ANALYZING VOICE IN THE CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN SHORT STORY

by

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This thesis is about voice in short fiction. In particular, it is about the multiple voices at work in a series of contemporary Canadian short stories. Little attention has been paid to voice in Canadian fiction; the purpose of this study is to show that voice is important by examining the ways in which voices come into play in these texts. This dissertation will illustrate some of the ways in which voices may be listened to; it will provide a demonstration of the kinds of reading that may be done when voice is situated at the core of the interaction between reader and text.

Because the subject of this dissertation is narrative voice, the first chapter is devoted to a consideration of what the narrator is: what the term implies, how narrators have been distinguished from authors, implied authors and characters, and where difficulties arise in making such distinctions. Each of the remaining chapters focusses on the short fiction of an individual author. Chapter Two highlights elements of repetition and surprise in Leon Rooke's story "Shut Up." Chapter Three addresses the interplay of voices in Terry Griggs' "Unfinished." The fourth chapter analyzes two short stories by Douglas Glover,
"Red" and "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon"; these are both first-person narrations and the analysis reveals how the apparently singular "I" of each story plays host to a variety of competing voices and identities. The principal subject of Chapter Five is polyphony in Mavis Gallant's story "The Pegnitz Junction"; the discussion focusses on the complex interweaving of character-voices, and the role of the omniscient narrator.

This dissertation comprises a series of analyses of Canadian short fiction, analyses which illustrate the techniques involved in identifying fictional voices. It argues that short story criticism in Canada has, for the most part, failed to address the issue of voice, and that voice-centred reading strategies make a significant contribution to the critical repertoire of readers of fiction.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about voice in short fiction. In particular, it is about the multiple voices at work in a series of contemporary Canadian short stories. The purposes of this study are, by examining the ways in which voices come into play in these texts, to show that voice is important, to demonstrate how an awareness of voice affects critical reading, and to illustrate a variety of means by which voice may be identified and incorporated into readers' responses. One way of understanding reading is to use an auditory metaphor: reading is the process of listening to different voices and determining how they tell the story. This dissertation will illustrate some of the ways in which voices may be listened to; it will provide a demonstration of the kinds of reading that may be done when voice is situated at the core of the interaction between reader and text; and it will hazard some suggestions about the consequences of these reading strategies.

The principal contention of this study is that reading strategies which privilege voice will reveal aspects of fiction which might otherwise remain obscure: these aspects
include the ways in which direct and indirect speech function both in characterization and in constructing the oppositions which create narrative tension; the complexity of the relations among figures (for example, the author, implied author, narrator, and characters) and the points at which they overlap or separate; and the broad range of languages which combine to form that strange and variegated thing which is called narrative voice.

This Introduction will argue that criticism of Canadian short fiction has paid little attention to voice and that voice-centred reading strategies are valuable because of the kinds of issues they bring to light, issues which are often neglected by other kinds of reading. First, it will provide a context for the discussion in a brief survey of short story criticism in Canada. Then it will introduce samples of critical commentaries on the works of well-known Canadian authors in order to demonstrate the kinds of critical approaches which are often brought to bear on the short story. These samples are followed by a brief discussion of voice. Finally, an outline will summarize the procedure, major emphases and strategies of this thesis.

1. Critical context

The most informative book on the short story in Canada
is W.H. New's *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand* (1987), which is valuable both for its sensitive analyses of individual narratives and for its comprehensive account of the development of the genre. In the opening chapter, New outlines the means by which the short story has been defined and assessed (definitions based on formal categories—length, technique, and type—or issuing from history and culture). He takes the reader through nineteenth-century story commentaries such as those of Edgar Allan Poe (with his concern for brevity and unity of impression) and Brander Matthews (with the catalogue of features he considered necessary for short fiction) and into the varied appraisals of the twentieth century (such as those of Frank O'Connor, Ian Reid, Clare Hanson, and Susan Lohafer), pointing out the cultural and other biases of each.

New maps the changes in the short story in New Zealand and Canada. Central to the experience of early fiction writers, he claims, is the search for "an appropriate literary form for the stories they wanted to tell" and "a determined effort... to find a literary means of coming to terms with the specifics of the local experience. Initially it was a matter of faithfully recording the empirical facts of the environment... Yet by World War I, ... writers had... begun to document the nuances of voice and attitude that
were to mark their separateness as a culture as well as to record the specifics of flora and fauna that marked their separateness of territory " (21). New notes the importance in Canada of "the documentary impulse" and of irony; hence the importance of the sketch, which "stopped being a 'static' form because it was charged with the tension between the observing mind and the documentary language of observation" (24). And it is with the documentary sketch that New begins, in Part 2 ("Canada: Story and History"), outlining a "cumulative literary tradition" of short fiction (29), when he discusses the work of, among others, Duncan Campbell Scott, Susanna Moodie, Thomas McCulloch, and Thomas Chandler Haliburton. Eventually the sketch was to fall out of favour; Scott's success in "maintaining the separateness of the fragmentary units within the overall composite structure" (49) became a problem once fragmentation came to be seen as unfortunate in the context of a broad range of colonial cultural values. The tale took its place, a form which adapted itself to a variety of purposes including moral didacticism and romantic regionalism. By the nineteen twenties, however, writers such as Morley Callaghan and Raymond Knister were returning to the sketch in search of a new style that would give their work an international appeal. New's discussion of the period from 1930 to 1980 at first highlights the diversity of writers' backgrounds, the tension between the idea of a Canadian literature and the
fact that much of it was being written and shaped by people who would at one time not have been considered Canadian; later in this period, the main opposition will have less to do with national or ethnic influence and more to do with ideology and practice, as the difference between the concerns of modernist and postmodernist writers emerges. With its dual focus on micro- and macrostructures (its careful attention to, for example, the opening of Margaret Laurence's "To Set Our House in Order," and that in the context of a much larger national and cultural history), New's own text in many ways embodies the idea of fragmented unity, of the "interrupted sequence" (102) of short story cycles which is one of his chief interests.

Other books on the short story in Canada, besides those which address the work of an individual author, include Helmut Bonheim's *The Narrative Modes: Techniques of the Short Story* (1982), a structuralist analysis of short fiction. Bonheim identifies the four narrative modes (description, report, speech and comment) he sees as forming the basis of fictional narrative. He draws statistics from a study of six hundred short stories (three hundred of which are Canadian stories) to argue that discernible structural patterns exist in both novels and short stories, and that this examination of the interaction of the modes (the "fundamental categories of narration" [165]) constitutes a
theory of structure which may form the basis for a poetics of narrative. Roughly half the book explains and explores the narrative modes, their definitions and manifestations, while three substantial chapters are devoted to short story beginnings and endings. Michelle Gadpaille’s *The Canadian Short Story* (1988) provides a sketchy overview of major (and not so major) Canadian story writers and their works; there are also chapters on Gallant, Munro and Atwood, and a final one on writing from the 1960s and after. Gadpaille, however, attempts to cover so much ground in a slim volume that she ends up saying very little about any of the works she mentions. Simone Vauthier’s *Reverberations* (1993) is an unusual book in that it makes no particular claim as to what the Canadian short story was, is, or might be; in this respect it echoes Robert Lecker’s *On the Line: Readings in the Short Fiction of Clark Blaise, John Metcalf and Hugh Hood* (1982). Both critics assume that the stories, and the readings of them, will be valuable in their own right. Lecker’s title is self-explanatory; *Reverberations* collects Vauthier’s essays on the short stories of a variety of writers (Leon Rooke, Audrey Thomas, John Metcalf, Clark Blaise, Carol Shields, Rudy Wiebe, Hugh Hood and Mavis Gallant). Each chapter focusses on one story (except the chapter on Shields, which is about endings in *Various Miracles*), so that Vauthier has enough room to draw on a variety of theoretical and critical models and to analyze
the fiction in some depth. *How Stories Mean* (1993) is an anthology which draws together, apart from introductory pieces by editors John Metcalf and J.R. Struthers, forty-six meditations on short fiction by Canadian writers; the subjects range from punctuation to morality and literary markets.

Articles on the short story include Frank Davey's "Genre Subversion and the Canadian Short Story," in which Davey argues that the Canadian short story has been misconstrued as having evolved on the basis of Anglo-American models, that a much more "pluralist or eclectic view of the short story" is required to understand the kind of genre b(1)ending he sees as one of its chief characteristics (10). Writer David Arnason provides a brief summary of the story's history in Canada in the 1983 issue of *RANAM* (*Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines*), a later (1987) issue of which also contains Davey's piece. The latter volume also includes an article by Dieter Meindl, "Modernism and the English Canadian Story Cycle," addressing "the special suitability of the short story cycle for the expression of distinctly modern concerns and convictions" (18). Gerald Lynch concurs in his "The One and the Many: English-Canadian Short Story Cycles" (*Canadian Literature* 1991) that "the story cycle seems to be well suited to the concerns of Canadian writers"; Lynch, like New, sees the
cycle as a vital means of "portraying a particular region or community" and, like Meindl, he relates it to "the psychology that characterizes modernism" (92). David Jackel surveys short fiction from 1972 to 1984 in the Literary History of Canada vol. 4 (1990). Jackel categorizes the anthologies of short fiction produced during that period, noting the tension between those that strove to acknowledge a Canadian literary tradition and those which denied such a tradition existed. He assesses the work of many writers who produced collections of short stories from 1972 to 1984 (Margaret Atwood, Matt Cohen, Jack Hodgins, Hugh Hood, John Metcalf, Audrey Thomas, Rudy Wiebe and many others). Jackel concludes by asserting that the short story has finally received the recognition it deserves. He laments "the tendency to find the short story a ground on which to battle over the merits of experimental and self-reflexive fiction at the expense of more traditional forms" and the "promotion of a vague and rootless cosmopolitanism which would somehow accord with 'international standards' invoked but never defined," which "seemed to deny the Canadian-ness of Canadian fiction" (72). Jackel invokes T.D. MacLulich and George Grant, and closes with the following warning, which encapsulates his position on the short story, and on writing in general:

Writers who seek to attune themselves with currently fashionable theories of art, and neglect the realities of their time and place, add to the risk that literature will become merely source material for
social scientists and cultural historians. Fortunately, the variety, the substance, and the quality of many short stories published between 1972 and 1984 give some reason to hope that dogmatic, doctrinaire, and ill-grounded 'international' views will not in the end prevail.

While Canadian short fiction has prompted a good deal of critical response, that response has usually taken the form of studies of individual authors. With some significant exceptions, not a great deal of comparative or associative work has been done on the short story in this country. And on the subject of voice, critics have largely remained silent.

2. Critical samples

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief demonstration of the relative absence of criticism related to voice. I will discuss two 'samples': two sets of critical commentaries on major Canadian authors, Sinclair Ross and Margaret Laurence. Ross and Laurence figure here because they are canonical Canadian writers whose fiction is often anthologized and generally considered part of the Canadian literary mainstream.

Certain obvious objections might be raised at this point. I have chosen only two samples because this is not a
catalogue of criticism, just a brief and, I would argue, representative sketch. The critical commentaries cited here are not the only ones available on these authors, but they are standard texts and the aim here is to illustrate by selection, not to be comprehensive. Margaret Laurence and Sinclair Ross are both prairie writers--indeed, the thematic connections between them are significant enough to have been explored by Sandra Djwa in an article in Margaret Laurence (see below)--but ultimately the differences outweigh the similarities.

(A) Sinclair Ross

Sinclair Ross is well known for his novels and short stories; the standard collection of his shorter works is The Lamp at Noon and Other Stories, issued by McClelland and Stewart in 1968, with an introduction by Margaret Laurence, as part of the New Canadian Library series. Ross is known chiefly as a prairie realist, a chronicler of the bleak lives of hardworking farm families beaten down by a climate which only sometimes and only just allows them to eke out an existence. Much of Ross's fiction is characterized by a Hardyesque sense of doom, his characters determined to struggle on, but marked for defeat.
Margaret Laurence’s Introduction to *The Lamp at Noon* highlights isolation: "The human community is, for most of the time, reduced to its smallest unit, the family... It is within this extreme condition of human separateness and in the extremes of summer drought and winter blizzard that Ross’s characters grapple with their lives and their fate" (7). For Laurence, the "violent and unpredictable" land "appear[s] almost as chief protagonist" (7); "the emptiness of the landscape, the bleakness of the land, reflect the inability of these people to touch one another with assurance and gentleness" (11). She notes Ross’s style in one sentence: "Ross’s style is always beautifully matched to his material--spare, lean, honest, no gimmicks, and yet in its very simplicity setting up continuing echoes in the mind" (8). Characterization is relatively consistent: the women, Laurence writes, "are farmers’ wives, most of them still fairly young, trying to resign themselves to lives of unrelieved drabness" (8-9). These lonely women are desperate for communication; the men, on the other hand, remain "painfully inarticulate," compelled by the duties of manhood to work like dogs and hide their feelings, as a result of which they "fail consistently in close relationships" (9-10). To summarize: the key features of Ross’s writing, for Laurence, involve the violent and implacable setting, which functions symbolically as an
indicator of the characters' alienation from one another; the spare, simple style; and the tension between the desperate loneliness of the wives and the determined drudgery of the husbands. Setting, style, and character, then, with the emphasis on setting and character because Laurence gives them more attention.

Thirteen years after Laurence's Introduction, Ken Mitchell's *Sinclair Ross: A Reader's Guide* was published by Coteau Books. This is a critical study of Ross's oeuvre, with a chapter devoted to the short fiction. Mitchell characterizes Ross's stories as follows:

Most of the stories have a remarkably similar pattern: a direct narrative simplicity and lack of stylistic excess. Occasionally, there is a first-person narrator. The characters are usually simple people, either rural or small-town; "sophisticates" never appear, even peripherally. Ross's technique of characterization, however, is never simple. It shows a careful accretion of physical and psychological detail through the course of a well-plotted story. His pieces are, in other words, models of the "classic" story, and show much similarity to the stories of James Joyce and Stephen Crane. Ross's particular strength is the use of certain forces, such as weather and landscape, to create symbolic patterns around the internal lives of his characters; he also shows a highly developed eye for the significantly vivid detail in a commonplace world.

Mitchell goes on to argue that the stories collected in *The Lamp at Noon* may be divided into two groups. One set is "marked by an intense conflict between husband and wife," while the other comes from a child's point of view. In the
first set, "the husband is tight-lipped and physically powerful,... toiling to satisfy the demands of his farm and crops. The wife is generally characterized as sensitive and refined, often well-educated. She is subjected to a life of suffering and emotional deprivation..." (5).

To summarize Mitchell’s comments, then: Ross’s short stories are marked by a "narrative simplicity"; the characters, too, are simple, although not simply characterized; plots are carefully structured along a "classic" model; the harshness of the landscape mirrors the inner torment of the character’s lives; one of the strengths of the writing lies in its use of vivid detail.

Mitchell and Laurence are both struck by certain dominant features of Ross’s work: the symbolism of the harsh setting, the simplicity of the style, the incompatibility of the sexes. Mitchell draws attention to vivid detail, which is implicit in Laurence’s praise for Ross’s description of prairie landscapes.

A third and final sample of Ross criticism is Lorraine McMullen’s book, Sinclair Ross, first published in 1979 in the Twayne series but revised and reissued in 1991 by Tecumseh Press. Each of Ross’s stories, McMullen argues,
is a finely wrought pattern of event, character, and setting in which precision, economy, rhythm, and repetition, the hallmarks of Ross's novels, are evident... While recreating the prairie of the depression, this fiction most often concentrates on the effects of loneliness, isolation, hardship, and poverty on individuals and their relationships. Thus, although Ross vividly and realistically portrays the wind, storms, and droughts of the prairie of the thirties, his focus is on inner rather than outer reality. In fact, one of the remarkable aspects of his art is his ability to merge inner and outer landscape...

(9)

McMullen, then, highlights "event, character, and setting"; she is slightly more precise than Mitchell or Laurence in her characterization of Ross's language ("precision, economy, rhythm, and repetition"); she notes the significance of setting, the evocation of isolation and hardship, and the way in which the former symbolizes the latter. (There is also a section on style and craft, which addresses, very briefly, humour, point of view, Ross's meticulousness, and descriptive passages.)

To generalize from these three books, then, the dominant features of Ross's short fiction are the ways in which the natural environment enacts the characters' psychological conflicts and the gulf of silence which separates husbands (hard-working and insensitive) from wives (lonely and sensitive). Ross's language is mentioned either with reference to his descriptive powers (this overlaps with the issue of symbolism and the natural environment,
especially since such powers tend to be proven by citation rather than analyzed) or in terms of such qualities as simplicity and precision.

(B) Margaret Laurence

Voice is an important concept in feminist criticism, for a variety of reasons. In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," (1981), Elaine Showalter, a major proponent of Anglo-American feminism, posits a cultural model of women's writing. In a much-cited passage, Showalter writes: "one implication of this model is that women's fiction can be read as a double-voiced discourse, containing a 'dominant' and a 'muted' story" (266). The paradigmatic opposition between speech (seen as male and dominant) and silence (seen as female and subordinate) has led many feminist critics to seek out women's voices in fiction: to search, that is, for an articulation of women's experience within men's texts, for the "muted" story in women's writing, or for a voice that may be identified as in some way characteristic of women (in the last example, the term "voice" means as much "behaviour patterns" as anything else; see Carol Gilligan's controversial study, *In a Different Voice* [1982]). The prominence of the term "voice" in feminist scholarship might suggest that critical studies of Margaret Laurence's fiction would have to do, overwhelmingly, with voice, since
Laurence's writing is so much about women's concerns and perspectives and lends itself readily to feminist readings. This, however, is not the case.


Margaret Laurence collects an impressive thirty-seven commentaries, which include reviews, introductions, an interview, critical studies, semi-biographical appraisals, and Laurence's own meditations on language and life. Of these, only one commentary addresses voice directly: "Time and the Narrative Voice"--by Margaret Laurence. As a rule, writers are far more interested in voice than critics are.

A Place to Stand On brings together twenty-five pieces on Laurence's work. Nine of those appeared previously in Margaret Laurence, including "Time and the Narrative Voice." Two other entries address voice directly: "Gadgetry or Growing: Form and Voice in the Novel" and "Every Now and
Then: Voice and Language in Laurence’s *The Stone Angel.*" The former is, again, by Margaret Laurence; the latter’s author is, not surprisingly, W.H. New, whose interest in voice becomes more apparent in *Dreams of Speech and Violence.*

In *Crossing the River,* ten articles (excluding the Preface, Introduction, and Afterword) provide a range of perspectives on Laurence’s art; one, Diana Brydon’s "Silence, Voice, and the Mirror: Margaret Laurence and Women," speaks to issues of voice. And of the fifteen which appear in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence*—none. Thus, of the seventy-eight works collected in these four books, four deal with voice, and two of those were written by the author herself.

While standard commentaries on the short fiction of Sinclair Ross and Margaret Laurence highlight such features as setting and character, they includes little substantive discussion of language and even less of voice. This is in some ways especially curious in the case of Ross, since criticism of his novel *As For Me and My House* has in recent years been dominated by issues relating to voice and the reliability of the narrator. It is not my intention to argue that the kinds of criticism represented in these samples are misguided, merely that most of them do not deal with a topic I consider important. The readings they produce
are affected by the subjects they choose to introduce, and it is my contention that introducing voice as a primary topic will produce different kinds of readings.

3. Voice

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to provide a clear-cut definition of voice; such a definition would inevitably fail to encompass all the possibilities. Voice is notoriously difficult to sum up in any useful way. In the Introduction to Voicelust: Eight Contemporary Fiction Writers on Style, Allen Weir and Don Hendrie, Jr., note that, "[i]n fiction workshops, the terms voice and tone come up frequently. They are crucial elements of contemporary fiction, at once specific and vague, at once clearly understood and difficult to define adequately." According to the celebrated children's fantasy writer Lloyd Alexander, "The narrative voice, unique and personal, is an audible fingerprint" (123). Style, tone and narrative voice, Alexander writes, "are elusive terms, overlapping and merging with one another... Encompassing style and tone, voice is the most important and the most difficult to describe" (126).

Included in Voicelust is an essay by writer Lee Smith. "Even the small considerations of language," Smith writes,
"Contribute to any writer's voice: such prosaic questions as the length of the sentences, the favoured grammatical constructions, the imagery, or the lack of imagery" (99). This thesis assumes that the prosaic questions and the small considerations of language are those which give rise to the voices of the text, and that it is only through the process of unravelling voices that a sense of what voice is may be formed. It is important to add that, while the term "voice" is at times used to designate one dominant narrative persona or stance, the analyses which compose this study will explore the voices of characters as well as narrators, and will demonstrate that the narrator's voice is often not one voice but many.

4. Outline

The body of this thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter examines the notion of the narrator. Narrative voice means here the voices of the narration rather than the voice of the narrator; this definition reflects a recognition of the polyphony of fiction, and the fact that voices other than the narrator's often play a significant role. The narrator's (narrators') voices, however, demand attention, and it is for this reason that the first chapter of this study is devoted to a
consideration of what the narrator is: what the term implies, how narrators have been distinguished from authors, implied authors and characters, and where difficulties arise in making such distinctions. The identity of the narrator is not a topic that tends to receive much consideration. In a thesis which deals with narrative voices, with identifying the voices of narrators and others, it is important to be clear about what the term narrator can mean, and to have some idea as to where to situate the narrator among other figures implicated in the production of voice in fiction.

Each of the four subsequent chapters examines the work of an individual writer. Chapters Two and Three introduce the means by which voice may be addressed. Chapter Two begins with a consideration of Leon Rooke's critical reception which highlights the effects of the prominence of voice in his stories; it then proceeds to analyze the characteristics of the narrative voice in "Shut Up," which appeared in Rooke's 1992 collection, *Who Do You Love?* Chapter Three examines the interplay of voices in Terry Griggs' "Unfinished" (*Quickening*, 1990). In addition to the voices of the narrator, which are often ironic and self-reflexive, this story includes a variety of other voices belonging to an amalgam of people the narrator encounters: the voices are not those of other individualized characters but of a collective "they" the narrator confronts in the
process of recovering from the loss which is the subject of the story.

The fourth chapter analyzes two short stories by Douglas Glover, "Red" and "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon." Both stories appear in Glover's second collection of short fiction, *Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon* (1985). These stories manifest two different types of polyvocality. "Red" is dominated by the narrator's voice, but that voice draws into itself a variety of other voices issuing from characters and assorted modes of discourse, so that what appears at first glance to be one strong voice turns out to be an amalgam of voices speaking in and through that of Flo, the narrator. "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon," like "Red," is told in the first person; the "I" is both the narrator and a character in the story. Here, however, the voice of the narrator gives the impression not of allowing entrance to other voices but of breaking down into the fragments of which it is made. Thus, the "I" in the story—a pronoun which appears in the first sentence to represent a singular and unitary identity—finds itself playing host to an assortment of antecedent identities (lover, ex-lover, protagonist, narrator, philosopher, writer, and others) which conflict with and contradict one another throughout the text.
The principal subject of Chapter Five is Mavis Gallant's story "The Pegnitz Junction," although some other texts come under consideration; the discussion has chiefly to do with character-voices. The speech of the two main characters says a lot about who they are as individuals, but it also functions as a means of addressing the story's main theme, which has to do with the ways in which people respond to authority. The character named Herbert speaks a lot without saying very much; he is presented as an authority figure, but remains curiously acquiescent in his response to others' abuses of power. The character named Christine, on the other hand, confronts authoritarianism wherever she perceives it, and her challenges are mostly direct and verbal. The voice of the narrator is a complex issue in Gallant's fiction, and the chapter continues by assessing some critics' responses to the distant omniscience her stories often cultivate.

Chapters Four and Five build on the two chapters which precede them by continuing to examine strategies for isolating and identifying voices; in addition, though, they introduce other topics which are related to voice. Thus, Chapter Four blends voice-centred reading strategies with Judith Butler's ideas about the performance of gender; the result is an analysis of the ways in which characters perform a variety of gendered identities through speech in
Douglas Glover’s story, "Red." In Chapter Five, following the analysis of voice in Mavis Gallant’s "The Pegnitz Junction," voice is shown to play a key role in the issues of judgement which have so influenced Gallant’s critical reception.

The selection of authors for this study reflects a variety of choices. The intention was to include recent fiction, but not exclusively work from the last decade. The temporal range extends from Gallant’s "The Pegnitz Junction," originally published in book form in 1973, to Leon Rooke’s "Shut Up," collected in 1992; between these fictions fall Glover’s stories (collected in 1985) and Griggs’ "Unfinished" (in 1991): two chapters, then, involving books published in the nineties, one in the eighties and one in the seventies. The purpose of this spectrum, such as it is, is to address primarily "new" stories while at the same time providing some sense of history and avoiding the charge that voice plays a significant role only in fiction issuing from a very brief period, that it is a minor trend or a blip on the graph. Temporal considerations aside, the stories had to be good—a highly subjective criterion—which is to say I had to find them interesting enough to feel they would keep my attention through repeated readings. Also, they needed to do interesting things with voice. Although many very different
kinds of stories lend themselves to voice-centred readings, it is obviously more productive to bring them to bear on texts in which voice stands out at least in some small way. Other issues included gender and voice: Douglas Glover is one of a very few male writers (Rooke is another) whose stories often feature highly audible women's voices. And while some voice-centred fiction often announces itself as such from the opening lines of the story, such is not the case with Mavis Gallant's "The Peginitz Junction," which, with its ironies and understatement, counters any notion that texts in which voice plays a significant role must manifest some kind of vocal flamboyance or ostentation.

A final note: I do not by any means intend to imply that the readings which follow are superior to all other kinds of reading, that they reveal the ultimate truth about a story which would otherwise be inaccessible, or that the kinds of reading done here are the only kinds that should be done. By highlighting issues of voice, this study creates new and interesting ways of reading fiction--but they are not the only ways.
Voices can't come from nowhere. In order to talk about voice, one must have some notion of a figure to whom the voice belongs. The term "figure" is more useful than, for example, "person" or "character," because of its connotations; it refers in this text to authors (implied or actual), characters, narrators, and other such discursive constructs that simulate people in some way. Most voices do after all come from people, and "figure" connotes personhood. But it also means image, and this is important in terms of how voices are attributed. There is a sense in which the narrator is not a character at all, in which the narrator, even a first-person narrator, is never a character but possibly some kind of image of a character. The "I" designates both a character who is capable of action and a narrator who is not, who is capable only of commentary. The narrator, then, is a figure rather than a person (since a person is presumably real) or a character (who does things in a story). In order to continue investigating voices in
fiction it will be helpful to examine the figures to whom these voices belong.

It is no longer possible to use such terms as "narrator" uncritically. The multiplicity of voices generated by the fictional "I" gives rise to questions about the nature and function of whom or what the "I" designates. I will use, as a basis for this discussion of narrators and others, Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978). *Story and Discourse* is not the most recent study of narrative but it is one of the most widely read North-American texts on the subject; in addition, it incorporates Chatman's readings of the works of a wide range of theorists, including Aristotle, Roland Barthes, Wayne Booth, E.M. Forster, Gérard Genette, Henry James, Percy Lubbock, and Tzvetan Todorov. Chatman isolates and defines what he sees as the key elements of narrative, à la Genette, and describes the process he calls "reading out," which is a conceptualization of the reading process and the roles of those fictional and actual personae who participate in it.

Chatman's study is clear and accessible. Like any discussion of narrative, it relies on a series of metaphors to describe the components of story and discourse, and it is important to recognize these metaphors, their derivation and
effect. Chatman approaches narrative from the perspective of structuralism, and while he is careful to explain and analyze such concepts as story and discourse, which are crucial to his work, many other ideas about narrative go unchallenged (for example, the notion of narrative as a chain of units, that chain of units having a surface structure and a deep structure, the surface structure being accessible through a simple reading, the deep structure through a more careful one, the deep structure somehow containing and guiding the narrative elements into a whole which can be understood by the careful reader who uses the appropriate means to access the deep structure). Concepts such as structure and immanence, metaphors such as depth and grammar inform Chatman’s work. There is nothing wrong with using metaphors to describe the reading process, but problems arise when, for example, Chatman distinguishes between "real and implied authors and audiences: only implied authors and audiences are immanent to the work" (31). Setting aside the difficulty of the theological burden carried by the word "immanent," readers are left with the question, Why? Why are only implied authors and audiences immanent to the work --what does it mean to be "immanent to the work," and what then are the criteria for immanence? As Chatman combines one metaphor with others--immanence, for example, with grammar and structure--his explanations become more and more opaque:
For narrative purposes, then, a trait may be said to be a narrative adjective out of the vernacular labeling a personal quality of a character... Just as we define "event" at the story level as a narrative predicate (DO or HAPPEN), so we can define "trait" as the narrative adjective tied to the narrative copula when that replaces the normal transitive predicate. The actual verbal adjective, of course, need not... appear. But whether inferred or not, it is immanent to the deep structure of the text.

Structure--deep or surface--is another morass Chatman chooses to avoid. In spite of these weaknesses, Story and Discourse has its moments of clear thinking; one of its chief strengths lies in the way it breaks down large and unwieldy concepts into relatively manageable ones. Whether such categories and distinctions can withstand sustained critique is an open question; they do provide a useful place to begin.

The Sending End

A narrative is a communication; hence, it presupposes two parties, a sender and a receiver. Each party entails three different personages. On the sending end are the real author, the implied author, and the narrator (if any); on the receiving end, the real audience (listener, reader, viewer), the implied audience, and the narratee.  

(125)
The "receiving end" has been the subject of considerable critical discussion—in speech-act, reader-response and reception theories, in the works of, among others, Jauss, Iser and Fish. Narrative voice has chiefly to do with the "sending end" of the communication, and this is what will be addressed here. Chatman subdivides the category into three figures: the real author, the implied author, and the narrator. Although these terms appear to designate separate entities, the distinctions among them are often confused and obscure. This section will problematize the means by which the three figures have been separated, in order to demonstrate the complications involved in using the word "narrator."

The Real Author

The "real author" would appear to be somewhat easier than the other figures to deal with, since the term refers to an identifiable person. But this is not so. While much has been written about individual authors and groups of authors in this century, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of the author in theory and criticism, in literature and in reading practices. The
sentent convention of modern criticism is that the author writes the text and then the text leaves the author; the author has no further textual function and does not come into play in the reading process.

This of course is a sweeping generalization— if it were strictly true then biographies, especially literary biographies (which imply a significant relation between the author’s life and the author’s work), would have disappeared, along with poetry readings, interviews, the publication of diaries and letters, and a host of other author-related texts and practices which raise a variety of questions about the author and what Michel Foucault refers to as the author-function (125). For instance: given that biographies continue to proliferate, what is the function of biography? More precisely, if a reader reads Quentin Bell’s biography of Virginia Woolf in conjunction with The Waves, is the reading of The Waves affected by Woolf’s life, by the reader’s interpretation of Woolf’s life, or by no one’s life but rather Quentin Bell’s text? Furthermore, the notion that the finished text separates itself from the author is questionable—consider Salman Rushdie and the extent to which his work has impacted on his life, and his life on, at the very least, the distribution and circulation of his work (Rushdie’s case may be an extreme example, but it is one which demonstrates the persistence of the relationship
There are three key twentieth-century texts that focus on the author: W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy" (1946), Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1968) and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" (1969). "The Intentional Fallacy" underscores the New Critical reaction against Romantic criticism in its affirmation of the autonomy of the poem (that is, the text's independence from its author). Wimsatt and Beardsley contend "that judgement of poems is different from the art of producing them" (1018); they seek to redirect literary study away from "author psychology" (1018) and toward "objective criticism" (1016). The effect of their argument is to transfer significance from author to text. The influence of "The Intentional Fallacy" has been vast--it is reprinted in virtually every anthology of theory and criticism--so much so, indeed, that its effect seems to have been not only helpfully to divert attention from the author in matters of textual analysis, but also curiously to discourage many critics from talking about the author at all.

Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" appeared some twenty years after "The Intentional Fallacy"; it also advances the complaint that readers pay too much attention
to the author, too little to the writing: "The explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it" (168). For Barthes, the author disappears in the act of composition:

As soon as a fact is narrated no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but in transitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins.  

(168)

It is only with the death of the author that the reader may emerge, and for Barthes the reader is the important figure, or perhaps the important site: "The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (171).

In "What Is an Author?" Michel Foucault agrees with Barthes that writing entails the writer's death: "If we wish to know the writer in our day, it will be through the singularity of his [sic] absence and in his link to death, which has transformed him into a victim of his own writing" (117). Foucault is interested in the ways in which the author has functioned (as a proper name, a holder of copyright, a subject position). He analyzes what he sees as the four most important characteristics of the author-
function: it

is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses; it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy.

(130-31)

Wimsatt and Beardsley, Barthes and Foucault all have a similar agenda, which is to respond to the question "What does the author mean?" Each text argues in its own way that such a question is inappropriate, that other questions should be asked instead. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, these questions are about the way in which the poem functions. The poem is conceptualized as an artifact, a complete thing, a series of parts constituting a unitary and autonomous object; the job of the critic is to explain the relation of part to whole. For Barthes, the important questions have to do with how writing should be read, with the ephemeral quality of the act of reading, with the way in which the text inscribes itself on the very body of the reader. Foucault provides his own list of preferable questions at the end of the article ("What are the modes of existence of this discourse?...What placements are determined for possible subjects?" [138]). The lesson of
the twentieth century is that the author is useful only in his or her absence, that it is no longer interesting to ask who the author is or what s/he means. But the author's presence (or absence) still lingers, and remains important because of its persistence even in the minds of those who have long forsaken the idea of the author as "oracle" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1022), and because of the way in which the author impinges on other figures. The author is obsolete, and yet vital to the construction of the other figures which comprise the "sending end" of the communication.

"That it is essential not to confuse author and narrator," Chatman writes, "has become a commonplace of literary theory" (147). It seems easy enough to separate author and narrator--the former has a body, where the latter has a voice in a text. But at times the substitution of "narrator" where "author" would once have been used causes problems of responsibility--to what degree is the narrator responsible for the text? Chatman distinguishes between author and narrator as follows:

In the strict sense, of course, all statements are "mediated," since they are composed by someone. Even dialogue has to be invented by an author. But it is quite clear (well established in theory and criticism) that we must distinguish between the narrator, or speaker, the one currently "telling" the story, and the author, the ultimate designer of the fable, who also decides, for example, whether to have a narrator, and
if so, how prominent he [sic] should be. It is a fundamental convention to ignore the author, but not the narrator. The narrator may be overt... Or he [sic] may be "absent"... The "narrator," when he [sic] appears, is a demonstrable, recognizable entity immanent to the narrative itself. Every narrative, even one wholly "shown" or unmediated, finally has an author, the one who devised it. But "narrator" should not be used in that sense. Rather it should mean only the someone--person or presence--actually telling the story to an audience, no matter how minimally evoked his [sic] voice or the audience's listening ear.

(33-34)

These premises should be clear enough: the author invents the story; the narrator tells it. But if all statements are "composed by someone," and that someone is the author, then to what degree is it possible to attribute autonomy to the narrator, or to a character? That is to say, is there a meaningful overlap between an author composing a sentence and a narrator "speaking" it--does the fact that the sentence remains the same (if indeed it does) bind author and narrator in some inexorable way, or is such a connection incidental to the narrative and to the reading process?

One consequence of the connection--or perhaps, the difficulty in distinguishing--between author and narrator is its impact on the language of literary criticism. When Terry Griggs' story "Unfinished" opens with its sequence of incomplete similes, how is the critic to talk about that opening--who is responsible for it? One might say,
following the notion that the author is responsible for the invention, "Griggs omits subjects and verbs in this series of sentence fragments in order to underline the sense of incompletion suggested by the title." Or one might consider the opening lines as the first manifestation of the narrator's voice and attribute them accordingly: "The narrator begins with a series of truncated comparisons which highlight the theme of discontinuity." The easy way out is to avoid mentioning author or narrator altogether by beginning: "This sequence of similes lacks subjects and verbs...." The implications are quite different. The first two statements implicate an inventor, a figure capable of choice. The former defies Wimsatt and Beardsley's warnings about the intentional fallacy by affirming that the writer has made certain choices in order to achieve a certain end--it does not ignore the author and is not acceptable according to current critical convention. The latter conforms to convention by substituting the narrator for the author, but the simple substitution suggests that the two are interchangeable, which is not the case. Critics who discuss the voice of the narrator often imply that the narrator has written the story. In this instance the implication is indirect: the narrator begins with comparisons, the comparisons highlight discontinuity--ergo, the narrator selects particular comparisons so as to create a particular effect. The question then is whether such
choices are within the narrator's purview. Both sentences assume the existence of a guiding hand, a controlling mind. The last example differs in several respects. It omits any reference to a controlling figure; this suggests that responsibility is not an issue, or at least that such responsibility does not apply to the "sending end" of the communication. The failure to refer to a figure may be a means of avoiding the questions such a reference would entail, or it may signal the belief that such questions are not always pertinent, that what is pertinent is the interaction between reader and text, or the free play of language. The implicit or explicit distinctions critics make among narrator, author and text, the degrees of responsibility they accord the author, narrator(s) and characters, all contribute to the manifestation of a critical position, that position constituting a set of decisions about figures and their relation in and to the text.

"Even dialogue," Chatman writes, "has to be invented by an author" (33). Consider the following paragraph, which occurs on the second page of "Unfinished":

But it wasn't my fault. I wasn't the inventor of this farce, this thriller, just a character like you. The heroine cowering in the corner, her hand clapped like a stranger's hand against her mouth. Face it, you were written out, discarded, a paper man torn in two, a jagged line down the centre. Not a drop spilled. (42)
Here the narrator appears to be commenting directly on the distinction between herself and the author. The paragraph opens with a denial of authorial responsibility--just in case the reader, or the narratee, were beginning to confuse the roles of author and narrator, the narrator clarifies them by assigning invention to the author. In the second sentence she describes herself as "just a character"--powerless in relation to the author-inventor. The third sentence increases the distance between the narrator-character and the author in that the narrator represents herself specifically as a stock character, a traditional thriller-heroine, subject to the violence of the stranger, the author, his hand stopping her voice. This is somewhat disingenuous--the narrator may not be "the inventor of this farce" but she plays a greater role, with more power in and responsibility for the narrative than a character. But exactly where the differences lie--between author and narrator, narrator and cardboard heroine--is difficult to determine.

The Implied Author

Wayne Booth invented the implied author in his 1961 book, The Rhetoric of Fiction. The implied author is a
useful illusion; it increases the number of figures on the sending end from two to three and allows for the attribution of ideas to someone other than author and narrator. Chatman quotes Booth’s explanation of what the implied author is, and elaborates on it:

As he writes, [the real author] creates not simply an ideal, impersonal ‘man in general’ but an implied version of ‘himself’ that is different from the implied authors we meet in other men’s works.... Whether we call this implied author an ‘official scribe’, or adopt the term recently revived by Kathleen Tillotson [in The Tale and the Teller 1959]--the author’s ‘second self’--it is clear that the picture the reader gets of this presence is one of the author’s most important effects. However impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe.

He is "implied," that is, reconstructed by the reader from the narrative. He is not the narrator, but rather the principle that invented the narrator, along with everything else in the narrative, that stacked the cards in this particular way, had these things happen to these characters, in these words or images.¹

(Chipman 148)

This passage illustrates the difficulties of distinguishing between figures: even Chatman grows confused as he describes the implied author as the one who "invented the narrator, along with everything else in the narrative": this figure, surely, is the "real" author.

Chatman continues his explication of Booth by addressing issues of voice:
Unlike the narrator, the implied author can tell us nothing. He, or better, it has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn.

(148)

But this is not what Booth says; according to The Rhetoric of Fiction, the implied author can have a voice. Booth concludes the paragraph Chatman excerpts above by crystallizing the issue at hand: "Our present problem is the intricate relationship of the so-called real author with his various official versions of himself [sic]" (71). The differences between the author and the implied authors which are constructed in that author's texts, Booth argues, "are most evident when the second self is given an overt, speaking role in a story" (71). If the implied author, or second self, has "an overt, speaking role," then that self clearly has a voice and a "direct means of communicating."

Voice seems to be the difficulty. While Chatman has trouble with voice and Booth's implied author, Booth himself is none too clear on the dividing line between the voice of the narrator and that of the implied author. Booth gives as an example the novels of Fielding, explaining that since the implied authors are clearly different in the different novels, and the real author is the same in each case, then the real author and the implied author cannot be
identical. One of the chief means by which Booth characterizes the implied author, however, is through the commentary of the narrator. Booth writes: "Our picture of him [sic, the implied author] is built, of course, only partly by the narrator's explicit commentary; it is even more derived from the kind of tale he chooses to tell" (73). But it is to the narrator's commentary rather than the kind of tale that Booth points, with the implication that the world view expressed by the narrator is that of the implied author (72-73). Having established a boundary between implied author and narrator, then, Booth proceeds to fuse the voices of the two figures in his discussion of what the implied author is. In the end, Chatman's image of a voiceless implied author, while it does not come from Booth, provides a corrective in that it obviates the problem of disentangling the implied author's voice from that of the narrator.

Booth's creation of the implied author is important because it prevents the simplistic equation of the real author with what Booth refers to as "the picture the reader gets of this presence" (71); the fact that the separation of implied author from author and narrator is plagued by difficulty is not his fault. Chatman's apparently unwitting manipulation of Booth's implied author makes two contributions. In addition to taking away the
implied author's voice, Chatman depersonalizes the figure, referring to "him" [sic] as "it"--the effect is to distance the implied author from the author, to reduce the implied author's personhood. Chatman describes the implied author as a "structural principle" (149). This comparison suggests the degree to which the implied author functions really not as anything like an author but as a structure, a form--or, if a voice, then not one voice but some kind of amalgam issuing from the various voices of the text without being reducible to or contained by any individual one. The implied author then, might better be called by a term that does not contain the word "author," which implies a misleading similarity to the real author. "Prime voice" might serve this purpose, with the caveat that "prime" does not mean more important or better, and that the voice is not a single voice recorded in the text but a composite voice heard by the reader, comprising the assorted voices of narrator(s) and character(s).

The Narrator

The narrator's presence derives from the audience's sense of some demonstrable communication. If it feels it is being told something, it presumes a teller.

(Chatman 147)
Even if it were possible to draw sharp distinctions between the narrator and the real author or the narrator and the implied author, the voice of the narrator would remain at times difficult to identify. The chief obstacle to the isolation of the narrator's voice results from one of the features which make it most interesting, the way in which it incorporates and intermingles with the voices of other characters, particularly in free indirect discourse.

Clearly, there are different kinds of narrators. Some assume a prominent role in the story, with first-person narration, remarks addressed to the narratee, and the like. Others are scarcely present, concealed behind a third-person narration, commenting on action and character only in the most oblique manner. Chatman's chief interest in narrators lies in the degree to which they manifest themselves in the text. He describes as "nonnarrated" texts which appear only to report information⁴. Between this kind of text and a narration which is "conspicuously audible" (197), Chatman situates "covert or effaced" narration. This is the sort of narration in which it is most difficult to locate the narrator's voice and to disentangle it from other voices in the text. Covert narration will be the subject of this discussion because its own complexities are interesting and because many of the
difficulties it offers are manifested to different degrees even in narrations in which the voice of the narrator is much more easily identifiable.

"In covert narration," Chatman writes,

we hear a voice speaking of events, characters, and setting, but its owner remains hidden in the discursive [sic] shadows. Unlike the "nonnarrated" story, the covertly narrated one can express a character’s speech or thoughts in indirect form. Such expression implies an interpretive device or mediator qualitatively different from the simple mindreading stenographer of nonnarrated narratives. Some interpreting person must be converting the characters’ thoughts into indirect expression, and we cannot tell whether his own slant does not lurk behind the words...

The terrain of covert narration is bewildering, and it is easy to lose one’s bearings.

(197)

It is the indirect expression, then, that causes problems of interpretation, and most often this occurs in free indirect discourse. Chatman provides a table to indicate the differences between direct and indirect speech and thought, and between "tagged" and "free" style:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tagged</th>
<th>Free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech &quot;I have to go,&quot; she said</td>
<td>I have to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought &quot;I have to go,&quot; she thought</td>
<td>I have to go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indirect:

Speech She said that she had to go She had to go
Thought She thought that she had to go She had to go

This table indicates some of the potential for ambiguity. The free indirect forms remain the same whether they express speech or thought. "She had to go" may then indicate the narrator's report of the character's thought or the character's speech. Or it could represent the narrator's thought, assuming the narrator functions as a character ("I thought she had to go").

Mavis Gallant's "The Peginitz Junction" provides a multitude of examples of the ambiguity generated by the use of free indirect discourse. Consider the following paragraph. In it, Herbert has recognized the deception of a young German woman who is trying to pass herself off as American; Christine had not believed Herbert but now sees he was right:

By now Christine knew all this. Herbert, who knew nothing, had fixed upon the essence of it: the girl was ashamed of being thought German by other Germans. (78)
"Who knew nothing" is the key here: is this free indirect discourse (whom Christine thought knew nothing), or a direct statement of the narrator's opinion? In other words, is "who knew nothing" the (unuttered) statement of the narrator, or of Christine? It might well be the voice of the narrator, since there is no tag to indicate otherwise; in this case, the narrator intervenes directly in the discourse to make judgements about character. This kind of intervention--or the lack of it--has a significant impact on the way Gallant's work has been received, and such issues of narration and judgement will be discussed in more detail later on. On the other hand, the "who knew nothing" might well be Christine's voice (the voice that speaks in her mind), since the opening sentence suggests that the paragraph centres on Christine. In this case, several questions arise: what does Christine mean when she says Herbert "knew nothing": is this a general statement or does it imply simply that Herbert does not have access to the psychic information she does? And if it is a general statement, coming so close to the end of the novella, does it imply that Christine has decided Herbert is a waste of her time? This is a small example of the kinds of interpretative questions that arise as a result of the use of free indirect discourse; it remains significant because it is one of many, because it raises questions central to the plot (that is, to the relationship of Christine and
Herbert), and because it demonstrates the ultimate unresolvability of many questions associated with this mode of expression. Chatman addresses this unresolvability:

Sometimes it is not possible to decide whether the words in indirect free form are the character's or the narrator's... This is not a negative characterization, since the merging of the two voices may well be an intended aesthetic effect. The implication is "It doesn't matter who says or thinks this; it is appropriate to both character and narrator." The ambiguity may strengthen the bond between the two, make us trust still more the narrator's authority. Perhaps we should speak of "neutralization" or "unification," rather than ambiguity.

(206)

Neutralization is however not always the effect. It matters whether the narrator or the character says Herbert knew nothing; the effects are different. It may not be possible to make an absolute determination, but it is possible to form an opinion, and forming opinions about narrators, characters, and action is after all a large part of reading.

Relations among authors, implied authors, narrators and characters are complicated, and while it is not necessary to be able to identify any segment of a text as belonging to one or another of them, it is helpful to have some sense of who these figures are before one begins the process of examining the interactions among their voices.
1. "he"; "him"; "himself" [sic]

2. Booth uses the phrase "official version" interchangeably with "second self" and "implied author."

3. The difference between implied author and narrator grows increasingly muddy when it comes to the definition of the reliable narrator. Booth calls "a narrator reliable when he [sic] speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he [sic] does not" (158-9). But if, according to Booth, an implied author can have a voice in a text, and if the reliable narrator "speaks for... the implied author's norms," then how is it possible to distinguish between the narrator speaking for the implied author and the implied author speaking? Chatman does not address this problem, but it is implicit in his definition as well: "The unreliable narrator is at virtual odds with the implied author; otherwise his [sic] unreliability could not emerge" (149). Therefore, the reliable narrator is not at odds with the implied author, and the question becomes: what degree of sameness is implied by "not at odds"?

4. "The non- or minimally-mediated narrative records nothing beyond the speech or verbalized thoughts of characters. Such minimal marks of narrative presence... as 'he thought' or 'he said' may be deleted..." (Chatman 166)
Leon Rooke arrived in Victoria in 1969, a little-known writer from North Carolina with one collection of short stories to his credit. Since that time he has moved to Ontario and published twelve more collections of short fiction, several plays, and three novels. Although Rooke has by now established himself as a major figure in the Canadian literary scene, his work has received scant critical attention. Keith Garebian in *Canadian Writers and Their Works* writes: "So far, Rooke remains a literary magician loved wisely and well, but who so far has not received his due share of critical analysis"(138)--that was in 1989, and the situation has not changed much.

The reasons for Rooke's relative critical obscurity are not clear. Garebian points out that many of Rooke's early works are not available--but his later fictions certainly are. It may be that, despite the success...
of a few writers such as Alice Munro and Mavis Gallant, the short story is still considered a lesser genre--perhaps even a women's genre--and that critics have difficulty taking seriously a fiction writer whose works are primarily not novels. It's possible that the diction and rhythms of Rooke's fictional voices sound too foreign to appeal to Canadian ears. There is also the matter of the characteristic weirdness of Rooke's stories: it is difficult to identify with some of his characters, who are often strange creatures tangled up in bizarre events.

Another possible difficulty for readers is the question of how to approach, respond to, understand Rooke's fiction. Pierre Spriet writes of Rooke's stories: "Ce qui frappe dans ses nouvelles, c'est l'impossibilité où se trouve le lecteur d'en faire une lecture référentielle" (137). There are two chief factors at work here: thematic symbolism and narrative voice. First, thematically, the struggle between good and evil is often at the core of Rooke's fiction, a struggle manifested partly through symbols--but it is often not clear what the symbols are symbols of. At times there appears to be a strong element of Christian morality, but often that is undercut. Hilda Kirkwood in an interview in Brick describes Rooke's 1989 novel:
A Good Baby seems to be about the struggle between Good and Evil, these abstract concepts embodied firmly in two extremes, Truman the murderer and mad preacher who is the Devil, or a devil, in human form, and the Good Baby who is a baby Jesus figure, if I am not mistaken, female in this case, with the corresponding influence on the people around them.

(29)

This is quintessential Rooke: a moral struggle peppered with ambiguous and paradoxical symbols: the devil-preacher, the girl-Jesus. Lawrence Mathews in "'A Bolt of White Cloth': Leon Rooke as Parabolist" identifies the "religious terminology" in that story but argues that, ultimately, the identification of characters or motifs as Biblical is beside the point: "It is a a text that promotes no particular brand of theology or wisdom" (108-9). And Michèle Kaltemback notes that several of the apparently Christian references in A Good Baby might equally well derive from Greek tragedy (45). The cloth (in "A Bolt of White Cloth") is a good example of Rooke's indeterminate symbolism: it could, as Danièle Pitavy-Souques claims, symbolize speech (128), but it could just as easily suggest a whole host of other things. As several critics have noted, Rooke's fictions dissolve the boundary between real and imaginary worlds, which is to say that they refuse a structure that divides those worlds; in the same way, they work against the idea that the literal refers to another, more significant level (for example, the symbolic, theological, or metaphorical). In Rooke's work the real and the imaginary, the literal and the symbolic collide and the metaphysical is as likely to
inhere in a sock as an epiphany. The effect of this is that some readers are left wondering whether they are dealing with theology, morality, or something else, and what the symbols symbolize.

My final speculation as to the lack of critical writing about Rooke's work is that much of his fiction is driven by strong voices, and that kind of writing can be difficult to analyze (because voice is not often a starting point for literary investigation, because there is no vocabulary with which to discuss it—the term "voice" itself often remains undefined). Geoff Hancock and Stephen Scobie both highlight the performative quality of Rooke's art.

In 1995 The Porcupine's Quill released Muffins, a thin book containing one story and a 45 r.p.m. vinyl record of Rooke reading it—Rooke's voice becomes, quite literally, part of the package, and the reader's experience of the text is auditory as well as visual. Frank Davey in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature writes:

In continually testing the limits of fiction, he deliberately weakens traditional elements of the realistic story. Often there is little unity of action: the narrator, as in "Brush fire", prefers frequent digression to the tale he originally set out to tell. The development of character is often minimal, with the result that many of Rooke's stories have the quality of parable or fable—skeletal dramas enacted by generic figures. Although in some stories setting can be given in such detail that it becomes the dominant element... in many it is completely absent.

(712-13)
If narrators don't stick to their narratives, characterization is minimal, and setting is absent, then anyone embarking on an analysis might have trouble deciding where to begin. Of course, Davey's description does not apply to all of Rooke's stories, but Simone Vauthier opens the third paragraph of her reading of "The Birth Control King of the Upper Volta" with a comment that characterizes much of Rooke's fiction: "What we perceive first is a voice" (10). But once the voice has been perceived, then what?

How to talk about voice? This section will examine a story called "Shut Up" from Rooke's 1992 collection Who Do You Love? and examine two key elements of the narrative: repetition and surprise.

"Shut Up" is a short first-person narrative involving protagonist Gordon, his wife and son, and a mysterious black figure. The story opens with a dispute between Gordon and his wife, in which she tells him to shut up. There is an argument about the television (Gordon objects to its volume), and one about shoes (she wants him to buy some). During these conflicts, the mysterious black figure enters and departs at intervals, visible initially only to Gordon. Whenever he (the black figure is referred to as "it" or "he") appears, Gordon is enveloped in darkness, blinded. Gordon goes outdoors to confront the figure, who leads him to a shoe store and buys him an
expensive pair of shoes. Gordon's wife, not surprisingly, does not believe in the figure she cannot see and claims Gordon bought the shoes himself. The son takes Gordon's old shoes; the wife is angry with her family. Gordon and his son sit in the boy's room at night looking at their shoes and experiencing the repeated visits of the black figure, who now appears to the son as well. By the end of the story the wife has stopped speaking to them.

This is in many ways a representative Rooke story: little characterization, no setting to speak of (a house in a town that has an Eighty-third Street), a bizarre and unrealistic plot featuring a powerful and mysterious entity, and a variety of possible thematic motifs, all ambiguous. The chief tropes of blindness, blackness and darkness all have a place in the Christian tradition, but that tradition does not appear to be invoked otherwise--such tropes could just as easily imply race, or some other issue entirely. The two major potential symbols are the television and the shoes, the two sources of domestic conflict.

1. Repetition

The first paragraph of "Shut Up" is full of dialogue and repetition:
"You must do me the favor of doing me the favor of shutting up." That is what she said. It is how she talks. I told her not to talk that way. Talk human, I told her. "When it comes to that," she said, "you don't talk so straight yourself. No you don't." Please stop talking like that, I said. "Talk, talk," she said. "That's all I ever hear. Why don't you be Q.U.I.E.T.? Why don't you Shut. Up?"

The opening sentence repeats the expression in the story's title and draws attention to itself with the odd and nonsensical repetition "do me the favor of doing me the favor." The next two sentences repeat one another structurally as follows: [impersonal third person pronoun] + "is" + "what"/"how" + "she" + verb. The similarity between the second and third sentences is reinforced by further parallels--both sentences are brief, six-word statements; the verbs which conclude the subordinate clauses are monosyllabic synonyms. But while these sentences form a twinned pair, the close of the third provides a transition to the remainder of the paragraph: one of the most obvious differences between the sentences is the tense shift in the second predicate verb, and the verb's position of emphasis at the end of the sentence highlights that shift. So, when "talks" brings the second of the paired sentences to a close, it also initiates a new repetitive sequence based on the verb "to talk," which appears six more times before the end of the paragraph. The fourth sentence, "I told her not to talk that way," in addition to repeating "talk," also
includes the variant "told," which appears in the phrase "I told her," a clause repeated in the fifth sentence. The sixth and seventh sentences repeat the words "you don't"; the eighth and ninth feature utterances including "talk(ing)" followed by "I said" and "she said." The last two sentences are questions beginning "Why don't you..."; and the final two words of the paragraph circle back to the title. Then comes the new paragraph, which one might reasonably assume to be about something different, but which instead resumes the discussion ("That is how she talks"), includes an ironic question about the proceedings thus far ("have I made my point?") and continues the pattern of repetition with variation by contriving a peculiarly physical version of "This is how she talks": "It is how her tongue moves."

Repetition--of words, of ideas, images--is a common technique of humour, and it takes different forms in different parts of the story. There is simple verbal repetition, an example of which appears one page after the opening paragraph:

Now I do not normally watch television. I am a normal person, but I do not normally watch it. As a matter of fact, I hate it. That is how normal I am. In a normal year, say six or seven times I will watch television.

(113)
Repetition of ideas often occurs through a combination of verbal repetition and paraphrase or variation; the following passage also appears on the story's second page:

For, once they had spoken, a large black figure strode into my room. A large, INERT black figure, once it had got where it was going.
Huge.
We--all three of us--were cast under its spell. Such an ENORMOUS black figure. I had never imagined such a figure could be so large. I could not imagine how, even crouching, it could have come through the front door.
We were under its spell. I said that. We could not say a word. We no longer could see each other. That's how black it was.

This passage illustrates a variety of techniques which serve to characterize the comic voice of the narration. In the first paragraph above, the second sentence repeats "large black figure" from the first, varying it slightly by adding "INERT," and although the word "inert" does not connote size, the capitals do, so that even a word not having to do with size is muscled into contributing to that idea. The next paragraph ("Huge"), a single word isolated for emphasis, seems both to encapsulate and to expand on the previous one; it summarizes the idea and uses a term that suggests a size greater than "large." The third paragraph continues the expansion, adding "ENORMOUS," so that there is a progression from "large" through "huge" to "ENORMOUS." Once the pattern has been established, though, it is abandoned, since its continuation would become predictable;
instead of adding further adjectives, the narrator goes back to "large," pausing to reflect on that largeness in two sentences which open with slight variation: "I had never imagined..." and "I could not imagine how...." The final paragraph cited above repeats--again with a slight variation--the opening sentence of the paragraph it follows. In the first instance "We--all three of us--were cast under its spell" the repetition lies in the explanation "all three of us," which as a phrase is an unnecessary adjunct to "we" because the situation and the participants have already been explained. The opening of the last paragraph above ("We were under its spell. I said that") repeats the opening of the paragraph immediately preceding it, and acknowledges the repetition; it also echoes the beginning of a paragraph which figures a half a page up ("I said that. I definitely said that"). After two sentences which elaborate on the extent to which the characters are mesmerized by the figure ("We could not... We no longer could..."), the narrator concludes the paragraph, "That's how black it was," as if to suggest that he has been talking all this time about the figure's blackness--which has been mentioned repeatedly but without the emphasis accorded its size.

Repetition is the most striking device in the first couple of pages of "Shut Up" because it occurs with such frequency; its consequences are numerous. Although the
citations above may not sound funny, that is because they are being decontextualized and explicated rather than read; the overall effect on reading is comic. Repetition also functions as a device which both separates and connects the voices of the speakers. In the opening paragraph, the word "talk" is repeated by Gordon and his wife; it links their statements, which are shown not merely to focus on the same subject but to share the same vocabulary, so that the man and his wife seem even in the midst of their argument to have some kind of common ground, a common language. Certain phrases, however, come, through their repetition, to be associated with one character or another, so that the wife's refrain ("shut up") sets itself up in opposition to that of the husband ("Please stop talking like that," "Please don't"), and the division between them comes to centre on issues of speech and silence. The narrator's speech gives the impression of polite reason ("Please"), in contrast with the wife's rather rude demand ("shut up"). Ironically, by the end of the story, it is the wife who has shut up, who has responded to the narrator's request ("Please stop talking like that") by ceasing to speak altogether.
2. Surprise

In a discussion of A Bolt of White Cloth, Danièle Pitavy-Souques formulates the philosophical position that lies at the heart of Rooke's work--surprise:

A l’origine de ces textes, plus qu’un propos baroque, il y a projet métaphysique: non pas désir d’affirmer une transcendance mais susciter l’étonnement philosophique par lequel l’homme peut appréhender sa condition.

(134)

In some of Rooke’s stories, surprise is associated with innocence. Simone Vauthier in her analysis of "The Birth Control King of the Upper Volta" raises the question of Adlai’s unreliability as a narrator; one manifestation of Adlai’s unreliability, she argues, has to do with his surprise:

the narrator’s understanding of people and of events may strike us as limited, to say the least. When, on the telephone, the Pole exclaims, "Oh, it’s you, the nincompoop"... Adlai is baffled.... His very surprise betrays his simplicity.

(12)

In "Shut Up," the narrator is not as childlike as Adlai but equally baffled by the situation in which he finds himself. The main reason for his surprise is the appearance of the black thing, but in the course of the narration his
surprised tone is heard more than once. For example, Gordon's statement "That TV is too loud" appears to initiate the conflict; it is followed by this paragraph:

I said that. I definitely said that. Such is how these present difficulties got started. It did not seem to me a mean thing to say.

The utterance could have been tagged ('"That TV is too loud," I said') but instead, the attribution takes up a full sentence and is situated one paragraph break after the utterance; the effect of this arrangement is to create a pause in the reading between the utterance and "I said that." The pause and the full sentence give more weight to the admission, but they also suggest a pause in the narrator's thought while he is telling the story, as if Gordon himself were surprised at what he said. This sense of surprise is heightened by the repetition, "I definitely said that": the "definitely," which might convey confidence and authority, instead creates the impression that the narrator is trying to convince himself of the fact that he said what he did, that he is having trouble imagining he could have said such a thing. Then the reason for his surprise is explained: Gordon's utterance is the cause of "these present difficulties." If he is amazed by what he said it is at least partly because what he said has caused so much trouble; his surprise has to do with the
consequences of his speech as well as its origin. Having admitted culpability, Gordon seeks to downplay his role in initiating the conflict: "It did not seem to me a mean thing to say." But the point has been made that he started the trouble which is the subject of the narrative, and that he started it by speaking.

Gordon's wife and son burst into his room and tell him to shut up, the black figure enters, and Gordon describes the effect of his appearance on the family in a language which itself suggests surprise ("I had never imagined... I could not imagine..."). He repeats that the figure stuns all of them ("We--all three of us--were cast under its spell"); "We were under its spell... We could not say a word..."). He muses for a time on blindness, and then his wife speaks, as if nothing has happened:

In the blackness, under the shade of this gigantic fellow, I heard her say, "Is that clear?" And my son saying "Yeah, Dad, is that clear?"
As if they were totally ignorant of this giant figure blackening the room.
Quite amazing, I thought.
Well, I thought, they lead charmed lives.

Gordon expresses his amazement directly, and at this point the reader is as surprised as he is that the black figure is not visible to the wife and son. The reason for this is that Gordon has described the incident as if they shared his
reactions. But the narrator who is telling the events of the story is not the same as the character who experienced them. Vauthier comments on the distance in "The Birth Control King of the Upper Volta" between Adlai's "two selves, the 'innocent' self who woke up that morning, and the more experienced self he now has become" (11). In "Shut Up," the more experienced self--the I-narrator, as opposed to the I-character--has in effect been manipulating his audience into surprise by withholding information. This withholding has to do with a transposition of the identities of the "I." Gordon tells the story in the past tense as the narrator, the one who has already experienced the events of the narrative. His experience and his status as narrator are reflected in generalizing comments which convey the impression that he knows and has some understanding of what will happen/what has happened (for example: "Such is how these present difficulties got started"). But in the section describing the first appearance of the black figure, the I-narrator in effect poses as the I-character, which is to say that he temporarily assumes the role of innocent--so that he may then be surprised, and so that we may be surprised with him.

In "Shut Up," surprise does not seem to lead Gordon to a greater understanding of the way the world works. His expressions of surprise may render him, like
Adlai, less credible as a narrator. The shift from narrator to character which allows the reader to be surprised with Gordon creates a precedent—it suggests that further manipulations may be in store and the narrator should not be trusted implicitly. When the wife is given the opportunity to say her piece, it is difficult not to find her interpretation of events more credible. According to Gordon, the black figure has taken him to a shoe store and bought him an expensive pair of shoes:

But the wife accepts none of this. She says, "What big black figure? Have you gone crazy? Can't you admit to the simple act? That you bought those new shoes? No? Then Shut. Up." (116)

On the one hand, the wife's position seems eminently sensible—because of the implausibility of the events Gordon is asking her to accept. On the other, the black figure soon begins appearing to the son as well, so that the reader, if not the wife, receives some corroboration of Gordon's story. Gordon responds to the events he describes with surprise, his wife with disbelief. But his willingness to accept the unlikely does not appear to help him. And at the end of the story he continues to be baffled, though in a resigned sort of way, at how things have turned out.
"Shut Up" opens in the middle of a heated dialogue; it
closes with Gordon contemplating his situation in silence.
Gordon and his son, sitting in the boy's room, converse only
occasionally; the woman speaks to neither of them. Whatever
the black figure may be construed as representing, it has
had the effect of silencing the family, but the narrator's
voice continues even in the darkness, summing up, not
ceasing to be surprised by the world or to articulate that
surprise.
1. A number of critics have noted Southern-sounding idioms and speech (see, for example, J.R. Struthers' 1981 review, or Hilda Kirkwood's 1994 interview).

2. Garebian argues that "the peculiarity of his [Rooke's] vision and the compressed intensity of his form do contribute to popular misconceptions of his craft... The abnormality of some of the characters and situations obscured for several critics the subtleties of the works" (139).

3. See, for example, Vauthier (18-22) and Spriet (139).


5. Rooke discusses setting and place in a 1986 interview with Clint Burnham:

   Place has never meant that much to me. We are a very mobile society now and we take--or don't take--our places with us where we go. Boundaries aren't fixed. And more than that, the place where we most live is in our heads, in our imaginations. But I see setting and place as two different things. It's essential that most stories have a setting. But "setting" is a kitchen, a bedroom, an apartment or house, on a street corner or job site or in a neighbourhood. That's where we live, where the dramatic struggle or conflict takes place, and nine times out of ten it matters little whether that room or neighbourhood is in Toronto or Victoria, or Miami, Ohio, or Sydney, Australia.

   (6)
CHAPTER THREE

NARRATIVE VOICE AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN TERRY GRIGGS' "UNFINISHED"

Terry Griggs was born in Little Current, Manitoulin Island in 1951; she lives in London, Ontario. Her collection of short stories, *Quickening*, appeared in 1990 and a novel, *The Lusty Man*, was published in 1995. *The Lusty Man* is an exuberant, energetic comic novel; *Quickening* possesses the same energy but deploys it differently. Even in the least self-reflexive of its fictions, *Quickening* displays a profound concern with the language of prose, with image, with the idiom, the rhythm of a sentence. This chapter will examine the story "Unfinished": it will analyze the introduction of the narrator's voice in the opening paragraphs, explore the different voices of the narrator and of others and their interplay, and demonstrate the way in which aspects of self-reflexivity in the narrator's voice call into question her own role and function in the text.

"Unfinished" is a four-page story about the
unexpected death of the (female) narrator's lover. The text consists of a series of recollections of the events surrounding the man's stroke and the narrator's experience of loss. The story opens some time after the funeral--at least a few days later, although the details of the recollection suggest that not very much time has passed. It closes, after an achronological set of incidents and reminiscences, with the funeral. The first-person narrator-protagonist situates herself in the present but relates much of the story in the past tense, describing and commenting on the death and its aftermath. Paragraphs are short and linked by repeated or connected words and images, although the transition from one idea or paragraph to another is often abrupt. The text addresses a "you" (the narratee, the deceased) whose frequent invocation makes him seem alive and immediate, and gives the story an epistolary quality. The "you" also implicates the reader, so that the relation between reader and lover--both designated by the same pronoun--acts as a source of narrative tension.

1. Openings

The title of the story comments metonymically on life and death. The two most obvious implications are that the man's life is unfinished because it was suddenly cut short, as if there were a certain amount of time allotted
for a life and some of his was taken away. The woman's life, on the other hand, is unfinished in that some of it remains to be lived. The term also suggests roughness, the raw emotion of grief, as if a good sanding and a coat of urethane would smooth over the splintered surfaces of her existence. More particularly, however, the title describes the sentences which form the opening paragraph:

Like a dream in the middle of the day. Like holding a river, holding moonlight, falling like mercury. Like remembering pain, inexactely. Like what is left. Like nothing.

This sequence of similes lacks subjects and verbs: as the title suggests, the sentences are incomplete, although "unfinished" often indicates that the "finish," the end, is missing, whereas the ellipses here occur at the beginnings of the sentences. As a result of these omissions, the paragraph compares a series of things ("a dream in the middle of the day," "holding a river, holding moonlight") to something unidentified--something unidentifiable, on a first reading, since at this point in the story the reader does not know enough to be able to speculate as to what the something is. These similes cluster around a missing centre--the gap left by the man's death.
The first sentence suggests the narrator's sense of unreality, her inability to concentrate on the present. The second offers three comparisons. "Holding a river" and "holding moonlight" evoke both the natural (since rivers and moonlight are natural phenomena) and the impossible (since neither can be held). "Falling like mercury" is a more complex and threatening image, one whose suggestion of uncontrolled movement opposes the security of containment connoted by "holding." And mercury is most commonly associated with its use in thermometers and barometers: falling mercury in a thermometer indicates heat loss and, because mercury thermometers most often register body temperature, may suggest the cooling of the man's corpse. A drop in barometric pressure warns of stormy weather, an obvious meteorological metaphor. "Falling like mercury" deviates from the syntactical pattern of the two phrases which precede it--the "like" has moved to a position after the present participle. The effect here is to foreground "falling" rather than "like," a shift of emphasis which emphasizes the idea of the loss of control and thus provides a transition from the natural and the dreamlike to the starkness of the last three sentences, which comment more directly on the story as a whole. The repetition of each of these comparisons two pages later and the resonance of the opening images throughout the story underline the fact that this is not a classic expository introduction, that the
significance of the opening paragraphs cannot be comprehended without the later ones. The plurality of meanings necessitates the rereading process Roland Barthes describes in S/Z:

We must further accept one last freedom: that of reading the text as if it had already been read.... [F]or those of us who are trying to establish a plural, we cannot stop this plural at the gates of reading: the reading must also be plural, that is, without order of entrance.... [Rereading] contests the claim which would have us believe that the first reading is a primary, naive, phenomenal reading which we will only, afterwards, have to "explicate," to intellectualize (as if there were a beginning of reading, as if everything were not already read: there is no first reading...); rereading is no longer consumption, but play...
(15-16)

So that reading and rereading, meanings and beginnings, all form part of the activity and the text which remain already and forever "unfinished."

The opening paragraph is relatively voiceless: there is nothing to indicate who speaks; any sense of person or character has been emptied out of the text in a simulacrum of the vacuum created by the man's death. Not until the second paragraph does the narrator overtly assume her role; the paragraph begins, "I could send a fleet of searching metaphors and never find you." The reference to metaphors implies that the narrator is alluding to the opening paragraph and retrospectively claiming it as her
own, although she has not until now appeared in the text. As the story continues, so will the narrator's reflections on the literary functions of language.

The third paragraph also opens with an explicit reference to narrative technique:

A beginning, a middle, and an end. But your story wasn't finished, the plot was still unfolding, and now you're lying in it. What does that make you? Postmodern? Or simply, post-everything? (41)

The Aristotelian allusion applies to the text as well as the death: the narrator establishes early on the metaphor of life-as-text/text-as-life, which will be exploited throughout the story, and uses it as the occasion for some funereal puns.

The first three paragraphs of "Unfinished" set the story up in several significant ways. The opening paragraph emphasizes the sense of loss through its ellipses, its voicelessness, and the strategic closural positioning of "nothing." The second paragraph inserts the narrator into the story and, by commenting on the use of metaphor, indicates the prominence in this text of both metaphor and narrative self-consciousness. In the third paragraph, that self-consciousness develops further through wordplay and the
explicit comparison between life and text. The opening, then, introduces the principal voices of the narrator: the first paragraph's voicelessness suggests the silence of death; the second situates her in the text and in the present tense as a first-person narrator who is capable of action, while the third reveals her capacity for reflection on the story she is telling.

2. Voices

"Unfinished" incorporates a variety of voices besides that of the narrator. These voices tend to be clearly marked by italics, quotation marks, or the identification of the speaker. Many of the utterances which do not issue from the narrator are attributed, directly or indirectly, to a group the narrator calls "them." "They," along with the "I"-narrator and the "you"-narratee, form the central triad of characters. Other, minor voices serve a variety of functions specific to the contexts in which they appear.

The story's second paragraph introduces the possibility of the incorporation of other voices with the narrator's claim, "I am a bounty hunter with one instruction: bring him back alive." This is not really
another voice, since the statement presents itself as the narrator's own metaphor for her position. However, the italics and the term "instruction" give the impression that these words belong to someone else, that the narrator has been handed an assignment by some unidentified person or entity. The task seems an impossible one but, figuratively speaking, bringing her lover back alive is precisely what the narrator does in addressing the story to him. The repeated "you" assumes his existence elsewhere; the story's epistolary quality derives from the sense that the narrator is updating her partner on what has been going on ("When they took you away, I cleaned the fridge"; "You would have enjoyed this...""). The narrator brings him back to life by positing him as narratee. It could also be argued that the narrator's memories evoke the man's life. Few such memories, however, figure in the story, which is not about what he was like alive but what life is like for the narrator now that he is not. By focussing on her own experience of her partner's departure, the narrator in effect brings him back dead.

The second use of italics marks attributed voices; it occurs in the third paragraph, when the narrator watches children in a garden imitating crow noises, "caw caw cawing into the wind, until the real thing drifted in, black and silent, and settled ominously near, which stopped them dead
in their tracks." Italics heighten the contrast between the children's energetic voices and the slow silence of the "real thing," so that the children and their voices come to signify life, whereas the crow and silence embody not merely death but the ability to silence and thus to kill ("stopped them dead").

Quotation marks flag other voices, especially those of the anonymous "they," even more clearly than italics. The narrator/protagonist is taken out for coffee by friends, Bill and Mary, "a few days after" (note the omission--after what?--the death goes unmentioned, another ellipsis). "Trying to keep me busy, you know," says the narrator, "my mind diverted from 'morbid' topics." The quotation marks here are ambiguous; the term "morbid" is not explicitly assigned to Mary or Bill, although either may have used it. Bill orders "your apple pie à la morte, please" and general embarrassment ensues, except on the part of the waitress, who "thought it was hilarious and kept repeating it as new customers came in" (41). Bill's slip underlines the absurdity of the situation: he and Mary want to talk about anything but the "morbid," when death is precisely the subject of everyone's thoughts. And when the waitress innocently picks up on Bill's remark (much to his dismay), her actions parallel those of the narrator, who returns to the past to put the death into words and makes
sardonic jokes about it.

Mary and Bill are common names, and apart from Bill's Freudian slip they do nothing to distinguish themselves as individuals: Mary and Bill are among the faceless "they" whose words recur in the story, words which are usually italicized and which serve chiefly as the object of the narrator's critique. A paragraph on the second page begins, "A stroke, they said. A stroke of what? Lightning? A caress..." The "they" remain unidentified--presumably the hospital staff. The narrator could report the incident directly but instead repeats the precise words, as though they were significant, as though she doubted them, as though she were unsure of what they meant. Such critical repetition conveys a sense that "they" are not entirely to be trusted.³

"They" reappear as an unreliable source of information in the next paragraph, which begins, "They say when someone is dying, it's like being born. The dying need to be cradled, rocked..." But the narrator's experience does not bear this out; the death she witnessed did not happen that way. Here, the pronoun has expanded to include people in general, rather than people in the story: "they say" means that what follows will be an adage rather than something a character (or group of characters) actually
says. This accounts for the fact that the words are not italicized or placed in quotation marks; they constitute part of the general domain of words. And it is words that the narrator minds, as is evident in a paragraph on the third page of the story, where a dialogue occurs between the narrator and her interlocutor(s), the narrator’s speech (or thought) in italics, the other speaker’s (or speakers’) in quotation marks:

'I know what you’re going through.' Yes. 'At least he didn’t suffer.' No. 'You have that to be thankful for.' Yes. 'It’s all over now.' No... yes. 'Before long you’ll be able to pick up the pieces, start again.' Yes, the pieces, all over. Like mercury falling.

This exchange presents itself as a conversation, although it may not be one. The use of italics as well as quotation marks confuses the issue. A straightforward conversation would probably have the narrator’s words in quotation marks instead of italics, with indentations to mark the change in speakers. The use of italics suggests that this conversation is different, possibly imagined, possibly a composite. The fact that no speaker other than the narrator is identified disrupts the conventions of dialogue. It may indicate that this is not one conversation but fragments combined from a series of them, in which case the voice in quotation marks could issue from one character or several,
on one occasion or many. The narrator's responses are also instructive. The monosyllabic comments contrast sharply with the full sentences they respond to. The sequence of replies ("Yes." "No." "Yes." "No... yes"), their brevity and alternation, suggest that the narrator does not wish to engage in conversation, that she is merely answering by rote, especially in the fourth response, when "no" turns into "yes" as if either response would be the same. The final italicized segment indicates the breakdown of the narrator's life, which is not adequately addressed by the banal and unhelpful but presumably well-intentioned remarks of the interlocutor. The paragraph closes with an unmarked statement ("Like mercury falling") which indicates a return from conversation to narrative. This fragment echoes the story's second sentence, but here the context controls the implications of the image. Following the narrator's utterance, "Yes, the pieces, all over," this reference to mercury strongly suggests dispersal. (Mercury at room temperature is liquid and, if spilled, separates into droplets which, like a river, like moonlight, are very difficult to contain.)

The "they" become less sympathetic as characters (as a character really--they are all one, indistinguishable) in a later paragraph, not by what they say but what they don't: "As it is, no one wants to speak of you. Your name
leaves a bad taste in their mouths." This reinforces the silence/death equation established in the incident involving the crow and the children. Their refusal to acknowledge the death of the narrator's lover underlines his absence, and their silence becomes as expressive as speech.

In the end, though, "they" redeem themselves; their voices pull the narrator back to life. The narrator at the graveside feels the power of their words in a closing section which is profoundly ambivalent but ultimately life-affirming:

A person can meditate only so long by a grave... I felt this terrific pull, this force, and the living eyes at my back, and voices saying, Honey, there's plenty of time for that, come away now, come home, we'll have a few drinks, order some food.

I stepped into it and it swept me away, into the future, blood pumping, cells working like slaves to keep me going. Scarcely five minutes out of the gate, get this, and someone had me laughing, it came pouring out of my mouth, a magician's trick, like a long and coloured scarf of vomit.

The shock of "vomit" at the end foregrounds the violence of the protagonist's loss, its irreparability, but this shock is mitigated by the forces of life and companionship which reel her back into life. Note the terms with which they appeal to her, the words that connote comfort, the foyer--"home," "drinks," "food." Unlike the dialogue earlier, this
italicized section is not unattributed--here the narrator identifies if not people at least "the voices" and the voices are plural, not a communal amalgam.

In "Unfinished," voices other than that (or those) of the narrator belong for the most part to a group identified as "they," a pronoun whose antecedents change according to the context. At times "they" represents everyone except the narrator and narratee; on occasion, "they" refers to certain friends, or to the narrator's social circle in general. What "they" say amuses and frustrates the narrator by turns, but both the voice and its disembodiment are crucial to the dynamic triad at the story's core. The three principals are the narrator, the lover, and the other ("they")--with the lover gone, the narrator must confront the other. (Indeed, if the "you" refers to the reader as well as the dead man, and the reader belongs to the rest of the world--i.e. "they"--then "you" and "they" are elided and the triad folds, leaving the narrator standing alone against everyone else.)

"Unfinished" addresses the narrator's ambivalence: she wants both to remain in the past, with the death (or at least with the lover), and to move forward. She finds the voice of the other--the voice of speech/movement/change, as opposed to silence/stillness/ stasis--intrusive because of her resistance to what it offers. In the end she succumbs to
it, with mixed feelings, and chooses, following the metaphorical structure of the story, speech and life over silence and death.

3. The voices of the narrator

The narrator's tone of voice shifts frequently to indicate changes in topic or mood. The dominant tone is ironic, but the irony is not the same throughout. Apparently pleasant memories are transformed through an accumulation of increasingly sombre connotations. Puns and wordplay seem at times flippant; on other occasions they probe words and meanings as if seeking with profound seriousness a linguistic explanation for death. Irony also creates a self-conscious distance between the narrator and her story, so that she is able to talk about it as well as telling it.

At times the narrative voice strikes a tranquil, recollective tone: "I remember standing at the window looking at the cedars..."(41); "I remember watching out the window a corpulent and strangely clumsy sparrow..."(43). In each of these cases, the peace is disturbed as what follows
grows increasingly ominous. When the narrator sees the cedars, she also sees the children playing and the arrival of the portentous crow who "stopped them dead." The sparrow seems innocent enough at first glance but the word "corpulent" echoes "corpse," the "strangely clumsy" suggests something not quite right, and then the image becomes one of possession, as the narrator imagines the sparrow "bursting" with the man inside its body. Similarly, the first paragraph, which begins, "Like a dream in the middle of the day," moves rapidly to its curt close: "Like nothing." The semblance of calm in the narrative voice metamorphoses consistently; every dream turns into a nightmare.

Irony also effects a kind of transformation: it adds a second, apparently unrelated or contradictory meaning to a word (or a statement, or an idea). Thus the meaning of the first word is transformed--once infected by the meaning of the second, it can no longer function as an independent unit of signification (supposing it were able to in the first place). Wordplay is important in "Unfinished" because it relies on multiple meanings; it sustains the ironic voice, revealing both the narrator's acute awareness of the intricacies of language and her penchant for black humour. "The plot was still unfolding," the narrator says in the third paragraph, "and now you're lying in it." The pun on the meanings of "plot" introduces the narrator's concern
with the conventions of genre. At times the grim irony seems more speculative than sardonic: "A stroke of what? Lightning? A caress, fingers placed lovingly on a vein and squeezing tight, forming a little bonbon of clotted blood?" (42). Here the narrator explores the possible significances of the word "stroke," drawing two together in an attempt to understand what has happened, so that the caress and the blood clot are linked in an incongruous semantic comparison. The next sentence explains the need for such attentiveness to language and meaning: "Your speech, how suddenly it skidded out of control, words crashing into one another, unspelling themselves before your startled eyes." The spell which bound the man's words together in a meaningful way has been broken by the stroke. The first sign of imminent death: loss of control over language, the chaos of words. The next stage, presumably, is silence: "You were blue, what do you want me to say?" (43). This sentence forms a paragraph by itself, answering its own question--in the face of death, there is nothing to be said.

The ironic voice in "Unfinished" creates a sense of narrative self-consciousness which is reinforced by frequent references to genre and generic convention. Repeated allusions to narrative method in writing and in film signal the narrator's awareness that she is operating within certain formal parameters. The second paragraph
begins by alluding to literary language ("I could send a fleet of searching metaphors... "). The third paragraph ("A beginning, a middle, and an end...") makes reference to narrative structure and theory. The seventh paragraph describes the sound of the ambulance siren, tracing it through the streets as it grows from an "insect whine" to a "bellow": this paragraph sounds especially cinematographic because of its emphasis on sound and movement, but the image of the siren, "a period typed and left to float on a blank sheet of paper," grounds itself from the outset in the mechanics of writing. Through its ironic tone and its overt concern with genre and narrative strategy, the dominant voice of "Unfinished" draws attention to its capacity for reflection on as well as in the fiction. The effect of this strategy is a blurring of roles generally imagined to be discrete, in particular the roles of author, implied author, narrator and character. The next chapter will examine a story by Douglas Glover, "Dog Attempts To Drown Man in Saskatoon," in which, rather than fading into one another around the edges, the personae who play these roles become increasingly separate and fragmented.
1. Although the word "river" does not reappear, it is symbolically associated with the man through its connotations of death. The narrator later refers to the man as a swimmer. The paragraph preceding this reference closes with the sentence fragment, "Like mercury falling"; the one which follows it includes a reference to moonlight.

2. This explicit connection between silence and death seems particularly resonant, coming as it does so soon after the voicelessness of the opening lines.

3. Allen Thiher, discussing voice in Samuel Beckett, looks to Heidegger to explain this kind of use of "they":

   In Heidegger's early work, especially in Being and Time, he would discover that there is rarely, if ever, such a thing as an individual speaker. For what is taken to be the individual voice is really the voice of das Man, the anonymous "they" that speak, through inauthentic speech, the fallen logos of everyday existence. The only authentic voice would appear to be the voice of silence that stands opposed in silent resolve to the "they" that speak a language of publicly determined meanings.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE VOICES VOICE COMPRISEx: INCORPORATION, FRAGMENTATION AND FIRST-PERSON NARRATION IN DOUGLAS GLOVER’S "RED" AND "DOG ATTEMPTS TO DROWN MAN IN SASKATOON"

Douglas Glover is probably best known for his most recent novel, The Life and Times of Captain N (1993), which was widely reviewed. He is also the author of three books of short fiction: The Mad River (1981), Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon (1985) and A Guide to Animal Behaviour (1991). These collections are notable for their eclecticism. Louis K. MacKendrick writes of Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon that "Apart from their international range... these stories show a significant variety of voice and narrative form" (126), and the entry on Glover in Contemporary Authors notes the "range of perspectives that particularly impressed critics" in A Guide to Animal Behaviour (163). That range is broadened by one aspect of Glover’s writing that is unusual: many of Glover’s narrators are women. It is quite rare for a writer to use narrators of both genders often. Another interesting feature of Glover’s writing is the increase in first-person narrations:
in each successive story collection, the proportion of stories narrated in the first person grew—all the stories in *A Guide to Animal Behaviour* are at least partly first-person narrations—and many of the narrators are female.

This chapter will examine two stories from *Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon*. Both are narrated in the first person, one with a female and one with a male protagonist. The purpose will be to analyze the variety of voices at work in these narratives with a view to understanding some of the means by which polyphonic effects may be achieved. In "Red," the narrator incorporates other voices and languages into her own; in the collection’s title story, the narrating "I" subdivides, creating a multiplicity of narrating personae.

I) "Red"

"Red" is one of eight stories brought together in Douglas Glover’s second collection, *Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon*. Three of these stories are narrated in the first person by a female protagonist. One of the interesting features of "Red" is the way in which Flo’s narration incorporates a wide range of her own modes of expression and includes as well the voices of a variety of characters. While "Red" may be described as a "first-
person" narration, the analysis which follows will
demonstrate that the phrase "first person" is neither
singular nor irreducible, and that it elides the differences
among the voices it comprises.

"Red" blends genres in the same way that Flo blends
voices. Elements of romance, parody, comedy, drama and
satire all figure in the story, whose principal focus
remains the relationship between Flo, the narrator, and her
husband, Red. The narrative opens in the present tense;
repeated shifts, from present to past, fill in the
background. Flo married Jack Titus, alcoholic, liar, and
banjo-picking philanderer, during or soon after college;
they had three children and a twenty-year relationship
before she left him. The children are perennially
miserable. Sylvie, the oldest at twenty-eight, has attached
herself to Leo, "a pill-popping, glue-sniffing loser" (42);
Franky has failed her bar admission examinations three
times; Pierre is a depressed waiter. When she met Red, Flo
was contemplating a melodramatic suicide at a Holiday Inn in
Kansas City, but a week later the two were married and ten
years later, when the story opens, they are living more or
less happily ever after in New Mexico.
1. "Whose words are these?": theoretical considerations

Dick Leith and George Myerson's *The Power of Address: Explorations in Rhetoric* formulates a series of questions designed to assist the reader in clarifying the process through which various kinds of texts are understood. One of the most useful questions is: "Whose words are these?" And one of the main reasons for posing such a question is that "The authority of ideas can depend on how we decide to identify a voice..." (158). That is, certain voices carry more authority (or different kinds of authority) than others; the reader's assessment of an idea will be influenced by her perception of the source of the voice as more or less authoritative. In an examination of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Leith and Myerson use the question "Whose words are these?" as a means of teasing out not only the various voices belonging to different characters but also, inside the language of a single character, the influences of other voices (that is, those of other characters) and language systems (for example, science, poetry).

This approach to reading the language of fiction echoes that of Mikhail Bakhtin, whom Leith and Myerson mention often and approvingly: "M.M. Bakhtin's work gives an
exemplary model for the understanding of general problems through the reading of literature, an understanding that is not available in any other way" (83). In Discourse in the Novel, Bakhtin criticizes the philosophy of discourse prior to the twentieth century for assuming "the system of a unitary language" (269). Bakhtin identifies a variety of "languages," including literary language (that is, the language of the novel--Bakhtin does not discuss short fiction as a separate discourse). Even "literary language," though, "is itself stratified and heteroglot" (288). One "form for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel--a form that every novel without exception utilizes--is the language used by characters," writes Bakhtin (315); heteroglossia is also diffused throughout the authorial speech that surrounds the characters, creating highly particularized character zones. These zones are formed from the fragments of character speech, from various forms for hidden transmission of someone else's word, from scattered words and sayings belonging to someone else's speech, from those invasions into authorial speech of others' expressive indicators (ellipsis, questions, exclamations). Such a character zone is the field of action for a character's voice, encroaching in one way or another upon the author's voice.

(316)

Discourse in the Novel and The Power of Address both concern themselves with what Bakhtin terms "hybridization," the ways in which fragments of speech from a variety of sources combine in a text. One of the differences between them, and a source of difficulty for some of Bakhtin's readers, is his
assertion that "authorial speech" and "the author's voice" can be identified as distinct from that of, for example, a "posited" or implied author, a narrator or character. But Bakhtin's point has little to do with authorial dominance, and everything to do with the astonishing diversity of voices and languages in fictional prose. For their part, Leith and Myerson refer, if not to the author, at least to the "authority of ideas" and its relation to the identification of voice, as if authority were a constant and its degrees consistent and apparent to all readers in the same way.

While the following discussion will analyze character-speech and its components, or, to put it another way, the voices voice comprises, it will be salutary to recall throughout that voice is not a transparency interposed between character and reader. One image of voice and character that suggests the complexity of their relationship is offered in an article by Michel Chion on the film Psycho. Chion argues in "The Impossible Embodiment" that Psycho "is concerned with the impossibility of attaching a voice to a body or, in other words, with the impossibility of embodiment" (195). Chion uses the term "acousmêtre" to describe "the voice of a person not yet seen" (195). "When an acousmatic presence consists of a voice," Chion argues, "and above all when that voice has not yet been visualized,
and one cannot therefore yet put a face to it--one is dealing with a being of a particular sort, a kind of talking, acting shadow, which I have named an acousmêtre" (206). In a story, the "voice of a person not yet seen" is the only voice that will emerge, since characters can never be "seen" the way they are in movies: in this sense, all fiction is acousmatic in that it deals only with acousmatic voices. Fiction, even more than film, creates an "impossibility of embodiment," denying the stability and the consistency which have come to be associated with fictional characters and their manifestation in fictional voices.

2. "Red": implicit and explicit quotation

This section will address some of the polyphonic qualities of "Red." Specifically, it will examine the manifestation of different voices in the text by identifying allusions to a variety of languages (for example, a language associated with a particular character, or with a certain discipline or field of study). Leith and Myerson in The Power of Address refer to such allusions as "quotations"; they distinguish between implicit and explicit quotations: Walton quotes Frankenstein, Frankenstein quotes the monster. That applies both to snippets of
'speech' and to longer narrations. These are explicit quotations, vouched for by the book's structure, including chapter divisions. But then the inventor's earlier voice turns up inside his later (present) account; and monster-resonances get into what 'should' be Victor's narration. These might be called implicit quotations... These are 'quotations' in the sense that one voice presents or contains another. As ever, the quoting and the quoted identify themselves as not the other, and yet overlap... Explicit quotations, then, tend to be attributed, or more easily identifiable as issuing from a given character, while implicit quotations, the fragments of various languages, combine to create a particular fictional voice. Implicit quotations are more difficult to deal with precisely because they overlap: they are always (at least) double-voiced. Flo narrates "Red" in the first person, but the words of others constitute a substantial portion of her story. "Red" includes direct speech from Flo herself, Red, Sylvie, the three children as a group, Jack and Jack's mother; in addition, the story reports or refers to speech by all of these characters and more (Flo's former employer, Jack's former doctor). These references constitute what Leith and Myerson call explicit quotations. In addition, Flo's own discourse incorporates a variety of implicit quotations. Flo, the potter, moulds and casts the language of others into a text which is, finally, her story.
Flo's narration comprises a variety of levels of language; her diction and allusion range from the formal to the colloquial. On the first page of the story she says she was educated at Smith, one of the most prestigious women's colleges in the United States. At times her language reflects her level of education. Consider, for example, the statement, "Jack just looked at me as if I were a loon" (47), in which the subjunctive "were" replaces the more common conversational "was," or the syntax and vocabulary of Flo's reference to a bartender, "a man with whom I am sure he [Jack] has been holding intimate colloquy" (52). At times the style is more informal and idiomatic, but in general the grammar, syntax and vocabulary belong to the realm of literary language, and this effect is heightened in ironic phrases such as "intimate colloquy."

Two of the many languages, or language systems, at work in "Red" are those of art and geography. Flo's frame of reference is that of the artist; in a description of Red, she notes "a Hawaiian shirt out of a Douanier-Rousseau [sic] jungle" (42). She also mentions Kachina dolls, Penitente chapels, Pueblo sacred dances, a storage pot "in the Mimbres style"; the specificity of the descriptions testifies to the visual artist's concern with style. The narration also
draws on the language of geography, both directly, through its frequent naming of places (New Mexico, Santa Fe, the Pecos River, the Blood of Christ Mountains, La Posada), and indirectly, through epithets suggestive of place ("Stepping through the adobe arch..."; "a tripod of piñon logs").

In addition to its varied languages and frames of reference, the narrative offers evidence of shifts from what one might call a spoken voice to a written voice. This is perhaps a problematic distinction: the term "written voice" would appear to be an oxymoron. But some utterances clearly sound as if they are spoken, while others give the distinct impression that they have been written. Characteristic features of a spoken voice may include (and are not limited to) colloquial language, a conversational tone, the use of the first person and the present tense, and informal syntax. The written voice more often employs the past tense and is more likely to include, for example, the subjunctive or the pluperfect. It may be distinguished by such markers as more formal syntax and diction, a more precise and concise, less leisurely style. Flo recounts Red's encounter with Patrice as follows: "They had run into each other in Upper Volta one year while he was building the sluice gates on a power dam for the government; Patrice was backpacking, studying African primitives" (47). This sentence is relatively long, dense with information,
carefully balanced with a semi-colon to separate Red's activities from Patrice's. It is a concise way of conveying information, a considered, written sentence, quite different from such others as "Jack's mother never gave me any help," or "I cried all the time he was telling me the story."

These last two sentences could be spoken as easily as they could be written. The shift from the written voice to the conversational voice implies a shift in the persona of the narrator, an alternation between the writing narrator and the talking character ("talking" is of course a metaphor here, since the text is never actually spoken unless it is read aloud, which introduces a totally different performative dynamic). This distinction between the narrator as character and the narrator as narrator is one which appears in "Red," but one which Glover exploits much more extensively in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon."

(B) Explicit quotation

The following passage exemplifies the diversity of the voices which contribute to Flo's narration:

For his part, Red admitted it wasn't quite true what he had said about all the drinking and whoring. Until a year and a half before we met, he had been married to a Mexican woman called Patrice, an abstract expressionist painter in the style of Ruffino Tamayo, who had died of a stroke. They had run into each other in Upper Volta one year while he was building the sluice
gates on a power dam for the government; Patrice was backpacking, studying African primitives. When she failed to conceive, she "went Catholic" instead of going to see a doctor, according to Red. She even got him to go to Mass, praying for a child that never came. "She was a difficult woman," he said, shaking his head. "But I can't forget her. Take me, and you'll just have to put up with her like a ghost in the house." I cried all the time he was telling me the story. I had never met a man so romantic. Sometimes I think I had just never met a man.

Jack was just the opposite. Jack lied every time he opened his mouth. He lied when he said "good morning" or "how are you?" It wasn't that he was trying to be cruel; he would always explain his prevarication by saying he only wanted to make me happy. I didn't know until the second year of our marriage that he was an alcoholic. I didn't know until he went into the hospital with acute alcohol poisoning and the doctor told me himself. "But Jack doesn't drink," I said, all innocence and wounded pride. "Lady, when your husband came in here, he had more bourbon than blood in his veins."

Explicit quotations from Red counter the image of power and invulnerability he has projected thus far in the story. In Sylvie's unsympathetic terms, Red is an "over-sexed, macho, crypto-fascist pig" (45). He initiates the relationship with Flo; he builds large structures and makes lots of money; he provides for Flo's children and pays for their education. He is strong physically as well as figuratively: when Pierre accidentally shoots Red on a hunting expedition, Pierre faints and it is the wounded Red who carries him back to the truck. Although Flo's children regard Red as unassailable, he is maimed, physically by skin cancer and emotionally by the grief associated with his first
Red says that Patrice "went Catholic"; "she was a difficult woman... but I can't forget her." His determination to keep alive the memory of his late wife appeals to Flo because it reveals the kind of respect she was never accorded in her marriage to Jack. Twice in this passage, Red's speech is presented inside quotation marks; the first citation is a reference to Patrice's Catholicism, the second to her lingering presence in his life. These two direct quotations emphasize, respectively, Red and Patrice's failure to conceive a child and his bereavement. By alluding first to a lack of life and then explicitly to death, they suggest Red's ultimate impotence in the face of mortality.

Leith and Myerson's term, "explicit quotation," encompasses more than direct quotation. It applies also to other attributable fragments of speech, such as that which opens the passage cited above: "For his part, Red admitted it wasn't quite true what he had said about all the drinking and whoring." When Red first meets Flo, he plays the role of swaggering stud; as they become better acquainted, his roles become increasingly varied. His initial announcement, "I... drink and whore all the time" (43), appears in direct speech, whereas the counter to it, his 'admission,' occurs in indirect speech. Typographically, direct speech is accentuated and localized in a way that indirect discourse
is not; indirect discourse also tends to diffuse the impact of an utterance because it often requires more words ("For his part, Red admitted it wasn’t quite true what he had said..."). The indirection of Red’s admission softens the contrast between the earlier and the later utterance, and this effect is reinforced by the clause, "it wasn’t quite true." The second statement gives the impression not of contradicting but merely of qualifying the first; the identity Red projects in the second instance thus seems not entirely consistent (rather than in direct conflict) with the first.

Explicit quotations from Jack demonstrate the capacity for double-voicedness of even the most banal utterance. "He lied," Flo claims, "when he said 'good morning' or 'how are you.'" It is difficult to imagine "good morning" as a lie, especially since it is usually considered a greeting rather than an assertion. Jack’s ability to lie "every time he opened his mouth" underscores the importance of investigating the languages that are invoked by an utterance: "How are you?" may be a familiar question (so familiar that it often ceases to function as a question) belonging to what Bakhtin calls "common language" (301-2), but here it also belongs to Jack’s language, that is, the language of duplicity.
Flo's conversation with the doctor, which appears in direct speech, shows her naivete in the early stages of her marriage with Jack, her apparent inability to understand the major cause of the unhappiness in her marriage. The dialogue characterizes a Flo who is far different from the one who narrates the story. The quotation marks which enclose the brief, deluded assertion "But Jack doesn't drink," separate the voice of the trusting Flo ("all innocence") from that of Flo the narrator, who has learned about deception and misplaced loyalty. This explicit quotation fragments the identity of the focal character, highlighting a split between Flo-as-she-is and Flo-as-she-was.

Fragmented and contradictory identities recur in "Red." Just as Red the unassailable turns out to have his own fragilities, so Flo the narrator contrasts her current experienced self with her former inexperienced self. Even within the Flo of the story's present tense, a variety of identities continue to compete. The Flo who is married to Red recognizes the infantile egocentrism of her adult children, but the Flo who is a mother responds immediately to Sylvie's voice ("thin and weary... like a knife in my ribs" [50]), and, against her better judgement, out of maternal guilt and empathy, allows herself to be manipulated into a meeting with Jack. She does this "in a moment of
weakness" (50); in another moment, a different Flo would act differently. Thus, the name "Flo" designates a variety of Flos, the term "character" a variety of characters. Implicit and explicit quotation provide concise impressions of the competing identities which, together, create character.

3. Speech and the production of identity

Voice, then, is a key factor in the creation of character, or, to put it another way, in the production of fictional identities. The discussion which follows will address the production of identity through speech, focussing on the production of sexual or gendered identities. Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) is an extended discussion of the production of sexual identities; Butler argues that gender is not assigned but performed, that an individual creates a gender by enacting it.

Significant risks accompany the introduction of *Gender Trouble* at this juncture. First, Butler’s project is to locate the performance of gender identity, not of identity in general, and to situate it in the context of a
society governed by compulsory heterosexuality—to avoid questions of sexual difference is to avoid the principal arguments of her book. Furthermore, repeated references to politics, the individual and the law suggest that the purpose of Gender Trouble is to address issues of gender identity in the polis, not in fiction; the "illusion of an interior and organizing gender core" becomes a much less radical notion once it is transposed to the world of fiction, where "illusion" is a given. However, much of what Butler has to say about identity and performance applies to heterosexual as well as homosexual identities. And as for the "literary" context of this particular discussion, Butler herself draws heavily on discursive models: the writings of Foucault, Freud, Kristeva, Lacan and Wittig figure prominently in Gender Trouble.

Butler explains the production of identity as follows:

"Acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires," Butler writes, "create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core." That is, the assortment of verbal and bodily
acts of an individual appear to be controlled from within by a force called gender. When the idea of that force is removed, what remains, according to Butler, is a series of unconnected acts, each of which might be allied with one gender or the other, or with a particular facet of one gender. Red performs a variety of gender identities through his speech and his actions; this section will examine some of these performances, with a particular interest in the manifestation of multiple gender identities through speech.

Red is a rich Texan whose bravado reveals itself through his speech and actions from the outset. He and Flo meet because he approaches her to ask, without preamble: "You wanna hold my cucumber, honey?" (42). He drips sweat and drops cigar ash on her stomach, sweat and cigars being classic metonyms for a certain kind of masculinity. Red is characterized by the directness of his speech at their first meeting--in both senses of "direct": his words are in quotation marks and his manner of speaking is colloquial ("you wanna"), patronizing ("honey") and blunt. His opening line to Flo epitomizes the macho swagger that constitutes one of his gender identities.

Red’s dominant masculine presence reveals itself through how much he says as well as what he says. A conversational pattern emerges almost immediately whereby
Red speaks, Flo giggles; Red speaks, Flo laughs; Red speaks, Flo cries (42-3). Red's speech dominates at the first meeting not only because of the amount of space his words take up but because they are set apart from the rest of the narrative in inverted commas, and because Flo's own response to him is speechlessness: Flo is still the narrator, but in this section she is saying little to the reader and nothing to Red (at least not in direct speech). The stereotypical polarity between the man who speaks and the woman who remains silent is not maintained consistently, though; indeed the story parodies such a binary opposition by establishing it in the meeting scene and then undercutting it as the story progresses. After the scene by the pool, Flo and Red quickly reverse their conversational positions: in Red's room, Flo "talked for eight hours straight, then fell over asleep on his bed" (43). Red's words at the pool, in direct speech, take up a certain amount of story space, whereas the eight hours of Flo's narrative are passed over in a phrase. Although Red might not always have a lot to say, the fact that his speech is often reported directly makes it appear to take up more room; as a consequence, Red, the big man, the big talker, performs a kind of masculine identity of presence.

If Red's speech and the manner in which it is reported reveal aspects of his gender identity, so does the absence
of his speech, which Flo notes on a number of occasions. Red’s own silence is emphasized in a number of contexts with implications that may differ but remain consistently positive. There is the man-of-few-words motif: "Red was proud, but he never said a word" (46). There is silence implying decision and action (with the implication that speech opposes action by delaying it): "Red has never said 'what if' in his life" (50). There is silent pain: "And now he says nothing... Red cannot speak of things that are close to his heart" (51). And there is the refusal to speak in a way that is critical or judgemental, as when Flo’s children try to set her up with her ex-husband: "Red’s been good about this get-together with Jack. He hasn’t said a word" (51). This last type of silence does not necessarily come naturally; it is the result of an effort of will which does not always work: "Sometimes, when Sylvie has been especially hard on me, Red cannot restrain himself" (49). It remains always a quality, though, in Flo’s eyes, and one which she shares with Red: "I never say anything, nor does Red" (49); "Red never said he loved me, nor I him" (46).

Red’s final words counteract the role of hero he has performed throughout the story. When Red meets Flo, he rescues her from the death she has planned for herself at the Holiday Inn. He saves her children to the extent that he offers them a home and financial support. He even
conducts a parodic rescue of Pierre, carrying him to the truck when the latter faints after having shot Red in the back by accident. But in the story's final paragraphs, Red is at his most vulnerable: having just had skin cancers removed from his face by a dermatologist, he meets Flo in the bar where she has been talking to her ex-husband Jack, in the reunion orchestrated by her children. Presumably, Red has been reminded of the precariousness of both his life and his marriage. By the time he enters the bar, Flo has for her part been reminded of everything she loathes about Jack; she dumps him and slips in beside Red:

I am nudging Red's elbow, saying softly, "Buy me a drink, sweetheart." Then he turns to me and gives me a shock. A drop of blood has seeped through the gauze on his nose, tiny pinheads of sweat are running together over his brow, and there are tears sliding down his cheeks.

I take his hand and give it a squeeze.

"I love you, Flo," he says. "If you leave me, I'll blow my brains out."

(54-55)

Flo responds by affirming her love for Red. In a neat reversal of the initial poolside encounter, this episode has Flo playing the seducer (her opening line is less explicit than Red's "Wanna hold my cucumber, honey?", but it is a more conventional variation on the same theme; her "sweetheart" echoes Red's "honey" even to its placement in the sentence). And here it is Flo the hero who rescues Red from the threat of death by loneliness, who rescues him with her words (which are also, in a sense, his words), and who closes the narrative with her declaration.
II) "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon"

If "Red" is, among other things, a declaration of love, "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" declares the unreliability of declarations. The title story of Glover's 1985 collection is one of four fictions in that book narrated entirely in the first person, and the only such story to have a male narrator. Unlike "Red," this story is divided into segments separated by typographical marks, and the segments play off one another through repetition and variation.

1. The shifting "I"

Flo, the first-person narrator of "Red," breaks down the hegemony of the narrating "I" by weaving the voices of other characters into her story through implicit and explicit quotation. Similarly, the narrator of "Dog" disrupts the semblance of coherence provided by the first person. In this case, the disruption is effected chiefly through the fragmentation of the principal voice. The "I" in the story is not just the narrator but also the protagonist, husband, commentator, philosopher, rescuer.... Unlike Flo, this "I" remains nameless. If by naming we contain and stabilize identity, then the namelessness of this story's narrator suggests his evasiveness, his
multiplicity. And if the term "first person" implies singularity (that is, there may be a first and a second, but not two firsts) then this is not a first-person narration. The analysis which follows will focus on the dynamics of the relationship between the two main first persons of the story—the "I"-narrator and the "I"-character.

The work of Gérard Genette provides a helpful clarification of the distinction between the "I"-character and the "I"-narrator. In *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* Genette discusses the role of the first-person narrator, and notes that the terms "first-person—or third-person--narrative" seem "inadequate":

The presence of first-person verbs in a narrative text can therefore refer to two very different situations which grammar renders identical but which narrative analysis must distinguish: the narrator's own designation of himself as such, as when Virgil writes "I sing of arms and the man...," or else the identity of person between the narrator and one of the characters in the story, as when Crusoe writes "I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York...." The term "first-person narrative" refers, quite obviously, only to the second of these situations, and this dissymmetry confirms its unfitness.... The real question is whether or not the narrator can use the first person to designate one of his [sic] characters. We will therefore distinguish here two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he [sic] tells..., the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he [sic] tells.... I call the first type, for obvious reasons, heterodiegetic, and the second type homodiegetic.

(244-5)
One might dispute the contention that "the term 'first-person narrative' refers, quite obviously, only to the second of these situations." However, the point is well taken--first-person narration is not irreducible; it glosses over the differences among a number of narrative contexts. "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" illustrates both the differences between the homodiegetic and the heterodiegetic narrator and their points of convergence: the narration is first-person, but the narrator is at times homodiegetic, at times heterodiegetic; in places he operates somewhere between or beside the two categories. I am twisting Genette's designations slightly: the heterodiegetic narrator in "Dog" is not, strictly speaking, "outside of the story" (244). He is, however, further outside it than the narrator who acts as a character, and he is distanced from it, as he himself announces, by time and the distortions of fiction and memory.

Some readers find Genette's terms "homodiegetic" and "heterodiegetic" confusing. "Diegesis" is Genette's term for the "narrative as story," as opposed to the "narrative as discourse," the distinction between story and discourse being that which was popularized by the Russian Formalists. Thus the homodiegetic (same-as-diegesis) narrator is immersed in the story, whereas the heterodiegetic narrator is not. I will use the terms "I"-
character and "I"-narrator, because they highlight two of the story’s most salient narrative postures.

2. Openings

A) Opening lines

The opening lines of "Dog" introduce issues of identity and fragmentation which permeate the text:

My wife and I decide to separate, and then suddenly we are almost happy together. The pathos of our situation, our private and unique tragedy, lends romance to each small act. We see everything in the round, the facets as opposed to the flat banality that was wedging us apart. (97)

The narrator is identified as a married man from the first two words of the story; from the opening clause, the reader may assume that he will proceed to recount his version of the separation, and this is indeed what happens, more or less. The first sentence indicates one form of the opposition on which the story hinges, an opposition between unity (unitary identity, togetherness, marriage, fixity) and division (separation, fragmentation, disorder, disjunction, the divided self). The sentence may be mapped out as follows: "My wife and I decide" (unity)--"to separate" (division)--"and then suddenly we are almost happy together" (unity). This alternation of opposites manifests itself throughout the story, especially in the structure (even at
the level of sentence structure, as in the example above),
the fluctuating narrative postures, and the preoccupation
with the ambivalence of the "I."

The alternation between unity and division marks the
sequence of the opening sentences. The first sentence
presents itself as an objective description of events (as
objective, that is, as any first-person narration can be). The shift to a third-person subject in the second sentence
reinforces the semblance of objectivity, although that
sentence's position and its inclusion of two first-person
possessive adjectives suggest that it is to be understood as
flowing from the opening sentence, to be read as a
continuation of the voice of the "I." In the third
sentence, with the reversion to a first-person plural
subject, the narrator abandons the objective stance,
describing here a perception which is both particular and
somewhat deceptive. The protagonist claims that he and his
wife both "see... the facets as opposed to the flat
banality...." This is, however, quite a specific description
of a certain kind of perception, and it is unlikely that
they share it. It is more likely that the protagonist
appropriates his wife's perception, assuming that hers
coincides with his: he has decided that this is how they
have come to perceive their situation. The narrator, then,
one might argue, uses "we" in the third sentence when he
means "I," a slip with numerous resonances in a story so concerned with truth and deception, accuracy and error. In the story’s opening lines, the first-person plural subject pronouns and possessive adjectives might be described as ambivalent, caught in a referential tension between the editorial "we" that designates the narrator and the "we" that has two antecedents—the narrator/character and his wife.

The opening lines of "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" set up a tension between the "we" and the "I"; they introduce the narrator’s ambivalence toward unity and division, and the pattern of alternation which illustrates that ambivalence.

B) Opening paragraphs

"Dog" is not a straightforward chronological narration.

"Traditional story writers," claims the narrator, compose a beginning, a middle and an end, stringing these together in continuity as if there were some whole which they represented. Whereas I am writing fragments and discursive circumlocutions about an object that may not be complete or may be infinite. (102)

The story’s alternating structure juxtaposes sections which describe the events surrounding the dissolution of the protagonist’s marriage (usually told by the "I"-character)
with those which grapple with the business of story-telling, the act of narrating itself (told by the "I"-narrator).

These apparently discrete passages are separated by blank spaces and typographical marks, but even within individual sections the preoccupations of the "I"-character, reflecting on his marriage, intermingle with those of the "I"-narrator, meditating on his own narrative acts. The status (homodiegetic or heterodiegetic) of the narrator of "Dog" is produced by the concerns of the "I" at specific moments in the story. The first two paragraphs demonstrate the considerable differences between the story segments involving the "I"-character and those involving the "I"-narrator.

Here is the second paragraph of the story, which is also its second section, separated from the first paragraph by blank space and a typographical mark:

Note. Already this is not the story I wanted to tell. That is buried, gone, lost--its action fragmented and distorted by inexact recollection. Directly it was completed, it had disappeared, gone with the past into that strange realm of suspended animation, that coatrack of despair, wherein all our completed acts await, gathering dust, until we come for them again. I am trying to give you the truth, though I could try harder, and only refrain because I know that that way leads to madness. So I offer an approximation, a shadow play, such as would excite children, full of blind spots and irrelevant adumbrations, too little in parts; elsewhere too much. Alternately I will frustrate you and lead you astray. I can only say that, at the outset, my intention was otherwise; I sought only clarity and simple conclusions. Now I know the worst--that
reasons are out of joint with actions, that my best explanation will be obscure, subtle and unsatisfying, and that the human mind is a tangle of unexplored pathways.

(98)

This passage interrupts the narrative line initiated in the first paragraph and alludes to three of the most insistent tropes of the story: truth, blindness, and redemption. The abrupt sentence fragment ("Note.") marks from the outset the shift in tone, especially when it is contrasted with the conventional subject-verb-infinitive/object structure of the story’s opening clause. The "I" in the second sentence ("Already this is not the story I wanted to tell") is differentiated in context and intention from that of the opening section: the first "I," the "I"-character, appeared to be describing incidents having to do with his separation, while the "I" of the second paragraph, the "I"-narrator, desires to tell a story, and his primary interest lies in how that will happen. The difference is one of awareness: the first narrator does not disrupt the illusion that the story is reality, does not appear to be aware that he is telling a story; such disruption is the mandate of the "I"-narrator, whose self-conscious aim is the creation of fiction. But in the third sentence the "I"-narrator blurs the status of real experience in relation to fiction: the action of "the story I wanted to tell," he claims, is "distorted by inexact recollection." The narrator equates the action of the story with the experience his memory has
distorted—equates, in short, plot with life—the binary opposition between constructed fiction and (supposedly) authentic experience collapses when the action of the story appears both as artifice and as a (however distant) form of reality. Thus, in the first passage to establish a crucial difference between the narrators of the story, Glover elides this difference in the very process of creating it.

The shift from the "I"-character in the first paragraph to the "I"-narrator in the second produces a number of associated shifts in the style and focus of the narrative. The first paragraph is concerned with the character and his wife, the second with the narrator and his story. The first paragraph is structured around "I"-"she" interactions, which include dialogue ("she asks me"... "I do not say no"... "I say yes"), thoughts, perceptions and actions ("we see"... "[we] realize"... "we look"... "we are both thinking"... "I think"). There is a conflict between two characters, the protagonist and Lucy, about their marriage. In the second paragraph Lucy has disappeared; the paragraph is structured around not action or speech but description and introspection. There is a conflict between two characters, the "I"-narrator and the "you", about a story. The fact that the "I"-narrator is not much concerned with reporting dialogue or action gives him more room for description—hence the expanded use of adjectives (which come now in twos
and threes--"buried, gone, lost," "fragmented and
distorted," "obscure, subtle and unsatisfying") and of
imagery ("gone with the past into that strange realm of
suspended animation, that coatrack of despair, wherein all
our completed acts await, gathering dust, until we come for
them again"). The "I"-narrator encapsulates the story's
antiphonal structure: "Alternately I will frustrate you and
lead you astray."

The third paragraph of the story combines the "I"-
character and the "I"-narrator. It begins by repeating the
story's opening sentence:

"My wife and I decide to separate, and then
suddenly we are almost happy together." This is a
sentence full of ironies and lies. For example, I call
her my wife....

The reprise and critique of the opening line suggest that
this section will be dominated by the "I"-narrator, but
after the lines cited above the "I"-character returns and
talks about marriage. By this point the switch from "I"-
narrator to "I"-character is recognizable, the two narrative
postures having been set out in the preceding paragraphs.

The opening paragraphs of "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in
Saskatoon" constitute a critique of the convention of the
singularity of the first person. The story's narrating "I"
rapidly subdivides, revealing himself to be at least two
"I"s, telling at least two stories.

3. Truth

The principal source of ambivalence in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" is the recurring tension between unity and division. Unity suggests, among other things, the protagonist's marriage, the singular identity of the narrating "I," and the coherence of the story, whereas division, represented by the "I"-narrator, implies disruption, fragmentation, the protagonist's separation from his wife. The "I"-character is associated with unity and the orderly progression of the narrative, which the "I"-narrator interrupts and challenges at every turn. The ostensible reason for many of the "I"-narrator's interruptions is the search for truth.

In the second paragraph, the "I"-narrator asserts: "I am trying to give you the truth" (98). In the third, after a repetition of the opening sentence, he claims: "This is a sentence full of ironies and lies" (98). A few pages later, a paragraph begins as follows: "The discerning reader will by now have trapped me in a number of inconsistencies and doubtful statements" (103). Another opens:
Do not, if you wish, believe any of the above. It is psychological jazz written *en marge*; I am a poet of marginalia. Some of what I write is utter crap and wishful thinking. Lucy is not "happy to be sad"; she is seething inside because I am betraying her.

(105)

And again: "More bunk! I'll let you know now that we are not going to the art gallery as I write this" (107). The recurring references to truth, lies, and errors have numerous implications. The illusion being fostered is that the narrator started out telling a story and then, realizing it was inaccurate, decided to admit the deception in order to be truthful to the reader. This strategy raises a number of questions: what does truth mean in fiction, and to what extent can a work of fiction be untruthful? How is the reader to know that the narrator will be any more truthful after the confession of duplicity than before it? And by what means might that narrator tell the truth from here on in? On the one hand the confession establishes a complicity, a bond of confidence, between reader and narrator; on the other it undermines the narrator's credibility by revealing his own doubts about the authenticity of the text.

"Do not, if you wish, believe any of the above" (105): the onus is on the "you" to decide what s/he "wish[es]," what to "believe" (do we believe something because we wish to?). When a narrator makes a statement and later denounces
it, the effect is similar to that which occurs when a lawyer in a jury trial asks of a witness an improper question: the question may be contested and struck from the record, but it will always have been asked; the jury cannot un-hear it: "No gesture is lost; all our acts are linked and repeated" (105). Repeated interruptions and disclaimers in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" call into question the nature of truth and its manifestation in human acts and words; this interrogation is played out through shifts in narrative positions, specifically shifts from the "I"-character to the "I"-narrator--one "I" displaces another in order to critique it.

In "Red," the voice of the narrator draws in voices of other characters to create a first-person polyphony; in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon," the first person splits into two "I"-voices who compete for the right to truth, and to the story.

4. Narrative personae

While the principal separation in the narrative voice of "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" occurs between the "I"-character and the "I"-narrator, numerous other identities manifest themselves as components of that "I,"
identities which are identifiable by the languages they invoke. Chief among these are the storyteller, the philosopher, and the ambivalent lover.

The "I"-narrator is a writer, a storyteller, but he is never quite sure what story he is telling or how best to tell it: he alternates between confident explanations of his method and attacks on his own text. The disclaimer in the second section ("Already this is not the story I wanted to tell. That is buried, gone, lost") is echoed in the opening lines of the final section:

This is not the story I wanted to tell. I repeat this caveat as a reminder that I am willful and wayward as a storyteller, not a good storyteller at all. The right story, the true story, had I been able to tell it, would have changed your life--but it is buried, gone, lost.

(112)

It is as if "the right story, the true story" were a Platonic ideal, a notion in the storyteller's mind, of which actual texts can be only pale imitations ("so I offer you an approximation..."). The story--this story, "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon"--is framed by the narrator's assertions that it is not the story he had in mind, and indeed, of the list of topics to be covered that the narrator draws up in a notebook (106), some do not appear in this story at all. Except that they do--as part of that list. And in several cases they appear in another story altogether, "Woman Gored by Bison Lives," in Glover's third
collection, *A Guide to Animal Behaviour* (1991). Wolfgang Iser writes in "The Process of Reading" that the act of reading constitutes a continual modification of expectations: one sentence sets up certain expectations, which are then altered by the next (214). And in this story the "I"-narrator dramatizes that process by jumping in and commenting on the story as it proceeds with overt denials and disclaimers, repetitions and recontextualizations, so that the process of modification, the process of reading, is laid bare.

The language of philosophy enters the text on the second page as the narrator paraphrases Blaise Pascal: "Somewhere that cretin Pascal says that all our problems stem from not being able to sit quietly in a room alone" (98). The phrase "that cretin" implies that the narrator is to some degree familiar with Pascal's work (rather than having, say, taken the idea from a dictionary of quotations), and a couple of pages later the narrator explains the familiarity: "I am two courses short of a degree in philosophy which I will never receive" (100). Two pages after that, the "I"-narrator explains the story's "style": citing Heraclitus, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, he claims to be "invoking a tradition" of fragmentation. The parallel between the thematic concern with fragmentation and the philosophical justification for a
fragmented style is fairly obvious. The reference to academics implies a certain irony—if the philosopher’s philosophy of choice has to do with fragmentation, then it is appropriate that his degree should be missing two pieces. The invocation of the language of philosophy creates a discursive space for the contradictions and fragmentation of the story; it offers the philosophical "I" the opportunity to contemplate his circumstances from a variety of different positions.

The "I"-character in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" appears profoundly confused as to the nature of his role, and Lucy’s, in their relationship. In the story’s opening paragraph he makes the confusion explicit:

We are both thinking, "Who is this person to whom I have been married? What has been the meaning of our relationship?" These are questions we have never asked ourselves; we have been a blind couple groping with each other in the dark.

(97)

At the end of the paragraph he indicates the extent to which his feelings toward Lucy have changed ("Now I am defending my wife against Pascal! A month ago I would have used the same passage to bludgeon her" [98]). But it is not so much that the protagonist’s feelings have changed over time: the frequent denials and contradictions demonstrate that he harbours quite an array of apparently incompatible ideas about the relationship. In the third paragraph he argues that since the ceremony was short and the marriage short-
lived, they were never really married. In many of his analyses of the relationship, the protagonist claims that Lucy sought in him someone he clearly was not (a father, a brother). But, although he does not want to play the role of father to his wife, he often describes her as if she were a child, referring to her "child's school desk" (101), her "kittenish" behaviour (108); he is deeply moved when she dances at a puppet show: "She is a child again and I am in awe of her innocence... And when the puppeteers passed the hat at the end of the show, I turned out my pockets, I gave them everything I had" (109). The psychosexual implications of the story are far too complex to be gone into here; what the protagonist says, however, is that Lucy "refused to be a wife" (107), that she is sexually repressed and "naturally sees me as the father" (101). He seems unaware that he often sees her as the child. At one point in the story, refusing the role of father, he recasts himself: "Call this a play. Call me Orestes. Call her mother Clytemnestra. Her father, the wandering warrior king... I was the brother-friend come to slay the tyrant Celeste; Lucy was to teach me the meaning of suffering" (106). On occasion the protagonist's role in the relationship is more sexual than familial: "What she does love is for me to wrestle her to the living-room carpet and strip off her clothes in a mock rape" (107). Just as Red performs a variety of gender identities, so the protagonist of "Dog Attempts to Drown Man
in Saskatoon" articulates several of the subject positions he takes up in his relationship with Lucy; one difference is that in this story none of the roles seems satisfying, and one question is whether the protagonist avoids or creates them. And while the "I" in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" may be characterized as representing two different identities, those of narrator and protagonist, it is clear that this binary compartmentalization is inadequate to address the number and diversity of subject positions the story offers.

If "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" is an overtly, self-consciously fragmented and disrupted piece of writing, "Red" merely gives the impression of seamlessness: it shifts back and forth in time; the focus moves from Flo and Red to Flo and Jack to Flo and her children; the voice which seems to be Flo's speaks the words of others. Narration in the first person, then, does not mean narration by a single figure. Flo pulls other voices into her own; Lucy's nameless former husband fragments into assorted particles. In either case, what "I" means is considerably less obvious than it might seem. The next chapter will address polyphony without the "I," the incorporation of multiple voices in a third-person narration.
1. Bakhtin discusses this interweaving of quoted and quoting in an examination of Dickens’ *Little Dorrit*; he sees the "quotations" as marked by invisible (indeed, non-existent) punctuation:

   So it is throughout Dickens’ whole novel. His entire text is, in fact, everywhere dotted with quotation marks that serve to separate out little islands of scattered direct speech and purely authorial speech, washed by heteroglot waves from all sides. But it would have been impossible actually to insert such marks, since, as we have seen, one and the same word often figures both as the speech of the author and as the speech of another—and at the same time.

   (307-8)

2. Such as sentence fragments, non-standard syntax, and sentences which comprise, for example, one principal clause, or a series of principal clauses linked by conjunctions.

3. For example, complex sentences which include one or more subordinate clauses; compound sentences comprising two or more principal clauses linked by semi-colons instead of conjunctions; appositive and relative clauses.

4. Pierre Spriet discusses the use of the apparently spoken voice in an article on Leon Rooke’s "The Birth Control King of the Upper Volta" (an interesting geographical coincidence); there, he says,

   La nouvelle se présente comme une narration autodiégétique à la première personne: en identifiant narrateur et personnage principal, l’acte de parole se présente donc comme vérité et non comme fiction. Il supprime en effet tout intermédiaire: le narrateur se dit et paraît ne pas composer, ce qui contribue à voiler le caractère fictif du texte. Celui-ci ne se présente pas comme "littéraire," ce qui est une autre manière de dissimuler son caractère fictif; il se propose comme récit oral, sans apprêt et sans recherche rhétorique apparente.

   (138)

5. This is one of the many occasions in the story when comedy leads into parody; the psychoanalytic overtones here exemplify Glover’s sense of the absurd.

6. The sources of Red’s vulnerability appear at strategic points in the story: this exposition of his marriage to Patrice occurs about halfway through, while his skin cancer is accented at the end.
7. Indirect speech illustrates the difficulty of responding to the question, "Whose words are these?" The voice is Flo's, but she is paraphrasing Red, and the reader has no way of determining whose words are whose. Indicators such as "For his part, Red admitted..." and "according to Red" mark explicit quotations, but, unlike quotation marks, they do not separate one voice from another.

8. Flo's assertion, "But Jack doesn't drink," is immediately preceded by two sentences each of which begins with the statement, "I didn't know..."; this conspicuous repetition further stresses her ingenuousness.

9. "All three are, to use Sylvie's words, fucked up, a condition for which, they claim, I am mostly to blame" (41).

"For some reason they are afraid of life and take it out on me" (46).

10. As is suggested by the name itself: "Flo" may be a name in its own right or an abbreviation of Florence; it echoes "flow," "floe" and "flora"; Flo's name carries the traces of a diversity of other words and connotations.

11. Gender identity and sexual identity are interchangeable terms here, since, for Butler, "gender" and "sex" mean more or less the same thing:

If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all.

(7)

12. Indeed, Butler's critique of the stability of terms such as "sex" and "gender" effectively disrupts traditional distinctions among such other labels as "homosexual," "bisexual" and "heterosexual."

13. Red is associated with food a number of times in the opening pages of the story. He refers to his penis as a cucumber again a couple of pages later (43); Flo's initial description of him registers his "lime green" shorts and "skin the colour of boiled lobster" (42); a page later she notes that "his eyes were leaf green with red flecks, like pimento" (43)--the connection between food and desire does not need to be laboured.
14. Thus Genette's description of "the novelist's choice" might be extended: "to have the story told by one of its 'characters,' or to have it told by a narrator outside of the story," (244) or both.

15. See translator Jane Lewin's note (27n).

16. As Jeremy Hawthorn explains in A Concise Glossary of Literary Theory, the terms "story" and "discourse" belong to a confusing network of definitions and oppositions: commentators refer to story and plot, story and fabula, story and discourse, fabula and sjuzet, pairing the terms in such a way that "story" in one pair means the opposite of what it does in another. "The simple distinction," Hawthorn writes, "is between, on the one hand, a series of real or fictitious events, connected by a certain logic or chronology, and involving certain ACTORS, and on the other hand, the NARRATION of this series of events" (173). In Genette's work, "story" refers to the series of events, "discourse" to their narration.

17. Specifically, about this story. Indeed, it might be more accurate to say that the story rather than the addressee replaces Lucy, that the addressee plays a minor role and the "I"-narrator fails in love with his story, becoming increasingly absorbed in it even as the "I"-character distances himself from his wife.

18. Verb tenses heighten the distinction between the "I"-narrator and the "I"-character. The story opens with the "I"-character describing his relationship with Lucy in the present tense. The second section reveals the "I"-narrator confronting the difficulties of writing the story, also in the present tense; he suggests that the events of the first section are lost in the past. In both cases the tense is present, but the reader is given to understand that these are not equal presents: one present is, for all intents and purposes, past, while the other is present. The third section reverts to the present-present where it details the immediate circumstances of the marital breakdown, but it also refers to prior incidents (the wedding, for instance) and these appear in the past tense. Later in the story, the "I"-narrator corrects the "I"-character when the former claims to report what actually took place during the visit to the art gallery. This trip occurs, in chronological terms, after the present-tense opening section, yet it appears in the past tense. The tense shifts distinguish the temporal perspective of the "I"-narrator from that of the "I"-character, further underlining the distance between the two "I"s.
19. See Pascal's *Pensées*: "Tout le malheur des hommes vient d'une seule chose, qui est de ne savoir pas demeurer en repos dans une chambre" (ii,139).
CHAPTER FIVE

NARRATIVE MODULATIONS IN MAVIS GALLANT’S "THE PEGNITZ JUNCTION"

Voice is everything. If I don’t hear the voice, I can’t write the story. One has to find the exact tone, and it has to hold from beginning to end if it is to be true.

Mavis Gallant

Mavis Gallant’s career as a writer of short fiction may have begun in 1951 when The New Yorker first published one of her stories. She had moved to Europe from Canada the year before, and France has now been her home for many years. Gallant has written plays, novels and non-fiction, but the short story remains her most important genre. While it is impossible to characterize the entire body of any writer’s work, Gallant’s short fictions lend themselves to description more readily than some. Gallant is a writer’s writer, which is to say that her stories tend to appeal to readers accustomed to reading with care; her stories are subtle—nuanced rather than exuberant, witty rather than comic; strong emotions and desires may be evoked, but they are evoked coolly, often from the
perspective of a detached observer. Her characters, as is frequently noted, suffer various forms of alienation, often living or staying in foreign countries, speaking languages not their own—or, as is the case in "The Pegnitz Junction," always on their way home but never arriving.

"The Pegnitz Junction" is one of Gallant's most complex and challenging texts. The complexity and the challenges both arise from the sophisticated manipulation of voice and point of view. Narrative voices shift constantly in "The Pegnitz Junction," at times with a fluidity that renders their alternation barely perceptible, occasionally in such a manner as to disconcert and even confuse the reader. The skill with which these narrative modulations take place leads Danielle Schaub to characterize "The Pegnitz Junction" as "one of the richest examples of Mavis Gallant's polyphony" (234). Indeed, it is this polyphony, the strategic deployment of voices, in "The Pegnitz Junction," that makes it one of Gallant's most intricate and densely textured fictions. "The Pegnitz Junction" has been described as a novel (Davies 70), a novella (Gallant and Hancock 37; Besner 93), and a story (Gallant and Fabre 97): in any case, the ability of a relatively long fiction to sustain such a variety of voices appearing and disappearing, interrupting one another and then falling silent, constitutes one of the text's most compelling features.
"The Pegnitz Junction" is a story made up of stories—the voices Christine hears and the stories they tell intrude relentlessly on her consciousness. Gallant begins with the story of Christine and Herbert and, through numerous interjections, broadens the scope of the narrative so that in the end it is at least as much about a period in German history as it is about one German couple, at least as much about telling as it is about the tale.

"The Pegnitz Junction" opens, with characteristic Gallant irony, at the beginning of the end of a holiday: Christine, just twenty-one, is returning to Germany with her lover Herbert, ten years older than she, and his son, little Bert. This is a peculiarly static journey, though, marked not only by long periods of confinement in the overheated train compartment but also by apparently interminable interruptions during which the characters wait—for another train to arrive, for a new destination to present itself, for something to happen. Christine is engaged to marry a theology student, and one might expect the narrative to centre on the choice she will presumably have to make between him and Herbert. But the student remains a shadowy figure throughout, and while Herbert and his son frequently occupy Christine’s thoughts, these are just as often punctuated by what Christine refers to as "interference"—the interpolated thoughts of other characters transmitted by
some mysterious process through her.

1. "The Pegnitz Junction": Introductions

"The Pegnitz Junction" begins in the third person with a description of Christine. Like Douglas Glover's "Red," this narrative begins with an enumeration of the protagonist's physical traits: in the opening paragraph the reader learns that Christine is "bony" and "slow-moving," that she is tall and might have been thought "plain" a few years earlier, that she has big feet and light hair. Several significant differences in narrative technique, however, create widely divergent effects. Compare, for example, the opening sentence of Glover's "Red" ("I have hair like Ethel Kennedy's") to that of "The Pegnitz Junction" ("She was a bony slow-moving girl from a small bombed baroque German city, where all that was worthwhile keeping had been rebuilt and which now looked as pink and golden as a pretty child and as new as morning"). Both are opening sentences of stories featuring a female protagonist; each begins a paragraph which serves primarily to characterize the protagonist in terms of her physical appearance. In both stories, this information provides an immediate visual anchor for the reader; it establishes the
appearance of the character whose mind will act as the filter through which many of the events of the story will pass before they reach us. The differences, though, are more revealing than the similarities.

The most obvious consideration is point of view. Both stories announce the point of view and the focus on the protagonist from the very first word ("I"; "she"). The brief, direct address of the sentence from "Red" presents physical characteristics and at the same time introduces Flo's voice and suggests how that voice will shape the story. The first person creates the illusion of immediacy: since the roles of narrator and protagonist are combined, the impression is that Flo speaks directly to the reader, without the intervention of another voice (that of an omniscient narrator). The opening lines of "The Pegnitz Junction" are permitted to run longer because they are spoken by a narrator rather than a character. They contain much more physical description and also indicate the cultural and thematic contexts which will become crucial as the story progresses. The third person allows for a leisurely pace and a rhythmic, almost incantatory style. It permits the extensive and carefully constructed observations that seem more credible when they come from an omniscient narrator than from a character, whose perception of the world of the story remains necessarily limited. These
opening lines, then, characterize Christine's physical appearance and the voice of the invisible narrator; they tell us next to nothing about Christine's personality or her own voice. One might say that Flo's voice arrives in Glover's story at the same time as she does, whereas Christine's physical presence precedes her voice. This sequence is appropriate because Christine acts primarily (if at times unwillingly) as a listener, while Flo is a speaker. The opening sentence of "Red" draws the reader to the protagonist; that of "The Pegnitz Junction" functions mainly to map out certain distances, creating through the use of the third person a separation between narrator and protagonist, and situating the narrator between protagonist and reader.

Some readers have interpreted the distance between narrator and protagonist in "The Pegnitz Junction" as an indication of hostility on the part of the implied author. In her article on "The Pegnitz Junction," Danielle Schaub cites the story's opening paragraph as evidence of the omniscient narrator's distaste for Christine. "Originally depreciative descriptive statements," Schaub writes,

are further amplified by cascades of subclauses or subsequent clauses that colour them negatively. Thus the first picture of the protagonist and her background is not devoid of criticism. Christine immediately strikes the reader as not very attractive.... Since she is implicitly presented in a critical mode it is no wonder that the entire narrative is critical too. The
criticism even extends to the general attitude to things. The comment as to the town where Christine comes from reveals the human ability to forget the past by obliterating its traces and producing beautiful, impersonal, and ageless substitutes. (235)

Although Schaub appears to recognize the narrator's sense of loss as a result of the reconstruction (this, after all, is conveyed directly—"where all that was worthwhile keeping had been rebuilt"), her substitution of "beautiful" for the narrator's "pretty" reveals a blindness to the finely-tuned nuances of Gallant's diction. "Pretty" is a flimsy little word. And while Christine may not present herself as beautiful (or even pretty), this is not in itself a bad thing. Gallant's narrators are, by and large, interested in what the specifics of appearance reveal about a character, and not how attractive s/he might be. From the vantage point of the narrator, such epithets as "bony" may not seem particularly disparaging. (There is also the evidence in the second paragraph that Christine has done some work as a model: she must be reasonably good-looking.) The significance of the opening paragraph lies in its presentation, rather than its evaluation, of physical appearance. By establishing Christine from the outset as the object of the narrator's gaze, Gallant underlines her passivity, the impression that instead of acting she is acted upon. At times in "The Pegnitz Junction" Christine demonstrates her defiance--as in her outburst to the hotel
porter, for example, her challenging of the train conductor, or the closing section, when she goes against Herbert's wishes and tells little Bert the story about Bruno and his brothers. These acts of rebellion on Christine's part, significantly, are all associated with speech. More often, though, she is a receptor, channelling the experiences and feelings of others, and this is the role to which the reader is introduced in the opening lines of the story.

Other (generally minor) characters in "The Pegnitz Junction" arrive, as it were, voice-first: the night porter of the hotel, who is at first heard and not seen, "pounding on the passage door and shouting" (6); the train conductor who follows his own orders ("No standing in first class!" [20]) down the corridor. Here too, the precedence of voice over physical appearance serves a purpose: it is not so much what the night porter does as what he says and how he says it that are significant (his parting remarks sum up a particular attitude toward Germans in postwar Europe), and the train conductor's Bavarian accent will recur as a motif in the narrative.

If the use of the third person in the opening paragraphs of "The Pegnitz Junction" indicates the separation between narrator and protagonist, a statement in the second paragraph makes that separation explicit:
She was at one of those turnings in a young life where no one can lead, no one can help, but where someone for the sake of love might follow. (4)

These lines make manifest the difference in age: they suggest an experienced narrator looking back on youth and love. Even before this fairly direct dissociation, though, patterns of rhythm and syntax point to an authorial voice as opposed to a character-voice.

Consider the opening sentence as poetry for a moment:

She was a bony slow-moving girl from a small bombed baroque German city, where all that was worthwhile keeping had been rebuilt and which now looked as pink and golden as a pretty child and as new as morning.  

(3)

First of all, this is a long complex sentence comprising two subordinate relative clauses ("where all..." and "which now...") in addition to the main clause. Character voices occasionally manifest themselves in long sentences, but in such cases these tend to constitute a series of main clauses linked by "and." Generally, complex sentences sound written, and the two writerly similes at the end reinforce this impression here. When Christine does speak, she tends to express herself directly and concisely.
The cluster of stresses around the description of the city brings the reader up short and underlines the text's most prominent historical and ideological undercurrent. The two phrases containing the greatest number of stressed syllables describe Christine ("bony slow-moving girl"); four out of six syllables stressed) and her home town ("small bombed baroque German city"; five out of eight syllables stressed). These rhythmic emphases single out the protagonist and the city where she was raised, pairing the two off in the first part of the sentence as if to prepare for the comparison between them in the relative clause which explicitly personifies the city, likening it not just to a child but, though the traditional gender markers "pink" and "pretty," to a female child (Christine is not exactly a child, but she is considerably younger than Herbert, and the narrator does refer to her as a "girl.").

This comparison is important because the relation between person and place and, more precisely, the cultural, historical and social impact of the Second World War on German people, is the story's principal subject.

The opening sentence of "The Pegnitz Junction" works hard. While it tells us relatively little about Christine beyond her physical appearance, it lays out the thematic grounds of the story, establishes the narrator's
tone of voice (aloof, thoughtful, unhurried), and marks out a distance between narrator and protagonist. This difference is reflected in the relation between Gallant and her topic--Gallant the observer of the German people in the postwar era, positioning herself close enough to see detail but not so close as to become engulfed by it.

2. "The Pegnitz Junction": Herbert--issues of speech and authority

Herbert enters the story on its second page; this slight delay suggests his subordinate position in relation to Christine (who is introduced in the opening lines), and her prominence in the narrative as a whole. The first paragraph in which he is mentioned makes two important points about Herbert and speech:

Unlike the student of theology, he had not put up barriers such as too much talk, self-analysis, or second thoughts. In fact, he tended to limit the number of subjects he would discuss.... He often said he thought he could not live without her, but a few minutes after making such a declaration he seemed unable to remember what he had just said, or to imagine how his voice must have sounded to her.

(4)

Herbert, then, appears from the outset as a character whose speech is limited to certain specific and predetermined
topics. This characterization is not without irony: Herbert may be prepared to speak only on a restricted range of subjects, but within those parameters he can go on at considerable length. Furthermore, the authority of his voice is undermined by its impermanence even in his own mind. Authority is a key issue in Herbert's characterization--his own authority as a man, as a parent, as Christine's older lover, as a member of the professional class, as well as his response to authorities of various kinds. He defers meekly, for example, to the hotel porter's bullying, whereas Christine launches a verbal defence; he composes in his head letters of complaint to the editors of newspapers and journals, but in these letters he is careful not to criticize the government.

Herbert's utterances in "The Pegnitz Junction" often serve either to reify or to undercut his authority. When Herbert explains to his son, little Bert, why they must have a substantial meal in Strasbourg, the narrator intervenes with a direct translation:

... because the German train would not have a restaurant car, Herbert went on calmly. His actual words were, "Because there will be no facilities for eating on the second transport."

Herbert's second statement receives a double emphasis--it is set off in quotation marks and described as "His actual
words." Both these devices reinforce the directness, the seeming authenticity of his speech. The statement is a curious one, though--Herbert's "actual words," are supposedly in German, presumably translated by the narrator into English. The excessive formality of the diction and expression evoke the foreign in Herbert’s words, though a German rendering of the statement might sound equally odd. Many of the characters in the story are German and the reader assumes what they say is in German (although the narrator points out that Herbert at times insists on speaking French). But "The Pegnitz Junction" is, obviously, written in English and Gallant usually renders the characters’ voices as if they were speaking English, to the extent that it is at times difficult to remember that they are not. In this instance, however, the narrator gives Herbert’s speech an awkwardness that makes it sound like an inelegant translation.

The effect of Herbert’s utterance is twofold. First, it serves as a reminder of the foreignness of his speech (and only his--other characters could speak in this manner but Gallant does not have them do so). Second, the explanation, with its substitution of "transport" for "train" and "facilities for eating" for "restaurant car," gives the impression of imprecise and pedantic wordiness. This kind of language is often associated with government
documents, bureaucratic memoranda, and the like. Moreover, this speech comes at the bottom of a page devoted almost entirely to a summary of Herbert's explanations to his son about the upcoming journey, explanations which include meal plans, approximate travel times and stopovers: Herbert seems to have been explaining for an awfully long time at this point, although, as we are told in the next sentence, "Christine thought that Herbert's information left out a great deal." His diction and syntax here, then, align Herbert with decision-makers, administrators, and other such figures of authority.

The incident with the woman referred to as an "American army wife" heightens Herbert's credibility as a voice of authority in a surprising way. Christine is the one who, throughout much of the text, has the insights into people's characters--she hears their stories, the ones no one else hears. Unless Christine fabricates all the information she collects (the text does not support this interpretation, and neither does Gallant herself), then she stands in a particularly privileged position in terms of her ability to assess character. But it is Herbert who, without any special knowledge, recognizes immediately the deception practised by the young German woman who tries to pass herself off as American. This recognition functions in several ways. It allows Herbert to state definitively and,
as it turns out, accurately, in the face of Christine's protests, that the young woman is German. This reinforces his credibility, but it also suggests that he too is capable of insight and perhaps sensitivity. Her voice gives the pregnant woman away: she

said in her haughtiest English, "Sir! Vare iss ze boss to Buttonshtah?" which was enough to tell any careful census taker (Herbert, for one) her nationality, schooling, region, village--what part of village, even, if one was particular over details. (77)

Herbert tricks her by responding in German ("with the accent of their train conductor"), which she is not supposed to understand. "She had been deceived by the look of Herbert," the narrator tells us (77), just as Christine was deceived by the look of the pregnant woman. Herbert ignores the visual, concentrating on the auditory, and this approach enables him to make astute inferences: whereas appearances are misleading, voice, here, serves as an avenue to the truth.10

At times Herbert's ponderous habits of explanation, his propriety, and the overall impression that he seems much older than his thirty-one years combine to create the impression of a cardboard character, a dogmatic buffoon. Robertson Davies calls him "the reasonable Herbert," "a man without faith but full of remorseless
principle" (70). The incident with the "army wife," though, alerts the reader to the fact that he is to be taken seriously, that his character is more complex than one might suppose. Thus, when Herbert warns Christine that the man whose story she intercepts at the border is a policeman, we are more inclined to believe him, although Christine has not suspected it and there is little evidence to support his claim.

Another trait one would not expect to find in Herbert is his sense of humour; this characteristic manifests itself exclusively through voice. When strains of the train conductor's Bavarian accent reach Christine's compartment, we are told,

> The voice was very like Herbert's, imitating a celebrated Bavarian politician addressing a congress of peasants. But Herbert was not unexpectedly being funny out there in the corridor, and the voice belonged to the conductor, now seen for the first time.

(20-21)

Although Herbert's sense of humour is noted a few times in "The Pegnitz Junction," it never strikes the reader as one of his more prominent qualities--hence the use here of "unexpectedly." Later on we discover that Herbert occasionally begins phone conversations by imitating a political figure or television announcer, a custom Christine finds "strange for a man as busy and practical as Herbert"
In both instances, it is not what Herbert says but the substitution of another's voice for his own that creates a comic effect. Furthermore, the voices he tries out are those not of friends or family but of celebrities, generally politicians--figures of authority. Herbert undercuts their authority by exploiting their regional dialects, although he would not publicly criticize a government in his letters to the editor. Herbert's manipulation of voice serves as a means of quiet critique, a private rebellion against those in power.

Herbert's speech at times distinguishes itself by its absence. The incident with the French hotel porter underlines the differences between Christine's and Herbert's responses to authority. When Christine runs a bath on the morning of the last day of their holiday, the porter bursts in, screaming about the noise made by the hotel's ancient plumbing. The sudden violence of his response to the noise, the calculated malice of his actions ("The scented tub no one would ever use steamed gently; the porter pulled the stopper, finally, to make sure" [7]), and the fact that he evicts the travellers from their bathroom, locking the door, conjure images of cruelty and confinement, evoking the war. The text reinforces this evocation in its description of Herbert. Herbert is disturbed chiefly by the inaccuracy of the porter's statement that it is too late to make such a
noise: "He meant too early--Herbert, drawn by the banging and shouting, kept telling him so" (7). But the porter's slip resonates with historical implication. Christine berates the porter, but "That was all Herbert had to say"; he responds to intimidation with compliance:

He really seemed extraordinarily calm, picking up toothbrushes and jars and tubes without standing his ground for a second. It was as if he were under arrest, or as though the porter's old pajama top masked his badge of office, his secret credentials. The look on Herbert's face was abstract and soft, as if he had already lived this, or always had thought that he might. (7)

Although Herbert was only a child during the war, Gallant suggests through his reactions in this passage the collective memory of a population. Herbert might just as well have "already lived" this episode of packing and fleeing, an episode which prefigures the story of Sigi, the child whose parents woke him in the middle of the night to make their escape. Herbert's response to orders and potential danger, real or imagined, is obedience, and it is difficult to determine whether the implied criticism of his submission ("without standing his ground for a second") comes from Christine or the narrator, although the former alternative is the more likely. This time, however, there is no war, and the conflict is far enough in the past for Christine and her generation to have escaped witnessing it directly.
The difference in the characters’ experiences affects their behaviour-- Christine, who feels, perhaps, that there is less to fear, less to lose, fights back with a threat to the porter even as Herbert tries to smooth things over:

She said, "You are going to be in trouble over this."
"Never mind," said Herbert. He did not want any unpleasantness in France.12

Here Herbert’s thoughts take precedence over those of the narrator so that his motivation may be distinguished from that of Christine, who doesn’t mind a little unpleasantness if it serves a purpose. In one of Gallant’s most often-quoted statements, she articulates her vision of The Pegnitz Junction as an exploration of Fascism’s "small possibilities in people" (Gallant and Hancock 41). One might well particularize this comment to argue that "The Pegnitz Junction" is about such possibilities as they are manifested in the ways in which people respond to authority.

Herbert’s voice appears in italics for the first time near the end of the text (84). At times, Herbert’s thoughts and memories have been transmitted through Christine’s point of view (as when she thinks about Herbert thinking about his mother [13]). Here, however, Herbert’s voice gives the appearance of being channelled directly to
the reader, and the italics emphasize the clarity of the
signal. This technique exemplifies the layerings of
illusion in "The Pegnitz Junction"—the italicized section
is Herbert’s voice not, as it would seem, in some
unmediated form but as it is heard or interpreted by
Christine, who, apart from the reader, is the only one to
intercept it.

Italics function intermittently in the text to
pinpoint one voice or another. Mrs. Schneider’s voice
recurs more than any other and it always appears in italics,
as does the letter to Ken; the Kafkaesque story of Uncle
Ludwig and the castle is in ordinary type, as is the episode
concerning Sigi’s escape from his native village. When
Herbert’s voice is italicized, the typeface accentuates the
impression of directness created by the first-person
narration. The passage combines humour with an emotional
intensity we have not heretofore witnessed in Herbert. Even
as Herbert struggles to answer, over the telephone, a
question concerning one of the most important relationships
in his life, the narrator mocks his caution:

One night I heard, "Do you still love me?" I thought
for a long time, wanting to give her a complete answer.
(85)

This excerpt demonstrates the complexity of the story’s
narrative transmissions and transactions. The omniscient narrator is making fun of Herbert in a passage apparently narrated in the first person by Herbert himself, while technically it is Christine who hears Herbert's story and through whose point of view it is focalized and contextualized. "Occasionally within Christine's inner monologue," Schaub explains,

one can hear Herbert's voice, as if one heard a voice within a voice.... Episodes of people's lives... are thus recorded as if by an omniscient narrator whereas it is Christine who decodes such information. (236-7)

Christine's role as decoder is underlined by brief passages in which she comments on the information she has received, so as to demonstrate that she is the medium, that the information has not arrived in the text without her having channelled it.13

At first glance, Herbert seems very much in control; this position of power is established principally through contrasts between him and Christine. He is an engineer, whereas she appears to do nothing in particular. She has accompanied him to Paris and not the other way around. As a parent, Herbert acts as an educator; the fact that he is constantly imparting information makes it seem that he has a lot of it.14 As a man, Herbert is the object
of the attention of the girls from summer camp, who ignore Christine but "would have murdered one another for the sake of being [Herbert's] favourite" (21). As a mimic, Herbert finds a means of expression for such defiance as he is capable of. And the fact that he himself is the object of mimicry (as when little Bert says, "Oh, en quel honneur?", unwittingly paroding his father) testifies to Herbert's own influence. These power relations play themselves out through voice and dialogue. Ultimately, though, Herbert's own voice fades out. Consider once more the passage cited at the beginning of this section:

[Herbert] often said he thought he could not live without her, but a few minutes after making such a declaration he seemed unable to remember what he had just said, or to imagine how his voice must have sounded to her.

(4)

Christine indicates the ephemeral quality of Herbert's voice when, at the end of "The Pegnitz Junction," she closes the waiting room door. She shuts out the voices of the other characters, Herbert's included, and, left at last in peace, begins her story to little Bert.

3. Voice and point of view: Christine and authority
In most third-person fictions it is possible to discern a narrator, an implied author, a persona whose presence, at times effaced, at times controlling, determines, among other things, the tone, diction, mode of expression of the narrative--determines, then, how things are said, and often what is said. The quintessential Gallant narrator of this kind is detached, sophisticated, ironic, judging not overtly but through the implication of the sharply observed detail. It is not the voice of the narrative persona only, however, which structures textual observation and expression: much of "The Pegnitz Junction" comes from Christine’s point of view. This text is particularly complex in terms of its narrative layering--in terms, that is, of who is saying or thinking what, at what point, and through whose point of view these thoughts or utterances are expressed.

The controlling presence in "The Pegnitz Junction" fluctuates--in some places the narrator’s appears to be the guiding voice, while in others it is Christine’s, or that of another character. In the opening pages of the story the narrator’s voice predominates. The first few paragraphs consist of the narrator’s description of Christine, her physical appearance and general demeanour. The narrator maintains a distant, objective, descriptive stance, with what might be construed as occasional incursions into the
Sometimes she woke up to find herself being inspected from head to foot by little Bert, who had crept to their room in search of his father.... Through her hair she would watch him taking a long look at her before he moved round the bed...

Herbert would turn at once to little Bert. His deepest feelings were linked to the child. He sometimes could reveal anguish, of which only the child was the source.

(5)

Such observations, however, do not constitute substantial shifts in point of view; they stray only slightly from the perspective of the narrator. In the first instance, the physical perspective is Christine's ("Through her hair she would watch..."), but there is no indication of her thoughts or feelings; in the second, although the narrator is describing Herbert's feelings, the point of view is not really Herbert's: the focus is not on a particular feeling at a particular moment but rather on a characterization of his emotional life in general. The passage cited above, then, might be described as part of a gradual process (the movement from the omniscient narrator's point of view to the much narrower perspective of one individual), preparing for a more substantial shift a few pages later into the minds of the characters.

When the hotel porter makes his frenzied entrance into the hotel room and demands that the water be turned
off, the text makes its first foray into Christine's mind:

At first, of course, she thought that the man was drunk; then the knowledge came to her—she did not know how, but never questioned it either—that he suffered from a form of epilepsy. (7)

The shift from the narrator's point of view to that of Christine is clearly signalled by the phrase "she thought"; in addition, this sentence provides the first indication of Christine's telepathic sensitivity, which will be exploited throughout "The Pegnitz Junction."

A little later on, once they have boarded the train to Strasbourg, the narrative voice becomes more obviously and decisively Christine's. Herbert, Christine, and little Bert have been having breakfast and talking in the dining car; the paragraph opens as follows:

Oh, he was so foolish with the child! Like a servant, like a humble tutor with a crown prince. She would never marry Herbert—never. (13)

By this point, Christine's voice has taken over almost entirely from that of the narrator—the interjection and exclamation point, the repetition—all of this is not only Christine's point of view but her voice: her opinions and mode of expression.16
In the opening pages of the story, the narrator's voice predominates; Christine is presented as passive and acquiescent. As the narrative progresses, Christine becomes more of an active participant in it. First, the narrative voice more often merges with hers. Second, even as the polyphonic qualities of "The Pegnitz Junction" begin to emerge, so does Christine as a central figure. While the story of Christine, Herbert and little Bert is interrupted more and more often by the voices of other characters, Christine's role expands. As the one who channels these voices, she becomes a focal character. Her capacity for receiving information casts Christine in a stereotypical female role: that of the sensitive, intuitive woman, listening to the difficulties of others without speaking of her own. But this is after all a Gallant story, and such a characterization cannot be sustained without paradox. The third manifestation of Christine's increasingly significant contribution to the story of "The Pegnitz Junction" undermines the feminine stereotype: Christine is by far the most defiant and rebellious character in the text. Christine consistently challenges authoritarianism and refuses roles she does not want to accept in both the domestic and the political spheres, and in her role as storyteller.

Christine's main act of resistance on the domestic
front is to refuse the easy equation of woman with mother. Christine persists in rebelling against acting *in loco parentis*. Although some of Herbert's parental rules seem unnecessarily unyielding, she refrains from questioning them, from appearing to situate herself as a familial equal.\(^\text{17}\) At times she is not sure how to deal with the child:

Christine supposed that it was up to her to behave like a mother. Perhaps she ought to pick up the sponge, go out to little Bert, stoop down until their faces were nearly level...

(19)

But she does not. Much later, Herbert asks whether Christine thinks little Bert should be allowed a comic book. "But she was not the child's mother: she would not be drawn" (63).

Christine refuses the role of mother because she is unwilling to compromise herself through dissimulation. Born after the war, she remains, ironically, the character whose actions most often take the form of resistance. Herbert adheres to a strict code of principles, but sometimes only because they are principles; he will not alter them to suit circumstances. Christine's is a morality of contingency: she faces questions of principle in the context in which they arise.
Christine confronts abuses of power, whether they are directed against her or others. She challenges men in uniform—the French hotel porter, and, later, the train conductor. As the former disappears and the latter backs down, some of their authority is transferred to Christine. She also upbraids those she feels to be in the wrong. She tells the scarred man who searches for the site of his childhood escape, "Besides..., you know this was not the place. It must have been to the north" (60). And when he asks directions of an old man and is rebuffed, Christine confronts the latter:

"His feelings are hurt," said Christine, as the stranger drifted away. "Look at the way he hangs his head.... Now, why did you answer that way?" she asked the old man. "I'm sure you are not a refugee at all. What didn't you like about the poor creature?" (62)

Christine may not narrate "The Pegnitz Junction" but she is a storyteller, and the choices she makes about the stories she tells demonstrate her independence. The novella constitutes a fine example of Bakhtinian heteroglossia, including as it does a variety of voices and languages, as well as such genres as the letter, the biography and the embedded fiction. Many of the incorporated genres are stories issuing from other characters through Christine, but she herself plays the role of narrator on occasion. When Christine tells stories, her
audience usually comprises Herbert and little Bert. Herbert, finding them unsuitable, tends to interrupt the tales before they get underway. Christine does not change the story: when Herbert objects to it, she stops reading:

" 'It was the fourteenth of July in Paris. Bruno put on his blue-and-gold uniform with the tassels and buttons shining…' "

"No, no," said Herbert. "Nothing military."

"Well, you read then." She handed the book across.

Christine uses the pretence of reading to little Bert as a means of goading Herbert: she offers to read little Bert stories with titles she knows Herbert will not accept, such as "Bruno and the wicked stepmother." When she suggests to little Bert "Bruno goes to an anti-authoritarian kindergarten?" Herbert responds, "Don’t tease him" (38); Herbert apparently does not realize that he is himself the object of the teasing.

Christine’s oddest story is the one about Bruno’s five brothers, all named Georg--Herbert objects on the grounds that it is silly and confusing, but Christine insists with unusual vehemence that it is a true story, that her father knew the five brothers, only one of whom survived the war (she does not, however, try to convince Herbert that all five were brothers of Bruno the sponge). Circumstances
interrupt the narrative, but when "The Pegnitz Junction" closes, Christine, alone in the waiting room with little Bert, is able to resume it:

She had been hoping all day to have the last word, without interference. She held little Bert and said aloud, "Bruno had five brothers, all named Georg. But Georg was pronounced five different ways in the family, so there was no confusion. They were called the Goysh, the Yursh, the Shorsh..."

This is a defiantly non-closural point of closure—overdetermined, ambiguous, laden with a hundred contradictory implications. Christine is on a journey, but stalled in a waiting room while she waits to board or not to board the train that will take her home; she has escaped Herbert but knows he is not far away; she is telling his son a story, but a story Herbert has already vetoed; she seeks a respite from the persistence of other narratives but fills that space with another story about others’ lives. The omniscient narrator opens the narration of "The Pegnitz Junction" but in the end Christine is granted her wish and given the last word, although, if she is to be believed, these are probably the words of her father, and the novella, refusing to close with any degree of finality, pivots on its final ellipsis, directing the reader backward into the text and forward into its largest lacuna.
"The Pegnitz Junction" begins with the story of Christine, Herbert, and little Bert; gradually its scope expands to encompass the voices and histories of a broad range of German people. One might expect that the effects of this expanding scope--fragmentation, interruption, ellipsis, polyphony--would diminish the intensity of the focus on Christine, especially since the omniscient narrator's voice is strong and confident enough to upstage that of the protagonist. But this does not happen: Christine if anything gains substance and credibility through her repeated verbal opposition to intimidation, injustice and deception. If "The Pegnitz Junction" is about Fascism's "small possibilities in people" (Gallant and Hancock 41) then Christine represents the people in whom its possibilities are small indeed.20


"Mavis Gallant is a peculiar kind of moralist."

Janice Kulyk Keefer

Critical discussion of Mavis Gallant's stories
returns again and again to one key point: judgement. "Judgement" is a broad and probably an excessively juridical term to use in this context but it is appropriate because of its connotations of authority, power, control, hierarchy, and decision-making. The issue is narrative control: do Gallant’s (often but not always omniscient) narrators speak so forcefully as to close off the possibility of the reader's disagreeing with them, or do the obliquity and indirection which characterize their expressions of opinion allow for a range of interpretative responses? A consideration of three sets of critical positions will suffice to illustrate the nature of the debate.

Two contradictory complaints about Mavis Gallant’s fiction recur repeatedly in the critical commentaries. The first is that her judgements are too harsh: characters and their actions are treated in a disparaging manner; the opinions of the implied author are clear and nasty. The second major objection is that Gallant does not judge enough: the stories lack authorial direction; as a result, readers can’t decide what they mean. Critics who occupy what one might call a middle ground see Gallant’s characterization as ironic without being unsympathetic; authorial opinion is suggested rather than pronounced.
Example One: ruthlessness and indifference

Critics who feel that Gallant judges her characters too harshly include Herbert Grabes and Danielle Schaub; they represent what one might call the Mean Mavis school of thought. In an article entitled "Creating to Dissect: Strategies of Character Portrayal and Evaluation in Short Stories by Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro and Mavis Gallant," Grabes punctuates his critique of "Acceptance of Their Ways" with the kind of diction one might expect to find in a report on the activities of a cruel pathologist (124-26). He examines "the continuous and ruthless dissecting of character which is the most prominent feature of this story," noting Lily Littel's "ruthless analyses" and the presence of "an omniscient narrator who is just as merciless and devastatingly ironic." Grabes points to "scathingly satirical" narrative strategies and concludes that "the characters seem to be created only in order to be viciously dissected. Mavis Gallant’s scalpel continuously touches to the quick...." Danielle Schaub perceives in "The Pegnitz Junction" not so much an obsession with incision as a sense of pervasive and uncharitable gloom. She reads the omniscient narrator's opening description of Christine and her home town as an indictment of character and place. "The entire narrative is critical," Schaub writes. "None of the
characters is spared by Mavis Gallant’s disparaging pen: they all come out in a rather dismal light" (235-6). Grubes and Schaub place an unwarranted emphasis on the vicious and the dismal. It is true that only the most misguided of commentators on Gallant’s fiction might describe it as happy-go-lucky, but ambivalence is a powerful element of her writing. The narrator, whether omniscient or a character in the story, should not be taken too literally. Tone is crucial. As we have seen, the tone of the omniscient narrator in the opening paragraphs of "The Peggini Junction" serves a number of important functions; condemning the protagonist is not one of them.

Some reviewers have accused Gallant not of castigating her characters but on the contrary of maintaining a profound indifference toward them. "Critics have blamed Gallant for not judging more, for not smiling on the good or frowning on the bad more overtly," wrote Timothy Foote in a 1979 review of From the Fifteenth District. Eve Auchincloss’s review of My Heart is Broken in the New York Times Review of Books (1964) doubtless represents the kind of objections Foote is referring to. Gallant’s "discretion," Auchincloss claimed, "often wanders on into an ostentatious withholding of judgement that begs the question: why then write the story?" William Pritchard made the following comments in his 1973 review of The Peggini
Junction:

That Mavis Gallant refuses to... speak as a thoughtful omniscience behind her characters, might be admired as indicative of her belief that life's oddities mustn't be ironed out into the orderly understandings of fiction. Yet by cultivating incongruities, juxtaposing voices and memories that fit together in only the craziest way the author might seem to evade responsibility for saying or caring very much about her characters and their situation.

(4; emphasis added)

Pritchard sees Gallant's narrator as maintaining a studied indifference toward the characters, while Grabes and Schaub argue that narrators go out of their way to find fault. It may be instructive to invoke Wayne Booth at this point: he writes in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* that "it is difficult to see why there should be any connection between neutrality and an absence of judgement... But if I am right in claiming that neutrality is impossible, even the most neutral comment will reveal some sort of commitment" (76).

Repeated charges of Gallant's ruthlessness and indifference reveal the moral standards against which her fiction has often been assessed. Technical skill is never an issue--the problem for some readers is not bad *writing* but *bad* writing. The assumptions appear to run along the following lines: characters should be appealing and presented in an appealing fashion; writers should not dwell on their deficiencies--writers, in short, should be nice to
their characters because optimism is good, pessimism is bad, and a writer who exposes her characters (and especially her protagonists) to criticism will herself be judged harshly as a result.

Gallant’s fiction is not amoral but hers is not a morality of niceness. The morality which expresses itself through her stories has to do with contingency, ambivalence, and particularity; it does not deliver sweeping and unambiguous generalizations but emerges through the presentation of detail, through the way in which the narrative voice reveals itself in that presentation.

Example Two: originality and control

Some criticism manifests a greater tolerance for ambivalence and ambiguity, and shows itself more willing to read into the gaps left in the stories. Helmut Bonheim says of "Acceptance of Their Ways" that the "text contains no explicit formulation to help us open the door to its treasures" (72). But that’s fine with him. In his detailed analysis of "Orphans’ Progress," Michel Fabre describes the children’s progression toward alienation:
L'horrure n'est pas nommée, elle doit être perçue, suppléée par le lecteur dans le non-dit de l'énoncé qui se garde bien de prendre ouvertement parti. C'est en ce sens que l'originalité de la stratégie narrative de l'auteur se caractérise davantage par son utilisation de la voix que par un quelconque refus de respecter les exigences du genre de la nouvelle.

(Fabre 59)

Thus, for Fabre, it is the responsibility of the reader to fill in the gaps left by the narrator; this is part of the reading process, the "originality of the narrative strategy," and not a flaw in the fiction; such a responsibility, moreover, is a direct result of the writer's manipulation of voice.

The effects of Gallant's use of voice remain a subject of debate. Whereas Fabre concludes that "Le ton de Mavis Gallant indique une sorte de refus d'un discours totalisateur" (63), Janice Kulyk Keefer, in her lively and thought-provoking study, *Reading Mavis Gallant*, argues the opposite. Gallant, she says,

is good at doing different voices... Yet so strong is the reader's sense of the omniscient narrator's manipulation and control of the various voices within the text that any convincing discourse of opposition to the narrative line is exceedingly difficult to hear.

(Kulyk Keefer 62)

The arguments exemplified here are somewhat subtler
than those cited above; they take into account to a greater extent the complexity of Gallant's writing. But the issues raised are essentially the same: is it the case, as Fabre submits, that Gallant's stories are radically open-ended, refusing any "totalizing discourse," or is Kulyk Keefer right to hold that Gallant's narrators express their opinions if not directly at least so effectively as to swamp any readerly dissent? One final set of critical responses will provide some insight into the means and extent of Gallant's narrative control.

Example Three: strange magic and strong implication

The mode of narrative expression complicates the debate over the extent to which the implied author of a Gallant story judges her characters. Things are not made easy for the reader--Gallant's narrators do not come out and say, for example, 'Sometimes Christine is paralyzed by indecision,' or, 'Frau Schneider is a greedy old bigot but she did have a hard life.' Instead, as Fabre points out, much is left unsaid. One way of understanding Gallant's apparent restraint is to follow I.M. Owen, who, in a review of *In Transit*, writes:

That's perhaps the key to Mavis Gallant's strange
magic. She doesn't seek to explain the inexplicable; it happens, and she shows it happening.

Owen's laissez-faire approach differs from that of Fabre in that the latter highlights the calculated effects of Gallant's narrative strategies. For Owen, Gallant is a teller with a tale in mind: she lays it out, we put it together, and, somehow, it works. The "it happens" reading appeals because of its simplicity and the element of what might almost be called mysticism, the incomprehensibility of the process whereby some people write stories and other people read and appreciate them. But Owen and Fabre share the notion that the inexplicable and the unsaid ("le non-dit") constitute a significant component of Gallant's narrative: we read into the gaps.

The gap, the ellipsis, in fiction, is misleading. It sounds like an empty space, a small piece of nothing separating something from something else. But precisely because of its position before B and after A, the gap is not an empty space; it contains the wake of that which precedes it and the anticipation of that which follows. We do not read anything at all into gaps; they fulfil specific functions and in Mavis Gallant's stories the reader is often guided to fill them with particular assessments, judgements, conclusions. This is where Owen's take on Gallant falls
Wolfgang Iser explains the "it," the reading process, as the interaction between the reader's mind and the text; such a process is affected but not determined by both the "individual disposition of the reader" and the "different patterns of the text" (212). The reader follows the text's sequent sentences: one sentence raises an expectation, while the next modifies (rather than satisfying) that expectation. Thus the reader's progress through the narrative is characterized by a constant shaping and re-shaping of expectations. When it comes to dealing with gaps in the fiction, Iser claims, they "may be filled in different ways. For this reason, one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his [sic] own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled" (216).

Lawrence Mathews' article on From the Fifteenth District, provides a concise illustration of the way in which one critic reads a Gallant gap:

When, near the end of "The Remission," Barbara Webb thinks, "Alec gave me three children. Eric
gave me Lou Mas" (115), the reader is brought up short. Lou Mas is the house that Barbara and Alec have lived in. Paid for by her brothers and owned by them in all senses except the technically legal, it was given to her by Eric (her lover) only in that he has arranged for her to swindle her brothers out of it. For Barbara to think of this as somehow parallel to her husband's gift of three children is to reveal a breathtaking moral illiteracy. But these sentences end the paragraph. Gallant does not waste so much as a phrase in underlining for the reader the nature of the judgement of Barbara that is so strongly implied. (158-59)

According to Mathews, then, Gallant fills the gap for us--the space following the end of the paragraph resonates with Gallant's judgement of Barbara, a judgement which, if not directly stated, is "strongly implied." Strong implication may indeed be one of the most important phrases to bear in mind as one considers how Gallant evaluates her characters. In the case of "The Remission," it is not that Barbara is consistently judged and found wanting (nor is that Mathews' point); rather, one of the story's main concerns is her quirky morality, which is explored through Barbara's specific decisions and actions and their effects (at times apparently wholesome, at times not) on her life and the lives of other characters. Janice Kulyk Keefer might as well have been writing about Barbara when she describes Gallant as "a peculiar kind of moralist" (20).

Kulyk Keefer explains how that morality operates in Gallant's stories with respect to judgement and the
omniscient narrator:

One of the principal targets of Gallant's irony is the belief that we can make clear and sweeping judgements of people and situations: she shows us not only that we do not know more about a certain character than that character knows about her or himself, but also that we do not know nearly as much as we think we do about our own responses to others and the desires that provoke those responses. Again, the uncomfortable principle of extension operates here: not only Gallant's characters but also her readers are revealed as self-deceived and imperfectly aware.

This discomfort at being implicated in her irony is matched by an equally unsettling sense of Gallant's "invisibility" within her fictions. Authorial impersonality and the obliqueness it engenders are crucial to the very project of her fiction.

(Kulyk Keefer 45)

Here is the difficult part: if "not only Gallant's characters but also her readers" (and, I would add, her narrators) are to be "revealed as self-deceived and imperfectly aware," then Gallant must strike a very delicate balance. The issue is power: Gallant's narrator grows more powerful as she exposes the flaws in a character's perception of the world--the act of passing judgement confers authority on the judge. But if "[o]ne of the principal targets of Gallant's irony is the belief that we can make clear and sweeping judgements of people and situations," then the narrator's (and the reader's) judgement must be called into question. Hence the need both for the narrator's critique of character and situation, and for the measured detachment which provides a space for readers to construct their own evaluations--hence the
charges of ruthlessness, then, and of indifference.

Ultimately, the difference of opinion between Fabre and Kulyk Keefer is not one which may be resolved, at least not in general terms. If, as Iser argues, "The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed," it is because the convergence does not occur in the same place in all cases. If the convergence takes place between Iser’s two poles, the artistic and the aesthetic, then the locus of the convergence will be in one instance closer to "the individual disposition of the reader," and in another closer to "the reality of the text." Kulyk Keefer and Fabre are both alive to the possibilities of Gallant’s work; they differ not because they are unsophisticated critics but because they are not the same reader.

Gallant avoids what Fabre refers to as "un discours totalisateur" through a careful blend of warm opinion and cool distance. And if, as Kulyk Keefer asserts, "any convincing discourse of opposition to the narrative line is exceedingly hard to hear," then that is perhaps not the fault of the text, which makes a space for such discourse, but that of the reader who expects to hear rather than to speak it.
5. The prime voice

The concerns raised by Gallant critics about meaning, judgement, and the narrator/author are intimately bound up with voice. In some stories, "meaning" (the conclusions readers draw about characters, action, the function of a particular text in a body of work) may be construed on the basis of, for example, a pattern of symbols, metaphors, or images; these may resolve themselves in a significant closural figure. Or a key event, one which involves a character making an important decision or undergoing some kind of epiphany, might provide a narrative locus from which the reader can work backward and forward into the story. Such generic conventions, however, rarely find a place in the Gallant canon. Although certain images and ideas do recur, Gallant as a rule avoids weighted devices such as symbol and metaphor; each individual incident in a story seems important in its own right. Indeed, the detail and sense of precision accompanying the description of apparently minor events create a pattern of fictional development which is unusual in modern short fiction and yet a hallmark of Gallant's work. Insofar as it is possible to construct a schematic narrative line, what emerges is not what one anthology refers to as "the classic contours of situation, complication, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement" (The Short Story: An
Rather, Gallant's plotting may be imagined as a series of more or less equally weighted incidents.

Where "meaning" is not to be found in or made of traditional narrative devices such as plotting strategy, symbolic patterning and metaphor, it must be sought elsewhere, and in Gallant's work that place is voice. And if one of the more productive ways of reading Mavis Gallant's fiction has less to do with analyzing structure and symbol than with listening attentively to the voices that tell the stories, then issues of interpretation centre on what is heard, how it is heard, and who is speaking.

Voice and credibility: "Its Image on the Mirror"

Much of the information presented in a story arrives, as it were, in a mediated form. That is to say, the illusion we as readers maintain implies, among other things, that the narrator selects certain incidents as worthy of mention and recounts them. The character of the narrator determines what is significant and why. The "credibility" of the narrator means, basically, the degree
to which the narrator's opinions might be expected to coincide with those of the reader. Credibility is important because it affects the reader's position in relation to that of the narrator; it affects the perspective from which the reader receives information.

The credibility of Jean Price, the first-person narrator of "Its Image on the Mirror," is the subject of a critical dispute between D.B. Jewison and W.J. Keith. In Jewison's view, the contradictions in Jean's account of her family history are compounded by repeated references to the limitations of memory (and of Jean's memory in particular). Consequently, "Jean's authority is severely undermined" (102). Providing a series of examples of questionable assertions on Jean's part, Jewison concludes "that Jean's assessments must always be regarded with suspicion and sometimes with contempt" (104). W. J. Keith, by contrast, disputes some of the contradictions Jewison finds in Jean's story. "As a narrator," Keith contends, "Jean may be 'unreliable' in the way that we all are, but we cannot, I think, properly regard her unreliability as in any way culpable or excessive" (159). According to Keith, Jean's "assessments should certainly be regarded with 'suspicion'--only an impossibly naive reader would accept them all at face value--but I would argue that we should not, with Jewison, regard them, even 'sometimes,' with
The difference of opinion between Jewison and Keith is instructive in three ways. First, it shows the magnitude of the difficulties involved in determining credibility, shows this indeed as the very discussion becomes implicated in the process of assessing and evaluating trustworthiness. The credibility of the critics themselves is at issue: does the reader believe Jewison and distrust Jean, or side with Keith and accept (with some reservations) her version of the story? Second, it illustrates the centrality of voice to any reading of the text. Third, the debate raises the question of how credibility is determined.

What is a prime voice?

One way of envisioning the dynamics of credibility is to imagine that every reader constructs a prime voice--a voice the reader trusts, one which tells the truth, which states, for example, 'Jean Price said X but of course she was lying.' The prime voice is not that of a narrator, character, or author, although it may approach any or all of these at times--it does not exist except in the reader's
mind's ear. Its function is to tell not The Truth but a particular truth, or set of truths, about a particular story, the necessity of those truths being dictated by the reader, who evaluates the other voices and finds them, in one way or another, wanting. The prime voice tells the real story, insofar as that notion is conceivable--recounts a version of the story, let us say, which the reader chooses from among the many versions possible, because it seems most plausible, fitting, or interesting. The prime voice is not the ultimate or the best voice ("prime" here implies primacy only in terms of its appeal to a particular reader); rather, it is like one of a series of yardsticks, the one you end up buying, although none of them might measure exactly one yard. William Pritchard, in a review cited above, claims that "Mavis Gallant refuses to... speak as a thoughtful omniscience behind her characters" (4). Spatially, we may situate the prime voice alongside other voices in the story; temporally, it speaks simultaneously with and in between them.

To a reader operating within a critical framework which allows that there is or was a person who performed the physical act of writing but does not admit, for example, intentionality, as an unproblematic clue to understanding stories, the idea of a prime voice can be liberating. It is not a question of saying, "I believe the Author meant X,"
but of a different conceptualization of the way in which information communicated in a story is received and understood. The reader hears a prime voice which is different for each reader, and at each reading—the prime voice is an illustration of the dynamic interplay between reader and text which constitutes reading.

The prime voice in "The Pegnitz Junction"

The prime voice operates chiefly in one of two situations. In the first, it speaks in conjunction with the voice of the narrator. For example, in the opening lines of "The Pegnitz Junction," the omniscient narrator uses such epithets as "bony," "slow moving," and "tall" to describe Christine. Danielle Schaub understands this to mean that Christine is unattractive, although the narrator does not say so. One might say that Schaub interprets the narrator's comments in a certain light. Alternatively, one could argue that Schaub is in effect hearing another voice, the prime voice, along with that of the narrator, and that the prime voice is saying things like, 'Bony means too thin; too thin
is not attractive....' For another reader, because this is
the opening section of the text, the narrator's voice might
dominate--such a reader would perhaps not hear the prime
voice until that of the narrator has been more firmly
established (that is, the prime voice and the narrator's
voice might for the moment be saying the same thing).

In another set of circumstances the prime voice
takes on a more active role. When the narrator is
temporarily absent from the text, and a character-voice
dominates, the prime voice takes the place of the narrator.
The extensive monologues of Mrs. Schneider illustrate this
dynamic. The character is not speaking but thinking, so her
'speech' is not direct but reported. However, her
monologues differ from most instances of reported speech in
that they are presented with the appearance of intactness.
Italicized so as to be distinguished from the surrounding
text, they contain no interpolations from Christine, who
hears them, or from the omniscient narrator, who,
supposedly, passes them on. Like other italicized passages
in "The Pegnitz Junction," these create a sense of
immediacy, suggesting both through typography and through
the use of the first person that they represent a character-
voice which is being transmitted directly to the reader,
without the intervention of a narrator or another character.
"This was the beginning," says Mrs. Schneider,

Two first cousins from Muggendorf married two first cousins from Doos. Emigrated to the USA, all four together. [...] The men got work right away in Flushing. [...] Arrangement was that they would come to us for their evening meal. Had every evening meal together for forty-seven years. [...] I cooked around seventeen thousand suppers, all told. Never a disagreement. Never an angry word. Nothing but good food and family loyalty.

(23-4)

Mrs. Schneider recounts the lives of the four German émigrés in New York state, often in a brisk, clipped, journalistic style, as if she were in a hurry to get her story out. The brevity of the sentences and the omission of articles and subject pronouns ("Emigrated to the USA... Arrangement was... Had every evening meal...") underline the sense of urgency. Equally often, though, Mrs. Schneider provides long lists of the food she has prepared, as if to suggest that the couples' lives were significant chiefly because of what they had for supper. There is a tension between the impression of speed created stylistically and through the rapid succession of events and social changes Mrs. Schneider chronicles (the Depression, the war, the postwar period, the alterations in the social makeup of the neighbourhood), and the monotony of an existence marked by a relentless progression of dishes.32

However the principal tension in Mrs. Schneider's
monologues arises from the conflict between her voice and the prime voice. At times they appear to concur, as when she states that she has cooked seventeen thousand suppers--there is no doubt the woman has worked hard. But her assertions are more frequently suspect. For example, she repeatedly refers to familial harmony in sentences that open with a negation ("Never... Never..."; "Nobody... Never..."). Mrs. Schneider's insistence on the positive in sentences structured around negatives gives rise to an opposing voice. The prime voice in this instance emerges from the contradiction between what the character seems to want to say and how she says it; the prime voice tells the reader she is lying.

The prime voice expresses itself in opposition to that of Mrs. Schneider--where she says "family loyalty", it replies family loathing. Later, when she suggests pride, it indicates pathos. Mrs. Schneider describes the restrictions placed on the families during the war:

> During the conflict we were enemy aliens... Police had orders, had to tell us we couldn't go to the beaches any more. Big joke on them--we never went anyway, didn't even own bathing suits! Were given our territorial limits: could go into Jackson Heights as far as the corner of Northern and 81st. Never went, never wanted to.... The men... had three stations from home to work, were warned not to get off at the wrong one. They never did. The thing was we never wanted to go anywhere except the three blocks between our two homes. The only thing we missed was the fresh bratwurst. We never went anywhere because we never
The dominant tone of this passage is Mrs. Schneider's defiant glee at outwitting the authorities. But the prime voice tells a different story, that of the meanness of the life of a woman who chooses to spend her time only with people she clearly despises, of the lives of two couples who have no desire to go anywhere beyond "the three blocks between our two homes." Here again, the persistent repetition ("Big joke on them... The joke was on the whole USA!") and the reliance on negative constructions ("We never went... didn't even own... Never went, never wanted to... We never went anywhere because we never wanted to!") create a counter-voice.

One of Mrs. Schneider's most unattractive traits is her blatant racism:

There was a plan to save some German cities, those with interesting old monuments. The plan was to put Jews in the attics of all the houses. The Allies would never have dropped a bomb. What a difference it might have made. Later we learned this plan had been sabotaged by the President of the USA. Too bad. It could have saved many famous old statues and quite a few lives.

Here, the anti-Semitism Mrs. Schneider expressed earlier in her condemnation of President Roosevelt (39) masquerades as...
a desire to save statues and lives. There is no need for the oppositional syntactical strategies deployed earlier: the prime voice does not have to work very hard to show the ethnocentrism behind the appearance of prudent pragmatism.

The prime voice speaks from the space between that which is said and that which is not. It opposes the dominant voice by pointing to something outside or on the other side of it. And dominance is crucial because "The Pegnitz Junction" is a sequence of voices, a competitive polyphony, in which "narrative voice" constitutes not one thing, not one narrator or one voice, but a complex web of relations among different voices, each of which maintains a temporary position of power before relinquishing that position to another. The idea of a prime voice is an image of the interaction between reader and text, an image that attempts to take into account the importance of voice in the dynamic which constitutes the reading process.
1. Ronald Hatch, for example, who in an insightful early essay on Gallant's work pronounces "The Pegnitz Junction" "quite an extraordinary work," was puzzled on first reading, not really understanding the increasing fragmentation, yet feeling strangely the sinister element behind even the most trivial event.... By the end of the novella, so many stories have been introduced within stories that everything seems to be flying apart. (101)

2. Barbara Godard's comment on A Fairly Good Time applies equally to "The Pegnitz Junction": she describes Gallant's novel as "an eternal braid of story within story moving to the vanishing point" (43).

3. This journey represents the opposite of what railway travel is supposed to be. In The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century, Wolfgang Schivelbusch writes:

   'Annihilation of space and time' was the early-nineteenth-century characterization of the effect of railroad travel. The concept was based on the speed that the new means of transport was able to achieve. A given spatial distance, traditionally covered in a fixed amount of travel time, could suddenly be dealt with in a fraction of that time; to put it another way, the same amount of time permitted one to cover the old spatial distance many times over. In terms of transport economics, this meant a shrinking of space...

   (33)

By the twentieth century things have changed and the airplane is even faster than the train, but in Gallant's story the Paris airports are on strike: Christine, Herbert and little Bert are forced to resort to train travel. This is a significant change in plan: the strike suggests a social unrest which sets the stage for the questions Gallant poses about authority and civic order, and the prolonged overland journey evokes the railway narratives of the nineteenth century. In this case, though, it is a railway journey by default only, and instead of the annihilation of space, train travel here extends space and time not only because the movement itself is slow but because for so much of the journey there is no movement at all.

4. Here Schaub quotes in full the story's opening paragraph, italicizing such phrases as "bony slow-moving," "small bombed baroque German city" and "she would have been thought plain." (Curiously, Schaub does not place any emphasis on the assertion that "in her childhood she had often been told that her feet were like canal boats," which is perhaps the least flattering descriptive comment. However, as is so often the case in Gallant's work, this kind of mockery may characterize the speaker
as much as the addressee. That is, the point here could well have to do with one of Gallant's favourite themes, the errors of adults in their treatment of children.)

5. Further issues of irony and authorial judgement will be addressed below.

6. As with poetry, scansion results not from stresses placed by the author but from the interaction between the voice of the text and the way in which the reader hears it. That is to say, you might disagree with my emphases.

7. See the discussion of this topic earlier with reference to the expository section of Douglas Glover's "Red" which deals with Red's previous marriage.

8. In an interview with Michel Fabre, Gallant indicates her sensitivity to the effects of translation:

   When, for the first time I had to correct proofs of my own work in French..., I found that I was introducing gallicisms into my writing in English. I speak more French than English during the course of the day, but until now I have kept the two languages separated in my mind. I was greatly alarmed, for if it had continued I would have been forced to leave France, and that would have upset me very much. For a time I had to cut down my reading in French. I don't like shifting from one language to the other. When I am interviewed, I prefer the conversation to be entirely in English or in French.

   (Gallant and Fabre 95)

9. In an interview with Geoff Hancock, Gallant makes the following comment on Christine's unusual receptivity:

   You see, a great deal of conversation in it ["The Pegnitz Junction"] is cut off, short circuited. When the young woman hears the older woman thinking about her life in America, she really does hear her thinking. She is not inventing or making up stories. Everything that the young woman sees when she looks out the train window, she really does see. A kind of magic, if you like. To my mind, a short circuit. She really does know all these stories. She really does know what happened to everyone. Someone wondered if she was schizophrenic. No. There is a German expression, "I can hear him thinking." I've always liked that. I could hear him thinking. Because one does very often.

   (Gallant and Hancock 65)
10. Danielle Schaub indicates the irony of this situation when she points out that, in Paris, "Herbert feels so embarrassed about it [the war] that he only speaks French in public so as to pass himself off as French" (239).

11. Other episodes which reveal the Herbert-beneath-the-surface include those involving his ex-wife and his mother.

12. The specificity of "in France" here carries a certain weight: for Christine, France may be merely a foreign country, but for Herbert it remains enemy territory.

13. See for example the dialogue which follows the intercepted letter to Ken:

"Is it finished?" said little Bert.
"I suppose so. Though nothing is ever finished," said Christine. She had been disappointed by both the substance and quality of this information.

(84)

Or, a page later, the section which follows Herbert's italicized description of his wife's departure:

This fell like dirty cinders. As information, it offered nothing except the fact that Herbert was not far from the waiting room. Perhaps it had no connection with him; in this particular game no one was allowed an unfair advantage. It was old and tarnished stuff which had come to her by error.

(85)

14. So of course does Christine; her "interference" is also at times referred to as "information." Hers, however, is different in kind, and she does not pass it along.

15. Homi Bhabha has often discussed the importance of mimicry as a strategy for rebellion against authority. Bhabha's focus on the colonial context does not translate here, but the issues of power, rebellion and mimicry do. See, for example, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse":

Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both "normalized" knowledges and disciplinary powers.

(126)
16. This is precisely what Mikhail Bakhtin describes as one of the means of incorporating heteroglossia into a text: "an intrusion of the emotional aspects of someone else's speech (ellipsis, questions, exclamations)" (319). "The Pegnitz Junction" is a polyphonic text not merely because it includes a variety of voices but because of the ways in which those voices are incorporated, the ways in which they intersect and echo one another.

17. For example, when a vendor passes on the train, Christine buys a soft drink and then

saw she had made a mistake: Herbert would not let little Bert have soft drinks, even in an emergency, because they were bad for the teeth, and of course he would not drink in front of the thirsty child. When she realized this she put the can down on the floor.

(25)

18. Note that these challenges frame the narrative, the first occurring very early on, before the start of the train journey, and the second close to the end of the story. Christine's impugnment of the conductor is particularly significant because she undertakes it on behalf of a group--little Bert and the women in the station waiting room--in a passage redolent of intimidation ("panic," "fright," "power," "authority," "testify," "scaring," "frightened," "ill with terror," "escape" [80-81]).

19. See Bakhtin on incorporated genres and heteroglossia (320).

20. That a woman, and a young woman at that, should serve as the figure for resistance to oppression may not be entirely accidental. In the Hancock interview, Gallant has this to say:

We had no way of knowing then or for a long time that there had ever been any German resistance. If the Resistance in other countries has sometimes been inflated out of all historical reality, the German resistance has been played down. If you want to learn anything about it you have to take trouble, search out the books--very few--and try to find witnesses, first hand accounts. Ask people in Canada, today, if they have ever heard of Sophie Scholl, decapitated at nineteen for distributing anti-Nazi tracts at the university in Munich. Her brother, aged 21, was beheaded too. Of course, we didn't know that.

(40)

21. Schaub does contend, however, that Christine undergoes at the end of the narrative a transformation that signals an optimistic outlook on the future. In a curiously contradictory interpretation, Schaub claims that Christine "decides to stop pretending" and that "she starts acting as a real mother would"
Christine ignores the arrival of the train in a move away from social convention and toward independence. For a more convincing account of the story's final pages, see Hatch (103).

22. See, for example, Herbert Leet's review of The Other Paris: "there is a wistful, humorous quality in these simple tales of how a young American girl became disenchanted with Paris..." (Leet 832). Janice Kulyk Keefer quotes a later fragment of the same review, in which Leet concludes: "Enjoyment is limited to feminine special readers in larger public libraries" (Kulyk Keefer 155).

23. Reception theorist Wolfgang Iser argues that the gap (the interruption, the hiatus) is vital to the narrative: "Indeed, it is only through inevitable omissions that a story will gain its dynamism. Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections--for filling in the gaps left by the text itself" (216).

24. Fabre underlines the importance of gaps in Mavis Gallant's short stories and relates them to narrative voice:

Or, Mavis Gallant, par son recours répété à l'ellipse ou à la litote, semble refuser l'implication de l'auteur/narrateur qui s'efface bien plus qu'il ne se laisse entrevoir dans la plupart de ses nouvelles. Et, paradoxalement, c'est lorsqu'il semble se manifester le plus ouvertement que le narrateur se trouve le plus loin de la voix, qu'il prend le moins en charge la vision profonde de l'auteur.

(60)

25. In his analysis of Katherine Mansfield's "At the Bay," W. H. New explores various implications of textual gaps and silences; here he considers the paradoxical way in which speech and silence--presence and absence--implicate one another:

Repeatedly, the story asks not just that the reader listen to sounds, but that the reader mark how sounds break durations of silence: sound, that is, makes us aware not just of itself but also of the expressiveness of silence, of the presence of silence. Hence speech makes us aware of the unsaid, and action of what has not taken place: the effect of the form is oblique, drawing attention to a present other...."
26. Iser's conceptualization of sequent sentences, each of which modifies the expectations created by its precedent, approaches Bakhtin's understanding of sequent words: "every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (280).

27. "The artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader" (212).


29. Iser's consideration of Jane Austen comes to mind here--he notes the significance of "the unwritten aspects of apparently trivial scenes" (213).

30. It follows that the meaning of such terms as "truth" and "real" is utterly relative.

31. "In between" here implies a temporal as well as a spatial component: the prime voice may be that which is heard in the space which follows the end of a paragraph, or in the temporal space which begins where a reader stops reading and ends when she resumes.

32. "I cooked fresh chicken soup, pea soup with bacon, my own goulash soup, hot beer soup, soup with dumplings, soup with rice, soup with noodles, prepared my own cabbage in brine, made fresh celery salad, potato salad our way, potato dumplings, duck with red cabbage, cod with onions, plum dumplings, horseradish salad, sweet and sour pork our way, goose giblets with turnips" (24).


"Nobody was ever as close as we were.... Never a cross answer" (25).

34. This is one of many possible constructions of a prime voice--my prime voice at this reading. Different readers will feel varying degrees of sympathy (or none) for Mrs. Schneider, depending on the extent to which the prime voice opposes her account.
CONCLUSION: SUMMARIES AND POSSIBILITIES

This thesis investigates the function of voice in some recent Canadian short stories. The tension in Leon Rooke's "Shut Up" arises mainly from the conflict between two opposing voices, those of Gordon and his wife. Gordon's voice dominates the story, though, and the examination of such key features as repetition and surprise reveal the means by which that voice achieves its distinctive qualities. The voices of Terry Griggs' "Unfinished" are more numerous, and the narrator adopts several different narrative postures, some of which call into question the act of narrating itself. In Douglas Glover's "Red," the dominant voice is that of Flo, the narrator, but Flo's voice draws on an assortment of voices (those of different characters and different kinds of discourse); in "Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon," rather than accommodating other voices within itself, the voice of the narrator appears to separate and divide its own roles and identities. Mavis Gallant's "The Pegnitz Junction" is a fragmented narrative, a story constantly interrupted by other voices telling other stories, but although the protagonist, Christine, longs for the "interference" to disappear and leave her in peace, the interrupting stories themselves constitute a vital part of the narrative.
Voice in fiction is difficult to define, perhaps because it is less a thing, an entity of some kind, than a range of things—a process perhaps, or a series of experiences. It may be helpful to consider what kinds of issues are worth noting when one considers narrative voice, what aspects of a text one might explore to render it more audible. First, dialogue or any direct speech from characters: direct speech isolates the language of a character, setting it off from the other languages of the text so that it often encapsulates certain ideas or characteristics; careful attention to such matters as diction, idiom, syntax and rhythm may reveal not only the difference between one character’s speech and another’s but also the range of languages encompassed in the speech of a character, whether those languages derive from other characters (so that the interaction and appropriation of voice might be significant) or various kinds of discourse (for example academic, colloquial, scientific, or childlike languages). The placement and function of non-direct forms of character-speech may also be considered (that is, speech which is not marked typographically with dashes, quotation marks, or other such indices); in free indirect discourse, the distinction between speech and thought is not always clear. Then there are the voices of the narrator. The narrator may be more or less intrusive; as with character-speech, the narrator’s voice may draw on a variety of
languages, and may sound quite different in different sections of a story. In the case of a third-person narration, it may be useful to examine the differences and points of convergence between the narrator's voice and that of the protagonist (or those of other characters). In first-person narration, conceiving a distinction between the "I"-character(s) and the "I"-narrator(s) often helps to clarify the assorted voices of the "I".

Rather than attempting to say something concise, definitive, and conclusive about voice—which is probably not possible, given the range of its functions and manifestations—I would like to suggest some possibilities and questions for further exploration. In the course of my research for this study, I became interested in a number of questions I did not have the opportunity to address. I will present some of them here as an indication of some of the areas in which voice-centred reading strategies might prove helpful.

One issue in particular that requires closer examination has to do with the destination of narrative voice: how it accommodates a narratee. While this study has addressed what Seymour Chatman refers to as "the sending end" of the communication, the "receiving end"—that is, the roles of reader, audience, addressee and narratee as textual
functions and as participants in the reading process—and its relation to narrative voices deserve greater attention. At times, as in Terry Griggs' "Unfinished," the narratee is invoked explicitly through repeated references to "you": how, then, does that pronoun operate in its designation of both the reader and the character to whom the story is apparently addressed? And in texts which do not explicitly address anyone in particular, where there is no "you," no "dear reader," is a narratee nonetheless addressed, and if so by what specific means and with what effect?

Gender is another issue which relates to voice in significant and thought-provoking ways. Why is it that so few Canadian writers employ both male and female voices to any great extent? It seems that most men create, almost exclusively, male voices, and women, female voices (Leon Rooke and Douglas Glover are notable exceptions). It would be interesting to see structuralist methodologies similar to those employed in Helmut Bonheim's *The Narrative Modes* brought to bear on this question; such a study might form the basis of an interrogation into the characteristics of gendered voices. Furthermore, gender studies might seek to investigate gay and lesbian voices in fiction by heterosexual writers (such as Glover's "Woman Gored by Bison Lives"), or heterosexual voices created by gay and lesbian writers—I am thinking of an article by Emily S. Apter
entitled "Female Impersonations: Gender and Narrative Voice in Gide's L'Ecole des Femmes, Robert, and Geneviève," a fascinating exploration of gender-coding and narrative voice. Also, the section of this dissertation which examines the performance of gender in "Red" may provide a model for other considerations of gender performance in Canadian fiction.

Finally, with regard to the broader issue of voice and voice-centred readings, I would like to refer once again to the notion of a prime voice suggested in the chapter on Mavis Gallant. Although some readers may have difficulty reconciling the concept of prime voice with a reader-response perspective such as that articulated by Wolfgang Iser, that reconciliation is only problematic if the prime voice is seen to inhere in the text. I would suggest that the prime voice is a reader's construct, and one which may illustrate the reading process as it pertains to voice. The prime voice is a vaguely deconstructionist image in that it seeks to allow entrance to the aberrant trope, the aberrant voice, to create a space for reading (or listening) against the grain. In the language of feminist theory, it is the process of allowing the "other" voice in what Elaine Showalter calls a "double-voiced discourse" to speak.
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