for us because it only occurs with a combination of pause and scene, which, he further asserts, should be distinguished from one another (95). His suggestion is not challenged by the following passage from Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night*, in which I differentiate the pause from the scene with italics:

[Rosemary] opened the door of her room and went directly to her desk where she had suddenly remembered leaving her wristwatch. It was there; slipping it on she glanced down at the daily letter to her mother, finishing the last sentence in her mind. Then, rather gradually, she realized without turning about that she was not alone in the room.

In an inhabited room there are refracting objects only half noticed: varnished wood, more or less polished brass, silver and ivory, and beyond these a thousand conveyers of light and shadow so mild that one scarcely thinks of them as that, the tops of picture-frames, the edges of pencils or ashtrays, of crystal or china ornaments; the totality of this refraction--appealing to equally subtle reflexes of the vision as well as to those associated fragments in the subconscious that we seem to hang on

to, as a glass-fitter keeps the irregularly shaped pieces that may do some time--this fact might account for what Rosemary afterward mystically described as "realizing" that there was someone in the room, before she could determine it. But when she did realize it she turned swift in a sort of ballet step and saw that a dead Negro was stretched upon her bed.
(109)

This passage incorporates what Genette calls a "pause" because Fitzgerald does not integrate the description and commentary with the action of the scene. The pause works to create suspense between Rosemary's awareness and her identification of a presence in her room.

In a later discussion of mimesis and diegesis, Genette depicts Plato's attempt to eliminate description and commentary from Homer's version of a passage in *The Iliad* to achieve "pure narrative" (Genette 165), but what Genette does not point out is that Plato's version fails to provide the sense of time elapsing that Homer's version achieves.

Consider the difference, as presented by Genette:

Here it is in its original version: "So said he, and the old man was afraid and obeyed his word, and fared silently along the shore of the loud-sounding sea. Then went that aged man apart and prayed aloud to king Apollo, whom Leto of the fair locks bare [I, 11:33-36]." Here it is in its Platonic rewriting: And the old man on hearing this was frightened and departed in silence, and having gone apart from the camp he prayed at length to Apollo. (164-65)

The phrases Plato found unnecessary, such as "fared silently along the shore of the loud-sounding sea," actually provide a temporal rhythm in their length (which would not be affected by Genette's translation) that coincides with the described actions. Plato's "departed in silence" fails to capture the sense of Odysseus's wandering by the sea that Homer's description of "the shore of the loud-sounding sea" provides.

Part of what contributes to the proportion of narrative time to story time is the presence of description and/or commentary in a scene. These have no temporal elements in the story: they temporally exist in narrative time, not in story time. When a narrator mentions the colors in a sunset or the expression on a character's face, the story time does not progress. Genette's anisochrony for the pause shows the absence of temporal progression in the story as a narrator describes or comments upon the setting or characters. However, the words used to describe events often require less time to report than the events require to execute. As mentioned earlier, "John ran through the woods" takes less narrative time compared to the story time—the time it would take John to run through the woods. A novelist can create the illusion of time elapsing by integrating description and commentary with the scene so that "scene" and "pause" become inseparable. Commentary, description, and events may be mixed to create the illusion that narrative time and story time equal one another. But a mixture of the two may also be used to create the illusion that story time has slowed, as in the following passage from John Fowles's *The Magus* in which I italicize the commentary and description:

She smiled a moment, *as if she had forgotten that*, gave me an intense look, *seemed about to say something, changed her mind*. She opened the door and we went in. *There was a lamp on by the bed, the shutters were closed. The bed was as she had left it, the sheet and folk-weave bedspread thrown aside, the pillow crumpled; some open book of poetry beneath the lamp, I could see its broken lines of print; an abalone-shell used as an ashtray.* We stood a little at a loss, *as people do when they have foreseen such moments too long.* Her hair was down, the white hem of her night dress reached almost to her ankles. She glanced around the room, *as if with my eyes, as if I might be contemptuous of such domestic simplicity*; made a little grimace. I smiled, *but her shyness was contagious--and the changed reality between us, what she had really meant by no more "witchcraft": no more games, evasions, tantalizings.*

For a bizarre fewseconds those seemed, in retrospect, to hold a paradoxical innocence; Adam and Eve before the Fall. (489)

Now consider the passage as Plato would have revised it for "pure narrative" without description and commentary not immediately tied to the action:

She smiled a moment, gave me an intense look. She opened the door and we went in. I could see the broken lines of print in an open book of poetry. We stood a little at a loss. She glanced around the room, made a little grimace. I smiled.

In this revised version the moment appears brief, and we lose the illusion of the slowness of time the protagonist must feel as he awkwardly looks around the room. Indeed, the ratio of narrative time to story time may best be represented by $NT > ST$, for the few seconds the characters stand silently in the room together are presented as they must seem to the protagonist: slower than normal time. This ratio also occurs in Golding's *Pincher Martin*, for what takes an instant or two to occur requires much more time to report and to read:

When the air had gone with the shriek, water came in to fill its place--burning water, hard in the throat and mouth as stones that hurt. He hunched his body toward the place where the air had been but now it was gone and there was nothing but black, choking welter. His body let loose a panic and his mouth strained open till the hinges of his jaw hurt. Water thrust in, down, without mercy. Air came with it for a moment so that he fought in what might have been the right direction. But the water reclaimed him and spun so that knowledge of where the air might be was erased completely. . . . (7)

When the narrative time exceeds the story time, as in the last two passages, the narrative effects an illuminated scene, similar to television's use of slow-motion. Sternberg does not consider this ratio into his formula for the quantitative indicator.

Like a progression analysis that focuses on order, one that focuses on pace—its use of the pause, scene, illuminated scene, summary, and ellipsis—can reveal thematic implications. (Earlier in this chapter, I argue that Genette’s anachronies are problematic because they fail to acknowledge that narrative cannot present perfect chronology, that ellipses are inherent to virtually every word and phrase. When I suggest that we consider the ellipsis in our analysis of pace, I refer to those obvious omissions of hours, days, months, and years—not of minutes. Such an ellipsis is usually marked with indicators like “Hours later,” “Three years after,” and “The next morning . . .”.) The fact that the short time Chris struggles to survive in *Pincher Martin* seems to take a lifetime suggests that his experience may be allegorical—i.e., his struggle represents the human struggle to survive not just those trials that follow unusual tragedies such as shipwrecks, but all the moments in a lifetime, in any lifetime. My analysis of Fowles’s *The Collector* focuses on the pace aspect of progression. The following analysis of Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* focuses on order.

Conscience Revisited: Waugh’s Conversion Novel

“I caught him . . . with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread.” (Waugh 220)

In *Brideshead Revisited*, Evelyn Waugh’s implied audience is nonreligious—definitely anti-Catholic, and the implied author means to convert it. Waugh disarms the nonreligious by presenting what initially appears to be a narrator exposing flaws in the

Catholic Church. The end of the novel reveals that Charles-the-narrator has, all along, been a Catholic. Although Charles himself may have no intentions to convert through his self-effacing narrative, the author behind him clearly does. Waugh's use of a retrospective progression makes possible the subtlety of Charles's testimony by sharply contrasting the skeptical agnostic with the "newly" converted (350) and by withholding that contrast until the last lines of the novel. Because we witness the conversions of Sebastian, Julia, and Lord Marchmain through what we believe are the eyes of an agnostic, we feel we have been spared the "preacher's agenda." As unsuspecting readers, the defensiveness, resistance, and outright "deaf ears," which typically characterize our response to ulterior religious motives, are replaced with the innocent and eager curiosity with which we read less didactic literature. The conversions of Sebastian, Julia, and Lord Marchmain function as the "forerunners" to Charles's and, eventually, to what Waugh hopes will be our own.

A conversion novel would have little effect if it alienated its intended audience, and it is for this reason that Waugh develops Charles Ryder as a retrospective narrator. At the point which Charles begins his story, he does not have the riches given Job, nor does he have the wives and livestock granted Jacob. He is a sad and lonely man in the military, unsatisfied with his job and with his lot--not the usual type for "witnessing" or "giving testimony" to inspire the religious conversion of others. Just as sales affiliates usually present their most successful representatives to persuade others to join their company, religious testimonials usually involve people who have gone from extreme devastation and sinfulness to extreme joy and piety. Charles does not seem to be the best

candidate for converting people into Catholics. As he leaves one camp to relocate to another, he "reflected now that it had no single happy memory for me" (3). Waugh might have invented a successful general who feels content and perhaps even eagerness about his role in life--fulfillment, anyway--so that, by the end, we could see that conversion inspires success. But Charles tells us bluntly "Here love had died between me and the army" (3). He tells us further that he was incapable of inspiring the men in his platoon: "[H]ow could I help them, who could so little help myself?" (5). He feels old at thirty-nine and "stiff and weary in the evenings and reluctant to go out of camp" (5). This is not a man whose conversion seems to have brought him a great amount of joy. Nor has it made him pious, for when the commanding officer orders him to have a nearby ditch cleaned up, he smarts off by having a sergeant-major relay the order to the captain of a neighboring platoon (11). A more pious man would have proffered respect and humility, at least in theory.

We learn in the Epilogue that Charles has converted when he recites a "newly learned" and "ancient" prayer (350). But a hint in the Prologue--so subtle that it probably has its effect on most readers at the end of the novel--proves that Charles has been a Catholic through the entire course of his recollective role as narrator. Without this evidence, one could argue that Charles converts through the act of recalling the story, or at the end when he visits Nanny Hawkins. But the evidence in the Prologue makes the contrary clear. Hooper returns from scouting the new camp at Brideshead to report his having seen a mass in a Roman Catholic Church. He says "I looked in and there was a kind of service going on--just a padre and one old man. I felt very awkward. More in

your line than in mine" (16-17). Hooper has some cause to believe that the mass he has just witnessed is in Charles's "line." Although we do not discern the significance until the end, Hooper's statement indicates that the novel begins *ad fin*, or after the climax of the most recent sequence. The polysodic narrative consists of at least four complete sequences involving Sebastian, Julia and Charles, Charles and his father, Charles and Celia, and Charles and war. The sequences surrounding Sebastian and Julia dominate the narrative, while those surrounding Charles and his father and Charles and Celia function as subplots. The sequence that frames the novel as the Prologue and Epilogue appears minor through most of the novel until we learn of Charles's conversion, which happens "off stage," so to speak, in that it occurs as an ellipsis in the sequence. A close look at the combination of these sequences reveals that all but the sequence that frames the novel alternate, though most of Sebastian's sequence dominates the first book while most of Julia's dominates the second book. The reflexive Epilogue alludes to the omitted climax of the final sequence--Charles's conversion--and requires us to reconsider Charles's perspective. It is not until then that the sharp contrast between the two states of being--the agnostic and the believer--come into view.

Prior to our discovery of his conversion, Charles appears to be an advocate for religious skepticism and is particularly anti-Catholic. When he visits the Brideshead chapel for the first time, he genuflects to show "good manners" rather than for some religious motive (38). Lunt assumes that even though "[m]ost of the freshmen went" to Corporate Communion, Charles would not attend, to which Charles responds "You were

quite right" (58). He explains that he "had no religion" (85) and that "Sebastian's faith was an enigma to [Charles]" (85). He further explains:

The view implicit in my education was that the basic narrative of Christianity had long been exposed as a myth, and that opinion was now divided as to whether its ethical teaching was of present value, a division in which the main weight went against it; religion was a hobby which some people professed and others did not; at the best it was slightly ornamental, at the worst it was the province of "complexes" and "inhibitions"—catchwords of the decade—and of the intolerance, hypocrisy, and sheer stupidity attributed to it for centuries. (85-86)

Charles supposes that Sebastian is forced to "believe an awful lot of nonsense" (86), and when Bridey comments on Sebastian's drunkenness, Charles says "'For God's sake . . . why bring God into everything?'" (145) (the irony of which we only appreciate on a second reading). Charles sees religion as a barrier for both Sebastian (145) and Julia (181) from their "natural goal[s]" (181). To Julia, on the subject of religion, he says "'You do know at heart that it's all bosh, don't you?'" (290). Charles also argues against having the priest go to Lord Marchmain's death bed because he sees it as "superstition and trickery" (324), "[m]umbo-jumbo" (327), and a sure way to prevent Lord Marchmain's dying in "peace" (324). As a last petition to the doctor before Father Mackay is sent in, Charles pleads, "'We must stop this nonsense'" (335). Waugh means for his skeptical readers to identify with Charles from the start.

Skeptical readers are further disarmed by the fact that the more religious members of the Marchmain household appear to some degree repugnant while the more attractive of its members range from having religious uncertainty to downright hostility. Sebastian says that "Brideshead and Cordelia are both fervent Catholics" (89), but Bridey

cannot articulate his faith without reducing it to "stark nonsense" (164), and, according to Sebastian, Bridey is "miserable" (89). Julia says that Cordelia is "[a]n odd girl" who has "grown up quite plain" (300). Charles "thought her an ugly woman" (300). Sebastian and Julia, however, whom Sebastian describes as "half-heathen" (89), possess a "grace" that Bridey and Cordelia lack (300). Sebastian "was the most conspicuous man of his year by reason of his beauty" (28). Charles describes him as "magically beautifully" (31) and reports that the barber is "captivated by him" (29). Likewise, Julia is "taken aback by the power of her own beauty" (180) and is like "the heroine of a fairy story turning over in her hands the magic ring" (180). Bridey and Cordelia are associated with awkwardness--Bridey with a verbal clumsiness and Cordelia with an odd appearance. Sebastian and Julia are associated with grace, beauty, and magic.

Undermining this appearance of religious skepticism runs Waugh's counter-argument: those who are chosen, whether they deserve it or not, can do nothing to avoid the grace of God. This divine power is exemplified in "the twitch upon the thread" analogy which names the second book in the novel. God's grace is the "twitch" and Sebastian, Julia, Lord Marchmain, and Charles are each on the other end of the thread like hooked fish. Both Sebastian and Charles note that God's grace appears indiscriminate and it means neither happiness nor wisdom for those who receive it. Sebastian says: "Brideshead and Cordelia are both fervent Catholics; he's miserable, she's bird-happy; Julia and I are half-heathen; I am happy, I rather think Julia isn't. Mummy is popularly believed to be a saint and Papa is excommunicated--and I wouldn't know which of them is happy. Anyway, however you look at it, happiness doesn't seem

to have much to do with it. . .” (89). Charles, disgusted with the family’s desire to send a priest in to see the dying Lord Marchmain, complains to Julia: ““There were four of you [Catholics]. . . . Cara didn’t know the first thing [the religious argument] was about, and may or may not have believed it; you knew a bit and didn’t believe a word; Cordelia knew about as much and believed it madly; and only poor Bridey knew and believed, and I thought he made a pretty poor show when it came to explaining”” (330). Waugh challenges the traditional expectations in terms of cause and effect: if you believe, you’ll be happy; those who have been chosen have been chosen because they understand what they believe. He replaces the traditional expectations with a more ancient one, one that recollects Sophocles’s *Oedipus the King* and the “curse” on the family line. Of Lady Marchmain’s three brothers, Charles says “theirs was a wide property and an ancient name; male heirs had come late and, when they came. . . . [the line], in the tragic event, ended abruptly with them” (139). The phrase “tragic event” recalls the Greek notion of tragedy defined by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, the Oedipus myth being perhaps the most tragic of the ancient works. The end of the family line connects Lady Marchmain’s brothers with the sons of Oedipus and she, like Antigone, and later Ismene, cannot continue the family name as females. The allusion becomes more obvious when Charles, thinking of the soldiers who would die “for the travelling salesman” (139), wonders “whether perhaps there was not on [Lady Marchmain], too, the same blaze, marking her and hers for destruction by other ways than war . . . this whisper of doom?” (139). God’s grace resembles the indiscriminate and unavoidable grasp of a curse. Cordelia maintains:

“If you haven’t a vocation it’s no good however much you want to be [a nun or priest]; and if you have a vocation, you can’t get away from it, however much you hate it” (221).

The counter-argument further collects its strength in the successive conversions of the “half-heathen” Marchmains who are called “however much [they] hate it.”

Sebastian attempts to escape from his faith by drinking, by running from his mother—the Catholic matriarch of his household, and by avoiding mass—which puts him in a constant state of mortal sin. He says that “it’s very difficult being a Catholic” (86) and that he wished he liked Catholics (89). He admits to Charles, however, that his faith is not “nonsense” (86), and when Charles asks him about “Christmas and the star and the three kings and the ox and the ass” (87), he answers “Oh yes, I believe that” (87). Sebastian alienates himself from everyone except those less fortunate in attempts to get away from serving God, yet he spends his last years in a missionary and, according to Cordelia, “he’s very religious” (302).

Julia, like Sebastian, appears “half-heathen” (89). According to Charles, “her painted mouth was less friendly to the world” than Sebastian’s mouth (76), and “her religion stood as a barrier between her and her natural goal [to marry]” (181). She feels threatened before her marriage by Rex’s relationship with Brenda Champion, so she asks a priest “Surely, Father, it can’t be wrong to commit a small sin myself in order to keep [Rex] from a much worse one?” (189). When the priest will not grant her permission to sin and says “Now you had better come to the church and make your confession” (189), she responds “No, thank you” (189) and she “walked angrily home” (189). Charles tells us that “[f]rom that moment on she shut her mind against her religion” (189). Her

adulterous affair with Charles supports his claim. But, like Sebastain, Julia cannot escape the grace of God. Charles notes, while living with Julia at Brideshead, that "she had regained what I thought she had lost for ever, the magical sadness which had drawn me to her, the thwarted look that had seemed to say, 'Surely I was made for some other purpose than this?'" (310). She admits that after Brideshead condemns her and Charles for their life of sin, she feels something akin to what the protagonist feels in a picture called *The Awakened Conscience* (290). Shortly after this admission, she tells Charles she wants to have a child, that it is "one thing I can do" (291), and we recall her earlier statement that, before she miscarried, she had decided to raise her child Catholic: "That's one thing I can give her" (291). Julia's desire to overcome sin and to willfully accept the grace of God seems evident when she tells Charles "I wanted to be made an honest woman [through her marriage to Rex]. I've been wanting it ever since--come to think of it" (198). Julia's statement indicates that just after her decision to "shut her mind against her religion," she longs for something--a marriage--to set her right with God. In the final pages, she decides against the passive role of waiting for a marriage to redeem her. She gives up a life with Charles so that "[God] won't despair of me in the end" (340).

Although it precedes Sebastian's and Julia's, Lord Marchmain's conversion is the most climactic because it is the one that Charles expects least. Several characters testify to Lord Marchmain's apparent disdain for the Church. Anthony describes him as "infectiously slothful" (54-55), and Sebastian tells us that he is "excommunicated" (89). Brideshead recalls his father's drunkenness: "You can't stop people if they want to get

drunk. My mother couldn't stop my father, you know" (133). Rex reports that Lord Marchmain is "delighted" with his plan to marry Julia in the Protestant Church (198), and because of Cara's earlier claim that he hates Lady Marchmain—"My friend, he is a volcano of hate. He cannot breathe the same air as she" (102)—we suspect he is delighted because he knows it will injure his wife. Charles's argument against sending the priest to Marchmain's death bed is the most convincing testimony to Marchmain's religious skepticism: "It would be an outrage. No one could have made it clearer, all his life, what he thought of religion. They'll come now, when his mind's wandering and he hasn't the strength to resist, and claim him as a death-bed penitent" (324). But Charles's prediction proves false when, after having been anointed with oil, Marchmain's hand moves to his forehead. Charles thinks he will wipe it away to show his disdain for the Church, but "the hand moved slowly down his breast, then to his shoulder, and Lord Marchmain made the sign of the cross" (338). Marchmain's conversion seems sudden, but Cara has warned us that people who feel such deep hatred often fear God (103). Cordelia repeats this notion to Charles later when she says that "when people wanted to hate God they hated Mummy" (221) because "they have to find someone like themselves to hate" (221). Two very different characters suspect that Marchmain is not the atheist he pretends to be, thus making the conversion in the end more believable.

Charles's own conversion may begin at Lord Marchmain's death, for he kneels and prays for the first time: "O God, if there is a God, forgive him his sins, if there is such a thing as sin" (338). He prays again when he suspects that Lord Marchmain will wipe the anointed oil from his head: "O God, . . . don't let him do that" (338). And,

when he sees the sign he has hoped for, "if only for the sake of the woman I loved" (338), he realizes that it "was not a little thing" (338). A second reading of the novel reveals the narrator's Catholic sympathies and casts a double irony on words and phrases that seem religiously subversive to us in a first reading. For example, Charles the narrator comments on Lady Marchmain's habit of "[taking] all [her] sorrows with her daily to church" (189) with what first appears to be sarcasm: ". . . what comfort she took home with her, God knows" (189). The knowledge of the narrator's conversion adds a new meaning to "God knows" during a second reading. The same occurs after Charles's spiel about education exposing Christian narrative "as a myth" (85) when he says "No one had ever suggested to me that these quaint observances expressed a philosophic system and intransigent historical claims; nor, had they done so, would I have been much interested" (86). Upon reading these lines the first time, we assume that our narrator does not care to hear arguments defending the Church. A second reading removes what is first understood as a "jibe" at the Church and replaces it with sincerity. We begin to suspect this sincerity when, even before Lord Marchmain comes to Brideshead to die, Julia says to Charles that perhaps she, like Sebastian, is "only a forerunner, too" (303), and the narrator hints at a change occurring in his younger self:

Perhaps, I thought, while her words still hung in the air between us like a wisp of tobacco smoke—a thought to fade and vanish like smoke without a trace—perhaps all our loves are merely hints and symbols: a hill of many invisible crests; doors that open as in a dream to reveal only a further stretch of carpet and another door; perhaps you and I are types and this sadness which sometimes falls between us springs from disappointment in our search, each straining through and beyond the other, snatching a glimpse now and then of the shadow which turns the corner always a pace or two ahead of us. (303)

The "shadow" which is "always a pace or two ahead" seems to refer to God, or something like God, some kind of divine understanding. Charles seems momentarily to agree that both Sebastian and Julia are "hints and symbols" to someone further up ahead of him, someone who will always be a "shadow," even though the narrator says that such thoughts in him would "vanish." They may vanish, but the fact that he has them suggests a change in him. Thus, even before we know in the Epilogue of Charles's conversion, a foundation Waugh has created for it has already been at work on us, and whether we predict the conversion or not, we become aware of the fact that Charles the character is changing. The point we suspect change in Charles is also the point at which the novel becomes reflexive, for already we begin revising our earlier impressions of the narrator's tone and contrasting our newly forming image of him with the agnostic Charles.

This delicate change in our perceptions of the narrator's tone encourages the intended audience to change its attitude as well. The narrator wins its sympathies with the appearance of anti-Catholic sentiments so that when Charles the character begins to shift, subtly, in the other direction, Waugh effects a kind of psychological manipulation. The reader's sympathies shift with the protagonist's (who, near the end of the novel, is Charles). Even if the intended audience misses the change in Charles before the Epilogue, because Charles has gained its sympathies with the appearance of anti-Catholic sentiments, and because the narrator has established himself as trustworthy, the audience may not escape Waugh's psychological manipulation. The reader of the Epilogue becomes like Charles when he witnesses the surprising sign at Lord Marchmain's death. Charles is affected by the fact that a man who has made his anti-religious sentiments

completely clear his entire life accepts God in the end. The reader who misses Charles's subtle changes is still "caught" by Waugh (who replaces God in the novel as the twitcher of threads) when he or she sees that Charles who, like Lord Marchmain, has made his feelings against the Church so clear, converts. This may work on the reader because, just as Lord Marchmain has won a kind of respect from Charles in his ability to live without "superstition" and "mumbo-jumbo," the narrator has established a similar respect with his audience with his concern for his own reliability:

It is easy, retrospectively, to endow one's youth with a false precocity or a false innocence; to tamper with the dates marking one's stature on the edge of the door. I should like to think--indeed I sometimes do think--that I decorated those rooms with Morris stuffs and Arundel prints and that my shelves were filled with seventeenth-century folios and French novels of the second empire in Russia-leather and watered-silk. But this was not the truth. (27)

He admits what embarrasses him, which leads us to believe that we can trust him to tell us the truth. He makes a similar impression upon us when he exclaims:

How ungenerously in later life we disclaim the virtuous moods of our youth, living in retrospect long, summer days of unreflecting dissipation, Dresden figures of pastoral gaeity! . . . There is no candour in a story of early manhood which leaves out of account the home-sickness for nursery morality, the regrets and resolutions of amendment, the black hours which, like zero on the roulette table, turn up with roughly calculable regularity. (62)

Here he defines the reliable "story of early manhood" as one that includes moods such as home-sickness and boredom, and then he goes on to tell us of his boredom during his visit home as a student, going from room to room "in a mood of vehement self-reproach" (62). He is sure to admit when he has "compressed into a few sentences" what would have "required many" (137), or when he, as a youth, was overly romantic or idealistic--"I

have since learned that there is no such world" (169), he says after leaving Brideshead and feeling as though he "[has] left behind illusion" and entered "a world of three dimensions" (169). Thus, before he establishes himself as a Catholic narrator, he establishes himself as a trustworthy one. Waugh intends for his audience to be as moved by the trustworthy narrator's conversion as Charles is by Lord Marchmain's. Whether it begins to happen gradually before Marchmain's return to Brideshead, or whether it happens suddenly for the reader in the Epilogue, Waugh also seems to intend for the reader, in realizing he or she has been deceived (i.e., the narrator is not agnostic), to realize that he or she may be deceived about other things in the world. Waugh wants his intended audience to question its ability to perceive so that it will be more inclined to believe its trustworthy narrator.

Waugh manages to reap the advantages of both process and retrospective time shapes. The narrative reads like a process because, although it begins *ad fin*, or after the climax, the knowledge of Charles's conversion is withheld except for the inconspicuous reference by Hooper in the Prologue to a mass being in Charles's "line" (17). The advantage of the apparent process shape is that we experience Charles's subtle change before we ever contrast him with the converted narrator. When we do discover the religiosity of our teller, it is a shock, like Lord Marchmain's conversion is to Charles, that throws the entire narrative into a reflexive flux as we make our comparison between the two drastically different stages of Charles.

The Collector and the Artist: Fowles's Use of Pace
to Contrast the Living and the Dead

Every John Fowles novel I have read thus far has proved to be a metanarrative, and *The Collector* is no exception. The novel contrasts "dead" art (i.e., collections, photography, and realistic drawings) with "living" art, like Miranda's "lopsided" drawing of a bowl of fruit with which she is "just on the threshold of saying something about the fruit" (58). But Fowles's contrast goes beyond this fairly obvious motif. A close analysis reveals that the narratives of Clegg and Miranda differ significantly in their uses of pause and scene. Clegg's narrative reads like a historical record or a realistic novel. The pauses typically involve elaborate descriptions of key elements to his story--the van, the chloroform, his procurement of the house. The scenes are reports of important events--his stalking her, his purchase of the home, his kidnapping her, her attempts to escape--all detailed much more thoroughly than the few scenes in Miranda's narrative. In fact, Miranda's narrative consists of primarily fragmented commentary--or pauses--regarding art, womanhood, social class, and politics. Her scenes, which are significantly fewer in number than Clegg's, approximate and embellish--for she admits "*I'm cheating, I didn't say all these things*" (125). What we find in our analysis of pace is a stark contrast between the "dead" realistic novel and the "living" modern one.

The novel's commentary on art begins with Clegg's butterfly collection, which saddens Miranda because she feels he chokes all the beauty out:

"I hate scientists," she says. "I hate people who collect things, and classify things and give them names and then forget all about them. That's what people are always doing in art. They call a painter an impressionist or a cubist or something and then they put him in a drawer and don't see him as a living individual painter anymore." (52)

Miranda refers here to art critics, who she believes stifle and destroy creativity. She also defines art as something more creative than photography. She says, "When you draw something it lives and when you photograph it it dies" (52). She feels that photography requires no imagination (131), that it is mere imitation. She learns this from George Paston who criticizes her for "painting in someone else's style" (149). Miranda wants to paint "The essences. Not the things themselves" (123). The "lopsided" bowl of fruit which Clegg sees as the worst of a series of sketches is the best in Miranda's view because it offers the "idea" of the fruit instead of a duplicate of them.

The temptation to imitate, however, seems to be a natural burden for the artist. Even G.P. "woke up one morning to realize that all he had done for five years was a lie, because it was based on Braque's eyes and sensibilities and not his own" (151). He calls this kind of imitation "[p]hotography" (151). Miranda is also burdened by the influence of others, both artistically and otherwise. She criticizes Clegg for reading *The Catcher in the Rye* to please her (168) and believes he would say "I see" to her claim that "Michelangelo's *David* was a frying pan" (138); she despises the "stupid crawling imitation of the bourgeoisie" (191), or the "horrid timid copycatting genteel in-between social class" (151); yet she tries just as hard to please and imitate G.P. She creates a "[l]ist of the ways in which [G.P.] has altered me" that includes absurd criteria for the "real artist" (134), such as "You *have* to be Left politically because the Socialists are the only people who care, for all their mistakes. They *feel* they want to better the world" (134). Miranda says that she wants "to paint like Berthe Morisot" (123), and G.P.

condemns her work for "saying something . . . about Nicholson or Pasmore. Not about [her]self" (149). Fowles seems to suggest, however, that one cannot completely free oneself from the burden of influence, for he incorporates allusions to the works of some of his artistic predecessors, particularly to William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Fowles shows with his novel that one can be influenced by one's predecessors without imitating their works, that copying or duplicating is the wrong way to respond to that influence. When Miranda says that she wants "to paint like Berthe Morisot" (123), she clarifies herself by saying: "I don't mean with her colors or forms or anything physical, but with her simplicity and light" (123). Miranda imitates in other ways, though, for she feels that "Marianne is me; Eleanor is me as I ought to be" (187). Likewise, of Emma, she says "Her faults are my faults: her virtues I must *make* my virtues" (147). Her tendency to model her tastes and virtues after others she admires is not so different from Clegg's tendency to conform his tastes--at least, in appearances--to hers. Miranda is aware, however, of her limitations and artistic immaturity. She says "I might become a very clever artist, but I shan't ever be a great one" (56), and when she completes a sketch of Clegg, by which he is "amazed" because of the "likeness" to him (57), she says "'But it's bad, bad, bad. . . . Put it in a drawer with the butterflies'" (57).

Miranda's struggle to avoid mere imitation, mere photography, is paralleled by her attempt to use words:

When you use words. The gaps. The way Caliban sits, a certain bowed-and-upright posture--why? Embarrassment? To spring at me if I run for it? I can draw it. I can draw his face and his expressions, but words are all so used, they've been used about so many other things and people. I write "he smiled." What does that mean? No more than a

kindergarten poster painting of a turnip with a moon-mouth smile. Yet if I draw the smile . . .

Words are so crude, so terribly primitive compared to drawing, painting, sculpture. . . . Like a messy daub. (140)

Miranda suggests that narrative, because it relies on words, is as “dead” as photography. She says that writing is “the very opposite of drawing. You draw a line and you know at once whether it’s a good or a bad line. But you write a line and it seems true and then you read it again later” (121). Despite her frustration with writing as an art form, a comparison of her narrative to Clegg’s reveals that the novel’s progression shifts from Clegg’s primarily cohesive realistic “record” consisting of mostly summary, scene, and relatively few pauses to her highly fragmented narrative with greater pauses and fewer scenes.

Clegg’s narrative begins with several pages of summary that provide the background information explaining some of his family history, his reasons for choosing Miranda, and how he acquires the money to make his dreams come true. As he begins to describe the steps that lead up to the kidnapping, he pauses to provide details for some of the more important steps. The first pause describes the van he uses:

The van was the one really big luxury I gave myself. It had a special fitting in the back compartment, a camp bed you could let down and sleep in; I bought it to carry all my equipment for when I moved round the country, I didn’t buy it for the reason I did use it for. The whole idea was sudden, like a stroke of genius almost. (15)

Following this pause that details the van he will later use in the kidnapping is a scene relating one of the times he sees her. She is with friends, and he follows her into a coffee bar. He is very careful to include details. He tells us how many other student are with

her, how she walks, where they sit, what kind of crowd surrounds them, where he sits, how he responds when she stands next to him, and how she looks (15-16). He says: "She was in a check dress, dark blue and white it was, her arms brown and bare, her hair all loose down her back" (16). He relays the conversation she has with the girl behind the counter word for word (16). Other pauses include descriptions of the house advertisement (17), the rooms of the house (18), the garden and landscape surrounding the house (19), and the bag of chloroform he uses to put her out (25). The following description of the chloroform exemplifies Clegg's attention to details:

I had a special plastic bag sewn in my mac pocket, in which I put some of the chloroform and CTC and the pad so it was soaked and fresh. I kept the flap down, so the smell kept in, then in a second I could get it out when needed. (25)

In addition to pauses that detail important steps are those that explain and justify his actions. He begins one explanation with "No one will understand, they will think I was just after her for the obvious" (35). He later begins another with "I know what some would think, they would think my behavior peculiar." (61). In other places, he says "... I didn't want to kill her, that was the last thing I wanted" (38). At the end of his first narrative he argues: "What I am trying to say is that it all came unexpected. I know what I did next day was a mistake, but up to that day I thought I was acting for the best and within my rights" (108). His need to mention important details and to explain the motives behind his actions makes his narrative not unlike the realistic novels of the nineteenth century. His use of approximately forty-three scenes to her twenty illustrates

that he spends more time in his narrative imitating what happens. He provides a record, a duplicate, something Fowles suggests is "dead."

Miranda's narrative, on the other hand, contains over fifty pauses compared to Clegg's twenty, and they function less to describe or to explain and justify than they do to ponder and express ideas. The second page of her narrative illustrates this: "I am a terrible coward, I don't want to die, I love life so passionately, I never knew how much I wanted to live before. If I get out of this, I shall never be the same" (112). Other pauses focus on her attitudes about herself (121-122), about art (123), about politics (134), about social class and the New People (191), and about the Woman Question (133). The latter is illustrated in the following:

I don't want to use my skill vainly, for its own sake. But I want to *make* beauty. And marriage and being a mother terrifies me for that reason. Getting sucked down into the house and house things and the baby-world and the child-world and the cooking-world and the shopping-world. I have a feeling a lazy-cow me would welcome it, would forget what I once wanted to do, and I would just become a Great Female Cabbage. (133)

Here Miranda's narrative sounds much like the stream-of-consciousness that often characterizes modern novels. She speculates about the future, unlike Clegg, who records the past. Later she tells us "I hate the uneducated and the ignorant. I hate the pompous and the phoney. I hate the jealous and the resentful. I hate the crabbed and the mean and the petty. I hate all ordinary dull little people who aren't ashamed at being dull and little" (191). Her scenes, like her pauses, function less to record details--for she tells us more than once that when you write, "[y]ou write what you want to hear" (228)--than to

illustrate ideas. The first scene in her narrative, for example, supports her claim about little and dull people, for she shows Clegg's lack of social responsibility:

M. (*I was sitting on my bed, smoking. Caliban on his usual chair by the iron door, the fan was going outside*) What do you think about the H-bomb?

C. Nothing much.

M. You must think something.

C. Hope it doesn't drop on you. Or on me. (125)

In the same scene, she says to Clegg "Everything free and decent in life is being locked away in filthy little cellars by beastly people who don't care" (125). Her depictions of their experiences do more than record what happens; they represent philosophical arguments. Other scenes with Clegg focus on books (138) and literariness (189-90). The latter is exemplified by this exchange:

M. He [Holden Caulfield] tries to construct some sort of reality in his life, some sort of decency.

C. It's not realistic. Going to a posh school and his parents having money. He wouldn't behave like that. In my opinion. (190)

Miranda exposes Clegg's preference for realism, for dead art. Even the scenes with G.P. become arguments about art (148-49), sex (161-64), money and social class (193-94). She depicts G.P. as saying "[Most women] can't ever understand that if your desire is to go to the furthest limits of yourself then the actual form your art takes doesn't seem important to you. Whether you use words or paint or sounds. What you will" (148). G.P.'s claim about the different forms one's art can take supports the implication in the rest of the novel that Miranda's narrative is an art form.

Miranda's narrative, because it contains significantly more pauses and less scenes than Clegg's, would be diagnosed according to Sternberg's quantitative indicator as less

significant to the novel. Of course, most modern novels challenge Sternberg's indicator because they are structured less by the traditional build of a plot and more by the inner worlds of thinking characters like Miranda. Clegg's narrative, like those of nineteenth-century realism, possesses more frequent occasions when the narrative time equals the story time. Miranda's narrative, like many modern novels, is almost all narrative time, but, unlike Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, which feels like a suspended moment, Miranda's narrative feels like time passing. Because we have experienced the story time prior to her narrative through Clegg's account, because we are experiencing the same story through a different perspective, Miranda's narrative does not need to detail the events of the story. Fowles's novel reaps the benefits of both the realistic and the modern forms of narrative. We experience the artistic freedom of the modern narrative without the usual reader-unfriendly ambiguities.

Moreover, Miranda's tendency to include various genres--narration, drama, poetry--resembles the postmodern tendency to free literature by subverting our notions of genre. This parallels Miranda's "lopsided" bowl of fruit which, unlike Clegg's collections and photographs, liberates rather than destroys the beauty of the subject. Fowles's novel implicates the novels of realism at the same time that it, ironically, benefits from imitating them. It accuses them of killing all the beauty; they, as Clegg says, are "like a record" (52) and, as Miranda says, are "[a]ll dry and dead" (52).

Note

¹ See Emma Kafalenos's essay, listed in the Works Cited.

CHAPTER VII
A CONCLUSION

I wish to emphasize three things as I conclude this project. First, it has been fairly obvious throughout this dissertation that while I have been critical of some of the ideas of narratologists I have studied--such as Seymour Chatman, Gérard Genette, Mieke Bal, James Phelan, and Wayne Booth--I have been equally dependent on them. I have challenged some ideas and borrowed others from each of them. Although I question the space metaphor in Chatman's story-space-discourse-space distinction (a distinction I continue to make for my students despite my being critical of it), I highly depend on his terms describing voice and character--particularly the overt/covert distinction and the concept that characters can be considered "paradigms of traits." In Chapter VI, I am quite hard on Genette and Bal's models for describing order, but I am equally praiseworthy in Chapter II of their contributions to focalization and to Genette's model of diegetic levels. I contrast my view of character with Phelan's in terms of thematizing, and I revise his mimetic component of character, but I could not have thought of the term "progression" without him. Indeed, I think this term is probably the best of the ones I use in this project. I try to refine Booth's notion of the unreliable narrator in Chapter III, but in the same chapter, I rely on his dramatized/undramatized distinction. In fact, my whole enterprise was greatly inspired by Booth's *A Rhetoric of Fiction* in which he asserts that we need more names to describe the elements of narrative and that we need to appreciate variety in narrative strategies--i.e., that both showing and telling are equally useful.

Variety brings me to my second point. I proffer a terminology with this dissertation, but I hope I have made it clear that, in my search for accuracy, I welcome alternative terms that improve upon mine. Although I have not made it clear because here I have argued my own position on specific narrative elements, I advocate presenting a variety of terms and models to students of literature so that they can develop the ability to employ a wide range of perspectives. Students of literature need to understand that there are a number of ways to approach narrative and that their teachers do not hold the sole secret to finding meaning there. Students, themselves, ought to be encouraged to find their own terms for describing the phenomena they experience as readers.

My final point is that this project does not claim to identify and discuss the entirety of narrative. It admits in the beginning that its scope is limited. As I mention in a note to the introduction, it excludes treatments of setting and symbolism which are traditionally included in literature textbooks. And the elements it does discuss--point of view, voice, character, plot, and progression--it by no means exhausts. My goal in this work is to assert and defend this thesis: Traditional terms limit writers and readers of narrative in their strategies for making meaning, and the terms I present here and the concepts they represent illustrate alternative ways--and in some instances what I consider to me more precise ways--for understanding and discussing narrative.

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