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Actual Minds, Possible Worlds

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To say that all human thinking is essentially of two kinds—reasoning on the one hand, and narrative, descriptive, contemplative thinking on the other—is to say only what every reader's experience will corroborate.

William James

Part One

Two Natural Kinds

1

Approaching the Literary

Czeslaw Milosz begins his Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, delivered at Harvard in 1981–82, with a comment that is both emblem and warning:

> Many learned books on poetry have been written, and they find, at least in the countries of the West, more readers than does poetry itself. This is not a good sign, even if it may be explained both by the brilliance of their authors and by their zeal in assimilating scientific disciplines which today enjoy universal respect. A poet who would like to compete with those mountains of erudition would have to pretend he possesses more self-knowledge than poets are allowed to have.

For the three essays in Part One of this book are about poetry in one or another of its guises. And together they constitute yet another of those efforts to look at art through the glass of those respected "scientific disciplines."

Milosz goes on: "Frankly, all my life I have been in the power of a daimonion, and how the poems dictated by him came into being I do not quite understand. That is the reason why, in my years of teaching Slavic literatures, I have limited myself to the history of literature, trying to avoid poetics." I doubt we can read the demon's voice either, or even reconstruct it from the text. Freud, admitting the same point in "The Poet and the Daydream," urges, nonetheless, that the poem in its own right can tell us much about the nature of mind, even if it fails to yield up the secret of its creation. Dostoevski's mystical genius, Joyce's treacherous ways with language, these can still be studied with profit,

though we do not know their inspiration. No literary sciences (any more than any natural sciences) can penetrate particular moments of inspired creation. But however they came into existence, the worlds of *The Secret Sharer* or of Stephen Daedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* constitute texts as well as worlds. And these texts are worthy of the disciplined attention of anybody who seeks to understand the symbolic worlds that the writer creates. If we bring to bear upon these texts the most powerful instruments of literary, linguistic, and psychological analysis, we may yet understand not only what makes a story, but what makes it great. Who would deny that Aristotle's *Poetics* helped us understand tragedy, or that two millennia later, others illuminated different literary landscapes—Roman Jakobson the sound structure of poetry, Vladimir Propp the morphology of folktales, Kenneth Burke the dramatistic "grammar of motives," and even Roland Barthes (for all his self-mockery) the "writerly" text. This is the domain of literary theory.

But there is a second step in literary analysis that is rarely taken. Once we have characterized a text in terms of its structure, its historical context, its linguistic form, its genre, its multiple levels of meaning, and the rest, we may still wish to discover how and in what ways the text affects the reader and, indeed, what produces such effects on the reader as do occur. What makes great stories reverberate with such liveliness in our ordinarily mundane minds? What gives great fiction its power: what in the text and what in the reader? Can a "psychology" of literature describe systematically what happens when a reader enters the Dublin of Stephen Daedalus through the text of *Portrait*?

The usual way of approaching such issues is to invoke psychological processes or mechanisms that operate in "real life." Characters in story are said to be compelling by virtue of our capacity for "identification" or because, in their ensemble, they represent the cast of characters that we, the readers, carry unconsciously within us. Or, on the linguistic side, literature is said to affect us by virtue of its tropes—for example, by metaphor and synecdoche that evoke zestful imaginative play. But such proposals explain so much that they explain very little. They fail to tell why some stories succeed and some fail to engage the reader. And above all, they fail to provide an account of the processes of reading and of entering a story. There have been efforts to explore these processes more directly, as in I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* where

actual alternative "readings" of poems were examined, but such efforts have been rare and, on the whole, psychologically not well informed. Perhaps the task is too daunting.

Let me illustrate some of the challenges—and suggest why I think that, for all its dauntingness, the task is both possible and worthwhile, and why it might shed light not only on literary issues but on psychological ones beyond the limits of the psychology of literature. Take first the issue of alternative (or multiple) readings of a story or, for that matter, of any text. It is an ancient issue and has its origin in both classical linguistics and the interpreting of biblical texts. Nicholas of Lyra proposed many centuries ago, for example, that biblical texts are amenable to four levels of interpretation: *litera, moralis, allegoria,* and *anagogia,* the literal, the ethical, the historical, and the mystical. Literary and general linguists have always insisted that no text, no story can be understood at a single level. Roman Jakobson, for example, urged that all meaning is a form of translation, and that multiple translation (polysemy) is the rule rather than the exception: an utterance can be conceived of as referential, as expressive, as conative (in the sense of a speech act), as poetic, as phatic (contact preserving), and as metalinguistic. And Roland Barthes in *S/Z* (the analysis of a single text, Balzac's *Sarrasine*) illustrates how a novel achieves its meaning in the interplay of the interpretations yielded by at least five different "codes." What Nicholas of Lyra, Jakobson, and Barthes are saying, in effect, is that one *can* read and interpret texts in various ways, indeed in various ways simultaneously. Indeed, the prevailing view is that we *must* read and interpret in some multiple way if any "literary" meaning is to be extracted from a text. But in fact we know little about how readers actually do so—we know precious little indeed about the "reader-in-the-text" as a psychological process.

For the psychologist of literature, the theoretical analysis of "text interpretation" (by whomever formulated, and whatever the textual data base of the analysis) yields only hypotheses about actual readers. Do all readers assign multiple meanings to stories? And how can we characterize these multiple meanings? What kinds of category systems best capture this "meaning attribution" process, and how idiosyncratic is it? Is interpretation affected by genre, and what does genre mean psychologically (a matter to which I shall turn presently)? And *how* are multiple meanings triggered? What is there in the text that produces

this multiple effect, and how can one characterize the susceptibility of readers to polysemy? These are the kinds of questions we must ask as *psychologists* of literature, and I shall return to them in the next chapter.

Take the question of genre, another ancient issue in literary theory and one that still preoccupies literary scholars in a major way. Aristotle put his hand to the question in the *Poetics*, and his characterization of comedy and of tragedy in terms of both character and plot form is still a living part of literary theory. And Freud or no Freud, Aristotle's is still an astute psychological (as well as literary) speculation—to which I shall return to often in later chapters. There are many other literary approaches to genre that are psychologically suggestive. For contrast, take the formal distinction between epic and lyric offered by Austin Warren and René Wellek in their classic *Theory of Literature*: epic is the poetry of past tense, third person; lyric of first person present tense. While it was a distinction offered only as text characterization, it is interesting in more than a purely linguistic sense. Is it the case, for example, that the generic "unity" in the world of a fictional text depends upon the maintenance of a space-time structure, and that this unity requires consistent marking of tense and person? Is "psychological" genre constituted of such space-time marking: tales-of-others in the past, tales-of-self in the present, and so on? We do not know the answers to such questions, but in the following chapters I shall explore ways of pursuing them.

One gets a sense of the psychology of genre by listening to readers "tell back" a story they have just read or spontaneously "tell" a story about a "happening" in their own lives. "Telling back" a Conrad story, one reader will turn it into a yarn of adventure, another into a moral tale about duplicity, and a third into a case study of a *Doppelganger*. The text from which they started was the same. Genre seems to be a way of both organizing the structure of events and organizing the telling of them—a way that can be used for one's own storytelling or, indeed, for "placing" stories one is reading or hearing. Something in the actual text "triggers" an interpretation of genre in the reader, an interpretation that then dominates the reader's own creation of what Wolfgang Iser calls a "virtual text."

What then are the "triggers" and what are the subjective forms of genre that come to dominate the reader's mind? Is subjective genre

merely a convention, and are the triggers little more than literary or semiotic road signs telling the reader what genre it is and what stance to take toward the story? Yet, there is something altogether too universal about tragedy, comedy, epic, tales of deceit, for the explanation of genre to be only a matter of convention. Nor is it fixed and "hard-wired." Anthony Burgess says of "Clay" in Joyce's *Dubliners* that it is a *comic* story. It *can* be read that way. Maria (its principal character) then is seen as a comic bungler caught in the ennui of Dublin. Her illusions about herself then become the stuff of Joycean black comedy. Yes, one can read it as Burgess does, or at least try to.

But stories, in Paul Ricoeur's phrase, are "models for the redescription of the world." But the story is not by itself the model. It is, so to speak, an instantiation of models we carry in our own minds. An undergraduate in a seminar in which I once participated interpreted *Hamlet* as an account of the bungling of a Danish prince who had become "sword happy" at his German university and who was so inept at killing the man he hated that he did in his wisest friend, Polonius, in the process. Yes, this student admitted, the play was a "tragedy," but it was also a bungle (he was in engineering—with passion).

One rereads a story in endlessly changing ways—litera, moralis, allegoria, anagogia. (The young engineer was at moralis.) The alternate ways of reading may battle one another, marry one another, mock one another in the reader's mind. There is something in the telling, something in the plot that triggers this "genre conflict" in readers (see Chapter 2). The story goes nowhere and everywhere. So Frank Kermode, in distinguishing *sjuzet* and *fabula* (the linear incidents that make the plot, versus the timeless, motionless, underlying theme) remarks that the power of great stories is in the dialectical interaction they establish between the two: "the fusion of scandal and miracle." So while the reader begins by placing a story in one genre (and that may have powerful effects on his reading), he changes as he goes. The actual text is unchanged; the virtual text (to paraphrase Iser) changes almost moment to moment in the act of reading.

If we then ask about the nature and role of *psychological* genre—the reader's conception of what kind of story or text he is encountering or "recreating"—we are in fact asking not only a morphological question about the actual text, but also a question about the interpretive processes that are loosed by the text in the reader's mind.

❧

Twenty-odd years ago, engaged in research on the psychological nature and development of thought, I had one of those mild crises so endemic to students of mind. The Apollonian and the Dionysian, the logical and the intuitive, were at war. Gustave Theodor Fechner, the founder of modern experimental psychology, had called them the *Tagesansicht* and *Nachtansicht*. My own research had taken me more and more deeply into the study of logical inference, the strategies by which ordinary people penetrate to the logical structure of the regularities they encounter in a world that they create through the very exercise of mind that they use for exploring it.

I also read novels, went to films, let myself fall under the spell of Camus, Conrad, Robbe-Grillet, Sartre, Burgess, Bergman, Joyce, Antonioni. From time to time, almost as if to keep some balance between night and day, I wrote essays—about Freud, the modern novel, metaphor, mythology, painting. They were informal and "literary" rather than "systematic" in form, however psychologically motivated they may have been.

Eventually, I published these "fugitive" essays as a book: *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*. It was a relief to get the book out, though I do not think its publication changed my way of working much. By day, the *Tagesansicht* prevailed: my psychological research continued. At night there were novels and poems and plays. The crisis had passed.

Meanwhile, psychology itself had gone through changes, and, doubtless for the good, the voices of the left hand and of the right came more publicly and raucously into discussion with each other. The cognitive revolution in psychology, for one thing, had made it possible to consider the question of how knowledge and experience in their myriad forms were organized. And since language is our most powerful tool for organizing experience, and indeed, for constituting "realities," the products of language in all their rich variety were coming in for closer scrutiny. By the mid-1970s the social sciences had moved away from their traditional positivist stance toward a more interpretive posture: meaning became the central focus—how the word was interpreted, by what codes meaning was regulated, in what sense culture itself could be treated as a "text" that participants "read" for their own guidance.

And by the mid-1970s, with the Chomskian fervor spent, linguistics

returned with more powerful tools to its classical concern with the *uses* of language—among them its use to create the illusions of reality that make fiction. There followed a torrent of research, some obscure and some enlightening, addressing the great themes of "poetics" in the spirit of Jakobson and the Prague School. In time French structuralism—with Claude Lévi-Strauss taking the lead with his analyses of myth—came to dominate literary theory, only to be toppled by the more functionalist approach of the later Barthes, of Derrida, of Greimas, and of the deconstructionist critics (see Chapter 2).

These developments (and more of them to be recounted later) opened new psychological perspectives. For perhaps it is true, as academic psychologists like to say about themselves, that psychology has the courage of other peoples' convictions. Psychoanalysts, following the earlier lead of George Klein, began inquiring whether the object of analysis was not so much archaeologically to reconstruct a life as it was to help the patient construct a more contradiction-free and generative narrative of it. In which case, what constituted a narrative, or better, a *good* narrative? And academic psychologists, inspired by the lead of David Rumelhart, began to work on "story grammars," formal descriptions of the minimum structure that yielded stories or storylike sequences. And as if part of a *Zeitgeist,* even historians and historiographers, not notable for innovative courage, were again brooding about the powers of narrative history—Francis Parkman, say, in contrast to an analytic social economist sorting over the same period.

My old interest was rekindled. Setting out to sample this mass of new work, I discovered that there were two styles of approaching narrative, a discovery pressed upon me while I was teaching concurrently two seminars on narrative. One of them, at the New School for Social Research, was dominated by psychologists. The other, at the New York Institute for the Humanities, was made up of playwrights, poets, novelists, critics, editors. Both seminars were interested in psychological questions; both were interested in literary questions. Both were interested in readers and in writers. Both were interested in texts. But one group, the psychologists, was dedicated to working "top-down," the other to working "bottom-up." It is a distinction worth exploring, one that foretells something about the conflict one senses in working on narrative and on the psychology of literature generally.

Top-down partisans take off from a theory about story, about mind,

about writers, about readers. The theory may be anchored wherever: in psychoanalysis, in structural linguistics, in a theory of memory, in the philosophy of history. Armed with an hypothesis, the top-down partisan swoops on this text and that, searching for instances (and less often counter-instances) of what he hopes will be a right "explanation." In skilled and dispassionate hands, it is a powerful way to work. It is the way of the linguist, the social scientist, and of science generally, but it instills habits of work that always risk producing results that are insensitive to the contexts in which they were dug up. It partakes of one of the modes of thought to which I shall turn in the next chapter—the paradigmatic.

Bottom-up partisans march to a very different tune. Their approach is focused on a particular piece of work: a story, a novel, a poem, even a line. They take it as their morsel of reality and explore it to reconstruct or deconstruct it. They are in search of the implicit theory in Conrad's construction of *Heart of Darkness* or in the worlds that Flaubert constructs. It is not that they are occupied biographically with Conrad or with Flaubert, although they do not turn a tin ear to such matters, nor are they so taken with the new criticism that they look only at the text and its artifices, though they are concerned with that too. Rather, the effort is to *read* a text for its meanings, and by doing so to elucidate the art of its author. They do not forswear the guidance of psychoanalytic theory or of Jakobsonian poetics or even of the philosophy of language in pursuing their quest. But their quest is not to prove or disprove a theory, but to explore the world of a particular literary work.

Partisans of the top-down approach bewail the particularity of those who proceed bottom-up. The latter deplore the abstract nonwriterliness of the former. The two do not, alas, talk much to each other.

In the two essays that follow, I shall satisfy neither side, and, even worse, I can see no reason to apologize for it. Nor can I justify it by arguing that when we know enough, the two approaches will fuse. I do not think so. The most that I can claim is that, as with the stereoscope, depth is better achieved by looking from two points at once.

2

Two Modes of Thought

Let me begin by setting out my argument as baldly as possible, better to examine its basis and its consequences. It is this. There are two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality. The two (though complementary) are irreducible to one another. Efforts to reduce one mode to the other or to ignore one at the expense of the other inevitably fail to capture the rich diversity of thought.

Each of the ways of knowing, moreover, has operating principles of its own and its own criteria of well-formedness. They differ radically in their procedures for verification. A good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds. Both can be used as means for convincing another. Yet what they convince *of* is fundamentally different: arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness. The one verifies by eventual appeal to procedures for establishing formal and empirical proof. The other establishes not truth but verisimilitude. It has been claimed that the one is a refinement of or an abstraction from the other. But this must be either false or true only in the most unenlightening way.

They function differently, as already noted, and the structure of a well-formed logical argument differs radically from that of a well-wrought story. Each, perhaps, is a specialization or transformation of simple exposition, by which statements of fact are converted into statements implying causality. But the types of causality implied in the two modes are palpably different. The term *then* functions differently in the

logical proposition "if x, then y" and in the narrative *recit* "The king died, and then the queen died." One leads to a search for universal truth conditions, the other for likely particular connections between two events—mortal grief, suicide, foul play. While it is true that the world of a story (to achieve verisimilitude) must conform to canons of logical consistency, it can use violations of such consistency as a basis of drama—as in the novels of Kafka, where nonlogical arbitrariness in the social order provides the engine of drama, or in the plays of Pirandello or Beckett, where the identity operator, a = a, is cunningly violated to create multiple perspectives. And by the same token, the arts of rhetoric include the use of dramatic instantiation as a means of clinching an argument whose basis is principally logical.

But for all that, a story (allegedly true or allegedly fictional) is judged for its goodness as a story by criteria that are of a different kind from those used to judge a logical argument as adequate or correct. We all know by now that many scientific and mathematical hypotheses start their lives as little stories or metaphors, but they reach their scientific maturity by a process of conversion into verifiability, formal or empirical, and their power at maturity does not rest upon their dramatic origins. Hypothesis creation (in contrast to hypothesis testing) remains a tantalizing mystery—so much so that sober philosophers of science, like Karl Popper, characterize science as consisting principally of the falsification of hypotheses, no matter the source whence the hypothesis has come. Perhaps Richard Rorty is right in characterizing the mainstream of Anglo-American philosophy (which, on the whole, he rejects) as preoccupied with the epistemological question of how to know truth—which he contrasts with the broader question of how we come to endow experience with meaning, which is the question that preoccupies the poet and the storyteller.

Let me quickly and lightly characterize the two modes so that I may get on more precisely with the matter. One mode, the paradigmatic or logico-scientific one, attempts to fulfill the ideal of a formal, mathematical system of description and explanation. It employs categorization or conceptualization and the operations by which categories are established, instantiated, idealized, and related one to the other to form a system. Its armamentarium of connectives includes on the formal side such ideas as conjunction and disjunction, hyperonymy and hyponymy, strict implication, and the devices by which general propositions are extracted from statements in their particular contexts. At a gross level, the logico-scientific mode (I shall call it paradigmatic hereafter) deals in general causes, and in their establishment, and makes use of procedures to assure verifiable reference and to test for empirical truth. Its language is regulated by requirements of consistency and noncontradiction. Its domain is defined not only by observables to which its basic statements relate, but also by the set of possible worlds that can be logically generated and tested against observables—that is, it is driven by principled hypotheses.

We know a very great deal about the paradigmatic mode of thinking, and there have been developed over the millennia powerful prosthetic devices for helping us carry on with its work: logic, mathematics, sciences, and automata for operating in these fields as painlessly and swiftly as possible. We also know a fair amount about how children who are weak initially at the paradigmatic mode grow up to be fairly good at it when they can be induced to use it. The imaginative application of the paradigmatic mode leads to good theory, tight analysis, logical proof, sound argument, and empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypothesis. But paradigmatic "imagination" (or intuition) is not the same as the imagination of the novelist or poet. Rather, it is the ability to see possible formal connections before one is able to prove them in any formal way.

The imaginative application of the narrative mode leads instead to good stories, gripping drama, believable (though not necessarily "true") historical accounts. It deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experience in time and place. Joyce thought of the particularities of the story as epiphanies of the ordinary. The paradigmatic mode, by contrast, seeks to transcend the particular by higher and higher reaching for abstraction, and in the end disclaims in principle any explanatory value at all where the particular is concerned. There is a heartlessness to logic: one goes where one's premises and conclusions and observations take one, give or take some of the blindnesses that even logicians are prone to. Scientists, perhaps because they rely on familiar stories to fill in the gaps of their knowledge, have a harder time in practice. But their salvation is to wash the stories away when causes can be substituted for them. Paul Ricoeur argues

that narrative is built upon concern for the human condition: stories reach sad or comic or absurd denouements, while theoretical arguments are simply conclusive or inconclusive. In contrast to our vast knowledge of how science and logical reasoning proceed, we know precious little in any formal sense about how to make good stories.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that story must construct two landscapes simultaneously. One is the landscape of action, where the constituents are the arguments of action: agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument, something corresponding to a "story grammar." The other landscape is the landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think, or feel, or do not know, think, or feel. The two landscapes are essential and distinct: it is the difference between Oedipus sharing Jocasta's bed before and after he learns from the messenger that she is his mother.

In this sense, psychic reality dominates narrative and any reality that exists beyond the awareness of those involved in the story is put there by the author with the object of creating dramatic effect. Indeed, it is an invention of modern novelists and playwrights to create a world made up entirely of the psychic realities of the protagonists, leaving knowledge of the "real" world in the realm of the implicit. So writers as different as Joyce and Melville share the characteristic of not "disclosing" aboriginal realities but leaving them at the horizon of the story as matters of supposition—or, as we shall see, of *pre*supposition.

Science—particularly theoretical physics—also proceeds by constructing worlds in a comparable way, by "inventing" the facts (or world) against which the theory must be tested. But the striking difference is that, from time to time, there are moments of testing when, for example, light can be shown to be bent or neutrinos must be shown to leave marks in a cloud chamber. It may indeed be the case, as Quine has urged, that physics is 99 percent speculation and 1 percent observation. But the world making involved in its speculations is of a different order from what story making does. Physics must eventuate in predicting something that is testably right, however much it may speculate. Stories have no such need for testability. Believability in a story is of a different order than the believability of even the speculative parts of physical theory. If we apply Popper's criterion of falsifiability to a story as a test of its goodness, we are guilty of misplaced verification.

❧

Having said that much about how the two modes can be distinguished one from the other, let me now focus almost entirely on the less understood of the pair: on narrative. And as I remarked in the preceding chapter, I shall want to concentrate on narrative, so to speak, at its far reach: as an art form. William James comments in his Gifford Lectures, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, that to study religion one should study the most religious man at his most religious moment. I shall try to follow his advice with respect to narrative but, perhaps, with a Platonic twist. The great works of fiction that transform narrative into an art form come closest to revealing "purely" the deep structure of the narrative mode in expression. The same claim can be made for science and mathematics: they reveal most plainly (and purely) the deep structure of paradigmatic thought. And perhaps James intended his dictum in the same sense, in spite of his anti-Platonism.

There is another reason, aside from the Platonic, for pursuing this course. If one takes the view (as I shall in Chapter 5) that human mental activity depends for its full expression upon being linked to a cultural tool kit—a set of prosthetic devices, so to speak—then we are well advised when studying mental activity to take into account the tools employed in that activity. As primatologists tell us, this amplification by cultural tools is the hallmark of human skills, and we overlook it in our research with peril. And so, if one wishes to study the psychology of mathematics (as, say, G. Polya did), one studies the works of trained and gifted mathematicians, with particular emphasis on the heuristics and the formalisms they use to give form to their mathematical intuitions.

By the same token, one does well to study the work of trained and gifted writers if one is to understand what it is that makes good stories powerful or compelling. Anybody (at almost any age) can tell a story—and it is altogether good that story grammarians, so called, are studying the minimal structure needed to create a story. And anybody (again, at almost any age) can "do" some mathematics. But great fiction, like great mathematics, requires the transformation of intuitions into expressions in a symbolic system—natural language or some artificialized form of it. The forms of expression that emerge, the

discourse that carries the story, or the calculus that depicts a mathematical relation—these are crucial for understanding the differences between an inchoate account of a bad marriage and *Madame Bovary*, between a clumsily argued justification and an elegant and powerful derivation of a logical proof. I think I have said all that needs saying on this point, a point addressed more to psychologists than to literary theorists. The former, perhaps, will quarrel with the point out of deference to the reductionism of science. The latter will almost certainly find the point almost bizarrely obvious.

❧

Narrative deals with the vicissitudes of human intentions. And since there are myriad intentions and endless ways for them to run into trouble—or so it would seem—there should be endless kinds of stories. But, surprisingly, this seems not to be the case. One view has it that lifelike narratives start with a canonical or "legitimate" steady state, which is breached, resulting in a crisis, which is terminated by a redress, with recurrence of the cycle an open possibility. Literary theorists as various as Victor Turner (an anthropologist), Tzvetan Todorov, Hayden White (an historian), and Vladimir Propp (a folklorist) suggest that there is some such constraining deep structure to narrative, and that good stories are well-formed particular realizations of it. Not all literary scholars take this view—Barbara Herrnstein-Smith being a notable dissenting voice.

If it were the case that there are limits on the kinds of stories, it could mean either that the limits are inherent in the minds of writers and/or readers (what one is able to tell or to understand), or that the limits are a matter of convention. If it were the former, if the limits on story were innate, then it would be difficult to explain the eruptions of innovation that illuminate the course of literary history. And if it were the latter, the heavy hand of convention, that limited the nature of story, then it would be just as difficult to explain why there is so much recognizable similarity in tales from all lands, and so much historical continuity within any particular language whose literatures have gone through changes as dramatic as, say, the French or English or Russian.

The arguments pro and con are, somehow, more interesting than conclusive. Their conclusiveness is flawed not only by literary innovation but, I suspect, by the impossibility of deciding whether, say,

Joyce's *Ulysses* or Beckett's *Molloy* trilogy fits a particular formula or not. Aside from all that, what level of interpretation of a story shall we take to represent its "deep structure"—litera, moralis, allegoria, or anagogia? And whose interpretation: Jung's, Foucault's, Northrop Frye's? And when, as with antinovel novels, a writer (like Calvino, say) exploits his reader's story expectations by flouting them artfully, does that count as violating or conforming to the canonical form?

And as if this were not enough, there is the question of the discourse into which the story is woven and the two aspects of story (to which we have already alluded): the *fabula* and the *sjuzet*, the timeless and the sequenced. Which is constrained, and in what ways? That there may be a structure to time-worn folktales or to myths, a matter to which I shall revert later, nobody will deny. But do these narratives provide a universal structure for all fictions? For Alain Robbe-Grillet or, to take an instance where it is even difficult to decide whether the book is a novel or an exercise in criticism, for Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*?

I think we would do well with as loose fitting a constraint as we can manage concerning what a story must "be" to be a story. And the one that strikes me as most serviceable is the one with which we began: narrative deals with the vicissitudes of intention.

I propose this not only because it leaves the theorist with a certain flexibility but because it has a "primitiveness" that is appealing. By primitive I mean simply that one can make a strong argument for the irreducible nature of the concept of intention (much as Kant did for the concept of causation). That is to say, intention is immediately and intuitively recognizable: it seems to require for its recognition no complex or sophisticated interpretive act on the part of the beholder. The evidence for such a claim is compelling.

There is a celebrated monograph, little known outside academic psychology, written a generation ago by the Belgian student of perception, Baron Michotte. By cinematic means, he demonstrated that when objects move with respect to one another within highly limited constraints, we *see* causality. An object moves toward another, makes contact with it, and the second object is seen to move in a compatible direction: we see one object "launching" another. Time-space relations can variously be arranged so that one object can be seen as "dragging" another, or "deflecting" it, and so on. These are "primitive" perceptions, and they are quite irresistible: we *see* cause.

To answer Hume's objection that such causal experiences derive from association, Alan Leslie repeated the Michotte demonstrations with six-month-old babies. His procedure measured signs of surprise in the infant, which expresses itself in a variety of registerable ways from facial expression to changes in heart rate and blood pressure. Leslie showed the infants a sequence of cinematic presentations that in their space-time arrangement were seen by adults as caused. He would then intersperse one noncausal presentation that was outside the prescribed Michotte space-time limits—and the baby would show startled surprise. The same effect could be achieved by following a noncausal sequence of presentations with a causal one. In each case, Leslie argued, there was some qualitative change in the experience of the infant that led to "dishabituation" and surprise. Note that a change in space-time arrangement of the displays that was as large as the one used to shift category produced no effect if it was within the category of causality. Michotte's work and Leslie's follow-up provide powerful arguments for the irreducibility of causality as a "mental category" in the Kantian sense.

Can intentionality as a concept be shown to be as primitive? Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel have also used a "bare" animated film to demonstrate the irresistibility of "perceived intention" in the form of a scenario involving a small moving triangle, a small moving circle, a large moving square, and a box-like empty rectangle—whose movements are irresistibly seen as two lovers being pursued by a large bully who, upon being thwarted, breaks up the house in which he has tried to find them. Judith Ann Stewart, more recently, has shown that it is possible to arrange the space-time relationship of simple figures to produce apparent intention or "animacy." We plainly *see* "search," "goal seeking," "persistence in overcoming obstacles"—see them as intention-driven. Interestingly, from the point of view of Propp's pioneering work on the structure of folktales (to which we shall come presently), the perception of animacy is induced by varying direction and speed of motion of an object with respect to an obstacle.

Unfortunately, we do not yet have the analogue experiment on apparent intention for Leslie's baby experiments on apparent causality. It will come soon enough. If it should yield positive results, then we would have to conclude that "intention and its vicissitudes" constitute a primitive category system in terms of which experience is organized,

at least as primitive as the category system of causality. I say "at least," for the fact remains that the evidence of children's animism suggests that their more primitive category is intention—physically caused events being seen as psychically intended, as in the early experiments that earned Piaget his first worldwide acclaim.

❧

But such experiments, while they tell us about the primitiveness of the idea of intention, tell us nothing about the discourse that converts an unworded narrative into powerful and haunting stories. What is it in the telling or writing of a tale that produces Jakobson's *literaturnost*? In the *telling* there must be "triggers" that release responses in the reader's mind, that transform a banal fabula into a masterpiece of literary narrative. Obviously, the language of the discourse is critical, but even before that there is plot, plot and its structure. Whatever the medium—whether words, cinema, abstract animation, theater—one can always distinguish between the fabula or basic story stuff, the events to be related in the narrative, and the "plot" or sjuzet, the story as told by linking the events together. The plot is how and in what order the reader becomes aware of what happened. And the "same" story can be told in different sequence. This means, of course, that there must be transformations of some kind that permit a common base structure of story to be handled in different meaning-preserving sequences.

What can we say about the deep structure of stories—the story stuff, or fabula, that lends itself to different orders of presentation? Could it be the kind of structure that I examined a moment ago and earlier attributed to Victor Turner, Hayden White, Vladimir Propp, and Tzvetan Todorov? That is to say, one "primitive" fabula involves the breach of a legitimate state of affairs, the break then creating a crisis that is nipped in the bud or that persists until there is redress? If there were a corresponding structure in the minds of readers, cinema viewers, and playgoers, then such a fabula could be plotted in linear order, in flashbacks, or even *in medias res,* starting virtually anywhere (as Robbe-Grillet succeeds in doing for film and novel, and as, say, Michel Leiris does in his "experimental" antinarrative autobiography)? We do not have to take a stand on how many such fabula there are (as many, for example, as Jung's archetypes?), only that they have some sort of

being in the beholder's mind that permits him to recognize them in whatever expression encountered.

But there is something more to it than that. Kenneth Burke argues that "story stuff" involves *characters* in *action* with intentions or *goals* in *settings* using particular *means*. Drama is generated, he claims, when there is an imbalance in the "ratio" of these constituents. That is to say, a character (say Nora in *A Doll's House*) is in an inappropriate setting, or an action does not warrant the goal to which it is leading a character.

Yet, neither breach, crisis, and redress, nor imbalances in a Burkeian pentad, are sufficient descriptions of "story stuff." For there are elements of story that rest not upon action and interaction but upon character as such. Conrad's novels provide a good example. Jim's inscrutability (even to the narrator who "tells" his story) is central to the drama of *Lord Jim*. In *The Secret Sharer*, the young captain's fascinated obsession with Leggatt drives the story. Some readers actually propose that Leggatt is an imaginary *Doppelganger* who exists only in the captain's mind. Perhaps, as with Aristotle's recipe for tragedy in the *Poetics*, drama is a working out of character in action in a plot constrained by a setting.

Yet this too cannot be a full account if we heed Propp's argument that, in the folktale, character is a *function* of a highly constrained plot, the chief role of a character being to play out a plot role as hero, false hero, helper, villain, and so on. For while it may be the case that in the time-smoothed folktale story-stuff determines character (and therefore character cannot be central), it is equally true that in the "modern" novel plot is derived from the working out of character in a particular setting (one of the earliest theorists of modernism, therefore, being Aristotle on tragedy!).

Greimas's view is that a primitive or irreducible feature of story (whatever else it may include) is that it occurs jointly on the plane of action and in the subjectivity of the protagonists. And perhaps this is why deceit, guile, and misunderstanding are to be found so often in myths and folktales from "Little Red Riding Hood" to "Perseus and the Gorgon" and, at the same time, lie at the heart of so many modern novels and plays.

Psychologically, the "dual landscape" view is appealing in suggesting how the reader is helped to enter the life and mind of the protagonists:

their consciousnesses are the magnets for empathy. The matching of "inner" vision and "outer" reality is, moreover, a classic human plight. It grips the child hearing how the Big Bad Wolf tries to deceive and then is unmasked by Red Riding Hood, or the adult reading Joyce's "Araby," suffering the humiliation of the young boy when his dreams of a gift for the neighbor girl fade in the tawdry atmosphere of the fairground closing.

In any case, the fabula of story—its timeless underlying theme—seems to be a unity that incorporates at least three constituents. It contains a *plight* into which *characters* have fallen as a result of intentions that have gone awry either because of circumstances, of the "character of characters," or most likely of the interaction between the two. And it requires an uneven distribution of underlying consciousness among the characters with respect to the plight. What gives the story its unity is the manner in which plight, characters, and consciousness interact to yield a structure that has a start, a development, and a "sense of an ending." Whether it is sufficient to characterize this unified structure as *steady state, breach, crisis, redress* is difficult to know. It is certainly not *necessary* to do so, for what one seeks in story structure is precisely how plight, character, and consciousness are integrated. Better to leave the issue open and to approach the matter with an open mind.

❧

Language, to whatever use it may be put, has the design feature of being organized on different levels, each level providing constituents for the level above which dominates it. As Jakobson noted in his classic analysis of the sound system of speech, the distinctive features of speech sound are determined by the phonemes that they constitute at the next level up; phonemes are combined according to rules at the next level up, the morpheme, and so on.

So too at the levels above sound, for morphemes, lexemes, sentences, speech acts, and discourse. Each level has its form of order, but that order is controlled and modified by the level above it. Since each level is dominated by the level above it, efforts to understand any level on its own have inevitably led to failure. The structure of language is such that it permits us to go from speech sounds through the intermediate levels to the intentions of speech acts and discourse. The path by which

we travel that route varies with our objective, and storytelling is a special objective.

In putting any particular expression together, one *selects* words and one *combines* them. *How* one selects and combines will depend on the uses to which one wishes to put an utterance. Jakobson calls these two primitive language-forming acts, selecting and combining, the *vertical* and the *horizontal* axes of language. The vertical axis of selection is dominated by the requirement of preserving or modifying meaning by substituting appropriate words or expressions for one another: *boy, immature male, lad,* and so on. But the rule of substitution goes beyond synonymy to metaphor. What of *colt, lamb, fawn*? Do they fit *boy*? We say it depends on context and objective. And what of larger-order substitutions? Which does better for New York: "the biggest city in North America" or "the harbor at the mouth of the Hudson"? Again, it depends. And what of substituting for *depression: black mood* or "ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas"? There is forever a matter of choice about the vertical axis: whether to preserve reference as literally as possible, whether to create an atmospheric change by metaphor, whether (as Jakobson and the Prague School urged upon poets) to "make it strange" so as to overcome automatic reading.

It is probably the case that scientific or logical writing—or, rather, writing governed by requirements of a scientific argument—tends to choose words with the object of assuring clear and definite reference and literal sense. It is required by the felicity conditions of speech acts of this kind. Litera dominates over moralis and the others. In the telling of a story, one has the selection restriction of representing a referent in the eye of a protagonist-beholder, with a perspective that fits the subjective landscape on which the story is being unfolded, and yet with due regard for the action that is going on. So from the start, the selection of expressions must meet the special requirement of that special form of speech act that is a story—of which more presently, when I consider a crucial idea proposed by Wolfgang Iser.

The second axis, the horizontal axis of combination, is inherent in the generative power of syntax to combine words and phrases. Its most elementary expression is predication or, even more primitively, the juxtaposition of a comment on a topic, when the topic is "given" or taken for granted and the comment is something new added to it. I see a new species of bird and say to my partner: "Some bird. Fantastic." The first element is the topic; the second the comment. Predication is a

more evolved form of making comments on topics that permits us to assign a "truth function" to the expression, as in such ordinary sentences as

The boy has a ball.
The boy has a secret.
The boy has a burning ambition.
The boy has a bee in his bonnet.

The boy is the given; the predicate is new. The sentence can now be translated into a formal or logical proposition and tested for its truth value in the context in which the utterance was made.

To the degree that a subject and predicate are "transparent," they can easily be converted into verifiable propositional form; indeed, one common theory of meaning, the verificationist theory, equates meaning with the set of verifiable propositions a predicational statement generates. But there are statements or utterances that combine given and new in a manner that is "strange" or that, in Henry James's sense, contains gaps, or where there is a difficult distance between the two. A good case in point is Eliot's lines

> I should have been a pair of ragged claws
> Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

To render these lines literally as "I am depressed with aging" (taking into account the context of the whole of "Prufrock," from which they are extracted) fails to capture the horizontal given-new combination of the poem. Yet, on one interpretation, that may be what they mean—noting that in the vertical axis we have translated "ragged claws . . ." into "depression over aging." To be sure, as Jakobson also insisted, meaning always involves translation. But there is some sense in which neither the literal translation of the new term nor the resulting combination of it with the given term succeeds as a poetic translation. And if we take predicate-like utterances in which both the subject and the predicate are nonliteral, the failure is even more evident, as in these lines from MacNeice:

> The sunlight on the garden
> Hardens and grows cold.
> We cannot cage the minute
> Within its nets of gold;
> When all is told
> We cannot beg for pardon.

It is not only "unclear" how to manage the vertical axis—to what does "sunlight on the garden" refer, and "harden" in this context? "Cage"? And then, "cage the minute," etcetera.

The language of poetry, or perhaps I should say the language of evocation, substitutes metaphors for both given and new, leaving it somewhat ambiguous what they are substitutes for. When the terms are combined, the resulting given-new combination is no longer amenable to being converted into ordinary truth functional propositions. Indeed, at crucial moments it even departs from the "contract" that specifies a clear distinction between given and new in predicative combinations.

So neither vertically nor horizontally does the evocative language of poetry and story conform to the requirements of plain reference or of verifiable predication. Stories of literary merit, to be sure, are about events in a "real" world, but they render that world newly strange, rescue it from obviousness, fill it with gaps that call upon the reader, in Barthes's sense, to become a writer, a composer of a virtual text in response to the actual. In the end, it is the reader who must write for himself what *he* intends to do with the actual text. How, for example, to read these lines from Yeats:

> The brawling of a sparrow in the eaves,
> The brilliant moon and all the milky sky,
> And all that famous harmony of leaves,
> Had blotted out man's image and his cry.

Which brings us directly to Wolfgang Iser's reflections in *The Act of Reading* on what manner of speech act is a narrative. I want to touch on only one part of his argument, one that is central to my own. With respect to narrative, he says, "the reader receives it by composing it." The text itself has structures that are "two-sided": a *verbal* aspect that guides reaction and prevents it from being arbitrary, and an affective aspect that is triggered or "prestructured by the language of the text." But the prestructure is underdetermined: fictional texts are inherently "indeterminate."

> fictional texts constitute their own objects and do not copy something already in existence. For this reason they cannot have the full determinacy of real objects, and indeed, it is the element of indeterminacy that evokes the text to "communicate" with the reader, in the sense that they induce him to participate both in the production and the comprehension of this work's intention.

It is this "relative indeterminacy of a text" that "allows a spectrum of actualizations." And so, "literary texts initiate 'performances' of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves."

And that is what is at the core of literary narrative as a speech act: an utterance or a text whose intention is to initiate and guide a search for meanings among a spectrum of possible meanings. Storytelling, besides, is a speech act whose felicity conditions are unique. The speech act is initiated by giving some indication to a listener or reader, first, that a story is to be recounted; second, that it is true or fictional; and third (optionally), that it fits some genre—a sad story, a moral fable, a comeuppance tale, a particular scandal, a happening in one's life. Beyond that, there is a condition of style: that the form of the discourse in which the story is actualized leaves open the "performance of meaning" in Iser's sense. It is this last condition that brings us directly to the discourse properties of stories, to which I turn now.

❧

Discourse, if Iser is right about narrative speech acts, must depend upon forms of discourse that recruit the reader's imagination—that enlist him in the "performance of meaning under the guidance of the text." Discourse must make it possible for the reader to "write" his own virtual text. And there are three features of discourse that seem to me to be crucial in this enlistment process.

The first is the triggering of *presupposition,* the creation of implicit rather than explicit meanings. For with explicitness, the reader's degrees of interpretive freedom are annulled. Examples abound, but Primo Levi's recent *The Periodic Table* provides a particularly striking case. His subtle setting forth of the properties of a particular element in each "story"—argon, hydrogen, zinc, and so on—provide a presuppositional background in terms of which the stories may be "interpreted." How the presuppositional background triggers interpretation is a matter I shall come to shortly.

The second is what I shall call *subjectification:* the depiction of reality not through an omniscient eye that views a timeless reality, but through the filter of the consciousness of protagonists in the story. Joyce, in the stories of *Dubliners*, rarely even hints at how the world really *is*. We see only the realities of the characters themselves—leaving us like the prisoners in Plato's cave, viewing only the shadows of events we can never know directly.

The third is ***multiple perspective:*** beholding the world not univocally but simultaneously through a set of prisms each of which catches some part of it. Auden's poem on the death of Yeats is a brilliant example: the poet's death is seen in the instruments of winter airports, on the floor of the Bourse, in the sickroom, in the "guts of the living." Roland Barthes argues in *S/Z* that without multiple codes of meaning a story is merely "readerly," not "writerly."

There are doubtless other means by which discourse keeps meaning open or "performable" by the reader—metaphor among them. But the three mentioned suffice for illustration. Together they succeed in ***subjunctivizing reality,*** which is my way of rendering what Iser means by a narrative speech act. I take my meaning of "subjunctive" from the second one offered by the *OED*: "Designating a mood (L. ***modus subjunctivus***) the forms of which are employed to denote an action or state as conceived (and not as a fact) and therefore used to express a wish, command, exhortation, or a contingent, hypothetical, or prospective event." To be in the subjunctive mode is, then, to be trafficking in human possibilities rather than in settled certainties. An "achieved" or "uptaken" narrative speech act, then, produces a subjunctive world. When I use the term ***subjunctivize,*** I shall mean it in this sense. What then can we say in any technical way about the means whereby discourse portrays a "subjunctive reality"? For surely that is the key to the issue of discourse in great fiction. Let me turn to some of the more systematic ways in which this is accomplished.

Begin with the familiar case of speech acts and Paul Grice's extension of the idea to what he calls the Cooperative Principle governing ordinary conversation. He proposes maxims of quantity (saying only as much as is necessary), of quality (saying only the truth, and saying it with perspicuousness), and of relevance (saying only what is to the point). However needed such maxims may be for regulating conversational cooperation, in fact they are guides to banality: to be brief, perspicuous, truthful, and relevant is to be drab and literal. But the existence of such maxims (however implicit our awareness of them), Grice argues, provides us with the means of violating them for purposes of ***meaning more than we say*** or for meaning something other than what we say (as in irony, for example) or for meaning less than we say. To mean in this way, by the use of such intended violations or "conversational implicatures," is to create gaps and to recruit presuppositions to fill them. As in

Where's Jack?
Well, I saw a yellow VW outside Susan's.

The reader-hearer, if he is to stay on the narrative scene, must fill in, and under the circumstances he is made complicitous with the characters in the exchange. Why doesn't the respondent say outright (perspicuously) that Jack is visiting Susan? Is it an illicit visit? Is Jack "going the rounds"? Cookbooks on story writing urge the use of implicatures to increase "narrative tension," and they can easily lose their effect when overused. Yet they provide the means for the kind of indirect talk that forces "meaning performance" upon the reader.

Presupposition is an ancient and complex topic in logic and linguistics, and one that deserves closer study by the student of narrative. A presupposition, formally defined, is an implied proposition whose force remains invariant whether the explicit proposition in which it is embedded is true or false. Their nature and operations have been set forth brilliantly by Stephen Levinson, by L. Karttunen and Richard Peters, and by Gerald Gazdar, and their discussions of presuppositional triggers, filters, plugs, and holes are richly suggestive for literary text analysis. They deal with what are called "heritage expressions" and with how a presupposition is built up over discourse in order to project itself into later statements. Triggers effect such projection. Four simple examples will serve to illustrate their manner of operating.

Trigger	Presupposition
Definite descriptions:	
John saw/didn't see the chimera.	There exists a chimera.
Factive verbs:	
John realized/didn't realize he was broke.	John was broke.
Implicative verbs:	
John managed/didn't manage to open the door.	John tried to open the door.
Iteratives:	
You can't get buggy whips anymore.	You used to be able to get buggy whips.

There are many other triggers. I think it is plain (though the details are not easy) that triggering presuppositions, like intentionally violating

conversational maxims, provides a powerful way of "meaning more than you are saying," or going beyond surface text, or packing the text with meaning for narrative purposes.

The use of presupposition is greatly facilitated by an informal "contract" that governs language exchanges. As Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson have noted, we characteristically assume that what somebody says *must* make sense, and we will, when in doubt about *what* sense it makes, search for or invent an interpretation of the utterance to give it sense. Example on a London street (after Sperber and Wilson):

> Will you buy a raffle ticket for the Royal Naval Lifeboat Institution?
> No thanks, I spend summers near Manchester.
> Ah yes, of course.

Obviously, you cannot press a reader (or a listener) to make endless interpretations of your obscure remarks. But you can go a surprisingly long way—provided only that you start with something approximating what Joseph Campbell called a "mythologically instructed community." And, in fact, most of the devices and tropes that we use in the telling and writing of stories are not substantively as demanding as the one in Sperber and Wilson's example.

To revert to the beginning discussion of paradigmatic and narrative modes of thought, both of them surely trade on presupposition, if only for the sake of brevity. If the scientist or analytic philosopher or logician should be found to be triggering presuppositions in a covert way, he will become the butt of jokes about making a hard sell rather than letting things speak for themselves. His presuppositions should be unpackable, easily so. The writer of fiction who does *not* use such triggering will simply fail. His story will be "flat."

What of subjectification, the rendering of the world of the story into the consciousness of its protagonists? Freud remarks in "The Poet and the Daydream" that the act of composition is, after all, an act of decomposition: the artist's separation of his own internal cast of characters into the characters of the story or play. The plot then becomes a hypothetical actualization of the reader's own internal "psychodynamics." Freud the psychologist thought, of course, that this was achieved unconsciously, and Milosz the poet agrees:

> In the very essence of poetry there is something indecent:
> A thing is brought forth that we didn't know we had in us,
> So we blink our eyes, as if a tiger had sprung out
> And stood in the light, lashing his tail.

Freud had it in mind that the "internal drama made external" aids the reader to identify not only with characters but with the human plights in which they find themselves. But this kind of theorizing does not help us much in our understanding of discourse. Is there something more precise that can be said about the language by which subjective landscapes and multiple perspectives are evoked in stories? For that is the issue I am addressing—how is reality rendered subjunctive by language?

An idea of Todorov's serves well as a point of departure. The argument runs somewhat as follows—I say "somewhat" because I am adding some elaborations that are not part of his analysis. Suppose one posits first a "way of saying" that is as simple, expository, and nonsubjunctive as possible: *x commits a crime*. In effect it depicts a "product" or event. It asserts. Todorov proposes that there are six simple transformations that transform the action of the verb from being a fait accompli to being psychologically in process, and as such contingent or subjunctive in our sense. His six simple transformations are as follows:

Mode. Modality, literally a modal auxiliary for the verb, subjectifies the action: *must, might, could, would,* and so on. Modals are ordinarily classified as epistemic and deontic, the first having to do with matters of what could or must be, the second with value obligations: *x must commit a crime* and *x should commit a crime*. And within each class there is a further subdivision between necessity and contingency: *x must commit a crime* and *x might commit a crime,* for example, both of which are "perspectival" triggers. Modal transformations also have the effect of implying a context for an act: x must or x should for some reason, implied but not stated, do what the verb requires.

Intention. Here, the act is directly embedded in its intention: *x plans to commit a crime* (or *hopes to, intends to,* and so on).

Result is a transformation—as in *x succeeds in committing a crime*—whose effect is both to presuppose intent and to raise but leave open the question of how it all came about.

Manner—as in *x is keen to commit a crime*—subjectifies the act and creates an attitude that modifies the action's intention.

Aspect refers to a form of time marking that is related not to an abstract time marker like tense but to the progress of the task in which the action is occurring: for example, *x is beginning to commit a crime* (*is in the midst of,* and so on). Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* contains an interesting discussion of the way the abstract emptiness of time, defined by tense, must be embodied in a concrete and progressing activity in order for it to constitute narrative time. Aspect transformations are probably the most direct way of providing or evoking such concreteness.

Status—as in *x is not committing a crime*—is a transformation that opens the possibility that there was a wish to, a set of circumstances that, a possibility that, an accusation that could have led to a crime. Negation is a powerful trigger of presuppositions about the possible. "I do not commit crimes" opens a world of alternative perspectives.

Todorov also proposes a half-dozen complex transformations that, in effect, alter a sentence by adding to it a verb phrase that modifies the original or main verb phrase. All of his complex verb phrases have the function of adding "factivity" to the original—that is, a state of mental activity to accompany the main verb phrase. They place the activity in a landscape of consciousness. They are:

Appearance:	x pretends he has committed a crime
Knowledge:	x learns y has committed . . .
Supposition:	x foresees he will commit . . .
Description:	x reports he has committed . . .
Subjectification:	x thinks he has committed . . .
Attitude:	x enjoys committing . . .

To put it in Todorov's words, such a transformation, simple or complex, "permits discourse to acquire a meaning without this meaning becoming pure information." I assume that "pure information" means for him a form of exposition that minimizes presupposition, that keeps the reader from going too far beyond the information given. The use of such transformations, on the other hand, should thicken the connective web that holds a narrative together in its depiction of both action and consciousness.

Can Todorov's system of transformations distinguish good narrative from, say, good exposition? Our research group tried it, comparing one of the stories in Joyce's *Dubliners* with a piece of fine expository

writing by the anthropologist Martha Weigel. "Clay" was our story—one on which we had been working intensively. It is a story laced with ritual—Maria laying out the barmbrack for the other girls at the laundry, her tram ride from Ballsbridge to the Pillar and then to Drumcondra, the All Hallows' Eve party and its ritual game of blind man's bluff. This inspired the choice, for comparison, of an expository text to which the same analysis could be applied and that dealt with ritual action. Martha Weigel is an anthropologist and a writer of considerable grace. Her subject is the Southwest and her specialty is the Penitentes, about whom she has written an acclaimed book, *Brothers of Light, Brothers of Blood.* It contains a chapter on rituals. That chapter was our choice.

Gwyneth Lewis and I set out to compare Joyce's "Clay" (113 sentences long) with Weigel's chapter on Penitente rituals—at least its first 113 sentences. The results of the trial run, though they may not be typical of anything save these two pieces, were so striking that I may be forgiven for reporting them here. Consider, for example, the number of Todorovian transformations per 100 sentences of text in the Joyce story and in Weigel's exposition:

Todorovian transformation	Joyce's "Clay"	Weigel's "Rituals"
Simple	117.5	34.6
Complex	84.9	16.0
Total	202.4	50.6

Or, in barest summary, the story contains on average two transformations per sentence; the anthropological account, only one every other sentence.

This, admittedly, is the most grossly unadorned word counting—however much it may be inspired by an hypothesis about how subjunctivizing is achieved. It tells nothing about the contexts in which these transformations are used or about the uses to which they are put. Why do one in three of Joyce's sentences contain transformations of manner, while only one in ten of Martha Weigel's do? Or why are a quarter of Joyce's constructions timed by aspect, while only one in fifty of Weigel's are? A more subtle analysis is for the future.

Rather, I want to say something about "reader response" to the

Joyce story. In our research, we ask our readers to tell us back the story in their own words: to create, so to speak, a virtual text. Again, I can make no claim for the representativeness of what we are finding, but we did subject to analysis the "told back" version of one of our readers, an experienced reader of fiction in his late teens who was reading the story for the first time. He told it back to us a day later. His version of "Clay" was only 24 sentences long (typically shorter than the story), in contrast to Joyce's 113. Compare Joyce and the reader, the numbers standing again for frequency of transformations per 100 sentences.

Todorovian transformation	Joyce's "Clay"	Reader's virtual text
Simple	117.5	235.3
Complex	84.9	91.1
Total	202.4	326.4

Is the reader picking up the subjunctivized speech of the story? Well, there are twice as many simple transformations in the reader's "story" as in Joyce's, and at least as many complex ones as Joyce used. Our reader is plainly resonating to the story and to its discourse as well. Indeed, the two texts, actual and virtual, even agree closely in terms of the frequency ranking of the transformations used. The simple transformations first:

Todorovian transformation	Joyce's "Clay"	Rank	Reader's virtual text	Rank
Manner	33.6	1	83.0	1
Aspect	24.7	2	38.0	3.5
Status	23.8	3	50.0	2
Mode	18.6	4	38.0	3.5
Result	10.6	5	25.0	5
Intention	6.2	6	1.3	6

And the match in the complex transformation was just as close:

Todorovian transformation	Joyce's "Clay"	Rank	Reader's virtual text	Rank
Description	41.6	1	46.0	1
Subjectification	17.7	2	13.8	2
Attitude	11.5	3	8.0	4.5
Knowledge	9.7	4	11.3	3
Appearance	2.6	5	8.0	4.5
Supposition	1.8	6	4.0	6

What is vividly interesting is that our young reader provided us with a virtual text that, I think, Joyce would not have minded. (It is to be found in the Appendix, placed side-by-side with Joyce's story.) One does not want to make too much of this particular concordance between the "retell" discourse of a reader and the text of a story. But the "results" of this first experiment do suggest some hypotheses. The first is that the "mood"—the *modus subjunctivus*—of the story is preserved in the reading, as well as the substance of the story itself, in the sense both of fabula and sjuzet. There are transformations, to be sure, and (as one can see by comparing the reader's story with Joyce's in the Appendix) these are principally in the form of deletions. Doubtless these deletions serve to "sharpen, level, and assimilate" elements of the story (to use Sir Frederic Bartlett's terms from his classic, *Remembering*). In the retelling, turn-of-the-century Dublin seems a bit more like the New York of today; the episode with the military-looking gentleman on the tram is forefronted in the virtual text more than in the actual one; the doings in the laundry are somewhat flattened.

But perhaps the most interesting qualitative transformation in the retelling is the reader's management of subjunctivity. At first, he tells the story in a way suggesting omniscience about what was happening. This is then modified by peppering the account with "he says" and "he said," where "he" is the author. Then subjunctivizing language begins to take over the virtual text. The reader now says of Maria that "she is going to x," "she wants to x," "she remembers when x," "she thinks what else she wants to x," "she's forced to x," "she becomes used to (accustomed to) x." Or "they start being merry," or "Maria said to Joe that he should make up with his brother Alfy," or "Maria says she's sorry." Or, to take a striking instance of mood preservation, "and Joe says, you know, since its such a nice night I won't get angry about it, but you know, he doesn't; he's not really happy that she brought it up." The subjective landscape is richly constructed in the virtual text,

though untransformed "matters of fact" are interspersed ("she goes there and gives the kids their little penny cakes") but only enough to keep a line of action going concurrently with the subjective line.

We also asked our reader a good many questions after he had told back the story so that we might dig a little more deeply into his interpretive activity. For the analysis of virtual text (the "retelling") is only one way of finding out what a story like "Clay" means to a reader. Asked about what had particularly struck him in the story, he picks up the witch theme: "her nose nearly touched her chin." He wonders whether her witchlike appearance clashes with the almost saintly quality she is pictured as possessing. Then he asks, does *she think* she is saintly while others are really sorry for her.

His search for a timeless fabula has begun: "I did kind of get like some kind of evil coming from her . . . even though she was so nice to everybody that she had some hidden evil building up in her, or something." And then, "like artificially nice, almost, like she had no real enemies, she had, you know, she was just nice to everybody, and she wanted everybody, you know, to be nice to her and respect her, which is what she got. But there was that, that, it is not possible for a human to be like that. You know, except, you know, we only saw part of her; we don't know what the other part of her is like." And later he adds, "I was almost happy that he (the old man on the bus), that he had stolen her plum cake, because it's almost like never . . . she was so naive that she'd never experienced anything like that, and I was happy that she had at least had some negative experience, 'cause not everything was always just, you know, hunky-dory and everything. Bad things do happen, when you're so trusting of everybody."

From this interpretation, he then raises a series of questions about symbolism, such as why were they "celebrating Halloween in that ritual, Christmas-like way?" Is it a story about the fall of innocence? He finally decides that it is.

Iser remarks in *The Act of Reading* that readers have both a *strategy* and a *repertoire* that they bring to bear on a text. This reader's principal strategy seemed to consist in trying to reconcile the "stuff" of the story with his repertoire of conceptions about human plights—his collection of possible fabulae. He says early on in so many words that he is "not sure what the story is trying to tell us" but admits that he is caught up in it. His interpretation of "Clay" as a story about "the cost of innocence protected by self-deception" is, so to speak, his personal thumbprint imposed on the story; but it is not entirely idiosyncratic. To begin with, it is not a culturally atypical interpretation (we know from other readers), particularly for a literate New York boy in his late teens. Nor does it do violence to the text: if we had asked other readers to "rate" the cultural appropriateness of his interpretation (which we are now doing in our research in progress), it would have been rated well. As for capturing the author's intent, what can one say? If it were possible to call up the shade of Joyce, he would doubtless turn the question into a pun for Finnegan's wake!

Obviously, it will always be a moot question whether and how well a reader's interpretation "maps" on an actual story, does justice to the writer's intention in telling the story, or conforms to the repertory of a culture. But in any case, the author's act of creating a narrative of a particular kind and in a particular form is not to evoke a standard reaction but to recruit whatever is most appropriate and emotionally lively in the reader's repertory. So "great" storytelling, inevitably, is about compelling human plights that are "accessible" to readers. But at the same time, the plights must be set forth with sufficient subjunctivity to allow them to be *rewritten* by the reader, rewritten so as to allow play for the reader's imagination. One cannot hope to "explain" the processes involved in such rewriting in any but an interpretive way, surely no more precisely, say, than an anthropologist "explains" what the Balinese cockfight means to those who bet on it (to take an example from Clifford Geertz's classic paper on that subject). All that one can hope for is to interpret a reader's interpretation in as detailed and rich a way as psychologically possible.

In the end, one is asking how a reader makes a strange text his own. On this point, there is an instructive exchange between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. It begins when Marco says:

> "Sire, now I have told you about all the cities I know."
> "There is still one of which you never speak."
> Marco Polo bowed his head.
> "Venice," the Khan said.
> Marco smiled. "What else do you believe I have been talking to you about?"

The emperor did not turn a hair. "And yet I have never heard you mention that name."

And Polo said: "Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice."

"When I ask about other cities I want to hear about them. And about Venice, when I ask you about Venice."

"To distinguish the other cities' qualities, I must speak of a first city that remains implicit. For me it is Venice."

Yet, there is something more than assimilating strange tales into the familiar dramas of our own lives, even more than transmuting our own dramas in the process. It is not just strange tales and familiar dramas that are implicated, but something at a level of interpretation beyond story. It is that form of timeless meaning which the story "contains" or instantiates though it is not "in" the story: it is the gist, the plight, perhaps what the Russian Formalists called the *fabula*. There is another exchange between Marco and Kublai that begins to catch the sense of it, of this meaning beyond the details. Marco describes a bridge stone by stone.

"But which is the stone that supports the bridge?" Kublai Khan asks.

"The bridge is not supported by one stone or another," Marco answers, "but by the line of the arch that they form."

Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: "Why do you speak to me of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me."

Polo answers: "Without stones there is no arch."

But still, it is not quite the arch. It is, rather, what arches are *for* in all the senses in which an arch is for something—for their beautiful form, for the chasms they safely bridge, for coming out on the other side of crossings, for a chance to see oneself reflected upside down yet right side up. So a reader goes from stones to arches to the significance of arches is some broader reality—goes back and forth between them in attempting finally to construct a sense of the story, its form, its meaning.

As our readers read, as they begin to construct a virtual text of their own, it is as if they were embarking on a journey without maps—and yet, they possess a stock of maps that *might* give hints, and besides, they know a lot about journeys and about mapmaking. First impressions of the new terrain are, of course, based on older journeys already taken. In time, the new journey becomes a thing in itself, however

much its initial shape was borrowed from the past. The virtual text becomes a story of its own, its very strangeness only a contrast with the reader's sense of the ordinary. The fictional landscape, finally, must be given a "reality" of its own—the ontological step. It is then that the reader asks that crucial interpretive question, "What's it all about?" But what "it" is, of course, is not the actual text—however great its literary power—but the text that the reader has constructed under its sway. And that is why the actual text needs the subjunctivity that makes it possible for a reader to create a world of his own. Like Barthes, I believe that the writer's greatest gift to a reader is to help him become a writer.

If I have, then, made much of the contingent and subjunctive not so much in storytelling as in story comprehending, it is because the narrative mode leads to conclusions not about certainties in an aboriginal world, but about the varying perspectives that can be constructed to make experience comprehensible. Beyond Barthes, I believe that the *great* writer's gift to a reader is to make him a *better* writer.

❧

Perhaps the greatest feat in the history of narrative art was the leap from the folktale to the psychological novel that places the engine of action in the characters rather than in the plot. What makes "Clay" a powerful story is not events, but Maria. Without her, the paltry events of the story (and even these are seen only through the eyes of the protagonists) would make no sense. As it is, they are vivid little epiphanies of ordinariness—her ordinariness, and through her, our ordinariness.

What is at the heart of the psychological story is the notion of a "character" or a "cast of characters." Our young reader of "Clay" ends with "It's actually a depressing story when you get down to it . . . like what's it all about for Maria, like what's it all leading to? She works, she's an old lady . . . she's done you know probably nothing." He has converted the story into a tale of character—character and circumstance.

Character is an extraordinarily elusive literary idea. Perhaps it is elusive for reasons beyond the literary. For even in "real life," it is always a moot question whether the actions of persons should be attributed to circumstances or to their "enduring dispositions"—their

character. Aristotle in the *Poetics* conveniently distinguishes between "agent" (*pratton*) and "character" (*ethos*), the former being a figure in a drama whose actions merely fit the requirements of the plot, and no more, while the latter has traits beyond those required. But this is by no means clear for, as Ricoeur reminds us in *Time and Narrative*, Aristotle's idea of *mimesis* includes the notion that drama reflects "character in action" and action surely involves plot and its setting. Besides, can there ever be a figure in a drama who does *just* what is required by the plot without giving some inkling of what he or she would be like in more general terms? As Seymour Chatman puts it, "If one trait is assigned to an action, why isn't the floodgate thereby opened?" Ask a reader whether he would be comfortable buying a second-hand car from a "false hero" in a Proppian fairytale, or what kind of relationship that false hero might have had with his father. It will soon be plain, as Solomon Asch demonstrated a generation ago, that character (or perhaps we should call it *apparent* character) is not a bundle of autonomous traits but an organized conception, however much we may construct it from such scraps and clues as we can find.

Asch made his point by demonstrating how differently the trait *intelligent* was interpreted depending on whether the character to whom it was attributed was also described as *cold* or as *warm*. In the first case, intelligent meant "crafty," while in the second it was taken to mean "wise." Apparent character is perceived as a *Gestalt,* not as a list of traits that account for particular actions. And the Gestalt seems to be constructed according to some sort of theory about how people are. For example, they have some sort of core characteristic that directs their behavior from within. But if the person in question behaves in a way that violates that core characteristic, we easily explain it away by invoking circumstances. My colleague Henri Zukier and I tried out some typical college-aged readers on a variant of the Asch experiment. To begin with, we gave them a short list of consistent trait names characterizing an imaginary person, like *spiritual, introverted, religious,* to which they would respond by describing him as "a saintly kind of person." Then we added to the list *practical* and *money-minded.* One subject: "Sure. A good man, but he's probably in one of those cut-throat businesses." Another: "I've known them like that—like one of those Amish or Mennonite farmers where I grew up, good in his own group and drives a hard bargain outside." (Interestingly enough, when subjects begin telling about "circumstances," their language quickly becomes drenched in Todorov transformations.)

The inseparability of character, setting, and action must be deeply rooted in the nature of narrative thought. It is only with difficulty that we can conceive of each of them in isolation. There are different ways of combining the three in constructing the *dramatis personae* of fiction (or of life, for that matter). And those constructions are by no means arbitrary. They reflect psychological processes such as those noted by Asch and other psychologists. They also reflect our beliefs about how people fit into society. The alternate ways in which we can construe people, moreover, often run into conflict with each other, and the conflict leaves us puzzled. Indeed, the act of construing another person is almost inevitably problematic. For all that, the choice of one construal rather than another virtually always has real consequences for how we deal with others. Our construal of character, indeed, is our first and perhaps most important step in dealing with another. It is this that makes the very act of interpreting a person—whether in fiction or in life—inherently dramatic. It is what makes the narrative of character so much more subjunctive than the folktale or the myth.

How characterize the different ways in which we construe "personhood" in literature? We could, of course, adopt the character types offered by theories of "personality" from Galen to Freud and Jung, and see whether readers of fiction use the same categories. But that is too specialized. We already know that even the most ordinary readers go beyond mere character depictions to consideration of circumstance and setting. We need, rather, a "morphology" of persons that captures common sense, that takes into account the range of concerns I have mentioned. Then we can explore how in fact readers fit character, plot, and action together in making the virtual text.

Amélie Rorty offers an analysis that, I think, is to the point. It distinguishes characters, figures, persons, selves, and individuals. She begins with a sketch: "*Characters* are delineated; their traits are sketched; they are not presumed to be strictly unified. They appear in novels by Dickens, not those by Kafka. *Figures* appear in cautionary tales, exemplary novels and hagiography. They present narratives of types of lives to be imitated. *Selves* are possessors of their properties. *Individuals* are centers of integrity; their rights are inalienable." The use of these variant construals is, for Rorty, fraught with human conse-

quences: "we are different entities as we conceive ourselves enlightened by these various views. Our powers of action are different, our relations to one another, our properties and proprieties, our characteristic successes or defeats, our conception of society's proper strictures and freedoms will vary with our conceptions of ourselves as characters, persons, selves, individuals."

Let me very briefly sketch Rorty's views and then return more directly to the general point. She sees *characters* as evolved from their origin in the Greek concept of the hero. The hero is known by his deeds. "As the hero's distance from the gods increases, his heroism comes to be exemplified in his character rather than in the sheer glory of his action." Characters do not have identity crises, since there is no presupposition about their unity; but disharmony among their characteristics breeds trouble—in their action, not in their selfhood. To know what sort of character a person is is to know the circumstances that suit him best, for not all characters are suited to the same life. A character's tragedy is to be in circumstances where his disposition is no longer needed, no longer suited. "Characters in time of great social change . . . are likely to be tragic." And then, "In fiction, characters are dear to us because they are predictable, because they entitle us to the superiority of gods who can lovingly foresee and thus more readily forgive what is fixed."

Figures "are defined by their place in an unfolding drama; they are not assigned roles because of their traits, but rather have the traits of their prototypes in myth or sacred script. Figures are characters writ large, become figureheads . . . Both their roles and their traits emerge from their place in an ancient narrative. The narration, the plot, comes first . . ." Whatever else figures are doing, they are filling their roles. A confidante may have gone to buy fish, but her real role is the sharing of confidences. "A figure is neither formed by nor owns experience." They are Mary or Martha, Peter or Paul, Che Guevara or Paul Bunyan.

The idea of *persons,* Rorty proposes, comes from two sources: the *dramatis personae* of the stage, and the law. "A person's roles and his place in the narrative devolve from the choices that place him in a structural system, related to others." Central to it is the idea of a unified center of action and choice—the unit of both legal and theological responsibility. Interest in persons, then, centers upon locating liability.

The scope of a person lies in his powers to affect those around him, a scope for which he bears responsibility.

When we conceive of persons exclusively as sources of responsibility, we think of them as souls or minds, engaged with *res cogitans.* When we think of them as possessing rights and powers, we think of them as *selves.* "When a society has changed so that individuals acquire their rights by virtue of their powers, rather than having their powers defined by their rights, the concept of person has been transformed to a concept of self." Jane Austen describes a world of persons on the verge of becoming selves, Trollope one that has already become a world of selves, one in which the property required for stature is no longer land but an assured income due one by virtue of one's qualities.

Finally, *individuality,* born out of the corruption in societies of selves: "It begins with conscience and ends with consciousness." At its core is a contrast of individual *versus* society: "an individual transcends and resists what is binding and oppressive in society and does so from an original natural position . . . The rights of persons are formulated *in* society, while the rights of individuals are demanded *of* society." And so Molloy and Malone, the zaniness of the individual soldier in the midst of an insane war, rip-off as the redistribution of property.

Each is a mode of interpreting as well as a mode of depiction, and in both, the lines are not clear. Depictions achieve drama by embodying a conflict: is Leggatt in *The Secret Sharer* a "figure" or an "individual" in Rorty's sense? And as writers alter their "presentation" of personhood—from the figures of Homer to the characters of Euripides, from Jane Austen's persons to Trollope's selves, from Conrad's selves to Beckett's individuals—so too readers change in the approach to personhood. In life, is it crusading senator or macho lover of Marilyn Monroe, a teenage offender in the light of love or the light of justice, which Roger Casement, which of the two Parnells. In literature, is Roth's Zuckerman a character who searches for the setting that will uncork his gifts, the figure in a morality drama, or the individual in revolt?

Lionel Trilling, reviewing David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd,* conjectured whether modern sociology was coming to take the place of the novel as a window on the lives of those who live in "other" social classes. But that cannot be right. For the anomaly of personhood—its

consequential alternativeness—cannot be caught save through the vehicle of narrative. And it is this alternativeness—this inherent restlessness in deciding on the right depiction of personhood—that gives the novel of character, the psychological novel, its force, its subjunctivity, and its power to disturb.

❧

One final point and I am done. It is about narrative and history. In a recent book on historiography, Dale Porter raises some extremely interesting questions about the strengths and shortcomings of narrative history. I do not want to evaluate his arguments, but to comment on one point that recurs in his account (as it has in earlier accounts by Bryce Gallie and by Isaiah Berlin). There is an assumption, implicit to be sure, that a narrative account leaves one open to "errors" that are departures from an aboriginal reality that is better discerned by a more systematic, "logico-scientific" method. After all, what we know, the *annales,* so to speak, is that on Christmas Day at the Vatican in the year 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. When an historian of the stature of Louis Halphen sets these bare "facts" into a web of imperial and papal intentions and of changing "world views," does he risk errors that are more egregious and fanciful than, say, the errors in wait for a sober economic historian who eschews narratives? That one does something more verifiable than the other, few would doubt. Trade and commerce, the flow of capital, and so on are documentable in a way that motives and a growing "sense of Europeanness" are not. So should Halphen's account be treated as a form of fiction (or "faction") or as fictionalized history?

The economist Robert Heilbroner once remarked that when forecasts based on economic theory fail, he and his colleagues take to telling stories—about Japanese managers, about the Zurich "snake," about the Bank of England's "determination" to keep sterling from falling. There is a curious anomaly here: businessmen and bankers today (like men of affairs of all ages) guide their decisions by just such stories—even when a workable theory is available. These narratives, once acted out, "make" events and "make" history. They contribute to the reality of the participants. For an economist (or an economic historian) to ignore them, even on grounds that "general economic forces" shape the world of economics, would be to don blinders. Can anyone

say a priori that history is completely independent of what goes on in the minds of its participants? Narratives may be the last resort of economic theorists. But they are probably the life stuff of those whose behavior they study.

So we embellish our hard-core *annales,* convert them into *chroniques* and finally into narrative *histoires* (to borrow Hayden White's way of putting it). And thereby we constitute the psychological and cultural reality in which the participants in history actually live. In the end, then, the narrative and the paradigmatic come to live side by side. All the more reason for us to move toward an understanding of what is involved in telling and understanding great stories, and how it is that stories create a reality of their own—in life as in art.

Notes

1. Approaching the Literary

p. 3 Czeslaw Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry,* The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 1981–82 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983). Quotations from p. 3.

Sigmund Freud, "The Poet and the Daydream," in *The Collected Papers* (New York: Collier Books, 1963).

p. 4 Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language,* ed. T. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1960).

Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

Kenneth Burke, *The Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945); see also Dennis Donoghue's evaluation of Burke's work in the *New York Review of Books,* Sept. 21, 1985.

Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).

I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment,* rpt. ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935).

p. 5 Nicholas of Lyra (c.1265–1349) was a Franciscan whose works were widely known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. His most famous works were two commentaries on the Bible, *Postilla litteralis* (1322–31) and *Postilla mystica sen moralis* (1339). Born in Lire in Normandy, he was the subject of a pun, "lire et délire," that caught nicely the distinction between his literal readings and his mystical ones. He is characterized in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as

having had "a very independent attitude toward traditional interpretation, and a remarkable historical and critical sense."

p. 6 A. Warren and R. Wellek, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949).

Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); see also his *The Implied Reader* (Johns Hopkins, 1974).

p. 7 Anthony Burgess, *ReJoyce* (New York: Norton, 1965).

Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

Frank Kermode, "Secrets and Narrative Sequence," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

p. 8 G. T. Fechner, *Buechlein von Leben nach dem Tode* (1836); for further discussion see E. G. Boring, *History of Experimental Psychology* (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1950).

Jerome Bruner, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962).

p. 9 For a general account of work on story grammars, see Jean Mandler, *Stories, Scripts, and Scenes: Aspects of Schema Theory* (Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1984). See also Roger Shank and Robert Abelson on the theory of scripts and scenarios in *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding* (Erlbaum, 1977). A particularly seminal article in the literature in story grammars is D. E. Rumelhart, "Notes on a Schema for Stories," in D. G. Bobrow and A. Collins, eds., *Representation and Understanding* (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

2. Two Modes of Thought

p. 11 Parts of this chapter appeared as "Narrative and Paradigmatic Modes of Thought," in the 1985 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, *Learning and Teaching: The Ways of Knowing.*

p. 12 Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

p. 14 Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

W. V. O. Quine, "Review of Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking,*" *New York Review of Books* 25 (Nov. 23, 1978).

p. 15 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature; being the Gifford Lectures on natural religion delivered at Edinburgh in 1901–2* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902).

S. L. Washburn, "One Hundred Years of Biological Anthropology," in J. O. Brew, ed., *One Hundred Years of Anthropology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968).

G. Polya, *How to Solve It: A New Aspect of Mathematical Method,* 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

The reader may well ask how I would characterize the difference between narrative "at its far reach" as an art form, and the ordinary narratives that people offer in answer to such questions as "What have you been up to?" I think the question is better postponed until later in the chapter when I consider the "subjunctivation" process of great narrative—the means whereby it creates not only a story but also a sense of its contingent and uncertain variants.

p. 16 Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theater* (New York: New York Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982).

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories," in Mitchell, *On Narrative.*

p. 17 Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

A. Michotte, *The Perception of Causality* (New York: Basic Books, 1963).

p. 18 Alan Leslie, "The Representation of Perceived Causal Connection" (D.Phil. Thesis, Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford, 1979).

Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel, "An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior," *American Journal of Psychology* 57 (1944).

Judith Ann Stewart, "Perception of Animacy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1982).

The test for an experiment on infant perception of animacy or apparent intention would parallel Leslie's procedure on infant perception of causality. He sums up his test as follows: "Following habituation, 27 week old infants recover interest more when the spatio-temporal direction of an apparently *causal* event is reversed than when the spatio-temporal direction of a highly similar but apparently *non-causal* event is reversed." The same test can be used for apparently animate and nonanimate displays. See Alan Leslie and Stephanie Keeble, "Six-month-old Infants Perceive Causality," Medical Research Council, Cognitive Development Unit, 17 Gordon Street, London, WC1H OAH.

p. 19 Roman Jakobson, "What Is Poetry?" in Jakobson, *Selected Writings,* ed. Stephen Rudy, vol. 3 (The Hague: Mouton, 1981).

Michel Leiris, *Manhood: A Journey from Childhood into the Fierce Order of Virility,* trans. Richard Howard (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984).

p. 20 Kenneth Burke, *The Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945).

A. Greimas and J. Courtes, "The Cognitive Dimension of Narrative Discourse," *New Literary History* 7 (Spring 1976): 433–447.

p. 21 Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

p. 22 Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style and Language,* ed. T. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1960).

For the Prague School see Peter Steiner, ed., *The Prague School: Selected Writings 1929–1946* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); also see Jan Mukarovsky, *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays,* trans. and ed. John Burbank and Peter Steiner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

The distinction is often made between "paradigmatic" and "syntagmatic" in studies of word association. The former refers to associations that are based on synonymy, hyponymy, or hyperonymy, such as *dog-canine, dog-dachshund,* and *dog-animal.* The latter refers to a coherence describable by permissible juxtaposition within a subject-predicate framework, such as *dog-runs,* or *dog-friendly.* It is a distinction that parallels Jakobson's vertical and horizontal axes in language, but Jakobson's intent went far beyond word association. Indeed, he went so far

as to propose that the distinction could be used to distinguish between two forms of literary trope, the metaphoric (vertical) and the metonym (horizontal) and even between two types of aphasia, metaphoric (affecting word selection) and metonymic (affecting word combination).

p. 23 T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), pp. 3–7.

Louis MacNeice, "The Sunlight on the Garden," in *Collected Poems, 1925–1948* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949).

p. 24 William Butler Yeats, "The Sorrow of Love," in *The Poems of W. B. Yeats,* ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Macmillan, 1983). See also R. Jakobson and S. Rudy, "Yeats' 'Sorrow of Love' Through the Years," in R. Jakobson, *Selected Writings,* III (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), p. 600.

Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). Quotations from pp. 21, 61.

p. 26 W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats (d. January 1939)."

H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in P. Cole and J. L. Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1975); idem, "Presupposition and Conversational Implicature," in P. Cole, ed., *Radical Pragmatics* (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

p. 27 L. Karttunen and R. S. Peters, "Requiem for Presupposition," in *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society.* (Berkeley, 1977). For an excellent discussion of this work see Stephen Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1983), which also provides an excellent overview of the issues involved in the triggering of presuppositions.

Gerald Gazdar, *Pragmatics: Implicature, Presupposition, and Logical Form* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

p. 28 Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, "Mutual Knowledge and Relevance in Theories of Comprehension," in N. V. Smith, ed., *Mutual Knowledge* (London: Academic Press, 1982). Sperber and Wilson's account, of course, greatly refines the question of how much and what kind of mutual knowledge is needed to assure a mythologically instructed community.

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949).

p. 29 Czeslaw Milosz, "Ars poetica?" in Milosz, *Bells in Winter* (New York: Ecco Press, 1978), p. 30.

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

p. 30 P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose,* p. 233.

p. 31 Martha Weigel, *Brothers of Light, Brothers of Blood: The Penitentes of the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976).

p. 33 Sir Frederick Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

p. 35 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities,* trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972). Quotations from pp. 86, 82.

p. 38 Aristotle, *Poetics.* An easily obtained complete edition is Richard McKeon, ed., *Introduction to Aristotle* (New York: Random House, Modern Library, 1947).

Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 109.

Solomon Asch, "Forming Impressions of Personality," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 41 (1946): 258–290.

Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale.*

p. 39 Amélie Rorty, "A Literary Postscript: Characters, Persons, Selves, Individuals," in A. O. Rorty, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). Quotations from (in order) pp. 302, 303, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 313, 315.

p. 41 Lionel Trilling, review of David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd,* rpt. in Trilling, *A Gathering of Fugitives* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956).

p. 42 Dale Porter, *The Emergence of the Past: A Theory of Historical Explanation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

W. Bryce Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

Isaiah Berlin, *Historical Inevitability* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955).

Arthur Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

Louis Halphen, "The Coronation as the Expression of the Ideals of the Frankish Court," in Richard Sullivan, ed., *The Coronation of Charlemagne: What Did It Signify?* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1959).

p. 43 White, "The Value of Narrativity."

For the reader not acquainted with contemporary work in literary theory, the following "K-ration" of books will provide an entry into the literature. W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); Susan Suleiman and Inge Crosman, eds., *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Robert Scholes, *Semiotics and Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974); Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Iser, *The Act of Reading*; Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). But any choice is arbitrary, and I cannot speak as a professional literary scholar or as an unbiased student. One could as well choose a completely different set of authors and find an interesting entry into this complex field—E. D. Hirsch, Frank Kermode, Bakhtin (particularly his *Dialogical Imagination*), Northrop Frye, or for that matter, Aristotle's *Poetics* or the essays of Harold Bloom, who finds his roots in quite a different tradition than most theorists and critics writing today.

3. Possible Castles

p. 45 Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

K. J. J. Hintikka, *Knowledge and Belief* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

Gordon Mills, *Hamlet's Castle: The Study of Literature as a Social Experience* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976).

p. 46 Two earlier papers of my own discuss the origins of these ideas about perception: "On Perceptual Readiness," *Psychological Review* 64 (1957): 123–152; and "Neural Mechanisms in Perception," *Psychological Review* 64 (1957): 340–358. A much more modern version of perceptual processing is to be found in David Marr, *Vision: A Computational Investigation in the Human Representation of Visual Information* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1982).

p. 47 George Miller, "The Magic Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information," *Psychological Review* 63 (1956): 81–97.

Jerome Bruner and Leo Postman, "On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm," *Journal of Personality* 18 (1949): 206–223.

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

p. 48 Ascher Shapiro, *Shape and Flow: The Fluid Dynamics of Drag* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961).

p. 49 Jerome Bruner, "Intention in the Structure of Action and Interaction," in L. Lipsitt, ed., *Advances in Infancy Research,* vol. 1 (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1981).

Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (New York: John Wiley, 1958).

p. 51 For a fuller account of this encounter with Niels Bohr, see my *In Search of Mind* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).

p. 52 Manet's exclamation is often quoted and has become part of scholarly folklore. I must confess that I have not been able to find a source for it in spite of a vigorous search. My question is usually greeted with "Yes, of course, but where?"

4. The Transactional Self

p. 57 H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in P. Cole and J. L. Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, "Mutual Knowledge and Relevance in Theories of Comprehension," in N. V. Smith, ed., *Mutual Knowledge* (London: Academic Press, 1982).

Hilary Putnam, *Mind, Language and Reality,* vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

Colwyn Trevarthen, "Instincts for Human Understanding and for Cultural Cooperation: Their Development in Infancy," in M. von Cranach, K. Foppa, W. Lepenies, and D. Ploog, eds., *Human Ethology:*